

# The Meads

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	401994
<b>Inspection date</b>	07/07/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	David Wynford-Jones
<b>Setting address</b>	Mill Mead School, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG14 3AA
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<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

## Description of the setting

The Meads Management Group Committee, registered the breakfast and after school clubs, a pre-school group for three to five year olds (the three/four group) and a holiday play-scheme in 1995. The groups are on the Early Years Register and on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Registers. They are based in and operate from a number of rooms at the Mill Mead Primary School in Hertford. The setting supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or are learning to speak English as an additional language. It is suitable for access by children or adults with disabilities.

The three/four club has 30 children aged from three to the end of Early Years Foundation Stage on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for nursery education. Not all attend every session because the setting is limited to a maximum of 24 children at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 09.00 until 15.30, term time only. A lunch time club is offered to children who attend the three/four group on a full or part-time basis and also to children in the nursery.

The breakfast club runs from 07.45 until 08.45. The after-school club operates from 15.15 to 18.00. The breakfast and after-school clubs are subject to a maximum of 55 pupils with no more than 38 children under the age of eight years in attendance. Both clubs run in term time only. The out of school clubs has 101 pupils aged three to 11 years on roll.

The holiday club runs for part of the summer break. It is open to pupils attending the Meads and adjacent primary schools.

The different groups have systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language. There is suitable access for adults and children with physical difficulties. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The management committee employ nine staff to work with the different groups. Seven of the staff, including the pre-school leader and the after-school club leader hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are an additional eight unqualified members of staff who work with the after-school club on a less regular basis.

The groups are a member of the '4Children' organisation, they receives support from the local authority and work in partnership with the school.

The inspection took place during term time. The three/four group and the after school club were inspected.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Provision in the three/four group and in the after-school club is good. There is good capacity for further improvement. The settings meet the needs of children in

the Early Years Foundation Stage well. Effective leadership, good team work and good links with parents ensure that all children are happy, included and well cared for. They make good progress in their social and physical development and to become independent learners.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- identify the purpose and intended learning for each planned activity and share with other providers how well children are doing.
- develop assessment procedures to inform planning so that all children make the best possible progress
- ensure there is greater rigour in recording day-to-day risk assessments.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Leadership and management are good in both the three/four group and the after-school club. The management committee has made certain that appropriate policies are in place and the settings meet the current requirements for safeguarding. They ensure that all staff implement policies consistently and place appropriate emphasis on the well-being of the children.

The settings have yet to formally record their self-evaluations of the work of the groups. However, discussions with the leaders indicate they have a good use of self-evaluation. Their understanding of the strengths and areas for development is thorough. Leaders in the three/four group are very clear about the direction for improvements. They have already identified a date for discussing with the school's Early Years team changes to planning the curriculum and to assessment procedures. The implementations of the changes following the introduction of the Early Years Framework are not as advanced in the after-school club.

Day-to-day leadership and management of both settings are good. The safety and welfare of the children has a high priority. Staff are consistently vigilant but especially at the start and end of each session. There are good signing in and checking procedures. Any unexplained absences are followed up swiftly. At the end of the sessions the children are handed over safely to the named person. Occasional accidents are dealt with efficiently because most members of staff have first aid qualifications. Records are maintained so all are aware of how accidents are handled. Children understand and are familiar with safety routines and fire evacuation. Routine risk assessments are undertaken on a regular basis. However, leaders do not always record these assessments in sufficient detail.

Links with the teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes are good. They plan together and have identified half termly themes. Staff in the three/four group make good use of the outdoor area as an extension of the classroom and to

promote the children's physical development. The classes work together well as they share teaching space and equipment. Partnerships with parents are good and the leadership offered enables parents to take an active part in the education of their own child. Systems for communication, including informal dialogue and by newsletter are firmly embedded. Overall, parents are happy with the provision. They appreciate the regular contact with members of staff at the start or the end of sessions. They feel that their children are safe and well-cared for and enjoy attending the three/four group and the after-school club.

In the three/four group there is a strong focus on ensuring the all round development of each child. In the after-school club the focus is on promoting children's social development by encouraging the children of different ages to work and play together. In both settings the children's understanding of healthy living is promoted effectively. They understand the need for a balanced diet and regular exercise.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Good relationships are fostered between adults and children. The children behave well and settle quickly in the three/four group. They are polite and enjoy the sessions. They feel safe and will happily turn to any member of staff if there are any concerns. Children are provided with a wide range of opportunities which successfully promote their development across the six areas of learning. Staff ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in all activities.

Daily planning clearly identifies the activities, key questions and the equipment to be used but does not focus sufficiently on what the children are going to do and learn. Staff are rightly in the process of reviewing the assessment grids with the view of changing them to match the age related expectations. Ongoing assessments are recorded systematically and shared with parents on a regular basis. The vast majority of children make good progress, particularly in developing their social skills and in taking responsibility for themselves. This is because staff place significant importance on providing a good balance between activities that are initiated by the children and those that are led by adults. However, the setting has yet to develop assessment systems for analysing, collectively and individually, the children's attainment and progress. This limits the setting a little in its ability to ensure that children make the best progress possible.

The children are developing a good understanding of the importance of healthy living and staying safe. They know about the importance of washing their hands before eating. Snack and lunch times are well planned to encourage children to develop good eating habits and to engage in conversation. The younger children are beginning to develop their understanding of contributing to the community by helping to put equipment away.

The children's understanding of healthy living and the development of their social skills continues to be promoted well in the after-school club. They are offered a range of activities to choose and are encouraged to ask for alternative equipment

if there is something else they would like to play with. This encourages the children to become independent and take greater responsibility for their actions. The children behave well and are polite. Younger children mix and play happily with older pupils. They take turns and act responsibly.

In the after-school club, planning and the use of assessment are at a relatively early stage of development. Systems recording the children's attainment and progress have only relatively recently been introduced.

Nevertheless, the strong emphasis on developing the children's social skills and the opportunities provided in both settings, for them to work and play with older children provide them with a good basis for the next stage in their education.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met