

Squirrels Day Nursery

Broxbourne Centre, High Road, Turnford, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, EN10 6AE

Inspection date	21/01/2014
Previous inspection date	21/04/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
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

- Practitioners continually seek out new ideas and activities to build on children's interests and extend their learning experiences. This keeps children motivated and eager to learn.
- The quality of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. This has a positive impact on children's achievements, particularly the oldest children.
- Parents are included in all aspects of the nursery and communication with them is exceptionally good. This contributes to children settling well and being secure and happy, therefore, developing a positive approach to play and learning.
- Focused reflection and action planning are effective in securing improvements in the provision that have the biggest impact on children's learning.
- Practitioners have a secure understanding of safeguarding children. They ensure children's welfare is prioritised and take appropriate action where there are concerns about children's well-being.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to improve the links between observation, assessment and planning to ensure every practitioner consistently provides expert, tailored experiences for every child, so that the very highest levels of achievement are consistently promoted.

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 observed activities in the classrooms, the garden and conducted a joint observation with the Early Years Professional.
- The inspector, children and practitioners had conversations at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at documentation related to the management of the setting, children's progress and self-evaluation.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents through short discussions.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications for all practitioners and support staff.

Inspector

Alison Reeves

Full report

Information about the setting

Squirrels Day Nursery was registered in 2001 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in purpose built premises, next to the Children's Centre at Hertfordshire Regional College, Broxbourne Site. It is managed by a private company. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four base rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs 30 practitioners and two kitchen and administrative staff. Of these, 28 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2, 3, 5 and 6, including one with Early Years Professional Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, for 48 weeks of the year, from 8am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 177 children attending, who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the links between planning and assessment even further, so that every practitioner is able to consistently provide expert, tailored experiences to ensure that every child reaches the very highest levels of achievements.

Inspection judgements

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

Practitioners support children's learning effectively. Activities are interesting and innovative and this makes children keen to join in. Most practitioners know their key children well and this enables them to plan carefully for their next steps in learning. Effective teaching means children learn and develop well from their individual starting points. The curriculum covers the seven areas of learning with an appropriate focus on the prime and specific areas depending on children's age and stage of development. Practitioners use appropriate strategies to engage children and are always looking out for new and interesting activities for children. There is a very good balance of child-led and adult-led play throughout the nursery. As children progress, there is a gradual increase in the structure of the day. For example, well-planned group work sessions for older children include phonics, letters and sounds and number work. Children delight in the sessions and demonstrate their secure understanding as they apply their knowledge in their play. This supports children in being ready for future school based learning. Children's natural curiosity is of vital importance to practitioners, who foster this well. The quality of teaching

in the nursery is good and in some cases outstanding. Experienced and highly qualified practitioners use their knowledge and training to excellent effect.

Children thoroughly enjoy themselves in the nursery. They choose most of their activities for themselves either from those prepared by practitioners or by getting additional toys from the storage units. Practitioners are alert to children's early communication. They support children's skills and build on them by using signing to make it easier for children with fewer communication skills or those with English as an additional language to interact and express themselves more easily. The vibrant visual displays help to foster children's interest and inquisitiveness in their environment. Practitioners' creativity aids learning. Good use of a display, linked to a popular story, means children are actively involved in telling the story. Practitioners provide open-ended activities for children. This allows children to develop their play and to return to activities over an extended period so they consolidate their learning. Some of the younger children experience these benefits with the dough and role play house. At the table children focus on different aspects of learning; some are interested in colours, finding all the red cutters regardless of shape or size; others are looking at the number of things they can make. Practitioners adapt their teaching and the focus depending on the individual child. Children have strong explorative instincts. This is fostered well by individual practitioners. One child brings in a large watering can from the garden to fill with water. The child takes it to the bathroom but cannot fit it under the taps. A practitioner expertly supports the child, asking how they will fill the can, acknowledging the difficulty but not providing the solution. The child and practitioner work together for a considerable time. Her skill enables the child to solve the initial problem but raises another; the child cannot lift the heavy can. They continue to talk and resolve the new problem. Many practitioners use a similar approach to teaching, using open questions, such as 'How can we...?' and 'Why do you think...?' They model thinking and wondering how to tackle things along with the child rather than presenting immediate answers. As a result, children develop their thought processes and their engagement in active learning helps them to retain knowledge. The oldest children are confident in their use of numbers, counting sequences and simple addition; both practitioners and the classroom displays support this. Children count how many are here today and when two other children arrive they are able to tell the practitioner there are now 24 children present. Children's creativity is expressed in free artwork and in their imaginative play. In the garden, children use logs to build a rocket and make a home out of sand for a crocodile. They bring together their knowledge of the world, their ideas and experiences to create new and inventive activities. This is because practitioners recognise that child-led learning that is properly supported engages children and therefore, they make good progress.

Practitioners frequently observe children as they play. The style of the writing makes them meaningful and easy to share with children and their parents. Practitioners use their assessments to identify next steps in learning and develop plans for further worthwhile activities that meet children's individual needs. Regular summaries of children's achievements show that children are making good progress. Where children's starting points are below expectations, most practitioners prioritise children's learning in the areas where most help is needed, providing opportunities for children to develop rapidly. This helps children to attain the expected levels of development and practitioners endeavour to narrow the gaps between the various groups of children. Parents are involved in their

child's learning. The nursery has a number of informative displays and resources that show what children do and how to support learning at home. Individual key persons share children's learning with parents, offering specific ideas for parents to try with their children and asking parents about what they would like them to do in the nursery. This demonstrates effective and inclusive working to support children's good progress towards the early learning goals.

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

Children settle quickly into the nursery. This is because of the highly effective key person arrangements. Practitioners and families work together to ensure all of the necessary information about children's needs is shared. This enables practitioners to plan for children's routine, keeping it as close to their home routine as possible. This means children sleep and eat at times that meet their specific needs. Children, therefore, feel comfortable and secure, which means they are ready to learn and get the most out of what the nursery has to offer. As children get older they benefit from a basic routine for their day. Practitioners use pictures so children can read the routine for themselves. As a result, children know what to expect throughout the day and can become involved in planning their learning and play. Children develop strong attachments to their key person and other practitioners who work with them. Consequently, they feel emotionally secure, able to share their feelings and make their needs known. This means children rapidly develop their confidence and self-belief that supports them in coping with new situations and changes. Each key person works with children and their families to support them through changes in their lives.

Children rapidly develop independence skills during their time in the nursery. Practitioners provide a wealth of appropriate opportunities for children to practise and develop skills that enable them to do things for themselves. The youngest children learn to coordinate their bodies and negotiate steps in a safe and controlled fashion. This means they become confident and ably manage obstacles safely for themselves. Practitioners make the most of mealtimes to promote further independence. Children help to prepare foods and pour their own milk and water. Children show an enormous satisfaction in these tasks and this builds their confidence further. Learning to manage their clothing, the toilet and hand washing means children are self-reliant. Direct teaching by practitioners on the importance of good health and hygiene helps children to understand why they wash their hands and put on warm clothes and boots for outdoor play. Children enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle in the nursery. Children have a nutritionally balanced diet. Carefully planned menus take account of children's specific needs and children enjoy their meals. Excellent use of the garden for extended periods throughout the day in all kinds of weather enables children, who enjoy outdoor learning, to benefit significantly. Being outdoors each day ensures children have plenty of fresh air. Practitioners use the garden to teach children about safety. The various areas and associated equipment provide an ideal learning environment. Children using the logs are careful as they lift and move them into position under the watchful eye of a practitioner. They learn about how to move and balance things safely and where they encounter problems, they are supported in working out their own solutions.

Children's behaviour is generally very good. Practitioners are good role models and are usually quick to spot potential situations where children need guidance on how to behave well. Practitioners give clear guidance, they use group times to talk about children's feelings and how their behaviour affects others. This helps children to learn what is expected of them and to develop an understanding of others. Children enjoy making their own choices about their play and learning. They choose the toys and resources they need from a wide range that are stored where they can get to them easily, in labelled boxes and baskets so children know what is inside. Children behave responsibly, walking carefully to the dining room and helping to put away toys at tidy up time. Their responsible behaviour, confidence and independence, along with the support of practitioners, helps to prepare them for the next stage in their learning as they move into new base rooms or prepare for school.

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

An effective team of qualified practitioners manages Squirrels Day Nursery. The nursery meets all of the legal requirements for the Statutory framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. Robust recruitment procedures ensure practitioners have suitable skills, qualification, experience or a willingness to train to work with young children. Practitioners complete a thorough induction to ensure they understand the nursery policies and their roles and responsibilities. All practitioners have detailed knowledge of safeguarding procedures. This means they recognise concerns and respond quickly to promote children's safety and well-being. The nursery is well-maintained and practitioners are vigilant about children's safety. Security systems prevent unauthorised persons from gaining access and practitioners are careful to establish the identity of any visitors. A regular risk assessment of all areas used by children and their families promotes a safe environment for everyone. A significant number of practitioners have a paediatric first-aid qualification, in addition to their early years qualification. This means they are able to fully promote children's welfare.

The high proportion of qualified practitioners has a very positive impact on children's experiences. The nursery provides many training opportunities for practitioners. This means they keep up to date with current practice, have the opportunity to learn new methods of teaching and discover how to develop the learning environment. In addition to the short courses, practitioners are encouraged and supported to improve their qualification level. Managers and practitioners have been using their local authority quality award scheme as a way of reflecting on their practice and identifying aspects for improvement. As a result of the review, strategic plans are developed. This gives a clear focus and shared goals that everyone works hard to achieve. The monitoring of the practice within the setting is effective in highlighting aspects that could be improved. There is a system for tracking cohorts of children to ensure children with below average starting points are making good progress. This is generally very effective, although, there are occasional gaps between practice and management expectations.

Very effective partnerships with other professionals mean families have access to good quality support and advice. Practitioners are able to work with vulnerable families, sensitively establishing needs. Practitioners liaise and share progress information with the child's key person when children attend other settings, move to or from other setting. These effective arrangements provide continuity for children and this is important for their ongoing achievement. Relationships with parents are very strong. Parents are included in all aspects of the nursery. They are highly valued and practitioners consistently seek information and share details about children's progress and learning. This means most children are very well supported in making the best progress towards the early learning goals. Parents' views help to shape the plans for developing the nursery. Parents say they are completely happy because their child has settled in so well. They trust the practitioners. Some said they had look at and tried other nurseries but this was the one for their child. Several mention their child's key person. One said 'she is brilliant; she keeps me up to date so I know what my child has been doing and what we are working on'. This demonstrates the high regard and effective relationships between families and the nursery.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	404885
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	950275
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	84
Number of children on roll	177
Name of provider	Squirrels Day Nurseries Ltd
Date of previous inspection	21/04/2010
Telephone number	01992 411644

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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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