



The Meadows Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY340486
Inspection date	26 February 2007
Inspector	Stacey Sangster
Setting Address	18 St. Helens Crescent, HASTINGS, East Sussex, TN34 2EW
Telephone number	01424 422611
E-mail	ron@cossey.fsnet.co.uk
Registered person	Ronald Michael Cossey
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 Nursery School is one of five nurseries run by the same owner. It opened in 2006 and operates from the ground floor of a large detached house on the outskirts of Hastings. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery employs 6 members of staff who hold appropriate early years qualifications and 2 are working towards a higher level qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a hygienic, well maintained and very comfortable environment. This is effectively maintained by the staff who ensure that all areas are clean before children arrive. Staff routinely wipe tables between activities and before serving snacks and meals and talk to children about the reasons for doing this. Discussions about keeping the environment clean and tidy are frequent and this helps children to learn about basic hygiene.

Children benefit from good support from staff at snack times and enjoy taking part in the preparation by buttering their own bread. Staff and children chat about healthy foods and those which they should eat in moderation, which enhances their developing understanding of healthy eating. They choose from carrot and raisins at snack time and can help themselves freely to drinks throughout the day, preventing them from become thirsty. Packed lunches are provided by parents for main mealtimes and these are refrigerated to prevent spoiling. Warm foods are checked with a thermostatic probe to ensure they are reheated in line with environmental health guidelines

Children receive protection from infectious illnesses, as any who are infections are prohibited from attending the setting and this helps to minimise cross infection. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that children are effectively treated in case of an accident. Staff with first aid qualifications are present at all times and clear written records are maintained. Appropriate procedures are also in place regarding the administration of medication.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play with a wide range of toys and resources that are well-maintained and appropriate for their ages and stages of development. These are attractively displayed and generally all stored at low levels so that children can access them safely and easily.

Some very good precautions have been taken to help keep children safe and most risks have been minimised. Doorways and stairs are fitted with stair gates, finger guards and socket covers are in place in all rooms. The security of the premises is very good. Radiators are covered with guards, but on longer panels not all of the metal is covered and this reduces the effectiveness of their protection. Staff are very vigilant and provide children with positive role models and gentle reminders of how to keep themselves and each other safe. As a result, children confidently move around the setting and are able explore their environment safely and with minimal intervention from staff.

Appropriate procedures are in place to protect children from the risk of fire. Evacuation drills are practised regularly and fire fighting equipment is in place. Overall the fire procedures are effective and safeguard the children, however as the manager, was unable to confirm if the front door to the premises was a fire exit or not this temporarily reduced the effectiveness of the procedures.

The manager acts as the child protection co-ordinator and is clear on the responsibilities of this role. She has a thorough understanding of the procedures to follow if any concerns are identified and has all the relevant contact details to make a referral if necessary. Staff have received training and all are aware of the process for reporting concerns; as a result, children's welfare is protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery. Most separate easily from parents and carers and enthusiastically greet the staff and their friends. Children play happily in the relaxed, friendly atmosphere. Their individual emotional and care needs are very well understood by all staff. Staff demonstrate warmth and affection toward the children and this is reciprocated. Younger children and those new to the setting receive additional cuddles and support to help them settle.

A large number of activities are set up for free play and these are well resourced and appealing to the children although are somewhat limited in the outdoor areas. Resources and space are used well to support play and provide a stable environment for children of all ages. Children access a wide variety of activities, which staff thoughtfully plan and prepare to encourage them to develop skills and have fun. Staff are familiar with and regularly use the Birth to three matters framework. This effectively involves the under three's and furthers their development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and understand how children learn. A balanced curriculum is in place that covers the six areas of learning. Staff are imaginative in their use of resources to effectively support children's development and promote the stepping stones within the foundation stage.

Children's individual achievements are recorded, the information is used to plan the next stages of the children's learning. The level of challenge is sufficient and staff are skilled at motivating children to take part and explore activities and ask questions about how things work and why things happen. Children benefit from a range of teaching methods which help them to learn. Staff provide opportunities for the children to think and to demonstrate what they know. They encourage children to try new experiences and to share events and experiences from home with the other children. Staff work closely with the children, they sit with them at activities to extend and develop the children's knowledge and understanding and inspire thoughtful discussion.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are well supported to develop good social skills and to learn right from wrong in a supportive environment. They are provided with a range of activities and resources aimed at promoting positive images of

people from throughout the community and the wider world and are learning about different customs and beliefs.

Children are polite, well mannered and caring. Adults act as very good role models and are calm and consistent when dealing with the children. Children understand the accepted codes of behaviour. They know that staff will support them if another child is behaving unfairly for example refusing to share a toy and approach staff confidently for help to resolve issues. This helps children to relax and feel at ease when they play and staff guidance and support helps children develop positive skills such as how to negotiate.

The nursery provides an inclusive environment and has good arrangements in place to care for children with special needs. The setting has a very positive attitude towards meeting the needs of all children and the manager has experience of adapting care to meet the needs of children who require additional support. Similarly, there are effective procedures in place to care for children with English and an additional language.

The partnership with parents is good. Those whose children receive nursery funding are supported to understand the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum. They are kept informed of their child's progress through face to face meetings and contact books. They are invited to look at their child's individual profile and to contribute comments and suggestions regarding planning their next steps, although sometimes opportunities are missed for key workers to use this information within the formal assessment of children's progress. All parents are greeted warmly by staff and are familiar with the procedures and routines of the setting. Children benefit from these positive relationships and the easy exchange of information.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the setting is very effective. The manager is very well qualified and experienced and is supported by a team of staff who have or who are in the process of obtaining appropriate childcare qualifications. The ratio of qualified to unqualified staff meets the requirements of registration.

There are very good systems in place to promote training within the staff group appraisals, staff meetings and staff monitoring are all used effectively to highlight staff strengths and offer training opportunities to support staff development.

The organisation of the setting is very good. Rooms are organised to provide appealing, child centred environments where they can explore and play usually grouped according to their age. Staff are well deployed and time is also well managed to provide children with an appropriate pace. Routines provide a good mix of relaxing as well as more stimulating activities.

Leadership and management is good. The operations manual and policies help to guide the staff and inform the parents. Policies are tried and tested as they are consistent throughout the nursery chain. The content of the policies are reviewed or updated regularly. The five nurseries within the chain collate information and share examples of good practice during managers meetings. This co-ordinated approach provides good support and enables the setting

to benefit from the lessons learnt by the practitioners in the other settings. Positive relationships exist between the whole staff team and this creates a harmonious environment for the children.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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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 radiators are adequately protected to prevent children from accessing them when they are hot
- extend the range of activities available in the garden

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):

- use information provided by parents more regularly in the assessment of children's progress

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