

Inspection of Squirrels Family & Childcare Centre

Duston Community Centre, Pendle Road, NORTHAMPTON NN5 6DT

Inspection date: 8 March 2022

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

As they arrive at the nursery, babies smile when they see familiar staff and put their arms out to them. Toddlers and pre-school children wave goodbye to the parents at the main door. They engage in conversations with the staff as they walk to their designated room. Staff encourage children to do things for themselves and be independent. Babies make choices about the toys they want to play with. Toddlers are learning to wipe their own noses, put used tissues in a bin and wash their own hands after. Pre-school children put on their own coats, hats and boots to go outside. When they struggle, staff encourage them to keep trying and praise them for their efforts. This helps to promote children's self-esteem and confidence.

Staff teach the children about how to stay safe during daily trips out of the nursery. Toddlers understand that they need to hold the hand of a member of staff as they walk to the park. Pre-school children learn to understand that they must stop, look and listen before crossing the road. Once at the park, the staff encourage the children to run down a hill onto the playing field. They first remind children of the rules. They tell children that they should not run past a landmark, and that they need to remain in sight of the staff at all times. Children follow these instructions and behave well.

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

- Staff help children to manage their emotions and feelings well. They gently remind children of their high expectations for behaviour. For example, encouraging children to be kind to their friends and think about the impact that their behaviour has on others. Toddlers and pre-school children are learning to handle toys and resources with care, use manners and take turns.
- Staff have an in-depth knowledge of the local area and families who attend the setting. This helps them to tailor support to meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff work closely with parents and other professionals, such as occupational therapists and speech therapists, to plan and implement specific strategies for individual children. Children who receive additional funding are supported by staff on a one-to-one basis. They make good progress towards their individual learning and development targets.
- Parents are pleased with the care that their children receive at the nursery. They say that their children love attending, they have good bonds with staff and are making lots of friends. Parents speak highly of the dedicated, hardworking and caring manager. Also, that staff go 'above and beyond' to meet the needs of their children, particularly those children with SEND.
- Children benefit from freshly prepared, healthy, and nutritious meals. These are planned to reflect the dietary needs of children. Pre-school children confidently

use serving spoons and tongs to serve their own food. When they finish eating, they clean up after themselves, carrying their used plates, drinking glasses and cutlery to the kitchen to be washed.

- Photos of the children and their families are displayed in the nursery. Staff talk to the children about their photos. They use them to support children's understanding about their individuality and differences. Toddlers enjoy looking at photos of each other's pets. They show an interest in cats and dogs that they see while walking to the park. Staff recognise that not all children have pets at home, so they arranged a trip to a pet shop. Children share the photos of their favourite animals they saw in the pet shop. They confidently point these out to the inspector.
- Overall, staff promote children's communication and language well. They respond to babies as they babble and model the name of the toys they are playing with. Toddlers and pre-school children confidently sing nursery rhymes and enjoy listening to stories being read by staff. However, staff do not maximise opportunities that arise during their interactions with children to extend their communication skills further. For example, if children do not respond to questions asked of them, staff do not follow up their questioning to support children's understanding and language development.
- Staff say they enjoy working at the setting and they feel valued and supported in their role. They have regular supervisions and appraisal meetings with the manager. These are not always effective at identifying what support individual staff need to develop their practice, skills and knowledge further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff confidently describe the signs and symptoms of abuse. They know the procedures to follow if they have a concern about the welfare of a child or the conduct of another member of staff. When employing new staff, the provider ensures that all staff are suitable for their role by carrying out rigorous and relevant checks. The ongoing suitability of staff is regularly checked throughout their employment. Staff carry out daily risk assessments to ensure that the nursery environment is safe. Additional risk assessments are carried out for trips out of the nursery to keep children safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- engage children more effectively in conversations and extend their communication and language skills further
- strengthen support for staff's professional development to focus on developing their teaching practice to an even higher level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2609934
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10214205
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 11
Total number of places	46
Number of children on roll	145
Name of registered person	Squirrels Childcare & Training Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2609932
Telephone number	07702 542721
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Squirrels Family & Childcare Centre, located in Northampton, registered in 2020. The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one who has qualified teacher status. The nursery is open from 7.30am until 5.30pm Monday to Friday, all year round. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Teresa Lester

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 manager and provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Children spoke to the inspector about what they enjoy doing while at the nursery.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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