



The Meadows Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221911
Inspection date	01 February 2007
Inspector	Emma Bright
Setting Address	Farriers Gate, New Road, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire, PE16 6QP
Telephone number	01354 696261
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Registered person	The Meadows Centre
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 Meadows Daycare is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the setting and members of the local community. It opened in 1998 and operates from a purpose-built community centre next to Glebelands Primary School in Chatteris. A maximum of 44 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open five days a week from 09:00 to 18:00 during school term times offering sessions for nursery and out of school care. It is also open from 08:00 to 18:00 during the school holidays for the playscheme. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 149 children aged from three to 11 years on roll. Of these, 53 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The setting employs eight staff. Of these, seven staff hold appropriate qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff have a very good understanding of childhood nutrition and ensure children are well nourished. For example, children help themselves to a good selection of healthy snacks; they enthusiastically tuck in to pieces of orange, cucumber, raisins and breadsticks. Young children are beginning to make connections about healthy food being 'good for you' and explain that "raisins make you big". All children enjoy the social aspect with their peers and adults during snack time, which is provided on a 'rolling' basis so that they can choose when they want to eat. This allows them to continue their activities and enhances the flow of each session. All children's individual dietary needs are met as clear information is gathered from parents about allergies or special dietary requirements and this ensures children can eat safely.

All children are well cared for if they become unwell or in the event of an accident because clear information is gathered from parents and records are in place to make sure that appropriate care is given. Accurate details of children's medical needs are recorded and all staff are aware so that they can act swiftly in an emergency. Thorough recording systems ensure that parents are well informed of any accidents their child sustains whilst at the setting.

All children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday, practical experiences, and learn the importance of regular fresh air and exercise. They enjoy running around freely and exert themselves outdoors in all kinds of weather. Young children develop good physical coordination as they participate in 'ring games' outdoors and tackle obstacles courses indoors; children in the out of school club enjoy playing football with their friends. This helps all children to develop good muscle control, feel relaxed and develop a sense of overall well-being. All children understand about personal hygiene; they competently wash their hands before eating and young children explain that they do this to get rid of germs "because the germs are on our hands".

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a welcoming and homely environment, where their artwork is valued and attractively displayed for others to see and enjoy. This promotes their confidence and self-esteem, whilst contributing to their sense of belonging. Emphasis is given to making sure that the environment is well prepared with a range of activities, which stimulate children's interest and enhances their development. All children play with a very good range toys and activities that are suitable for their age and stage of development. Resources have been carefully chosen to support children's play and these are cleaned and checked regularly to ensure that they remain in safe and in good condition.

All children benefit from the staff's very good understanding of safety issues; thorough security procedures restrict access to the setting and prevent children from leaving the premises

unaccompanied. Staff are particularly vigilant in their supervision of children to ensure their safety. Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff explain the dangers to them, which help children to develop their understanding of hazards and to take responsibility for themselves.

Risk assessments and daily checks by staff further promote children's safety. Thorough safety policies and procedures are clearly implemented by staff to ensure that children remain safe. For example, a clear written emergency escape plan is in place and children regularly practise the fire drill so that they know what to do in an emergency and are familiar with the routine. Children are well protected and kept safe from harm as all staff have a clear understanding of their role in child protection. They attend regular training in child protection to ensure their knowledge is up to date and a designated person ensures that any concerns are dealt with effectively, so that children's welfare is fully safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the setting at both the nursery and out of school club sessions. They benefit from a well-resourced and organised environment, which enables them to settle readily into their activities. Children are confident, independent and they make decisions about what they want to do. For example, young children select art materials to make their own pictures explaining "I'm making a card for my Daddy because he's poorly" and they demonstrate pride in their achievements, eagerly sharing their work with others. Children play competently on their own or with others and form strong friendships with their peers. They enjoy warm and affectionate relationships with staff, which increases their sense of trust and help them to develop a sense of self.

Staff plan a balanced range of meaningful activities across the sessions that take account of children's different ages and stages of development, stimulate their interest and promote all areas of development. Staff respond positively to children's ideas and opinions and consistently interact with them to extend their learning and play. For example, in the out of school club children enjoy games of 'boggle', which helps support their literacy skills whilst having fun.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All of the staff working with children have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and know how the activities they provide contribute to children's progress. Planning is in place, which provides a range of interesting activities and experiences that cover all areas of learning. A good balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Assessment records have not yet been sufficiently developed to fully record children's achievements and plan for the next step in their learning. Parents do not have opportunities to contribute to this, sharing what they know about their child's abilities, which means staff have an incomplete picture of children's attainments.

Children are confident communicators and eagerly share their news and knowledge with adults and one another. They listen and readily follow instructions and staff make good use of pictorial timetables to help children visualise what happens next. Children's early writing skills are

developing well as they use marks readily to represent their ideas. Some children confidently write their own names, forming recognisable letters and they talk knowingly about the letter their name begins with. All children enjoy looking at books, alone or together; they select from a good range of books, which they handle with care and respect. Children are independent; they concentrate and sustain attention in tasks that stimulate them. Their behaviour is good and they take turns, such as when negotiating for resources, readily sharing them with others. Children display good levels of self-esteem as they point out their art work saying "that's my beautiful painting".

Children demonstrate good problem solving skills; they use 'blu-tack' to 'mend' furniture and show each other how to make cards by folding the paper in half. Children use mathematical language to compare shape, position and height; and they competently explain that the height chart on the wall "is so we know how big we are". They have a good understanding of numbers, counting and calculation, and use numbers in their play and in everyday routines. For example, children know how old they are explaining "I'm going to be four when I've finished being three" and, and they develop mathematical ideas as they sell ice creams, charging £40.

Children find out about and observe living things; they learn to care for the goldfish, taking turns to feed them. They enjoy talking about events in their own lives that are important to them and discuss their experiences outside of the setting with adults. Children are becoming competent users of the computer and have good opportunities to develop their IT skills through the range of programmes. Children thoroughly enjoy the range of creative activities, particularly 'gloop'. They enjoy pushing their hands through the 'gloop' and scooping it up. They hold their hands up and watch with fascination as it trickles through their fingers. Children explain to visitors that the way to remove 'gloop' from clothing is to "wait and then you can brush it off when it's crusty".

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's behaviour is very good; they interact confidently with adults and their peers, learning to consider the needs of others and to work together co-operatively. For example, younger children explain how the sand timer helps them to take turns 'when they turn it upside down'. Children in the out of school club respond well to strategies such as writing their name on the 'waiting list' for popular resources such as the computer and clearly explain how they use it. Young children's self-esteem is further enhanced through 'what a star' awards, which they receive for being kind, helping another person or tidying up; as a result they work harmoniously together. Older children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging explaining "the thing I like best about the out of school club is I make best friends".

All children benefit from the setting's emphasis of working with parents and carers; good settling in procedures that are based around their individual needs helps to support children in the transition between home and the setting. Parents have opportunities to present their views through the use of questionnaires and they speak highly of the setting and staff. They receive good information about the setting so they know about activities and events, and have daily opportunities to discuss their child with staff. All documentation is in place to share

information with parents and carers so that they know about the setting's policies and procedures.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from the staff's caring support, which enables them to participate at an appropriate level. Clear records are kept of children's progress and staff work well with parents, carers and other agencies to support the children's needs, which ensure that they are included within the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. All children have many opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through a range of well planned activities. The good range of resources that positively represent the children who attend, as well as individuals from the wider community supports their play.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is good. Staff seek parents' views about their child's interests and achievements before the child starts, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. This contributes to children's well-being in the setting. Parents can view their child's records at any time and they meet regularly with staff, which means they are informed of how their child is progressing and developing. However, parents have less information on the Foundation Stage to help them understand about how activities help children learn and make progress towards the early learning goals

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a well prepared environment that promotes positive outcomes for all children and enables them to make decisions and pursue their own interests. This contributes to their enjoyment at the setting. Children are happy and confident because staff develop warm and affectionate relationships with them. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that adults are suitable and have appropriate skills and knowledge to work with children. The induction procedure and detailed operational plan, with up to date information for staff, makes sure that all members of the team are secure in their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. Nearly all of the staff team hold appropriate qualifications and they attend a range of training opportunities, which means that children benefit from practices which are in line with current ideas and legislation.

Children's needs are met by very good adult:child ratios and they benefit from the care and attention offered by the staff. All required documentation, which ensures children's welfare, is in place. For example, parental consents and details of any medical needs are obtained and stored with appropriate regard for confidentiality. However, some policies and procedures have minor details missing, which affect children's safety in an emergency. Staff work well together and demonstrate great enthusiasm for creating a stimulating and interesting environment for all children.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Managers are committed to continually developing the setting's practice to ensure that all children have access to good quality learning experiences. However, systems to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education are not yet fully developed to ensure that children consistently have access to rich learning experiences. Children benefit from the staff's good

knowledge and understanding of how children learn and their ongoing commitment to further training to update their knowledge and practice. Staff work well together as a team and demonstrate enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that promotes positive outcomes for children. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to update the child protection and complaints policy and ensure that staff improve their knowledge of health and safety procedures. The documentation has been improved; however it is in need of small further improvements and is therefore being brought forward at this inspection. Staff have updated their knowledge on health and safety and the good practice is shared throughout the setting. This ensures children's health and safety.

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider agreed to improve the physical activity programme and provide further opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning. Children benefit from lots of physical exercise, both indoors and outdoors, which enhances their well-being and helps them learn about leading a healthy lifestyle. Parents are welcomed into the setting; they help out by sharing their skills and traditions, working alongside their children and this enables them to support their child's learning.

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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- review and update documentation to ensure that the child protection and behaviour policies, and the procedures for complaints and lost children are complete.

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):

- further develop children's assessment records so that they are informative and help children to move on to the next stage in their learning. Ensure that parents have opportunities to contribute to this record so that they know about their child's progress
- ensure that parents are provided with further information on the Foundation Stage so that they know how activities help children learn and make progress towards the early learning goals
- continue to develop systems to monitor and evaluate the good practice, identifying areas for improvement to ensure that children continue to have access to rich learning experiences.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk