



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 511276

DfES Number: 538695

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 22/09/2004
Inspector Name Deborah Jaqueline Newbury

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care, Out of School Day Care
Setting Name Squirrels Pre-School
Setting Address Priory Park Pavillion
Priory Street
Farnborough
Hampshire
GU14 9PZ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Lisa Jane Healey

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Lisa Jane Healey
Address Squirrels Pre-School
Priory Park Pavilion, Priory Street
Farnborough
Hampshire
GU14 9PZ

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Squirrels is a privately owned provision offering sessional care to pre-school children and after school care to children attending full-time school. It operates from the Pavilion building in Priory Park in Farnborough. Premises include a main room used for most activities; a further room used for quieter activities and small group work, 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 2.9 to 5 years of age. Sessions run from 09.10 - 11.45 and 12.30 -15.00 Monday to Friday, excluding Wednesday afternoon. Children attending on Friday afternoon may bring a packed lunch and stay from 12.30. This option is available to children in the two terms before they start school. Fun time play sessions for pre-school children are offered during some school holidays from 09.30-12.00. There are currently 30 children on roll. This includes 25.funded three year olds and no funded four year olds. Squirrels after school club operates between 15.00 - 18.00 Monday to Friday, term time only for children four to twelve years of age. Squirrels welcomes children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The owner/manager works full time and has appropriate Early Years and Playwork qualifications. The pre-school has ten part time staff members, of whom four have early years qualifications. Three members of staff are working towards a level two qualification. In addition to the manager, the after school club has three part time staff who are working towards level two. Six members of staff hold a valid first aid qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher advisor, area special needs co-ordinator, PLA, EYCS and 4 Kids.

How good is the Day Care?

Squirrels provides good quality care for children. Both the pre-school and after school club have been inspected on this occasion. Premises are clean and well

maintained and offer a warm and welcoming environment for all children. Organisation of both parts of the provision is good. The effective deployment of staff and their active involvement and participation ensures children are well supported, settled and secure. Children choose from play materials that are age appropriate, interesting and which include items reflecting different aspects of diversity. A display of photographs supplements this although these relate mainly to culture and ethnicity. The staff team exceeds minimum qualification requirements and there is a strong commitment to ongoing training. Required documentation is in place, it is well organised and reviewed regularly.

Staff give good consideration to ensuring children's safety overall. They are aware of the potential hazards in using the tennis courts at present due to a gap in the fencing which is a potential escape area, especially for pre-school children. They are mostly very vigilant and supervise this area closely but existing arrangements to ensure this could be developed further. Staff follow very good health and hygiene practices and encourage these with children. Snacktime is well organised with children enjoying varied and healthy snacks. All staff are secure in their understanding of issues relating to child protection.

Children interact positively with others and build good relationships with staff who respond well to their interests. They have fun and are well occupied. Staff treat children as individuals and with equal concern. There are good procedures in place to support children with special needs. Staff have a very positive approach to behaviour management.

Staff form good relationships with parents. They seek written consent for all aspects of care and share information in a variety of ways.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- Staff act as positive role models and adopt a consistent approach to behaviour management. Children respond well to their calm voices, very good use of praise and positive re-inforcement which promotes and encourages their good behaviour. Staff encourage sharing and turn-taking, and help children to develop respect for each other. They differentiate between the different ages of the children cared for, involving those children who attend the after school club in the setting of rules for expected behaviour at the club. Children are invited to contribute ideas that are important to them. All children behave very well.
- Staff work together as a team, they are aware of their roles and follow these well, thus ensuring that sessions flow smoothly. All staff are encouraged to take advantage of training opportunities and attend a broad variety of workshops and other courses to develop their skills and thus improve the quality of the provision on offer.

- There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere evident in both the pre-school and the after school club. Children display high levels of confidence both in their surroundings and with their carers. They enjoy warm, caring and secure relationships with staff. Pre-school children engage in purposeful activity across all areas of the curriculum and they are well supported by staff who participate in their play and learning. Staff offer children attending the after school club many opportunities to make choices about what they do.
- Children's snacktime at the after school club is particularly well organised. The presentation is good and children are offered a variety of foods.
- Parents have access to good quality information about the provision. Staff share information informally and pre-school parents are given opportunities to speak with their child's keyworker.

What needs to be improved?

- further development of the provision's existing arrangements for monitoring potential escape areas when children are using the tennis courts
- further enhancement of the provision of resources and/or visual stimuli reflecting positive images of disability.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
6	develop further the provision's existing arrangements for monitoring potential escape areas when children are using the tennis courts
9	consider ways in which the setting's use of resources reflecting positive images of diversity could be further enhanced to include more about disability

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The quality of nursery education offered by Squirrels Pre-school is acceptable and of good quality. Children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals of mathematics and creative development and very good progress in all other areas.

Quality of teaching is generally good. Staff offer a range of activities across all areas of the curriculum although children's access to tools and materials during the daily art activity is limited to those selected by staff. Staff provide good levels of support both when working with children individually or as part of a larger group. Their use of questioning is especially effective although they sometimes miss opportunities to build on children's very evident interest in numbers. The setting's use of planning, observation and evaluation is not fully effective although it is clear that some improvements have been made e.g. recent plans have regard for the stepping-stones and identify a learning focus.

Leadership and management are generally good. The owner/manager is well qualified and is strongly committed to the continued improvement of care and education for all children. She has a positive attitude to professional development and encourages all staff to attend training. Staff work closely together. They are valued and supported appropriately. The owner recognises that the pre-school's current system of curriculum planning requires further development. She has instigated measures to address this.

Partnership with parents is generally good. They receive good quality information about the provision. Staff and parents share information informally. Parents also have access to their children's progress records and meet with their child's keyworker. It is not evident that any knowledge or information parents may share, as part of this process, is included in the written records kept on children. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning, e.g. through the pre-school's library scheme.

What is being done well?

- Staff arrange most resources to ensure they are easily accessible. The use of low level open shelving encourages children to make independent choices from a variety of items that enable them to investigate, explore and practice their skills. Staff change all play materials each week, thus ensuring that children are regularly offered different experiences and fresh opportunities for learning.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is very well fostered. They show high levels of confidence and self-esteem despite the fact that all are very young and have only recently returned to pre-school following the summer holiday. They are happy to make suggestions about songs they wish

to sing, talk about their families and home life and approach other children to ask what they want to drink when they are chosen to be helper.

- Staff value their contributions, for example by commenting favourably on their choice of song which provides further encouragement.
- Children gain good self-help and independence skills for example as they put on and take off outdoor shoes and coats. Some children manage this independently.
- Staff are enthusiastic and committed. Their effective use of open ended questions encourage children to think and thus consolidate and extend their learning. They respond in positive ways to children and act as positive role models.
- Children enjoy the many activities presented to them where they can practice and improve their co-ordination, for example as they manipulate dough using both tools and their hands, threading cotton reels, participating in ring games and finger rhymes.

What needs to be improved?

- the continued development of planning, evaluation, observation and assessment procedures and the use of these to inform future planning
- arrangements for ensuring that parents' contributions to children's records of achievement and progress are recorded
- opportunities for children to further develop their problem solving skills
- opportunities for children to have greater access to different tools and/or materials during the daily art activity.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The setting has made generally good progress overall in addressing the key issues identified at the previous inspection. These related to developing the programme for knowledge and understanding of the world, making greater use of planning and assessment systems, providing more opportunities for parents to contribute to the records kept on their children and the inclusion of physical development in plans.

The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world has been strengthened by the inclusion of opportunities for children to learn about animals through planned topic work and first hand experiences such as closely observing the life cycle of frogs and caterpillars. The pre-school takes advantage of planned outings to farms to build further on children's learning.

Physical development is now included in planning with staff linking this to the stepping stones to clearly show what children are expected to learn from the activities they provide.

Some progress has been made with the development of planning and assessment

systems although the cycle of planning, evaluation, observation and assessment is not fully complete as staff are not yet using this to identify individual children's learning needs and to inform future planning. This has been carried forward as a key issue following this inspection.

Parents can view their child's records when they wish and meet with their keyworker to discuss progress and share their knowledge about their children. It is not clear from available evidence that information gained from these discussions is recorded.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are very confident. They enjoy their time at the pre-school and build trusting relationships with their carers. They interact positively with other children and show concern for others. They eagerly explore the activities on offer and choose freely from the resources available to them, often persevering to complete chosen tasks. Children are gaining good self-help and independence skills. They are familiar with the daily routine and follow this well. Their behaviour is very good.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are becoming confident communicators. They are keen to converse with others and express their ideas and thoughts. They explore books independently and greatly enjoy storytime sessions where they listen intently and are eager to predict what will happen next. Children can borrow books to take home. Staff are beginning to introduce children to letter sounds. Children use pencils, make marks and explore emergent writing during role play, often ascribing meaning to their marks.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show interest in numbers and counting. They recognise some numerals and use number names correctly as they recite number rhymes, talk about the date and their age. Some children count confidently using one to one correspondence. They use appropriate mathematical language as they talk about size and shape. Children are beginning to problem solve as they think about how many children can play in the home corner at the same time but staff miss opportunities to build on this further.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children enjoy using the computer. They explore different materials, objects and construction toys. They show curiosity and interest as they investigate magnets or pour water into the water wheel. They show awareness of time as they talk about their home lives and different events. They learn about change as they talk about the signs of autumn and observe the life cycle of caterpillars. Children find out about their own and other cultures through planned activities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move with control and co-ordination. They enjoy outside play and show good spatial awareness and the ability to change direction and adjust speed. They explore different ways of moving - jumping, walking and running. They throw and kick balls and play with hoops and practice and develop their skills. Children use a range of large and small equipment and tools safely and with increasing control. They understand when they need to wash their hands and recognise when they are feeling hot.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children recognise and name colours. They enthusiastically join in with singing sessions and have a repertoire of songs and rhymes. They enjoy making music as they freely explore musical instruments. They explore different media and materials and take part in a daily art activity. Children enjoy this although they are confined to using the specific tools and materials staff provide which may possibly restrict their free creativity. Children enjoy imaginative play and play co-operatively.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- continue to develop planning, evaluation, observation and assessment procedures to identify individual children's learning needs and use these to inform future planning
- investigate ways in which parents' contributions to their children's records of achievement and progress can be recorded
- provide further opportunities for children to develop their problem solving skills
- consider ways in which children can have greater access to different tools and/or materials during the daily art activity.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.