

Inspection of Squirrels Children Day Nursery, Middleton

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

Inspection date: 23 August 2023

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| 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 | Inadequate |
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

The dedicated manager and deputy manager have worked tirelessly to address the weaknesses raised at the previous inspection. As a result of their sustained commitment to raise quality, the provision is greatly improved. Children arrive full of smiles and are excited to see their friends. They quickly develop close bonds with their key members of staff. As a result, they separate from their parents with ease and are ready to learn. Staff are good role models and have high expectations for children's behaviour. As a result, children are kind, courteous and respectful to one another.

Staff implement a balanced and sequenced curriculum across all rooms in the setting. This is designed to meet children's individual needs and interests. Furthermore, it builds on what children already know and can do. For example, toddlers use chunky pens to make marks on wipeable boards. Pre-school children use pencils to draw detailed pictures of themselves and others.

Staff plan fun and exciting environments, both indoors and outdoors. In the main, staff interactions with children are purposeful and support their learning. As a result, children are curious and active learners. For example, pre-school children confidently describe the different colours they make as they mix paints with their hands. Toddlers excitedly dig and scoop soil as they fill containers in the mud kitchen.

Staff quickly identify children who may need extra support. The special educational needs coordinator supports staff to design and implement targeted learning plans. These support children to catch up to their peers. All children, including children who receive early years funding, make good progress from their starting points.

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

- The manager and deputy manager are relentless in their efforts to ensure that all children receive good quality care and education. Meticulous attention to staff training, alongside a program of support for staff, has helped to raise the overall quality of education and care children receive. More can now be done to further embed the new systems for staff supervision and mentoring. This will help staff develop their teaching to the highest levels across the team.
- In the main, staff support children's communication and language skills well. Staff use a variety of communication and language tools well to help them assess children's speaking skills. They introduce new words to toddlers, such as 'press' and 'push' as they experiment with dough. Staff encourage pre-school children to talk about their family life and ask some probing questions. These help children to further refine their speaking skills. Some children are now ready

for even more challenging questions. This will allow them extend their critical thinking even further.

- All children love books and staff support them to develop a love of reading. Older children quickly gather on the carpet area to sit for story time. They listen attentively to the staff reading. In addition, they demonstrate their understanding as they act out the story with available props, such as masks and soft toys. Younger children find their favourite books and take these to the staff for them to read. Staff encourage children to point out the characters in the book and recite parts of the story. This helps children to extend their recall and memory skills.
- Staff provide children with constant praise and encouragement. As a result, children display high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. However, some staff are too quick to do things for children that they are more than capable of doing themselves. For example, they pour children's drinks and show them how pieces of a puzzle fit together. This means children are not challenged to extend their independence and thinking skills even further.
- Children develop well in mathematics. Older children confidently match numbers and count out objects. In addition, staff introduce words such as 'full' and 'empty' as children fill containers with water. Staff encourage children to make predictions. For example, they predict how quickly a piece of ice will melt and observe how it changes shape. As a result, children develop an understanding of concepts such as shape and time.
- Children have strong bonds with staff and regularly seek them out for help, comfort and support. Staff help children to understand and regulate their own feelings and emotions. For example, older children describe how they are feeling as staff read 'The Colour Monster' story. Staff use simple hand signs to help younger children understand commands, such as 'stop', 'wait' and 'more'. This helps to limit any frustrations and supports children to adapt their behaviour accordingly and remain calm.
- Partnerships with parents are a real strength of the setting. Parents comment that they are 'amazed' with leaders' and staff's efforts to ensure consistent improvements in the setting. In addition, they say that staff go 'above and beyond' for them and their children. Staff regularly share information with parents about their child's progress and how they can extend this at home. This further supports the good progress that children make.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager has taken steps to train all staff in child protection and safeguarding. As a result, all staff now fully understand their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. For example, staff working with toddlers implement safe sleep procedures. Staff working with older children help them develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For instance, children sensibly line up as they move between the indoor and outdoor environments and wait for staff before they enter the bathroom. All staff robustly implement the setting's risk assessment,

medication and accident procedures. This further ensures children's safety. Recruitment and vetting of staff are robust. As a result, children are cared for by suitable staff.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- continue to embed the new arrangements for staff coaching and supervision to help staff raise the quality of their education practice to consistently high levels across the team
- provide more opportunities for children to have a go at tasks and extend their critical thinking skills even further.

Setting details

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| Unique reference number | EY499184 |
| Local authority | Rochdale |
| Inspection number | 10283819 |
| 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 | 57 |
| Name of registered person | Squirrels Middleton Ltd |
| Registered person unique reference number | RP900827 |
| Telephone number | 01616435006 |
| Date of previous inspection | 3 March 2023 |

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

Donna Birch

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the provider and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do while at the setting.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a personal, social and emotional activity with the manager.
- The inspector observed interactions between the staff and the children.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector spoke to staff and parents and took account of their views.
- The manager and deputy manager took part in a leadership and management meeting with the inspector.

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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