

Inspection of Squirrels Children Day Nursery, Middleton

Former Baptist Church, Green Street, Middleton, Manchester M24 2HU

Inspection date: 3 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
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The quality of education	Inadequate
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Behaviour and attitudes	Inadequate
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Personal development	Inadequate
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Leadership and management	Inadequate
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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 inadequate

Leaders fail to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children to play and learn in. The nursery is chaotic and disorganised. Leaders do not deploy staff effectively and child supervision is poor. For example, staff fail to notice children climbing onto and over furniture. They are not aware of when younger children put choking hazards into their mouths. The inspector has to intervene on several occasions to maintain children's safety. Children do not display positive attitudes towards their learning. Activities are mundane and do not gain children's interest. Staff working with younger children expect them to have the knowledge of shapes and numbers beyond 10. Older children become bored as activities do not meet their learning needs. Children wander around looking for stimulation. This results in poor behaviour. Staff do not provide children with clear expectations about their behaviour or support them to regulate their emotions. This leads to frustrated behaviour, including physical altercations.

The key-person system is extremely poor. Staff lack the knowledge of how to support the emotional well-being of younger children. The nursery is filled with high levels of crying. Children do not settle and do not form secure bonds with staff. Some parents are unaware of who their children's key person is. They report that their children find it hard to settle. Children do not gain the necessary skills in readiness for school. For example, they do not learn about taking turns and show poor levels of concentration. Babies are under stimulated. They sit with staff for prolonged periods of time without any clear intention to their learning. Staff lack the knowledge and skills of how to meet the learning needs of babies. The lack of understanding from leaders means that children do not receive the quality care and learning experiences that they should.

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

- The manager exhibits poor leadership skills. She does not demonstrate the capacity to bring about the required change. Self-evaluation is ineffective and does not include the views of staff, parents and children. Poor oversight of this nursery results in breaches of legal requirements that have a significant impact on the safety and well-being of children.
- The manager has a poor understanding of child development. She has not introduced a well-sequenced curriculum and has limited understanding of children's interests and fascinations. She is unable to explain the intent of the curriculum and does not support staff in understanding what she wants them to teach children. This means that children are at a disadvantage. Activities lack purpose and do not help children to make progress. Gaps in learning do not close and those children who are at risk of falling behind do not get the support that they need.

- The support in place for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is poor. The manager is unaware of which children need additional help. Some children attend the setting with identified needs and the manager fails to act upon this. The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator is trying her best to remedy these shortfalls, but not enough has been done. This means that children with SEND do not get the support that they need.
- Staff morale is low. There have been significant changes to the leadership team. Leaders fail to provide coaching and guidance to staff. No supervision arrangements are in place for staff. This means that staff do not get the relevant training and support to improve their practice.
- Staff are inconsistent in providing children with clear messages about their behaviour. Staff are not equipped with the skills to teach children how to manage their emotions or behaviour and to understand what is expected of them. This means children do not learn boundaries or rules and persistently demonstrate poor self-control and a lack of respect for others.
- Staff follow hygiene practices and teach children about the importance of washing their hands before eating. However, the manager has not ensured that there are sufficient toilets for older children. Too many toilets do not work. This results in older children waiting long periods of time to use the toilet. Their behaviour deteriorates as they become bored and restless.
- The policy and procedures for administering medication to children are ineffective. Leaders fail to obtain the relevant information from parents about children's medication needs. Staff do not keep an accurate record when medication is given to a child nor do they seek parental consent for administering medication. Additionally, leaders are unaware if medication for children has been prescribed by a doctor. This lack of oversight places children's health at risk.
- Partnership working is weak. Links with external professionals are poor and parents are unaware of what is happening at the nursery. Staff do not inform them of their children's learning and care. The manager has not established respectful parental partnerships. This results in a lack of trust from some parents.
- Leaders fail to deploy staff effectively. For example, some staff working with younger children are preoccupied changing nappies. They fail to notice younger children hiding under furniture who have become stuck. Child supervision is weak and staff are not always aware of when children are in danger, such as when they push each other near the stairs. These poor standards in practice mean that children's safety is compromised.
- Care practices are poor. Significant weaknesses in the key-person system mean that children's emotional well-being is not met. Children do not settle and are upset. The manager fails to ensure that staff understand the role of the key-person. She does not inform some parents of who their children's key person is. This poor knowledge of how to best support children to settle at the nursery causes children unnecessary stress.
- Children enjoy spending time outdoors. They show effective coordination and balance skills while using play equipment. They kick balls and ride scooters.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The designated safeguarding lead has a poor understanding of child protection. She is unaware of safeguarding issues such as matters that may affect those who are vulnerable. Additionally, there are gaps in her understanding of the referral procedure. This lack of understanding from the safeguarding lead has an impact on staff's knowledge of how to keep children safe. Too many staff are unaware of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. Some are unaware of the steps to follow should they be concerned about the conduct of a colleague. Staff are trained in first aid and understand how to deal with accidents and injuries. That said, the administration of medication is poor.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

	Due date
ensure that staff and leaders are aware of local safeguarding procedures and understand safeguarding issues	07/04/2023
ensure that staff receive supervision, guidance and coaching sessions to improve their practice	07/04/2023
ensure that the key-person system meets the emotional well-being of children	07/04/2023
ensure that staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children including through effective deployment of staff and supervision of children	07/04/2023

ensure the policy and procedures for administering medication include systems for obtaining information about a child's needs and checking that prescription medicines have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist	07/04/2023
ensure that written permission is obtained from parents and that a written record is kept each time medication is administered to children	07/04/2023
ensure that staff provide children with clear expectations about their behaviour	07/04/2023
ensure that there are an adequate number of working toilets	07/04/2023
ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the support that they need	07/04/2023
make information available to parents regarding staffing in the setting and the name of their child's key person.	07/04/2023

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
ensure that children are provided with an ambitious curriculum, which builds on what they already know and can do.	28/04/2023

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY499184
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10276637
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	1 to 4
Total number of places	93
Number of children on roll	56
Name of registered person	Squirrels Middleton Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP900827
Telephone number	01616435006
Date of previous inspection	25 July 2017

Information about this early years setting

Squirrels Children Day Nursery, Middleton re-registered in 2016. The nursery opens from 7.30am until 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round with the exception of bank holidays and one week at Christmas. The nursery employs 14 members of staff. Of these, 12 hold an early years qualification at level 2 and above. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Luke Heaney

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 inspector observed the interactions between staff and children throughout the day and evaluated the impact these had on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including evidence of the suitability and training of staff.
- The inspector obtained the views of parents, staff and children through discussions.

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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