

Squirrels Day Nursery

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

Inspection date	01/04/2014
Previous inspection date	26/03/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Children attending are protected because the nursery has clear safeguarding and welfare policies and procedures, which are known by staff and implemented in their daily practice
- Staff implement appropriate procedures to meet the needs of young children. They make sure that parents are kept well informed with regard to how their personal care needs are met.

It is not yet good because

- Staff do not consistently use observations of children to determine the level of development they are currently achieving. This does not ensure that learning experiences are always fully matched to children's individual needs, in order to support and challenge them in making the best progress possible.
- Information provided to parents about children's learning is limited and at times insecure. This limits their ability to play an active role in their children's learning. This does not ensure that children's knowledge and skills are consolidated and extended effectively.
- Staff do not always maximise children's opportunities to develop their self-help skills or help them to increase their understanding about age-appropriate technology.

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 indoors and in nursery's outside play areas. she also spent time talking to children and staff.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of information, including children's assessment and planning records, evidence of suitability of staff members, complaint records and a range of other documentation, including the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of inspection.
- The inspector reviewed the nursery's hardcopy self-evaluation form provided at inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager of the nursery.

Inspector

Ann Cozzi

Full report

Information about the setting

Squirrels Day Nursery was registered in 2012 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated within a self-contained unit of Hatfield Community Free School in the area of Hatfield, Hertfordshire and is one of three nurseries managed by Squirrels Day Nurseries Limited. The nursery serves the local and wider area and is accessible to all children. There are enclosed areas available for outdoor play. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round with the exception of two weeks in August and two weeks over the Christmas period and sessions are from 8am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 74 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children and there are 74 children on roll. The nursery supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and a small number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The nursery employs 10 members of childcare staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that precise ongoing assessment is undertaken as an integral part of the learning and development process, in order to understand children's level of achievement; consistently use this information to shape and plan their individual learning experiences

- improve the regular two-way flow of information with parents to ensure that children's continuity of learning is effectively supported.

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

- maximise children's opportunities to access age-appropriate information and communication technology. For example, ensure that batteries are consistently replaced when needed, in toys provided for young children

- strengthen children's opportunities to develop independence skills, for instance, encouraging them to put on their own coats and shoes before going out to play.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. They ensure that children's progress checks at age two are completed in consultation with parents. This helps staff to effectively identify any gaps in learning and seek appropriate support for children. However, there is a weakness with regard to ensuring that ongoing observations of all children are consistently assessed. As a consequence, staff are not able to always recognise gaps in children's learning or areas where they would benefit from further challenge. This does not fully ensure that planning provides all children with persistent challenge to make certain they are able to make the best progress possible.

Very young children show lots of interest in their surroundings and are eager to explore. This is, on the whole, supported well by staff who organise resources to ensure they are easily accessible. As a result, they are encouraged to have a go at activities, choosing their own ways of doing things. For instance, with staff nearby for support, they successfully negotiate the steps of a slide, pulling themselves to standing, they step sideways to reach the top. However, young children's access to working battery operated toys is restricted because staff do not regularly check to ensure that batteries are replaced when needed. This does not fully support children to consistently build their skills and understanding of age-appropriate information and communication technology. Staff support children's developing communication and language by speaking clearly and using intonation in their voice. This sparks their interest and helps to teach listening and attention skills. Babies respond by experimenting with sound and using gestures to make their meaning known and more able children actively take part in a wide range of interesting conversations. Overall, staff teach children how to develop self-help skills. For example, young children are encouraged to feed themselves and older children enjoy making choices as they develop physical skills, such as learning how to use a spoon to serve their own food. However, on occasion, staff do not make the best use of all opportunities to extend opportunities in this area. For instance, they do not encourage children to put on their own coats and shoes in preparation for outdoor play. Staff teach children about the natural world around them, including living things and the changing seasons. For instance, older children have lots of fun hunting for bugs. This stimulating activity helps them to become successfully engaged and interested in learning. Children confidently share their thoughts and feelings and make valued contributions as they ask questions about what they can see. For instance, excitedly talk to their peers and staff about spiders and comment about the grass, which they notice has grown. Staff make good use of children's interest to teach them mathematical skills, for example, encouraging them to count or estimate how many bugs they have collected so far.

Staff form positive partnerships with parents. They make sure important information about children's starting points is sought prior to placement. This helps them to ensure that initial planning meets their individual needs. Parents are invited to view their child's learning records alongside key persons, every half term. In addition, staff spend time communicating with parents each day to exchange information about children's

achievements both at home and in the setting. However, the weakness with regard to children's assessments means that, at times, information shared by staff with parents is not always secure. Staff give parents ideas about how they can support their child's development at home. As a result, children make sound progress and gain sufficient skills to support their next stage of learning, such as moving onto school.

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

The nursery staff provide a warm and friendly environment, which supports children to feel confident and safe in their care. The settling-in procedure means that they are able to visit the nursery with their parents before they start. This gives them the chance to become familiar with the environment and provides key person's with the opportunity to discuss children's personal needs with parents. This exchange of information is used to help staff settle children into nursery and is maintained throughout placement. As a result, care is effectively tailored to suit each child's individual needs. Children clearly build strong attachments with staff in the nursery, which shows that their well-being and independence are adequately promoted.

Staff in the nursery provide children with clear and consistent guidance, which is age-appropriate. They give sensitive reminders to children along with clear explanations, which helps to nurture their understanding about what acceptable behaviour is. For example, more able children know that sometimes they must wait for their turn. Overall, children are enabled to help themselves to a wide selection of resources. However, the weakness in assessment and planning means that, on occasion, resources are not consistently used to best effect. As a consequence, children are, at times, less well challenged. In the main, children's independence is promoted, helping them to develop confidence and self-esteem. For instance, they are encouraged to develop some self-care skills, such as serving their own food at mealtimes. This contributes towards building children's confidence, helping them to prepare for the move to school.

Children show their awareness with regard to staying safe. For example, they know that if toys are left lying around, they 'might trip over' and hurt themselves. On the whole, children effectively manage their own personal needs. For instance, more able children are able to take themselves to the toilet independently and wash their own hands without prompting. Their growing understanding of established hygiene practice, is illustrated as they tell adults, 'we would get germs and nasty's if we don't wash our hands'. Children are provided with a range of healthy options at mealtimes, for example, on the day of inspection, they enjoyed fresh vegetables. Staff provide clear messages to children, in order to increase their understanding of the importance of a healthy diet. For example, they teach children about healthy foods, providing an interesting range of activities and lively conversations to consolidate learning. Staff are attentive to the needs of children wearing nappies and they ensure that appropriate hygiene procedures are implemented in their practice. For example, children are checked on a regular basis and staff use protective gloves and aprons when changing them. As a result, children's well-being is protected because they remain clean and comfortable. Parents are provided with information about their child's care when they collect them each day. For instance, how many times nappies have been changed, if creams provided by them have been applied

and what food their child has eaten. A jug of fresh water is provided in the older children's room, which enables them to help themselves to drinks at any time. In the baby room, staff ensure that children receive regular drinks throughout the day. Opportunities for outdoor play further supports children's health and well-being. This is because they have regular chances to take part in vigorous play as they run around and learn how to climb and balance on resources.

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

There are robust arrangements in place for safeguarding children. This is reflected in the nursery's clear policy and procedure, which is shared with parents. All staff working in the nursery have received safeguarding training. This ensures that they maintain a sound understanding of the process to follow if they have concerns about any child in their care. There are sound recruitment procedures in place to ensure that all staff working with children are subject to appropriate checks. This means that parents are reassured that their child is looked after by adults who are suitable to do so. There are a wide range of policies and procedures in place, which are shared with all parents and implemented in practice. For example, the manager investigates and responds appropriately to any complaints received from parents. Parents providing medication are required to give their written consent, which ensures that children's well-being is consistently protected. Safety measures implemented in the nursery are informed by clear risk assessments. For example, the provider has installed high internal door handles and an entry system, which protects children's security. Staff carry out regular safety checks, which gives them the opportunity to remove or minimise any identified risks before children arrive. They are deployed well throughout the nursery, which ensures that children are appropriately supervised. This supports children's enjoyment at nursery because it means that they are able to play in a safe and secure environment.

All of the staff team hold appropriate early years qualifications, which helps them to support children's sound progress towards the early learning goals. The manager and director implement adequate monitoring systems to evaluate staff practice. For instance, there is a formal appraisal system in place, which is informed by ongoing observations of staff. This helps them to check on individual performance and contributes towards determining the training needs of the team. This has had a positive impact on the communication and language skills of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. Systems in place for monitoring the assessment and planning of children's learning are adequate. This means that the manager has a reasonable view in regard to the quality of teaching in the nursery and how it has an impact upon children's progress. The nursery has made improvements since the last inspection, for example, they have successfully implemented the recommendations raised. As a result, children's imaginative play experiences have been enhanced through the provision of more resources. The nursery have also increased parents' opportunities to engage in children's learning by providing information in advance about all planned themes and activities. The manager and staff regularly seeking a wide range of opinions about the nursery, including those of other professionals. In addition, the nursery has completed a local authority quality award, which shows the provider's

commitment to drive improvement within the nursery.

Sound partnerships with parents are in place. Parents are provided with regular newsletters and there are a number of information boards in the nursery. This provides them with a variety of information, including nursery topics and forthcoming events. This ensures that parents know what subjects are being covered by staff and their children. Parents spoken to during the inspection provided positive feedback about the manger and her staff. They commented that their children 'love it' in nursery and that they are 'happy' with the service provided. Parents think that staff are 'really nice' and they would be confident to approach them with any concerns. Parents also said that their children 'get on well with staff'. Staff work closely in partnership with other agencies to effectively support children's continuity of care and learning.

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	EY450036
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	959369
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	74
Name of provider	Squirrels Day Nurseries Ltd
Date of previous inspection	26/03/2013
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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