

Inspection of Squirrels Thrapston Day Nursery

107 Huntingdon Road, Thrapston, Northamptonshire NN14 4NG

Inspection date: 15 April 2024

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

Welcoming and friendly staff greet children and parents at the door. Children arrive happy and separate from their parents without hesitation. Children are developing a love of books and stories. Babies cuddle up with staff as they look at picture books. Staff encourage them to name the animals in the book. Pre-school children concentrate for extended periods of time as they use their imaginations to retell the well-loved fairy tale 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. They confidently use lines from the story as they make bowls of porridge from play dough and pretend to eat it. Staff extend the activity further by encouraging children to use mathematical language in relation to size. Children show that they understand the size difference in the bowls and are able to order them from smallest to biggest.

Children are physically active. They benefit from daily opportunities to play and exercise in the fresh air. Staff encourage children to take age-appropriate risks. Pre-school children lift and carry planks of wood, moving them to create a walkway that they can balance on. Staff closely supervise children, ensuring they take turns to walk along an obstacle course and use a slide. They remind children not to rush the child in front and to give them space and time to complete the course safely. Children demonstrate pride in their achievements as they complete the course. Staff praise children which fosters their self-esteem.

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

- The aim of the nursery curriculum is to support all children to become confident learners. Staff use information from observations of children to plan for their individual next steps in development, providing activities that help children build on what they already know and can do. However, where children attend other early years settings, partnerships are not yet fully established to enable staff to work consistently to meet the child's care and learning needs.
- Staff promptly recognise the signs that children may need additional help. They work alongside parents and other professionals, where gaps in children's learning and development are identified, to implement targeted support.
- The manager monitors staff performance closely. She observes their practice and holds regular supervision meetings with them. She encourages staff to reflect on what they do well and helps them identify ongoing development opportunities to strengthen both their practice and knowledge. Staff 'shout outs' and rewards are given to recognise where staff have made positive contributions to the team and to the service offered.
- Staff use regular walks to the local parks and lakes to support children to learn about the natural world around them. Toddlers come back from a walk to the lakes excited to share that they saw a frog who 'ran away from them'. Staff use these conversations to extend children's vocabulary. They encourage children to

use words such as hop and jump to describe how the frog moved.

- There is effective two- way communication between parents and staff. When children start at the nursery, the staff work with parents to find out about their child's normal routines, interests and development. This helps staff to plan effectively to support children's emotional well-being and to meet children's individual needs. Parents are kept well informed about their child's day at the nursery. Staff regularly share ideas with parents about activities that they can do at home with their child to support them to make progress in their development.
- Staff use stories and props such as soft toys and stone faces with different expressions, to help children recognise and talk about their emotions and feelings. They help children think about what makes them feel happy, sad or angry. Staff reassure children that it is okay to feel this way. They gently remind children of their expectation for behaviour, encouraging them to be kind to their friends and think about the impact that their actions have on others.
- The nursery is very much a part of the local community. Staff and children regularly visit the residents at the local care home and take part in fun activities alongside them. The nursery holds weekly soft play and creative sessions for local parents to attend with their children. However, implementation of the curriculum for understanding the world is not as robust as other aspects of the curriculum. Staff have not fully considered how to support children to learn about different cultures, traditions, and beliefs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- share information with other settings that children attend to ensure consistency in the support that children receive
- provide children with opportunities to develop their awareness of different cultures, traditions and beliefs.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2671598
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10341167
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 11
Total number of places	61
Number of children on roll	113
Name of registered person	Squirrels Childcare & Training Limited
Registered person unique reference number	2609932
Telephone number	07702 542721
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Squirrels Thrapston Day Nursery, located in Thrapston, Northampton, registered in 2022. The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The nursery is open from 7.30am until 6pm 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 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 group activities with the manager.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- 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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