



## **Squirrels Pre-School**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY290541
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 September 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Linda Capon
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Annexe, Pickhursts Infants School, Pickhurst Lane, West Wickham, Kent, BR4 0HL
<b>Telephone number</b>	07903 795 222
<b>E-mail</b>	Squirrels@Squirrels-partnership.com
<b>Registered person</b>	Squirrels Pre School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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](http://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?

The Squirrels Pre-School operates from a purpose built building at the rear of Pickhurst Infant School. The pre-school is within walking distance of a shop schools, parks and a main line train station. The group serves the local area.

Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school is open five mornings a week 09:00 to 12:00 term time only.

There are seven staff working with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualification to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a nursery school teacher and from Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

All the children are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and free from infection. They use sound hygiene routines for the majority of the session as they use appropriate hand-washing and drying facilities after using the toilet. They are not free from cross-contamination when they dry their hands on the same towel prior to eating their snacks. Children know they must use a clean beaker and dish when they have their snack or a drink and take their dirty utensils to the sink for washing-up. The staff use very good hygiene routines throughout the session in line with the group's health and safety policy and procedures. They clean the tables appropriately prior to snacks, use different coloured cloths for cleaning, follow good hygiene routines themselves and ensure the children wash their hands after using the toilet. Children receive appropriate treatment when they have an accident and staff maintain good accident records.

The children enjoy physical play on a daily basis and spend much of their time outdoors exploring their environment. A good range of physical activities are readily accessible on a daily basis and the children are developing an awareness of when they need to rest or take a drink. They enjoy climbing, running, jumping and rolling down the small bank under the close supervision of the staff team. The staff extend the children's experiences as they suggest they move up and down the bank on all fours pretending to be mountaineers and discussing when they did this in the snow.

The children have a good understanding of healthy eating as staff support this learning through a range of well organised topics throughout the year, for example, a visit from the dentist to look at keeping their teeth healthy. All the children eat healthy snacks of fresh fruit, raw vegetables or raisins on a daily basis. They have water readily accessible both indoors and outdoors and a choice of milk or water at the snack bar. Children choose when they are ready for their snack and sit down with the staff and other children enjoying the social atmosphere. The individual dietary needs, likes and dislikes are always considered and the children receive appropriate food in agreement with the parent's wishes.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The children are very safe and secure in the setting. Staff ensure all the premises are safe and suitable for the children's use before they arrive, for example, they check

the socket covers are in place and check the outdoor play area and equipment. Staff ensure that all exits are fully secure including the bolts to both sides of the gates to the outdoor play area. The children are unable to leave the premises unnoticed during arrival and collection periods as the staff are vigilant and monitor the access to the provision. The well deployed staff provide appropriate care both in and out of doors. The children are developing an awareness of how to keep themselves safe and know the rules of the setting, for example, they always ask an adult before going to the toilet. Staff maintain a good risk assessment plan which they regularly review to ensure the children are safe at all times. Staff regularly monitor the accident book and risk assess the play space to ensure the children are safe at all times; for example, the outdoor play area has been changed to minimize the number of potential accidents.

The children spend their time in a very pleasant, organised, bright, clean, warm and welcoming environment. They have access to a wide range of very suitable toys and equipment of which much is brand new. Staff organise the premises well and the children play indoors and outdoors each day. The children have access to suitable areas for playing, resting, eating and drinking. All the staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures in line with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures ensuring the safety of the children at all times.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

All the children are very happy, settled and enjoy spending their time at the pre-school. They all settle very quickly on arrival and select an activity from the wide range of toys and equipment available each session. They can choose whether to play in or out of doors on most days. All the staff have a good understanding of the early learning goals and stepping stones and support the individual development and learning of each child very well. The children interact well with one another and the staff team, developing good communication and listening skills. Staff group the children very appropriately at all times to meet their individual developmental needs.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are very interested, motivated and keen to explore the broad and exciting range of activities provided on a daily basis. Good planning ensures the children have the opportunity to participate in the full range of activities and ensure good rotation of equipment. There is a very good balance of adult led and free choice activities each day. Children extend their creativity through the staff's knowledge and understanding of ensuring they do not over direct the children. A good range of messy play activities are available each session. All the children listen well to stories and many are able to re-tell their favourites, for example, Elmer. They are developing their language through new words, for example, patchwork. All the children are aware print has meaning and books are available at specific activities as a reference guide, for example, the book about Elmer was with the Elmer collage activity. All the children are readily making marks to represent their ideas and older children write their names confidently using

distinguishable letters. The children develop their imagination through the well organised, interesting and innovative role play areas and art and craft activities. They explore a full range of textures and materials and are developing their senses. The children are very interested in the changes they observe when growing plants and looking at the trees through the different seasons. They are developing their understanding of mixing colours at painting activities discussing the colours in a rainbow. Additional activities incorporated into the planning include outside visitors, for example, a local bee keeper and musicians.

All the children are developing their numeric skills with many confidently counting to 10 as staff fully support their mathematical development throughout the range of activities provided daily. For example, counting fish toys in the water tray, the number of children playing in the sand pit and the number of children at registration. They are developing their knowledge of simple calculation throughout the day and using simple mathematical language when filling and emptying buckets of sand, comparing the size of acorns and matching the fish in the water tray. All the children demonstrate good computer skills and use the mouse appropriately unaided. They are developing their physical skills daily through the excellent outdoor activities including the use of large tyres outdoors and musical instruments.

Staff and parent's work together and share information about each child's abilities prior to starting at the group. A key worker aids the individual child's progress and development through the early learning goals. The well organised curriculum is topic based, identifies the next steps for the children and the adults role in supporting this development. The staff fully evaluate the planning to check what did or did not work and identify any changes required for the future. Staff complete a development and progress record based on the observations of the individual child and plan for their next steps. These plans do not always include a discussion with the parents or consider parents views or ideas. The children are well supported in their overall development by all staff.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents is good. The staff welcome all the children. They are fully valued, respected and treated as individuals. Each child has their own key worker providing additional opportunities for developing good relationships with staff and reinforcing the child's security and sense of belonging. The children attending are from a mixed ethnic background extending the children's opportunities to learn more about other people and their cultures, for example, one child speaks French and is encouraged to count in French to extend the other children's learning. The children access a good range of resources reflecting positive images of other races, cultures and disabilities. Additional activities and visitors to the group extend the children's development and learning in this area, for example, a parent assisted with the Diwali topic and introduced a range of related activities. All the children are encouraged to be independent and make their own choices, for example, as they choose their own colours at the painting table and pour their own water when they decide they need a drink. Staff support children with individual special needs well and

provide one to one support when required. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

All the children are very confident in their surroundings. They all have a good relationship with the staff making them feel very safe and secure in the setting. New children settle very quickly as the group operates a good settling in procedure for all children. All the children behave well. They are aware of the group rules and are developing their understanding of right and wrong, for example, they apologise when they upset another child. Staff praise and encourage the children's efforts developing the children's self esteem and confidence. All the children have good social skills and manners, for example, they use please and thank-you at snack time, share the toys well, and take turns when playing in the home corner.

The staff team have good relationships with the children's parents. Parents find the staff friendly, welcoming, approachable and helpful. They receive very good information about the setting through the informative news letters, prospectus, notice board, photographs and the group's policies and procedures. They are involved in the discussion regarding changes, for example, the group undertook a parents' survey prior to the addition of the lunch club. The parents are encouraged to be fully involved in their child's care and development and provide the staff with detailed information to enable them to provide suitably for each child. Parents and children spent a learning day together developing the parents understanding of how and what their children do and learn at the group. Staff share information about the child with their parents, for example, when they have an accident and development and progress information.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. The children are well cared for and safe at all times. The well deployed, dedicated, organised staff team work well together. They are very aware of their individual role for each session and follow the groups daily planning to provide good resources and activities on a daily basis. Staff maintain an excellent daily staff ratio enabling them to fully support the children's development and learning at all times.

The premises are very well organised providing indoor and outdoor play opportunities for all the children throughout the session. A good registration procedure ensures staff are always aware of who is on the premises at any time ensuring the children's security and safety. Staff have an understanding of the Birth to Three Matters documents and incorporates these into the setting appropriately when required. All the required documentation and records are in place and support the health, safety and well-being of the children attending. The provider regularly reviews the group's policies and procedures to keep them up to date.

The group has a clear vision for their future development to improve the service they are providing. All the staff are keen to improve their child care skills and regularly undertake additional training, for example, every staff member has attended a First Aid course. The group operates a good appraisal system encouraging individual staff

to identify their own strengths and development. All staff are fully supported in the training and development they wish to undertake. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints to report.

## **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 children are provided with suitable hand drying facilities at all times.

#### **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 the children's individual play plans to identify the next steps more clearly and provide parent's with an opportunity to incorporate their own views and ideas.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)