



The Meadows Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511228
Inspection date	22 June 2005
Inspector	Fran Fielder
Setting Address	5-6 Fletcher Close, Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 2BW
Telephone number	01323 440144
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Registered person	Ronald Cossey and Valerie 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, Hailsham, is one of a chain of four private nursery settings operating in East Sussex. It has been registered since 2001.

The premises are made up of two terraced houses that were adapted during their building to house the nursery. The accommodation is on two floors and comprises four rooms used for child care, toilets, a kitchen area, and an office. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play. The nursery serves families from the local

community and the surrounding area.

The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 45 children at any one time. There are currently 113 children on roll, of whom 56 are in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports a number of children with special needs and some who speak English as an additional language.

There are 10 members of staff who work with the children including the nursery manager. There is also a curriculum standards manager who is responsible for overseeing all four nurseries. All are full time and all have an appropriate early years qualification. Three members of staff are currently on management training courses.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08.00 until 18.00 for fifty weeks of the year.

The nursery is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) and receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The nursery has an Investors in People Award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

From an early age children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through effective daily routines. For example, children automatically wash their hands after visiting the toilet and understand why. They also know that washing their hands before handling food prevents the spread of infection.

Children enjoy a good range of nutritious snacks such as fresh and dried fruit, raw vegetables and bread. This encourages children to develop healthy eating habits. Children receive plenty of drinks throughout the day to prevent dehydration. Older children can help themselves to water which encourages them to think about their own needs. Well-planned topic work helps children understand that rest, as well as vigorous exercise, is part of a healthy life style.

Warm interaction with their carers ensures young children's emotional well-being is nurtured. Toddlers learn to control their own body gaining physical skills appropriate to their stage of development. Staff are supportive and responsive helping toddlers towards independence.

Children have regular access to large outdoor play equipment where they can practise and develop physical skills. Children are competent when using the climbing frame and enjoy experimenting with different ways of moving. They show good co-ordination when running and jumping. Some children lack challenge when practising balancing skills. Children skilfully manoeuvre wheeled toys. For example, children move the toys backwards and forwards to make sure the vehicles are carefully 'parked' before moving on to other activities. Children show good hand and

eye co-ordination when throwing and catching different sized balls.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and learn in a secure environment where they can move around safely. Bright displays and examples of children's work make the premises very welcoming to children and adults. Even the lamp shades are decorated with children's hand prints. This makes the whole nursery very child friendly.

Although the premises are extremely safe the toilet cubicles do not have doors. This means children do not have sufficient privacy when visiting the toilet independently. Children have easy access to a good range of resources that are safe and well maintained. There are many good quality toys that are stimulating and suitable for the age and stage of development of the children.

There are regular risk assessments both indoors and out that enable staff to identify and quickly address and potential hazards. Good staff interaction helps children develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe. For example general discussions about hot kettles, the need for sun cream and hats teaches children to think about their own safety. When children go up and down the stairs they are reminded to use the low level hand rail as a way of keeping themselves steady on the stairs.

There are excellent systems in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate and all have a sound understanding of child protection issues. This promotes and safeguards children's welfare within the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The premises are bright and welcoming for all. There are beautiful displays of children's work which shows how staff value and welcome children's contributions. Children know the routines well and are very happy, confident and enthusiastic. Children confidently approach staff for support. This demonstrates that good, trusting relationships make children feel secure and valued.

Staff plan well for children under three years. They use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide stimulating activities that support all aspects of development. There are several very well presented interest tables that children enjoy exploring. Children play with a wide range of toys and equipment that are stimulating and fun. They enjoy and learn through a range of interesting activities that are appealing. All children learn and benefit from regular visitors such as a midwife, a police officer, a fire officer and small farm animals.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage of learning. This enables them to plan a good range of practical activities that interest the children. Plans include differentiation to ensure all children are suitably challenged and supported. Good observations identify children's achievement and this allows staff to plan the next steps for each child.

Children achieve well and are making good progress in all areas. Children develop a positive attitude to learning. They are curious and ask questions about people and activities. Many aspects of their day encourages independence. For example, children see to their personal needs and enjoy choosing from a variety of large play equipment in the garden.

Children enjoy speaking French and can recite colours and numbers. Many children happily demonstrate their skills during circle time.

The funded children have access to two very well equipped rooms. This gives children space for quiet and active play. However children do not freely move from room to room which can hinder their spontaneity. Staff work with the children but whole group activities can mean staff having little to do. Some table top activities are a little overcrowded and some can be too adult led. As a result opportunities for children to be truly creative are limited. Children love free play but this does not last long enough for children to learn for themselves. Children enjoy lots of art and craft activities linked to the current theme. For example children make hot air balloons during their topic 'Up in the air'.

Children speak very confidently to peers and adults. They talk openly during circle time about themselves and their families. They express their ideas and experiences well using good vocabulary. For example children are able to describe objects in the 'feely bag' so well that others are able to recognise the object without being given the name. Children recognise and write letters correctly. Children recognise rhyme and delight in finding matching words such as mouse and house, moth and cloth, wagon and dragon. Children listen attentively to stories and enjoy choosing and singing their favourite songs.

There are lots of opportunities to count and recognise numbers. Children sing songs such as 'Five Little Ducks' that help develop an understanding of calculation. Many children can count to 20. Older children count well using one object for each number.

Children enjoy a range of first hand experiences that allow them to explore and investigate. They dig in the garden and look closely at a variety of natural objects such as shells and leaves. This increases children's understanding of the world around them. Regular discussions about the weather and seasons help children develop an understanding of the passage of time and changes in nature. Children learn to appreciate other cultures through well planned topic work.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated as individuals and staff acknowledge differences and

preferences. All children have access to the full range of activities. There are many resources that reflect all aspects of society. This encourages children to develop a positive attitude towards diversity. Well planned topics and activities help children to understand and appreciate other cultures.

There are good systems in place to support children who have special needs. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures all children's needs are well planned for and met.

Children behave well and learn to respect their environment. They willingly help to clear away toys and enjoy responsibilities. For example, children take turns to prepare the table for lunch. Staff are mainly consistent in their approach to behaviour management and use appropriate strategies. This helps children learn right from wrong. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents complete an initial assessment of their child which ensures staff have a good knowledge of individual needs and achievements. This enables staff to build on what children already know as well as providing appropriate care. There are both formal and informal systems in place for staff and parents to share information about children's individual progress and development. Parents contribute to their child's assessment at parents' evenings. The regular sharing of information enhances children's progress towards the early learning goals.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. Clear aims for the nursery reflect a commitment to improving the quality of care and education. There are good procedures for appointing and inducting staff. This makes certain that adults working with the children are suitable. The opportunities for staff development are excellent. For example staff who wish to pursue a career in management are encouraged to develop their skills by attending appropriate courses. Regular appraisals identify training needs. This supports staff in their role and ensures they have the latest and most relevant information available.

Staff deployment is effective and ensures children are well supervised at all times. Children receive good support from staff who know them well. However the use of staff, resources and space can sometimes inhibit children's independence.

Staff work well as a team in all rooms and clear communication and guidance allows them to provide a stimulating well-balanced programme. Teaching is monitored through observation and discussion. Staff evaluate the activities and use the information to enhance the learning experiences for children.

All mandatory records are in place, confidential and well maintained. This guarantees the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare. The provision meets the needs of the children attending.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery were asked to maintain confidentiality with regard to accident records and details of medication given. There are now effective procedures that ensure confidentiality and contribute to children's welfare.

The nursery agreed to make written reports available to all parents and not just to those who attend parent consultations. All parents receive a photocopy of this information which is kept in the children's files. This ensures all parents and carers are aware of their children's progress and can support their children in their next steps of learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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 children are respected at all times by affording them privacy when visiting the toilet

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):

- review the use of space, resources and staff to allow children greater independence to explore, experiment and make decisions about their learning

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website:

