

Inspection of Squirrels Pre-School CIO

Hales Drive, CANTERBURY, Kent CT2 7AB

Inspection date: 13 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Inadequate
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Leadership and management	Inadequate
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding do not follow consistent and robust processes for monitoring possible concerns about children and identifying risks. Leaders do not effectively communicate or manage information, to enable them to be alert to any issues of concern in children's life at home or elsewhere. This does not ensure all children are safeguarded.

Despite this, children are happy and confident in this welcoming nursery. They have close bonds with staff who value each child highly. Staff take time to get to know children well, which caters for children's interests and learning needs. Staff have high expectations for each child. They plan a curriculum that considers each child's age and stage of development. For example, staff use effective questioning during activities to ensure that all children can engage and take part. Children learn new vocabulary and enjoy the varied ways that they can communicate with adults and their peers. Children behave well and grow in confidence as they enhance their social skills.

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

- The designated leads for safeguarding do not consistently follow up on potential risks to children's safety and well-being. For example, they fail to obtain a full explanation of when and how a child has obtained a pre-existing injury. Leaders do not consistently initiate communication with other professionals working with vulnerable children. The records kept for children are not kept up to date. This means that key information that could help to prevent risks for children, is not adequately managed.
- Staff have recently attended training to ensure that children have high quality interactions that support their communication and language. For example, children learn about the life cycle of a butterfly. Staff ask questions that help children to recall and make links. Children learn new words, such as 'metamorphosis'. This helps them to extend their vocabulary and learn different ways to explain their knowledge and understanding.
- Children enjoy a range of activities and benefit from a large and exciting outdoor space. They explore the large tree and take turns in stepping carefully along the wooden stumps. Staff skilfully encourage children to sing songs and count in their play experiences. However, staff are not always clear about what the overall intention of planned activities is, to support children's skills further.
- Children enjoy the social aspect of mealtimes. They enjoy healthy snacks provided by the nursery and share discussions about things that are similar and different to that of their peers. Staff acknowledge the physical development needs of children and provide opportunities for children to learn positive habits in relation to diet and good oral health.

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. The special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator works well with other agencies to provide a consistent approach to children's learning. Staff consider the routines for children, to ensure they gain the best possible experiences while at the nursery. Funding is allocated based on children's interests and helps to contribute to their overall learning experiences. For example, children benefit from visits from 'creepy crawly' experts. This helps to extend their knowledge and understanding of the natural world.
- Staff feel well supported. The manager encourages them to use their skills within the nursery, to provide the best possible outcomes for children. Staff know that they can access training that will help extend their professional development.
- Children learn useful skills in preparation for school. For example, staff share ideas with parents, such as listening to stories at home and practising getting dressed and undressed. However, the information given to parents is not always tailored to suit children's individual needs, to help consistently support children to make the best possible progress.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The leaders, who are also the designated leads for safeguarding, have not followed up information that may identify concerns about the welfare of children and families in their care. This does not effectively safeguard all children. Despite this, the manager and all staff know how to make the necessary referrals, should a concern be identified. They know how to action a concern about a colleague or if an allegation is made against a member of staff. Children are encouraged to take risks in a safe way. Staff ensure that children keep hydrated and safe in the sun.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
put in place robust procedures, in line with guidance of the local safeguarding partnership, for monitoring any concerns about children's welfare and obtaining regular and up-to-date information from other professionals working with any vulnerable children.	14/07/2023

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

- improve the planning of activities so that the learning intent is more precisely focused for all groups of children, to ensure the best possible outcomes
- build on the good partnerships with parents to ensure that all parents receive more frequent and specific guidance on how to support their children's home learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY549510
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10294129
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	22
Number of children on roll	35
Name of registered person	Squirrels Pre-School CIO
Registered person unique reference number	RP549509
Telephone number	01227766537
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Squirrels Pre-School CIO re-registered in 2017. The pre-school is open from 9am to 3pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and from 9am to midday on Thursday, during term time only. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education to children aged three and four years. It is also in receipt of pupil premium funding. There are seven members of staff, of whom, five hold relevant early years qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kate Williams

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 inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- 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 spoke to children, to find out about their time at the setting.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The deputy manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The manager provided the inspector with a sample of key documentation on request.

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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