

Inspection of Squirrels of St Marys

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Anns Hill Road, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 3NB

Inspection date: 19 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff have a strong, inclusive ethos for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children of all abilities eagerly engage in physical activity. They stretch and jump, bend and hop. They move with confidence across crates, planks and tyres. Children have access to quiet areas that are carefully arranged with cushions, curtains and lights. This helps children with sensory processing difficulties or who struggle to regulate their emotions. As a result, children with SEND make good progress and are able to access learning alongside their peers.

Compassionate staff help children to be calm and content in this relaxed setting. They play, talk and eat together with smiles and laughter. Children's behaviour is good. They help each other in group tasks that are ably supported by adults, for instance building a sand volcano with hands and spades. Children share resources sensibly, such as taking turns on balance bicycles and obstacles courses.

Children demonstrate a love of the outdoors. They run and chase each other outside, undeterred by cold, wind or rain. They independently fetch blankets or coats to stay warm, showing good self-help skills. The energetic staff have very good relationships with the children. This helps children to feel safe and secure and allows them to take risks in their play. For instance, children answer an adult's challenge to jump off a ramp in different ways.

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

- Staff have identified the social and emotional impact of lockdowns on babies as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, additional care is taken when young children first start at the nursery. Parents are invited to stay for extended settling-in periods. Photo books and illustrated stories that depict social situations are used to familiarise young children with new adults and routines. Parents of new starters report that their children have settled quickly and look forward to coming to the nursery.
- Staff use a range of effective techniques to support children to understand. For example, they make consistent use of Makaton, visual cards and visual timetables. These allow children to see how tasks are broken down, such as instructions for using the toilet, and to know what is happening next. In addition, staff use single words or short phrases to make instructions clear. However, at times, language is over-simplified and does not extend the language development of the older or most able children.
- Children with SEND follow individual education plans under the guidance of the enthusiastic special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). She seeks feedback from staff and parents to plan interventions that focus on specific areas of need,

for instance language groups to support children's social communication. The SENCo's work is underpinned by staff who are sensitive to the needs of children with SEND and have built trusting relationships with them. As a result of this support, children with SEND are improving their language and emotional regulation.

- The positive and engaging manager is continually evaluating ways to enhance the provision for the children. She has increased access to painting materials in all areas of the nursery, which further develops children's creativity and spontaneity. There has also been a redevelopment of the small-world area and a sensory exploration area for babies. In addition, the provision of more age-appropriate gym equipment outside has provided children of all ages with safe and engaging spaces in which to play and learn.
- Staff feel well supported by management. They have regular supervision sessions to discuss their individual progress. Staff help each other as a team, for instance making sure resources are available in different rooms when needed and ensuring that children receive appropriate adult support at all times. This means that children learn in a happy and supportive environment.
- Children are encouraged to develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of the natural world. They explore the colours and shapes of plants and inspect insects. When one child recoils at a 'disgusting' slug, staff support them to look closer and investigate. Soon, children decide to 'rescue' the animal and want to become involved in its care. Children are helped to look beyond their assumptions and open their minds to new ideas.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the role of the local authority designated officer and what to do if they have any concerns about the conduct of a colleague. They know the procedures to follow to record and report any concerns they have about a child. Staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe from radicalisation, extremism and female genital mutilation. The manager reviews accident logs to find any patterns, and changes are quickly made to equipment that poses any newly identified risk. Staff are aware of any allergies and intolerances that children might have and check with parents for any changes to children's diets.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to provide more consistent opportunities for children to experience language that is appropriate to their level of language development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2646626
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10295790
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	36
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Squirrels Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP910789
Telephone number	07745541328
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Squirrels of St. Mary's is located on the same site as St. Mary's Catholic Primary School in Gosport. It registered at its current location in 2021 and shares toileting facilities with the primary school. The nursery is part of the Squirrels Nursery Ltd family-run chain of nurseries. It is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. The nursery is open each weekday, during school term times only, from 8am until 4pm. There are four staff, three of whom hold appropriate qualifications at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

David Watkins

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 manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together to discuss the intentions for children's learning.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities. He assessed the impact this had on the children's learning.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The manager provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity with the manager.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023