

# Squirrels Day Nursery

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



## Inspection date

27 April 2015

Previous inspection date

1 April 2014

	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Good	2
The setting <b>meets legal requirements for early years settings</b>			

## Summary of key findings for parents

### This provision is good

- The inspirational manager has made significant improvements since the last inspection, to drive the nursery forward. She reflects critically on all areas of practice and is fully committed to achieving the highest possible outcomes for children.
- Well-qualified staff demonstrate a consistently good quality of teaching as they encourage children to become keen learners. They identify and support children's preferred learning styles and individual interests. For example, they provide tools to active learners during water play and demonstrate their individual uses, such as how a piece of hose can transport water.
- Staff effectively support children as they get ready to move on to school. They make full use of the onsite facilities, as older children attend weekly assemblies and eat lunch in the dining hall to develop their expected social skills. Staff implement their recent training on linking sounds and letters to focus on, and support, phonic work, in readiness for more structured literacy.
- Partnerships with parents are well-established, as staff use effective strategies to engage their involvement in children's learning. Experiences to share at home include activity cards and soft-toy adventure bags. Parents express how happy they are with the progress their children make, and many comment on their child's reluctance to leave at the end of each session.

### It is not yet outstanding because:

- The ongoing, astute and targeted professional development programme has not, as yet, developed staff's consistently good quality of teaching to a level of outstanding.
- Children are not always able to use a wide range of resources to explore with and extend their learning during adult-led activities.

## What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to implement and evaluate identified training needs to maintain consistency between all staff and enhance the quality of teaching to an outstanding level
- extend opportunities for children to use a wider range of resources to explore with, during adult-led activities, to encourage further, active involvement and extend their learning.

### Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's activities in both rooms, all outdoor areas and during the snack and lunchtime routines. She talked to children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager and held discussions with the provider, manager and some other members of staff.
- The inspector sampled the nursery documentation, including the self-evaluation form, policies, children's learning journals and staff files. She also viewed tracking data on a software system used.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents through discussions on the day.
- The inspector saw evidence of the qualifications and suitability of all persons working on the premises, and other documentation in relation to the safeguarding and welfare requirements.

### Inspector

Rachel Pepper

## Inspection findings

### **How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good**

Staff have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and implement interesting and challenging experiences to meet the needs of all children. Following a topic of life cycles, children care for and observe live chicks in an incubator. Staff develop children's understanding as they discuss the stages of growth during small-group time. They use probing questions to encourage children to think and recall, and allow them time to respond. Staff refer to key words and utilise the support of a Polish speaking volunteer to include all children. However, staff do not always make readily available a wide range of resources during planned activities, to encourage children to become more actively involved. Staff make purposeful observations and use these effectively to plan children's next steps in learning. They devise weekly plans and complete precise assessments to support children's good progress and rapidly close any identified gaps in their learning.

### **The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children is good**

Children settle quickly and have developed affectionate relationships with their key person. Furthermore, children move between the rooms with ease as staff use their detailed knowledge of each child to support them well. As a result, children gain confidence and become self-assured in their new surroundings. Children show awareness of the daily routines and eagerly anticipate 'story time' and 'wake-and-shake' sessions as they willingly help at tidy-up time. They develop independence as staff introduce a 'self-help skill of the week' and request parental support. For example, children attempt to manage smaller zips and fastenings on their coats, when at home and before they play outside. Children learn about managing their personal safety and the impact of their actions on others. They spend a large part of their day outdoors, promoting their good health. Children enjoy balancing on the different levels and use a selection of hoops and pedal bikes as they benefit from daily use of the school playground.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision is good**

Safeguarding measures are of high priority, as the manager follows a rigorous recruitment process for staff and ensures that all visitors adhere to strict procedures. Through regular staff supervisions, learning walks and effective self-evaluation, she highlights her priorities for improvement. The manager identifies the individual training needs of staff and can evaluate the impact that this has on practice. She aims to maintain and develop their consistently good quality of teaching to a level of outstanding. The manager uses a sophisticated software system to monitor children's learning. This enables her to track the progress of both individuals and different groups of children. Areas for future, targeted activities are clearly identified, yet the manager endeavours to adapt its precision further, highlighting her high standards. The manager uses innovative strategies, such as a software application, to engage the involvement of all the other settings that children attend. This results in a cohesive approach to their learning and consistency for each child, and is another example of her skilful practice.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	EY450036
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	1010987
<b>Type of provision</b>	Full-time provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 17
<b>Total number of places</b>	50
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	105
<b>Name of provider</b>	Squirrels Day Nurseries Ltd
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 April 2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	07713485193

Squirrels Day Nursery was registered in 2012 and is located in Hatfield. The nursery employs 10 members of full-time childcare staff. Nine staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above, including two with a qualification at level 6. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, all year round, with the exception of bank holidays, two weeks in August and two weeks over Christmas. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. 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 and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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