

# The Meadow Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY355864
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 April 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Yvonne Victoria Facey
<b>Setting Address</b>	Southey & District Community Association, Shirecliffe Community Centre, 349 Shirecliffe Road, Sheffield, S5 8XJ
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<b>Registered person</b>	NCH
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Crèche

## 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?

The Meadow Children's Centre was registered in 2007. It forms part of the 'roll out' of the National Children's Centre initiative, and grew out of the National Children's Home (NCH) and Sure Start projects for the Southey Green and Shirecliffe areas of Sheffield. The centre provides multi-agency support for local families, including family support and parent link services. Early years health professionals, including health visitors and midwives are also on site. The Meadow Children's Centre operates from premises in the Shirecliffe area, adjacent to Busk Meadows School. The centre works in close partnership with the school and a range of other agencies.

The nursery has its own separate area within the building. There are two interlinked rooms for the under twos, a room for two to five-year-olds and a sensory room. All play rooms have direct access to enclosed outdoor play spaces. There is a room on the first floor which is available for crèche provision, to support training courses and workshops. The centre is open every weekday for 48 weeks of the year, between 08.00 and 18.00. A maximum of 44 children under five years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 61 children on roll of which 21 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery has provision for children with disabilities and learning difficulties.

The nursery employs nine staff all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children receive a healthy diet and have regular meals and snack times. Snack menus are displayed. Children have lots of fruit in their diet, such as pear, apples and tangerines. Parents supply a packed lunch and are encouraged to provide healthy meals for their children. Children easily access water at all times as a water machine is installed in the play room with disposable cups. Milk or water is offered at snack times. Staff are aware of children's dietary requirements and these are displayed in the playroom. Meal times are relaxed and sociable, where staff sit with the children and have appropriate discussions about eating a healthy diet.

Children enjoy and benefit from regular physical activity. For example, all children have daily opportunities to play outdoors in all weathers and are able to freely explore the resources available, including construction toys, sand, water and bikes. Younger children are able to rest and sleep according to their individual routines, which staff are familiar with due to good communication with parents.

Very good procedures are in place to prevent the spread of infection. For instance, cot sheets are washed each day, children are excluded if they are ill and nappy changing procedures are good. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that children receive appropriate care in the event of an accident or need medication. For example, staff are familiar with emergency procedures and several staff in the nursery hold first aid certificates. Children benefit from the on site presence of health visitors, where staff are able to seek advice. Parents are contacted and verbally agree if their children can contact with the health visitors. However, written permission for emergency medical treatment does not include seeking advice. Children are able to play in a very clean environment, where no indoor shoes are worn in the baby room, which limits the risk of infection for the youngest children.

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

The provision is good.

Children are able to play comfortably in a very welcoming environment, which has excellent facilities and plenty of space for their needs. All rooms have colourful displays, attractive resources and suitable furnishings. Babies can sleep comfortably in the sleep room adjacent to the main baby room where staff can check them easily. There are both monitors to hear babies when they wake up and to check their breathing.

Children's risk of injury is minimised as staff take effective precautions to prevent accidents. For example staff carry out detailed risk assessments and help children to develop a good understanding about safety rules. They discuss safety rules, such as, not running indoors, the importance of keeping their environment clear to prevent tripping and road safety. Children regularly practise fire drills with staff, who evaluate the effectiveness of these so that everyone is able to evacuate safely. As a result children are beginning to learn about keeping themselves safe.

Staff supervise children well both indoors and outdoors to help ensure their safety. Children are able to play with a wide range of safe equipment, which staff ensure they can access freely

and safely. For instance, equipment and toys are accessible in low-level storage units. Children's risk of harm from others is minimised as staff have a good understanding of their roles in child protection. For example, staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding children and are familiar with procedures for reporting and recording concerns.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and engaged in play throughout the session developing close relationships with staff. Children show a keen interest in what they do and are able to develop a wide range of skills, as there is a broad range of activities available. The staff work very well with the younger children and extend their knowledge and understanding with appropriate questioning. Babies and young children enjoy a wide range of activities that successfully promote their learning. For example, they enjoy watering plants and exploring sand and water play indoors and outdoors. Staff base planning for all children around children's interest and their next steps in learning. For instance, children were interested diggers are taken to a building site to see them working. Children enjoy singing and stories supported by enthusiastic staff. Children attentively listen and join in making animal noises and discussing what animals eat. Children's individual needs are very well met. Parents complete 'all about me' information at the beginning of the placement. This includes information about sleep, routines, allergies and favourite toys.

All children have an excellent range of activities which are challenging and stimulating. Children receive good support from staff as they are friendly, enthusiastic and frequently engage children in purposeful discussions. Staff use hand signs and pictures as an aid to communication. For example, the youngest children use simple pictures to choose the songs they want to sing, and staff use hand signals to indicate hand washing. Staff throughout the nursery show a keen involvement in children's interests and play, using both planned and spontaneous opportunities to effectively extend children's learning. Staff are using the 'Birth to three matters', framework effectively as part of their planning and assessment systems. A key worker system ensures consistency in assessments and liaising with parents.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching is good. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the learning objectives for each activity and these are clearly linked to the different stepping stones within the Foundation Stage. They give children a wide variety of experiences to explore their environment and develop their skills. Children's attitudes towards learning are very good. They become highly engrossed in their activities and their concentration skills are very good. Staff use spontaneous opportunities to challenge and develop children's learning. For example, while playing a fishing game the member of staff tells children to go and find an item in the room that is the same colour as the fish they caught. Children show high levels of confidence in approaching staff with their ideas and questions. Staff are very responsive and knowledgeable about the children they care for. As a result, helping to extend children's learning very effectively. Staff clearly display planning so that it is easily accessible for parents to see. Staff effectively plan activities based on the children's interest and understanding. They assess children's progress regularly, including written observations that fully support the levels of assessment and clearly identify the next steps in children's learning.

Children enjoy a well resourced role-play area where they use their imaginations well. They enjoy the garden centre and use both the area set out and the outdoor play area as integral play

spaces. For example, they pretend to buy plants and dig in the nursery garden. Children speak very confidently using comprehensive vocabulary, that is extended by the skilful interactions of the staff as they talk and question the children during their play. Children enjoy planned and individual story times and books are important and well used by them. They use music and rhyme very well for example, children beat drums and shake bells to the rhythm of songs sung. However, the music area is set up in the same area as the book corner and at times children's stories were disrupted. There are plenty of recourses for children to discover technology and find out how things work. However, access to these recourses limits children's opportunities to explore them. Children are beginning to understand that writing has a purpose, and enjoy mark making in a variety of areas. They are successfully developing their maths skills, as they count and use number in every day activities. Overall children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

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

The provision is good.

Children have equal access to resources and activities as staff have a very inclusive and welcoming approach. Staff know all children's routine's well, such as their sleeping routines, favourite activities and are therefore able to meet their individual needs effectively. Children are able to play a integral part in the setting, as staff give them good opportunities to develop independence and make practical discussions about their environment. For example, they choose their new bikes out of the catalogue and help to unpack them when they arrive. Staff have a positive and consistent approach to behaviour, frequently praising children for their achievements and building their self esteem. The children play harmoniously together and they very clearly enjoy one another's company. For example, younger and older children mix very well and they look for their friends when they arrive at nursery. Behaviour is very good because the children are busy and engaged throughout the day. The provision for children with disabilities and learning difficulties is good, because the staff have an understanding of how to support these children and their families. Staff work in close partnership with other professionals to provide the children with the extra support they need to ensure they have opportunities to reach their full potential. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from good links between the home and the nursery. Staff develop positive and professional relationships with parents. Staff understand the importance of including the knowledge and experiences of parents to contribute towards children's care and learning. Good information is available about children's progress and the Foundation Stage and some areas are being developed. Easily accessible notice boards, news letters, and home visits all ensure that parents have plentiful information about the nursery education and their children's progress. Policies are easily accessible, although the full complaints procedure is not accessible to parents. Parents indicate that they are very happy with the care provided by the nursery.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The staff plan the routine of the day to ensure that children have very interesting and stimulating experiences each day. Children are always well supervised and purposefully occupied. Staff have effective skills and good levels of qualifications. Effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all staff working with children are suitable to do so. The very

comprehensive policies and procedures are successfully implemented by the staff and children's well-being is effectively promoted.

The services provided by the centre are well-organised and offer a comprehensive range of support and advice to parents and the wider community. 'The One Stop Shop' offers additional services that enhances the overall care for children and their families. It offers breastfeeding support, contact with speech therapist, health visitors and midwives. The whole centre work as part of a team offering support for the community, to ensure that children and families have a successful and valuable service.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic about learning which has a very positive effect on the children. The organisation ensure that there are good opportunities for further training for all staff. Planning and assessment systems are effective and ongoing evaluations ensure that activities for children are as relevant and well-organised. A system is being developed that ensures managers have a clear picture of the nursery education and enables them to monitor the progress of children successfully. The staff are very well supported by the management team, who are committed to provide high quality care for the children. As a result staff work very well together to provide an exciting and stimulating environment for children.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Positive comments from parents show they appreciate the services and the positive impact on the well-being of their children. There is a strong commitment throughout the centre to providing and developing services which improve the outcomes for children and families. The involvement of parents within the centre, as participants in activities and training, volunteers and as employees, increases their confidence and skills and therefore contributes to improving outcomes for children.

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

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted which 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:

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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 accessibility of full complaints procedure
- update the emergency permissions forms to include permission for advice.

### **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 how some areas of the room are used for musical instruments and books (also applies to care)
- develop children's experiences of use of technology.

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)