



The Squirrels Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	229108
Inspection date	21 November 2006
Inspector	Samantha Jayne Taylor
Setting Address	Coppice Primary School, Trinity Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B75 6TJ
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Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Out of School 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Squirrels Club is based at Coppice Primary School in Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield. It opened in 1993. It is one of a group of three clubs run by the same provider. The club operates in a portacabin at the rear of the school and also has the use of a second portacabin and the school hall. The children have the use of all of the school's outdoor space.

A maximum of 72 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 37 children on roll. The admissions policy allows for children over the age of eight years to attend. The club is open from 08:00 to 09:00 and 15:30 to 18:00 during term time and 08:00 to 18:00 during school holidays. There are currently 91 children on roll aged from four to eleven years.

The setting employs 6 permanent staff during term-time, additional staff are available when required. Some work in the out of school club and some only work during school holidays. Three quarters of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Effective procedures are in place to ensure children's health needs are supported, for example staff know what to do in the event of an accident and the documentation which is required. Staff encourage the development of children's independence skills through giving them tasks and errands to complete. Children help to tidy away following play and older children enjoy the responsibility of recording scores as they play skittles. As a consequence, children are encouraged to work as a team and their confidence is developed as they take on roles of authority.

Parents are given choice as to whether to provide a snack for their individual children. For children who eat snack at the setting staff provide safe storage for perishable food items. This helps to keep children safe. Drinking water is freely accessible to children at all times and they also enjoy a regular hot drink at evening registration.

Children are given many opportunities to further develop their physical skills indoors and outdoors. They enjoy games of football, tennis and rounders. There are balls and skipping ropes to play with where children run and jump to practise and refine their skills. During the summer play scheme children explore their natural environment with staff as they cycle their bikes within the grounds of the setting. This helps children to maintain a healthy lifestyle and they have tremendous fun as they do so.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff warmly welcome children and families. Children are eager to attend the setting where they can play alongside their siblings and peers; some children do not want to go home at the end of their day. Staff know children well which helps children to feel secure and they are confident in approaching them.

Equipment is maintained and is in satisfactory condition, which generally meets the differing needs and ages of the children. Older children independently self-select resources such as board games from cupboards. However accessibility of toys, resources and equipment for younger children does not always help them to exercise free choice.

Children are aware of keeping themselves and others safe. Older children are knowledgeable of the procedure to follow in the event of a fire and they are aware where to assemble in the event of any such occurrence. When playing outdoors children are aware of the boundaries of where they can play and staff give regular reminders. However, the written risk assessment undertaken by staff does not identify and minimise all risks to children when accessing the outdoor area.

Staff have a general understanding of child protection and the procedure to follow in the event of a concern. However, the written policy does not contain the latest revised information, for

example Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). As a consequence, full written information is not available to share with parents and carers to help protect children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children communicate confidently; they are clearly able to express their needs. Children experience a variety of activities both independently and with staff support. They play adult led games such as 'beetle' where they learn to take turns and share as they throw the die. During this game younger children learn to consolidate their understanding of numbers through matching skills and they are also introduced to vocabulary such as antenna. They are proud of their own picture made. As a consequence, children's opportunities for learning are promoted through play.

Staff are positive role models who spend time talking and playing with children. They are sensitive to children's individual needs, for example staff are able to engage younger and quieter children in games. This helps children to become confident in their surroundings and to feel secure. For children who wish to sit quietly or who are feeling tired towards the end of the day there are different games to access which are played alone or with staff support.

Children benefit from the range of different experiences, for example they talk of enjoying playing tennis. Younger children express that they like to attend the setting "because it is fun". There are activities to meet children's individual interests such as drawing and construction toys, where children draw and build towers in different formations. Children are proud of their built models which they share with their parents when they are collected.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have fun as they play games such as football and rounders. They have knowledge of some cultures and celebrations, for example Diwali. However, there are limited resources reflecting positive images of race, culture and disability to further promote children's awareness of diversity.

Older children talk about their differences in where they live and different countries. This leads to a conversation with staff regarding the local community which younger children join in with. Children are listened to and younger children readily connect the locality discussed to where they play football when they are at home. As a consequence, children's development in knowledge and understanding of the world is encouraged.

Children's self-esteem is fostered by the praise and encouragement they receive from staff when they make personal achievements. Staff spend time playing with children and showing interest in their games. Children are knowledgeable of the rules of the setting and respond appropriately to effective strategies in place to manage behaviour. As a result, children behave well.

Communication with parents and carers is promoted through regular newsletters to advise of forthcoming events. There is a notice board and parents folder containing written policies and information. Informal daily conversations and recordings in a daily diary help to ensure that any messages from school are well communicated. This helps to promote continuity of care and reassures parents.

The setting has a complaints policy, which is understood by staff. They are knowledgeable of the procedure to follow but the written complaints policy and the system in place for recording any complaints does not take into account the revised guidance to the national standards. As a result, full information is not available to share.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff are enthusiastic and committed to meeting the individual needs of the children. They work well as a team and communicate effectively to ensure children's individual needs are met and continuity of care is promoted. Children are relaxed in the company of staff and they are settled in the group as they receive appropriate adult support.

Children enjoy ready access to the outdoor area where they experience different types of play. Indoors there is a hall where they play team games. This means that children can pursue games of their interest and that space is used effectively. Staff communicate through the telephone system to ensure older children are safe as they walk from one area of the setting to another. Younger children are accompanied to safeguard their welfare. The registration system in place has recently been implemented with staff requesting that parents sign their children out from the setting. This helps to safeguard children's welfare.

Documentation is generally maintained and stored securely. However some written policies and procedures require an update of current revised information to the national standards to effectively promote children's welfare, for example the complaints procedure and how this is implemented. They are also required to be shared with staff at induction to ensure that children's welfare is comprehensively promoted. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection seven recommendations were made. This was in relation to ensuring that the registration system detailed when staff and children were present. The setting has made good improvement in this area; registers are in place which record staff and children's attendance. Staff also take registration during the session. On the evening session as parents and carers collect their children they sign their children out and record the departure time. This helps to keep children safe.

A recommendation was made with regards to a full risk assessment being undertaken and recorded. Whilst there is improvement in this area not all risks are identified to minimise risk to children in the outdoor area. For this reason a further recommendation is made at this inspection.

In relation to toys and equipment the setting was asked to increase the range and variety of equipment to support equal opportunities and also to ensure that children have a greater degree of choice. Older children are able to exercise choice but younger children's opportunities to independently access resources, toys and equipment is limited as are their representation of ethnicity and disability a further recommendation is made at this inspection.

The setting were asked to ensure that the child protection policy was based around the Area Child Protection Guidance (ACPC). The policy has been updated but there has been further guidance since the last inspection, hence the recommendation made at this inspection to update policies and procedures with current revised guidance with regards to the national standards.

The setting was also asked to ensure that staff are aware of infectious, communicable and notifiable diseases. The setting holds current information with regards to this but full information is not available within the written policy. A recommendation is made with regards to improving documentation.

The last recommendation made was in connection with health and hygiene to ensure that there is hot and cold water available for hand washing. This is now in place, which supports children's health.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

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 that risks to children are identified and minimised when accessing the outdoor play area
- improve younger children's accessibility to equipment and resources to enable free choice
- further develop staff's understanding of child protection

- increase the range of resources reflecting positive images of race, culture and disability to develop children's awareness of diversity
- improve upon written policies and procedures, which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, by ensuring that they comply with the revised guidance to the national standards and ensure that they are shared with staff at induction.

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