

Inspection of Squirrels Day Nurseries (Hemel) Ltd

Jupiter Community Free School, Jupiter Drive, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire
HP2 5NT

Inspection date: 5 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enjoy a wide variety of activities in this bright, welcoming nursery. Staff develop secure relationships with children, allowing children to feel safe in the nursery. Staff use children's interests to plan activities. Younger children explore the sensory tray. They crawl in it, and use their bare feet to explore the textures, crunching the flakes and watching to see what happens next. This helps children to become inquisitive learners.

Children receive a lot of praise and encouragement from staff as they play, such as when children climb up the ladders to the climbing frame. Staff encourage children to try independently. As their confidence builds, staff members gradually offer less support. Children enjoy exploring the different ways to climb. They delight as they make their way to the slide at the top. These achievements build on children's self-esteem.

Children seek each other out to share experiences. Younger children play alongside their peers. They watch intently as their friends play with toys, copying and following their lead. Older children work together to hunt for leaves, ready for leaf printing. They talk together about how their leaves look and try to find the biggest ones. This helps develop children's social skills and ability to work together.

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

- Staff are knowledgeable about their children. They work together as a team to create activities which are available for children to access. Older children develop skills needed for school. They learn how to put on their coats independently and use knives and forks at lunchtime. In the Explorers' room, staff create activities to meet the wide age range of children. Some staff members use their knowledge of babies' interests to involve them in play. However, this is not consistent and, therefore, babies sometimes become disengaged and move quickly on to other activities.
- An effective transition plan is in place for those children going to school. Key persons liaise with teachers to share information about children's development. They welcome teachers into the nursery to meet the children. Staff spend time talking to children about their recent visits to school. They encourage children to talk about the things they did. This helps children to become excited about the next stage in their learning.
- Staff are knowledgeable about how best to use additional funding to support children's development. During the COVID-19 pandemic, funding was used to support children with the next steps in their learning while at home. Children's key persons developed activity packs and completed 'doorstep drop-offs' to children. This aided parents with supporting their child's development at home.

- On the whole, children behave well. Staff model how to share toys for younger children. They explain how sharing is kind. Children are aware of the expectation of their behaviour while in the nursery. In the Investigators' room, staff remind children of the rules of the nursery. There are times when children mix in the garden area. During this time, plans are not shared between staff to ensure that, where needed, behaviour management is consistent. This means that children do not always know what is expected of them.
- Staff support children to develop knowledge of healthy lifestyles. Older children cut vegetables independently. They talk with staff about the different vegetables and where they come from. At snack time, children enjoy a range of healthy fruit. Where children have packed lunches, staff support parents to provide healthy options.
- The manager has greatly improved communication with parents. Parents comment on now feeling part of their child's learning journey. Parents find the staff team welcoming and approachable. They state that their children make good progress in their learning.
- Staff receive good support from the management team. New staff buddy up with experienced staff members. This offers support and encouragement daily. The manager has a clear plan in place to continue the development of the nursery. She understands her role in the journey they are on and how she will continue to support staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff keep children safe. Staff are knowledgeable of the signs and symptoms of abuse and know how to refer any concerns they might have about children's welfare or safety. Wider issues in society such as the 'Prevent' duty guidance and county lines are known by staff. They are confident on how to report on this when required. Staff attend training to keep their knowledge updated. Robust recruitment procedures are in place to ensure the suitability of all staff working with the children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- guide staff working with babies to enhance their knowledge of how babies learn to improve their interactions and engage babies in purposeful learning opportunities
- support staff to provide a more consistent approach to behaviour management so that children understand the rules and know what is expected of them.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY492557
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10233991
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	67
Name of registered person	Squirrels Day Nurseries (Hemel) Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP903406
Telephone number	01442 263921
Date of previous inspection	8 September 2016

Information about this early years setting

Squirrels Day Nurseries (Hemel) Ltd registered in 2015. The nursery employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens all year round from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, except for bank holidays and the last two weeks in August. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lisa Smith

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Staff spoke with the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection and she took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out joint observations of group activities.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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