

Squirrels Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511276
Inspection date	14 November 2007
Inspector	Hazel Stuart-Buddery / Catherine Hill
Setting Address	Priory Park Pavillion, Priory Street, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 9PZ
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Registered person	Lisa Jane Healey
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Squirrels is a privately owned provision offering full day care to pre-school children, after school care and a holiday play scheme to children attending full-time school. It operates from the Pavilion building in Priory Park in Farnborough. Premises include a main room used for all activities and a smaller room that will be used for out of school care, appropriate toilet facilities, kitchen and storage areas. Children can play in the enclosed play area and tennis courts. Use is also made of the park fields. The provision mostly serves families from the local community and is part of the Squirrels group, which owns and runs Squirrels Acorns pre-school.

The pre-school provides care and education for up to 26 children aged between 2 years and nine months to 5 years of age for full day care and a maximum of 30 children from 4 years to under eight years for out of school care. Sessions run from 09.10 - 11.45 and 12.30 -15.00 Monday to Friday, excluding Wednesday morning. On Wednesdays and Fridays children may attend all day to include a lunch club. Fun time play sessions for pre-school children are offered during some school holidays from 09.30-12.00, and in addition a play scheme will operate for children from four years to under eight years during the school holidays from 08.00 to 18.00. There are currently 67 children on roll. This includes 25 children receiving nursery education

funding. Squirrels after school club operates between 15.00 - 18.00 Monday to Friday, term time only for children four to 12 years of age. Squirrels support children with learning difficulties.

The owner/manager works full time and has appropriate Early Years and Playwork qualifications. The pre-school has 11 part time staff members, of whom six have early years qualifications; two members of staff have a level 2 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene and are generally protected against the spread of infection. They routinely wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet, although children all wash their hands in the same bowl of water as the group have no control over the temperature of the hot water. Staff have good procedures in place for nappy changing and staff use gloves and aprons. The changing mat is sanitized after every use and the nappy disposed of outside. All medical conditions are recorded and parents give prior written consent for prescribed medication which ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. Children receive appropriate care if there is an accident as all members of staff are first aid trained. Children benefit from healthy snacks and independent access to drinking water throughout the session. They enjoy the social interaction of sitting in small groups and chatting between themselves and the staff. Children enjoy snacks of fresh fruit and raisins and some children confidently explain that eating fruit keeps your bodies strong.

Children benefit from daily opportunities to play outside and get fresh air. They enjoy the freedom of being able to run around. Some children, while outside, initiate their own small groups to sing rhymes together. This attracts more children and all the children join hands to sing songs while they walk around in circles. Children confidently use pencils and paint brushes and join small construction pieces. Younger children, who are new to the group, receive good levels of support and affection. This supports their emotional well-being and gives them the confidence to explore the new surroundings.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a well-organised environment which allows them to move around and play safely. Pictures, posters and children's art work are displayed at low level and provide children with visual stimuli. Children are kept safe within the group owing to the care given by staff who are vetted and who demonstrate a good awareness of safety. For example, staff constantly remind children why they should not run while at the pre-school. Children listen carefully and then walk sensibly. The security of the site is good. Children cannot leave the premises unsupervised and unauthorised persons cannot gain entry without ringing the bell. A detailed and regular risk assessment is completed and the group have gained the local authorities '5 Gold Star Award' for health and safety. Children are protected well from the risk of fire. A written fire procedure is displayed and a fire drill is practised regularly.

Children's welfare is promoted with regard to child protection. All staff have a good awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse and of the procedures to follow should they be concerned. Some staff have completed the advanced child protection training and cascaded information

to all staff. Records are maintained of children's existing injuries, however, these are not signed by parents or carers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and engaged in purposeful play throughout the session. Younger and older children gain much from being together. They learn to communicate and develop good relationships. Staff provide structured activities and opportunities for children to make their own decisions during free play. Some younger children enjoy the interaction with staff members. They explore the crazy soap together and talk about how the soap feels and smells. The children comment on how clean their hands will be and investigate whether a paper plate can be washed in the crazy soap.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are well deployed during sessions and sensitively support children's learning. Well organised planning documentation ensures that all staff are aware of the learning objectives of activities. Information gained from regular observations of children's learning is effectively used to inform the planning of children's future short term learning targets. Children's development records are updated weekly and their progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals is clearly tracked. Staff take into account the individual needs of all children when planning activities. They work hard to ensure children have daily opportunities to progress in all skill areas, whilst allowing time for reinforcement and consolidation of skills. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Their personal, social and emotional development is very good. They are eager to learn and separate happily from their parents and/or carers on arrival and immediately engage in an activity of their choice. They behave very well and happily share resources, such as the Brio train set and stickle bricks. They smile and laugh together as they play with flowers from the role play area and show kindness as they play by sharing resources out fairly. They show respect for others as they sit in silence and listen whilst a child sings a solo rendition of 'Away in a Manger'. They have a very good understanding of daily routines. They understand that when staff begin to clap they stop what they are doing and join in, before listening to what they are going to be doing next. They have very good self-esteem as a result of the praise and encouragement they receive from staff. They are confident and their independence skills are developing well, as for example, they self select activities and resources. They put on their coats and shoes ready for outside play and help give out plates at snack time although, not all children are able to pour their own drinks without support.

Children have very good opportunities during sessions to mark make and practise their writing skills. They write their names on their colouring sheets, with some making clear recognisable letters. They experience writing for different purposes as they use the writing materials in the role play flower shop to write orders down. Children enjoy books and listen attentively to stories and staff effectively vary their voice levels as they read to maintain children's interest. The pre-school fosters children's interest in literature by operating a lending library where children can regularly take home a book of their choice to share with their parents. Children are developing a very good understanding of letter/sound links as they sound and use sign language when identifying the day of the week. Staff reinforce children's sound awareness as they emphasize the initial letter sounds on the title of the book the child has chosen to take home. Children show confidence with numbers as they immediately know that 14 follows 13 when discussing the date. They understand that the written number comprises of a 1 and 4 put

together. They reinforce their number awareness as they sing number songs. They count the number of children sitting at the table for snack and correctly identify the corresponding written number from numbers placed on a table by their snack plates. They have planned opportunities to learn about calculation and have learnt about different shapes and patterns. Staff show children their work is valued as their shape pictures are displayed within the pre-school.

Daily calendar activities ensure that children develop a sound understanding of the passage of time. They eagerly, and correctly, answer staff questions, for example, about the day, date, season and year. They confidently talk about events in their own lives and know that in autumn the leaves change colour. Children thoroughly enjoy, and absorb themselves, in exploring crazy soap. They learn about texture and shape as they play with the soap and staff allow children to lead their own learning. Staff sensitively and effectively build on children's natural curiosity by using questions appropriately to extend learning. They encourage children to try and make models from the soap mixture by demonstrating different possibilities. Children can freely access the computer to support their learning and have planned opportunities to use a range of information and communication technology resources. They learn about their local environment and the wider world through local walks, for example, nature walks in the adjoining park, and through visitors to the group and planned topic work.

Children's physical development is very good. They reinforce and further develop their fine motor control daily through use of a range of small scale resources and equipment. Some show excellent pencil control as they expertly colour between the lines on the petals of a flower picture while others demonstrate good dexterity as they join construction pieces together to make models of their choice. They have daily opportunities for outside play in the fresh air and enjoy the freedom to run around. Outside play is planned with children having opportunities to use play equipment but with time also allocated for free play for children to choose what they would like to do. Children thoroughly enjoy creative activities. They play in character in the role play area arranging flowers in buckets and taking orders over the phone. They use their hands as tools as they make models from play dough and have experienced using clay to make pots. They show great enthusiasm for singing and confidently sing solo to others within the pre-school. They are eager to share their repertoire of songs and sing part of songs they have independently learnt as well as joining in with songs learnt together. They smile and giggle with delight as they raise and lower their voices whilst singing a song about a mouse and develop an understanding of tempo as they pat their knees to correspond to the pace of the song they sing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel good about themselves and learn to show respect and consideration for others as they share resources and take turns when using equipment. For example, the number of smiley faces by some equipment show how many children can play together at any one time. Children respect this and happily occupy themselves until a space becomes free. Staff foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children learn about diversity through planned topics. Displays around the room and resources readily available help children learn about the wider world. Staff support children with learning difficulties. They work closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure individual needs are met. Children benefit from the groups clear guidelines for behaviour and staff are positive role models. Children respond well to the constant praise and encouragement given to them by the staff acknowledging their achievements. Children behave well and are polite and courteous. Older children set good examples that are followed by younger children. For example, older children know the routines

of the group, when staff rhythmically clap their hands, older children begin to clap along and sit on the mat, younger children watch this and happily copy. Children display good levels of self-esteem.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are kept very well informed about their child's educational progress. Parents are able to formally meet with their child's key worker throughout the year and are able to contribute to their child's short term learning targets. The pre-school respects parents' role in their child's education and works closely with them to ensure children's individual needs are catered for. Parents are informed about curriculum plans and share information about their child's abilities when they first join the pre-school and as their child attends through both written and verbal channels. Parents are involved in their child's learning as they share pre-school books with them at home. They are also given ideas on activities they can do at home with their children to support the weekly topic focus. Written comments from parents confirm they are 'completely happy with all aspects' of the pre-school. Regular news letters are sent out and a notice board keeps parents informed of any relevant information.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children settle well and are happy within the group. Staff work well as a team supporting children appropriately according to their needs. Staff organise space well and this allows the children to move around freely and safely. Children have free access to a range of resources that are frequently rotated to ensure children have a wide variety and their interest is maintained. Staff have annual appraisals and regular informal chats, the training needs of the staff are identified at these times to ensure on-going professional development. Most staff within the group hold or are working towards a relevant childcare qualification, to enhance their knowledge and understanding of childcare and education.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. Staff are efficient and professional and work very well as a team to provide a variety of positive learning experiences for children within a secure, supportive atmosphere. Excellent systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education to ensure all children are given the opportunity to progress and achieve. Staff are very well led by management who are dedicated to providing a quality provision and who are committed to ensuring high standards are maintained and further developed.

Policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety and enjoyment and ability to make a positive contribution. Most documentation and written records contain the necessary detail. However, records of existing injuries are not signed by parents and some incident records contain names of individuals. The owner has robust recruitment and on-going suitability procedures in place. The management team constantly evaluate and reflect the provision to ensure high standards are maintained. Overall, the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to consider ways in which the setting's use of resources reflecting positive images of diversity could be further enhanced to include more about disability. The group have purchased resources that positively reflect diversity and children have daily access to these within their play material.

Since the last nursery education inspection the pre-school have addressed all recommendations which related to planning and observation procedures, partnership with parents and children's creative and mathematical development. Planning, evaluation, observation and assessment procedures have been developed. Planning takes into account children's individual learning targets and activities are planned to ensure coverage of all aspects within the Foundation Stage curriculum. Partnership with parents has improved and parents' contributions to their child's record of achievement are recorded within their child's records. Children have a choice of a wider variety of different tools and/or materials during daily art activities to enhance their creative development. Further opportunities for children to develop their problem solving skills have been introduced with, for example, different mathematical resources freely available to children on low level shelves.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure parents sign to acknowledge existing injuries and maintain confidentiality by not recording specific children in incident records.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve opportunities for children to further develop their independence skills at snack time by, for example, providing jugs which they can use to pour their own drinks unaided.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk