

# Inspection of Squirrels Day Nursery

Hatfield Community Free School, Briars Lane, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 8ES

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Inspection date: 27 March 2023

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| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Outstanding</b> |
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| The quality of education                     | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Behaviour and attitudes                      | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Personal development                         | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Leadership and management                    | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Outstanding        |

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is outstanding**

Children relish their time in this superb learning environment. They are extremely happy and exude self-esteem and confidence. They are excited and eager to show visitors what they are doing. For example, older children draw pictures and are eager to share what they have drawn. Children are highly motivated to learn, and even the youngest children are engaged in the exciting and stimulating activities. Children learn about healthy foods and the impact on their bodies. Babies are encouraged to smell, taste and name different fruits during snack times. Older children talk about the benefits of eating healthily, during sociable mealtimes. Children are extremely independent. Babies use spoons to scoop their snack and attempt to peel their own oranges. Older children put on their own shoes and coats before going into the garden.

Babies are very settled, confident and at ease. They all have exceptional relationships with the staff in their room and staff respond sensitively to their needs. Staff ensure that the environment is stimulating for all ages. Non-walking babies relish purposeful and exciting activities in the garden area. For example, staff members encourage them to use their large muscles to search for items in the sand. All children benefit from excellent opportunities to engage in physical activities, indoors and outdoors.

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

- Communication and language is taught exceptionally well to children of all ages. Staff talk to babies as they explore wildflowers in water. They use repetition of words as children use a potato masher to mash the flour and water in the mud kitchen, saying, 'Mash, mash, mash.' Staff use Makaton and British Sign Language to aid children's communication skills. Older children are eager to ask questions to clarify their thoughts, and staff enthusiastically support their language development by introducing them to new words. For example, during an activity where children make their own scented dough, staff explain to children that, 'Using your hands to feel and your nose to smell means that you are using your senses.' Children use more complex words spontaneously in play as they tell staff they are being 'independent'.
- Staff ensure that the opinions and wishes of all children are incorporated into their learning. For example, older children talk about whether people in their family like ketchup. Staff encourage children to express their ideas together, talking about their families and explaining to them that they are all different and that this is a positive thing. As a result, children respect each other.
- Children's behaviour is expertly managed in a calm and sensitive manner. Staff get down to the child's level and quietly discuss their feelings and how their actions affect others. They use a sand timer to encourage children to take turns.

Children often suggest using it when they are waiting for their turn. Staff reward positive behaviour with lots of praise and encouragement. Consequently, children develop an excellent understanding of right and wrong.

- Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language is exceptional. Staff are proactive in seeking specialist advice and support for children and their families. Staff teach babies sign language so they can communicate with each other. Older children benefit from a sensory area adapted to meet the individual needs of each child. Children benefit from targeted interventions where gaps in their learning or development have been identified.
- The manager and staff are extremely passionate about their roles. Staff encourage children to use their imaginations and follow their lead. For example, in the garden, children pretend the parachute is a pancake. They wriggle on it, pretending to be chocolate sauce, using words such as 'slither'. Staff join in and add learning opportunities, introducing new language and mathematical concepts as they play.
- Leaders and managers provide parents with an abundance of information and resources for them to support their children's learning and development at home. Parents comment on how they feel extremely well supported with their child's learning and when they need emotional support. Managers arrange parent workshops so that staff can support parents to understand what their children are learning.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff demonstrate extremely robust safeguarding knowledge. They are clear on the procedures in place for the reporting of any concerns that a child may be at risk of harm or abuse. Staff benefit from the support of a strong designated safeguarding team and from the in-house training they receive. Children are very well supervised and supported in managing risks in their play and learning. Security at the setting is excellent, and there are clear procedures in place for dealing with accidents and incidents. The manager has robust recruitment procedures in place to help ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.

## Setting details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                     | EY450036  |
| <b>Local authority</b>                             | Hertfordshire   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                           | 10276608  |
| <b>Type of provision</b>                           | Childcare on non-domestic premises  |
| <b>Registers</b>                                   | Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register |
| <b>Day care type</b>                               | Full day care   |
| <b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b> | 0 to 4  |
| <b>Total number of places</b>                      | 50  |
| <b>Number of children on roll</b>                  | 80  |
| <b>Name of registered person</b>                   | Squirrels Day Nurseries (Hatfield) Ltd  |
| <b>Registered person unique reference number</b>   | RP908151  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                            | 07713485193   |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                 | 25 July 2017  |

## Information about this early years setting

Squirrels Day Nursery registered in 2012. The nursery employs 13 members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including two with qualifications at level 6. The nursery opens from 8am until 6pm, Monday to Friday, all year round, with the exception of bank holidays, two weeks in August and two weeks over Christmas. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Amy Clarkson

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The inspector checked a sample of documentation, including evidence of staff's suitability and training.
- The manager and the inspector completed a joint observation of an activity.
- The inspector held regular meetings throughout the inspection, to keep the provider and the manager updated.
- The inspector spoke with the nursery manager and the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.

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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