

# Meadows Mere Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	507796
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Sue Taylor
<b>Setting Address</b>	1-2 Alfred Road, Kingsmere, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN23 6TA
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<b>Registered person</b>	PLACES FOR CHILDREN LIMITED
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Meadows Mere Nursery School is one of five run by the same owner, under the organisation of PLACES FOR CHILDREN LIMITED. It opened in 1998 and operates from two adapted houses in a residential area. The accommodation is arranged over two floors. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 130 children aged from one year to under five years on roll. Of these, 70 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications and 5 are working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Clear hygienic routines followed by staff help maintain the premises clean and a healthy environment for children. Good hand washing routines are in place, with pictorial guidance for children and low-level sinks for easy access. The nappy changing routines support hygienic practices, for example, the staff wear disposable aprons and gloves. The written information shared with parents, regarding the nursery's policy on children's sickness, is clear and helps prevent cross infection. With the majority of the staff team having valid first aid training, children are given appropriate attention if they have an accident.

Clear information is obtained from parents about children's health care needs. This includes detailed information about individual diets or allergies, such as signs of allergic reactions and subsequent action. This ensures staff are well informed and are able to give suitable attention. Children learn about healthy practices through explanations from the staff.

The nursery supports children in having a balanced diet, providing parents with helpful guidance. Children benefit from healthy snacks such as various fruit. They bring packed lunches, where a member of staff checks for ice packs or perishables and label and store them in the fridge to prevent them from spoiling. The organisation of meal times is effective and children enjoy the happy, social occasion. Drinks are available throughout the day as children of all ages are able to access their own drink container.

There are daily opportunities for play in fresh air for all children, when the weather is suitable. There is easy access from the ground floor for the younger children. The large equipment, such as the climbing frame, slide and ride on toys help develop children's physical skills. Indoors, the older children use the soft play resources to help develop skills in balancing and jumping. Children learn to move in different ways as they pretend to be animals or enjoy taking part in the music and movement activities. Children's hand-eye coordination is supported well with a range of activities and resources. For example, they learn to thread needles with wool, make patterns using peg boards or practise writing skills. Children's emotional well being is supported well with the relationships they develop with the warm, caring staff.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The children benefit from the secure premises and garden. There are effective procedures for the arrival and departure of children that ensures their safety. Children can explore their room safely, as there are safety gates at doorways. The kitchen area is gated off from the toddler area to help keep them safe but this also means they can see the staff as drinks and snacks are prepared. Information about the safety of certain foods for snack times relating to a child's age is displayed, helping to maintain a safe environment.

Children learn to keep themselves safe, with good support from the staff. For example, as the children go up and down the stairs carefully, fully supervised by staff. Written risk assessments are in place with hazards minimised. Fire procedures are in place with a good level of detection and evacuations are practiced regularly. This ensures staff and children have an awareness of the procedures.

There is a very wide range of age appropriate toys and resources in each room. Regular safety checks ensure they remain in good condition, safe for children to use. There is a good mix of natural and plastic items for children to explore safely. The low level storage enables safe easy access by children of all ages. The furniture is suitable for the ages of the children, however there is no domestic style seating, particularly in the toddler rooms, where children can snuggle down with staff or share books.

There are good procedures in place relating to child protection. The named member of staff with responsibility has had relevant training. The staff are aware of the process to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care. They are aware of their role in safeguarding the children's welfare.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The nursery provides a welcoming child centred environment. There are numerous displays and photos for children and parents to look at, making good use of wall space and the ceiling. Positive relationships develop between staff and children, supported by good staff practices and a caring approach to the children. There is a key worker scheme in place, however, the number of children for whom a key worker is responsible for lessens the effectiveness of developing an in depth knowledge of each child.

Young children are introduced to counting and problem solving as they play, with appropriate staff input. For example, counting jumps on the trampette or during story time. The planning provides some links to the Birth to three matters framework. It shows that a good variety of interesting activities and experiences are made available to the children, in addition to free play. However, it does not always relate to where the children are in their individual development or learning. The nursery has plans to amend the planning to ensure it fully reflects the learning needs of the children. The staff are aware of individual children's needs and adapt activities accordingly. This helps ensure children are supported or challenged appropriately.

Children benefit from visitors to the nursery such as a local sheep farm where children can pet the sheep and learn about their care. The resources are stored at low level enabling children to make choices about their play. This includes a low shelf with art materials such as paint and paper available for children to access easily. They have natural items that they are able to explore. They have fun exploring sound with musical instruments.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff are familiar with the Foundation Stage and have a good understanding of how children learn. The planning shows an interesting range of activities. It identifies learning intentions linked to the six areas of learning and provides some supportive guidance to staff. For example, it notes possible activity adaptations for challenge and support. However, the identified stepping stones recorded as the learning intentions are generally pre-planned and do not always relate to where children actually are in their progress towards the early learning goals. As a result, it is not clear how the planning meets children's individual next steps in their learning. However, the staff adapt the activities well and from their knowledge of the children ensure they receive appropriate support or challenge as they play.

The staff make regular observations of the children. Their progress along the stepping stones is noted in the Stepping Forward profiles. The staff meet monthly to discuss the planning and the learning needs of the children. This helps ensure that learning needs are looked at. The staff plan a range of activities that help children make progress in all areas of learning. They create a stimulating child centred environment where the children's work is displayed and labelled. This shows children's work is valued and gives them a sense of belonging.

The staff are very good role models and demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning by presenting activities in an interesting and enthusiastic manner. They ask good questions of the children to encourage them to think and express their own ideas. They value what the children say. The children are very confident. They gain a good level of independence as they make choices and are encouraged to do things for themselves. Some games are designed to encourage involvement with other children, helping to develop social skills and communication.

The majority of children talk very confidently. They learn letter sounds, recognise their name and enjoy looking at books with friends or adults. The staff get the children to count throughout the day. This encourages the children to use counting in their own play. They learn about measuring and two and three-dimensional shapes. They learn about simple calculation through number songs or problem solving as they decide how many plates they need.

The nursery does not use a computer with the children. However, they have other opportunities to learn about information technology. For example, in addition to using cash registers and calculators, they have great fun as they instruct the remote robot to move along a grid map. They have good opportunities to investigate items from the natural world, with excellent displays. They gain a good awareness of other cultures and the wider world from the extensive resources available for them to look at. They learn to count in French and some children know some French words such as those of familiar colours.

Activities are planned that get children to look at what objects might float or sink. They explore ice and talk about night and day. Music and musical instruments are used for fun and creativity. For example, they play instruments to create sounds to reflect sunrise and sun set. Role play areas and small world resources encourage imaginative play. Children are able to access the art and craft materials. An extensive selection of different materials and tools, such as glue and scissors, allows them to use their own ideas and be creative.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The children are very settled at the nursery, with their care needs met well. They are familiar with the environment and daily routines. They play with resources that positively reflect the wider world, with an excellent selection in one room upstairs. Children learn some French words and learn to accept and respect differences as they follow the good role models shown by the staff. All children are valued as individuals and included positively. Children with English as an additional language are supported well and have their home language valued, which helps them settle. Individual educational plans are devised for children who need extra support in specific areas of their development. As a result, the nursery provides an inclusive environment for all children.

As a result of effective behaviour management, children behave very well. They know the routines of the day and help tidy away. They understand the need to share and take turns. The

atmosphere in the nursery is a happy one, with children well occupied and content. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents are welcomed into the nursery and develop positive relationships with the staff. They have an understanding of the nursery policies as these are shared with them when their child starts nursery. The policies include details about the complaints process and the nursery responsibility with regards to child protection. A home link sheet helps ensure information about the child is shared, this helps staff know a little about the child before they start. Notice boards provide useful information and include the planning. This helps parents have an idea of the activities their child is involved in. Each age group has an additional learning intention displayed and parents are invited to support their child from examples of activities they can do at home. Each child has a contact book that records particular achievements or information about a child's day.

The partnership with parents of nursery education children is good. They receive written information about the Foundation Stage that helps inform them that play has an important role in children's learning. Termly consultations are held where parents and staff discuss children's progress and share the assessment profiles. The meeting is recorded and may identify specific learning needs that can be worked on at home or at the nursery. Staff are available for discussions about the child's day or use the child's contact book to note achievements.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

There is a thorough recruitment process that ensures the suitability of staff. A clear induction process is in place for new staff, with ongoing support for all. The staff work well together and the day runs smoothly. The staff are actively encouraged to attend training courses and often share information with their colleagues. Regular staff meetings are held and the senior staff also meet to ensure information sharing is consistent. There are clear policies and procedures in place. The recording systems in place are well maintained. The children benefit from the organisation of the day, resources and environment.

Leadership and management are good. The staff are clear about their role and responsibilities. Their professional development is supported well with regular supervision and appraisals. The provider has a good awareness of the nursery strengths and areas to be developed. The nursery integrates care and learning well. The staff team are supported well and as a result they motivate the children to want to take part in activities and learn. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Good progress has been made since the last inspection. At the previous care inspection the nursery was asked to improve documentation relation to the register and the complaint procedure. The complaint policy now clearly informs parents of the procedure that reflects the Children Act regulation. The register has been adapted and includes an accurate record of times that children, staff and visitors arrive and leave as requested.

Since the last nursery education inspection, the nursery has provided parents with more specific information about what their child needs to do next in order to make progress.

## 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

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 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):

- consider the provision of domestic style seating to enable young children to snuggle and be comfortable with staff
- ensure that the assessment records of children's continuing development and learning are used in the planning process to meet their identified next steps, appropriate to their age and stage of development.

#### 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):

- develop the planning process to ensure it takes account of individual children's identified next steps in their progress towards the early learning goals.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)