

Inspection of Squirrels Pre-School CIO

Hales Drive, CANTERBURY, Kent CT2 7AB

Inspection date: 27 November 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at pre-school. They know the routines and settle quickly to their learning and play. When they arrive for the start of a session, they are warmly greeted by staff. They choose from a range of interesting activities both indoors and outside. The pre-school has a positive and welcoming atmosphere. Staff know the children well. The key-person system is embedded and children form secure attachments with staff. Staff talk confidently about children's interests and use their observations well to decide what children need to learn next. Overall, children behave well. They are confident and use good manners.

Staff place a strong emphasis on promoting children's independence and self-care skills. For instance, they patiently support children to put on their coats, and children learn to manage buttons and zips independently. Children are keen to take on small tasks, such as tidying, sweeping and gathering equipment, and they persist to complete them.

Children have plenty of fun playing in the well-equipped garden. They show good levels of concentration as they problem-solve. For example, they work out how to transfer water by using squeezable pipettes. Children enjoy taking part in physical activities, such as music and movement. They are excited to join in with their favourite action songs and take on new physical challenges, such as hopping on one leg.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Children have many opportunities to play outdoors and to be physically active. They are learning to balance and negotiate large equipment and have a growing awareness of their own abilities. Children take part in sensory activities in the garden. For example, they become excited as they search for letters in the water tray and swirl bubbly water around to make patterns.
- Staff use children's individual interests to precisely plan for more experiences in their play. They swiftly identify potential gaps in children's learning to provide additional support if required. Staff use the changing interests and likes of the children to precisely plan for more experiences in their play.
- Children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to make marks and develop confidence in writing. For instance, they learn to write letters in a large tray of sand and have a go at drawing different patterns with chalk outside. However, on some occasions staff do not enable children to develop their own creative ideas fully in adult-led activities.
- The manager and staff seek parents' views when evaluating the setting and make effective improvements that enhance children's experiences. Parents receive regular information about their children's development and progress.

Staff support parents to continue their children's learning at home. For example, they encourage parents to borrow books from a lending library so they can engage their children in reading activities at home.

- Staff effectively improve children's mathematical skills throughout their experiences. For instance, they encourage children's counting skills as well as inspiring children to explore and compare size, identifying bigger, smaller, shorter and longer. Staff place a strong focus on developing children's communication and language skills. For instance, they constantly talk to the children and asks them questions to encourage them to respond. Staff join in children's play and use a variety of words, which they repeat to build on children's understanding and speaking skills. Staff also use pictorial methods to help children make choices and understand routines.
- The manager and staff work well together and are a strong team. Training opportunities are generally used effectively to improve staff knowledge and skills, to maintain good-quality provision. For instance, staff have attended training on how to support children effectively to develop their communication and language skills. The manager works in close partnership with the host school, which helps to offer children a seamless transition to school. The monitoring of staff performance is not fully effective to identify clearly how all individual staff members can raise the quality of their teaching to the highest level. Additional funding is used well to support children in their learning and development.
- Children develop a good understanding of diversity. For example, they enjoy exploring the environment which includes positive cultural images and dual-language text, including books and role-play resources.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager ensures staff keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date. Staff have a good knowledge of the signs and symptoms which may indicate that children are at risk of harm. They have a secure understanding of wider safeguarding issues. They are confident with the procedures to follow if they have a concern about a child in their care. Staff know how to identify and minimise risks. They are well deployed and vigilant when supervising children. They set clear rules and boundaries that help children to keep themselves and others safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- consider how to promote children's creativity further, in particular during art and craft activities
- strengthen the individual support and coaching for all staff, to improve their

skills and the quality of teaching to the highest level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY549510
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10130898
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	22
Number of children on roll	35
Name of registered person	Squirrels Pre-School CIO
Registered person unique reference number	RP549509
Telephone number	01227766537
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Squirrels Pre-School CIO re-registered in 2017. The pre-school is open from 9am to 3pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and from 9am to midday on Thursday, during term time only. It receives funding to provide free early education to children age three and four years. It is also in receipt of pupil premium funding. There are seven members of staff and six of these have early years qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kimberley Luckham

Inspection activities

- The manager showed the inspector around the setting and discussed the aims of the pre-school.
- The inspector talked to staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection and took into account parents' views of the pre-school.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector reviewed a variety of documents, including first-aid certificates, policies and records.
- The inspector discussed leadership and management with the manager and provided feedback regarding the inspection.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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