

Inspection of Squirrels Nursery

The Acorn Centre, 3 The Kestrels, Eagle Avenue, Waterlooville PO8 9GX

Inspection date: 24 January 2023

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	Outstanding
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff greet the children warmly, and they separate from their parents with ease. They play with their friends and explore the range of available activities. Children feel safe and at home. They are confident and independent in their play. Staff have high expectations for children, and behaviour is good.

All children have access to the outdoor area at all times. They come and go freely, developing their independence and choices. For instance, children play happily with the mud outside and chase the bubbles from the bubble machine. Children share resources with their friends. For example, during a scoop and ball game, children play together cooperatively. They take turns playing with the different balls. Children show perseverance as they try to catch the ball in their scoop as it flies through the air. This helps to develop their physical skills.

Children laugh in excitement as staff build anticipation in a language activity. Staff and children call out 'splat' as the small flour mounds fall down. The flour splatters everywhere, and the children enjoy this fun activity. This activity also helps to build children's mathematical language, as they talk about 'big' and 'little'. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are making good progress from their starting points.

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

- Overall, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Children make good progress in their development. For example, staff plan activities to support babies' personal, social and emotional development. As a result, babies receive plenty of cuddles. They explore a range of resources appropriate to their age. However, there are times during the day when babies take part in activities with a larger group of older children. At these times, babies do not consistently enjoy the same good level of focused attention to support their learning.
- The management team is highly motivated. The team has recognised that since the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a waiting list for speech and language referrals. Parents have been offered an alternative voluntary programme. However, many are unable to attend due to work commitments. As a solution, the management team is proposing to send two staff members on the programme. Staff will bring the training back to the setting and share this with the parents and children. In addition, the nursery is involved with the 'warm hub' scheme. This allows local families to come into the community centre during the cold weather. Children take part in stay-and-play activities. The management team has recognised the importance of this scheme, and it is continued during warmer periods.
- Staff have developed a curriculum that follows children's interests and builds on

what they already know and can do. Children with SEND are particularly well supported. Staff seek advice from external agencies when children need additional help with their learning.

- Staff promote children's communication and language very well. Regular singing and storytelling sessions take place. In addition, key persons organise small, focused groups. This supports individual children's language development. It helps to ensure that children have the opportunity to improve their communication skills.
- Parents comment that the staff are 'brilliant' and support their children well. They report that they receive information about how their children are progressing at the nursery. Parents say that they get ideas for activities to do at home, to help develop their children's skills further.
- Partnership working is strong. The management team works with local schools, childminders and external agencies. As a result, children receive the support they need at the right time.
- Staff work with children to help them develop healthy lifestyles. Staff remind children why they need to wash their hands. They encourage children to eat their savoury food first from their lunch boxes. Staff remind children to blow their noses. For instance, tissue stations around the nursery help to support children's independence. Toileting routines are relaxed, and staff spend time interacting with the children. Staff respond to the children's questions and show an interest in what they say.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Robust recruitment procedures help to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. The management team and staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding requirements. All staff attend training to ensure their practice remains current. As a result, they know the procedures to follow to help keep children safe. Safeguarding is on the agenda at team meetings. All staff know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about the practice of a colleague. Staff receive paediatric first-aid training. This helps to ensure they take appropriate action in the event of an accident. The building and garden are secure, to prevent anyone accessing the nursery.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff working with the youngest children to plan more precisely for babies at times when they are involved with a larger group.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY471265
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10275405
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 8
Total number of places	68
Number of children on roll	77
Name of registered person	Squirrels Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP910789
Telephone number	02392 263 270
Date of previous inspection	16 February 2018

Information about this early years setting

Squirrels Nursery registered in 2003. The setting provides care in an all-age nursery and dedicated pre-school in a community building in Waterlooville, Hampshire. The setting opens on Monday to Friday, from 7am to 6pm, and on Saturday, from 8am to 4pm, throughout the year. The setting also provides out-of-school care for older children and during the school holidays. The setting receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are 14 staff, 12 of whom hold childcare qualifications at level 3, and a further two staff are working towards their level 3 award.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Lindsay Osman

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.
- We carried out this inspection as a result of a risk assessment, following information we received about the provider.
- The deputy managers and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Staff spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to the nominated individual and the manager about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a communication and language activity with the manager.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- 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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