

Squirrels Pre-School

Highwoods Surgery, Highwoods Square, Highwoods, COLCHESTER, CO4 9SR



Inspection date

30 April 2015

Previous inspection date

23 June 2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Outstanding	1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Outstanding	1
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- Staff have a superb knowledge of how children learn. They provide rich, imaginative and stimulating experiences for children. This sparks children's curiosity and enthusiasm to learn. As a result, children make excellent progress in their development.
- Staff have high expectations of children and themselves. They provide a superbly-resourced environment that allows children to become independent learners. Staff allow children to make their own choices in play, which allows them to flourish in all aspects of their development.
- Staff provide an exceptionally strong, loving base for children so they feel secure, happy and accepted. Children exude confidence in their play and build special, trusting and positive relationships with their key person, staff and each other.
- Staff provide a wealth of support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They complete robust support plans that include all those involved in the children's learning. As a result, children make superb progress.
- Children are safeguarded excellently. Staff carry out robust and thorough checks of the environment and individual activities, to ensure that children's safety remains the highest priority. They also have a superb knowledge of the action to take if they have concerns about a child.
- Staff form exceptional partnerships with parents. Parents are involved in every aspect of their children's learning; they contribute observations, photographs and art work from home. Consequently, children benefit from the high level of consistency in their learning between home and pre-school.
- The management and staff are highly qualified. They use their superb skills and knowledge to implement improvement plans to an exceptionally high standard. Consequently, children's needs are exceptionally well met through sharply focused evaluation of staff's practice.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- continue to build on staff's skills and interests in order to enhance children's experiences at the nursery even further.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the pre-school room and the outside play space.
- The inspector spoke to members of staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection and held a meeting with the managers.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with one of the managers.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and the children's centre support worker spoken to on the day of the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's records, planning documentation, evidence of the suitability of staff working in the provision and a range of other documentation, including policies and procedures.

Inspector

Daniella Tyler

Inspection findings

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

Staff get to know children incredibly well and therefore, make accurate, sharply focussed assessments of their capabilities. They plan superb activities around children's interests that successfully engage children in an excellent range of learning opportunities. Staff plan topics, such as pirates, which the children have shown interest in. Children develop excellent physical skills as they balance on tyres, and pretend to walk the plank out of a wooden boat. They develop high levels of communication and problem solving skills. Children work together and use their imagination to see where the staff have buried the pirate's treasure of sequins and jewels. Children are highly confident to seek staff out and engage them in play activities. Staff are highly skilled in supporting children's growing understanding of the world around them. Children are actively engaged as they pour different liquids onto baking soda and discuss what might happen and why. They use advanced words for their age, such as 'melting' and 'crumbly'.

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

Children are provided with an excellent range of opportunities to keep healthy and well. They take part in physical education lessons, engage in running and jumping games in the garden and go on regular walks in the local community. Children engage excitedly, with their ideas, when they are asked what other foods they would like to have for snack. Consequently, they feel valued and respected by staff. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. They implement a wealth of strategies to support children in managing their own behaviour and conflicts with other children. Picture cards of cars and bikes that the children can choose, enable them to learn patience and turn taking as they wait their turn for their chosen toy. Children use excellent manners, such as, 'Excuse me please?' Consequently, children develop high levels of social skills which will benefit them greatly when moving to school. Staff provide an excellent range of resources, activities and events that support children to be tolerant and celebrate each other's differences.

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

The management monitor the learning opportunities provided and children's progress exceptionally well. This ensures that any aspects of practice are strengthened swiftly and gaps in progress are closing rapidly. The management recently identified that mathematics could be further enhanced. They conducted training to support staff in thinking more critically about how mathematics can be implemented through their daily interactions. The management form highly successful partnerships with other organisations, such as children's centres. Support workers comment that staff are highly motivated in ensuring that children receive all the support they need. The management have high expectations of staff. They value staff's qualifications and support them through high quality supervision. Staff are given individual roles, such as responsibility for health and safety, and equality. This could be enhanced further, by using staff's particular interests and hobbies to build on the already first-rate educational programmes children experience.

Setting details

Unique reference number	203962
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	865225
Type of provision	Full-time provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	48
Name of provider	St John's & Highwoods Community Association
Date of previous inspection	23 June 2009
Telephone number	01206 853111

Squirrels Pre-School was registered in 2001. It employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 3 to 6, including one with Early Years Professional status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am to 11.45pm and 12.45pm to 3.15pm with a lunch club from 11.45am to 12.45pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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