

Squirrels Day Nursery

Hatfield Community Free School, Briars Lane, HATFIELD, Hertfordshire, AL10 8ES

Inspection date	26/03/2013
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children are involved in a wide range of play experiences based on their interests and linked to the seven areas of learning. The nursery plans a broad educational programme that meets the needs of all the children; they make good progress because staff have a good understanding of how children learn through play.
- Children are happy and settled. They build strong relationships with their key person, adults and the other children. Staff support children in taking part in new experiences; this builds on their confidence and self-esteem.
- The leadership and management is strong. The well-qualified staff team work well together to meet the needs of all children. Children are cared for in a safe and stimulating environment and the safeguarding and welfare requirements are met to a good standard.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The resources for imaginative play do not always provide children with a rich and varied experience that is linked to their interests and areas of learning.
- There is scope for the nursery to keep parents better informed about the planned themes and activities in order for them to fully support their children's learning at home.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to the children. She watched them play both indoors and outside and sat with them when they had their lunch.
- The inspector spoke to staff about the children's care, development and the daily routines.
- The inspector held the feedback meeting with the registered provider and the nursery manager.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents as they collected their children from nursery.

Inspector

Tina Kelly

Full Report

Information about the setting

Squirrels Day Nursery registered in 2012 on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is managed on behalf of the school by Squirrels Day Nurseries Limited. The nursery is situated within a self-contained unit in Hatfield Community Free School, Hatfield, Hertfordshire. Children have direct access to outdoor play space. Children come from the immediate and surrounding areas and attend for a variety of sessions.

The provision is open each week day from 8am to 6pm all year around, with the exception of two weeks in August and two weeks over the Christmas period. There are currently 40 children on roll. The nursery supports children who have English as an additional language.

The nursery is managed by the registered provider who holds an Early Years Degree and the registered individual holds Early Years Professional Status (EYPS). The nursery employs six staff who work with the children who have appropriate early years qualifications or are part of an apprenticeship scheme. The manager has Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- develop the children's imaginative play experience. For example, provide appropriate resources, such as tables and chairs and writing materials to develop their ideas while they are fresh in their minds and important to them
- improve opportunities for parents to engage in their children's learning at home by giving them information in advance about the planned themes and activities.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The nursery provides a rich and interesting environment for all children to be cared for, to play and to learn. Staff plan a broad educational programme based on the areas of learning and the children's interests. The 'All about me' form is used to ensure children settle at the nursery and to find out about their likes and interests so staff can plan and progress their learning based on their starting points. The next steps in learning are

identified for each child. Plans are drawn together across the nursery to plan future activities and extend their learning for children of all ages. This information is used as the basis for the 'Progress check at age two'. The key person monitors the children's achievements and developing skills using 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' guidance. Children's learning is tracked to ensure they have the skills needed for the next stages in their learning, such as going to school. Those for whom English is an additional language are supported effectively by staff so they make good progress.

Parents are kept well informed about their children's achievement and progress with regular opportunities to look at the children's learning journeys and discussion with the staff and key persons. Information is shared with the use of the 'This week I..' form. This enables staff to use events from home to plan for the children's developing interests. Staff are always available to talk to parents about what their children have enjoyed with an overview of the day's activities detailed on a white board display. The nursery plans a variety of open-ended topics but the detail is not effectively shared with parents in advance to enable them to link with the children's experiences and support their learning at home.

Planning in the 'Inventors' pre-school room fully reflects the children's interests and developing skills. The theme of dinosaurs is drawn into every aspect of the children's play and extends all areas of learning. Group time is managed extremely well, children are asked to imagine they are on the magic bus. They sit and listen intently as the manager asks them where they might find dinosaurs. Children respond using their own experience and their imagination, giving clear answers, such as 'in a cupboard' and 'by a tree'. Staff ask appropriate questions and involve the children in physical activities relating to dinosaurs. They re-enact stomping and walking with big steps. The session is extended to the outside play area so children have more space to pretend to be dinosaurs and make lots of noise. Children become deeply involved in a topic they can relate to and find interesting and fun. They take part in making a collage dinosaur landscape to enable them to use their creative skills and imagination. Their understanding is further extended as the sand tray is full of wet mud and model dinosaurs and footprints around the nursery floor engage children and extend their play ideas. Books are selected to support their interests, to reinforce the names and characteristics of their favourite dinosaurs. However, children's imaginative play in the home corner is not so well supported. Children do not have ready access to toys that can be used, moved and combined to promote and extend their imaginative play ideas, such as small tables, tea sets and writing materials. They are not always able to develop their own play ideas while they are fresh in their mind. The layout means that children can walk through the 'house' so cause disruption to others as they play.

The 'Explorers' room caters for babies and young children, who are keen and active learners. They have free access to a wide range of very good quality resources around the playroom. Their recently acquired skills are supported to a good level by staff, who know the children well. Children enjoy exploring all areas of the room, which promotes their independence. They sit with staff in the comfortable book area, listening to stories and learning how to handle and look at books. They are beginning to use their early skills as they manipulate and move dough around with dishes and plates to help them make links

with their own experiences. Staff engage with the children in all aspects of their play and learning. They join in the free play, when appropriate to guide the children with great sensitivity. Therefore, their learning, understanding and development is supported to a good level.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Arrangements to help children settle at the nursery and build secure emotional attachments are very effective. Children are able to handle, look at and refer to photographs on a low-level wall display. Pictures of their family and important aspects from home are a vital part of the children's settling-in process. Older children are able to talk about people and places in the photographs and retell important events with their family. Strong links with parents and the sharing of home events ensure the key person knows the children well and has the background information to build on their likes and previous experiences.

Young children and those with English as an additional language are supported well in their understanding and language development. Staff use communication cards with Makaton signs to reinforce personal care routines and to help children understand what is expected of them. Verbal praise and the card signage is used to reinforce the simple rules that are in place to keep children safe. They know to stop what they are doing when staff wiggle their hands and ask the children to listen. They respond well to the staff's requests to help in tidying away. They become very involved in helping and take great pride in making sure the toys are put away correctly. Children can explain that the pictures and word labels on the storage boxes tell them where the toys belong. Day-to-day routines help children to predict and make connections with their own experiences.

Children learn about a healthy lifestyle through good everyday routines. The free-flow snack time and lunch times are social and managed well. Children's independence is promoted to a high level as they pour drinks and serve their own lunch. They receive appropriate support from staff, who sit with the children and talk to them about what they like and food that is good for them. The food is prepared, fresh on site as part of the school dinner service. The menu is adapted for the babies and to meet children's dietary requirements. Children clearly enjoy their meals and snacks. They are very competent in making their needs known to staff as they ask for more and help to serve each other.

Outside play is an important aspect of the children's day. They have easy access from the home rooms to the small outside play areas. Planning shows children are taken out to the large school grounds for more physical play and sporting games. Staff plan the outside play to cover all areas of learning; they move toys and resources outside to continually support and extend children's play and learning. Children are very keen to extend their play outside. They have good practical skills and are very confident and competent in changing their shoes and putting on their coats and gloves.

Children of all ages have easy access to a wide range of good quality toys and resources

around the nursery. They take part in many varied social and practical experiences that provide them with the skills to move onto school with confidence.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The well-qualified and experienced staff team strive to consistently improve practice and provide the best opportunities for all children and their families. A good overview of the curriculum and the children's learning ensures planning meets the needs of each individual child. Robust recruitment and supervision ensures staff are suitable and supported well in their roles and responsibilities. A comprehensive safeguarding procedure is in place to monitor and manage any concerns about children. This is based on the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance. All staff understand the routines that are in place to maintain a safe environment for children. There is an expectation for all staff to continually update their knowledge of safeguarding; this is managed by the designated member of staff. Children's welfare is further protected as effective risk assessments are in place to ensure their safety at all times, both in the building and when playing outside.

The nursery has established good relationships with parents which contributes to them recognising and meeting the needs of each child so any gaps are identified and starting to be closed. Parents spoken to at the time of the inspection said they are very happy with the service they receive and they appreciate the good experiences their children take part in. They feel staff are helpful and approachable. There is a good working relationship with the on-site school, children are invited to assemblies and visits are planned for as they move onto the school. The nursery is building links to aid in children's transitions to other nearby schools. Strong links are in place with the local children's centre and local authority support services to ensure children's needs are recognised and met in full.

There is an effective evaluation system in place that is based on the requirements of the Herts Quality Standards accreditation scheme that is to be completed by mid-2013. Self-evaluation and reflective practice is embedded in all aspects of planning and day-to-day routines. The staff team have a good understanding of aspects of the nursery that work well and have identified areas to be developed. The staff team work well together in striving for continuous improvement.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY450036
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	886951
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	40
Name of provider	Squirrels Day Nurseries Ltd
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	07713485193

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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