



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 511757

DfES Number: 545637

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 06/12/2004
Inspector Name Angela Cole

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Little Meadow Group
Setting Address Elmore Lane East
Quedgeley
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL2 4LX

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Little Meadow Group 1086999

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Little Meadow Group
Address Elmore Lane East
Quedgeley
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL2 4LX

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

The Little Meadow Group formed from the merger of Little Meadows Under Fives and Meadowtech Out of School Club in November 2004. It is a committee run setting. It operates from its own building on the site of Meadowside Primary School in Quedgeley, Gloucestershire in a residential area that is close to shops and recreational facilities. The group also has access to the school outdoor play areas.

The under fives group started in 2001 and a maximum of 26 children aged two years to five years may attend at any one. Most come from the surrounding area. It opens each weekday during term-time from 09.15 to 11.45. A rising threes group runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12.45 to 14.45.

There are currently 45 children aged from two years nine months to under five years on roll. Of these, 32 children receive funding for nursery education. The group currently supports a number of children with special needs. No children speak English as an additional language. Four staff are employed and three of these, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a qualification.

The Out of School Club opened in 2002 for children of the primary school. There are currently 46 children from four to eleven years on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special needs. The club opens five days a week from 15.15 to 17.45 during school term times and from 08.30 to 17.30 during holiday times. Three part-time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. One staff member is currently working towards a qualification.

The group receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, school staff and fieldworkers from the Gloucestershire Playgroup and Toddler Association.

How good is the Day Care?

The Little Meadow Group provides good quality care for children.

Staff are effectively appointed, attend regular training and work well as teams. Both the under fives group (U5s) and the out of school club (OOSC) operate smoothly in practice. There are effective cover arrangements and ample adults for the numbers of children. Children are grouped appropriately with good use of key workers in the U5s. The premises are new, purpose-built, safe, clean and well maintained. Good quantities of high quality, safe toys and equipment are shared appropriately by the two groups. Most U5s documentation is well maintained. OOSC policies and procedures require up-dating and some documents, including medical consent, are not accessible.

The children are safe and staff are vigilant at all times, especially regarding access to the building. Staff knowledge of child protection is satisfactory. Children learn good hygiene practice in the U5s though some in the OOSC do not always wash hands before eating. All staff have current first aid training but some accident records are not signed by parents. Systems are in place to record any medication given. Children who become ill are well cared for by staff. Children's dietary needs are effectively met.

All children, including the rising threes, benefit from a stimulating, and sometimes exciting, range and balance of activities that supports progress in all areas of development. Caring staff closely observe the children and come to know them well. This knowledge is effectively used to plan appropriately for each age group. All children's needs are well met, particularly those with special needs. Staff consistently and effectively manage a wide range of children's behaviour.

Families are warmly welcomed into the groups and parents' wishes are closely heeded. Helpful, informal information about children's activities and their general progress is offered. Parents say they appreciate the staffs' friendly and professional approach.

What has improved since the last inspection?

After the last inspections, the setting agreed to actions regarding U5s medication records, OOSC resources, complaints procedure and staff awareness of child protection procedures.

Staff for the U5s have improved their regard for children's health as there is now a system to ensure written records of medication given are signed by parents.

The OOSC now shares U5s equipment that reflect positive images of culture and disability. Parents of older children are better informed as Ofsted's contact details are now included in the complaints procedure. Children at the OOSC are better protected as staff have satisfactory awareness of child protection procedures.

All actions from the previous inspections have been satisfactorily implemented.

What is being done well?

- Both the U5s and OOSC sessions are well organised. Children are grouped appropriately and there is ample adult support. Sound registration systems are in place to show the hours of attendance of children, staff and visitors.
- Children relate well to others and are very involved, interested and enjoy their play. The caring adults are attentive to children's interests and conversations, responding warmly and using much appropriate encouragement and praise. All children are fully included in the activities and, overall, have good access to appropriate resources. Toys and materials effectively show positive images of culture and many books address disability.
- The premises are secure and access is closely monitored. The playroom is kept at a comfortable temperature and made inviting with many displays of children work. The new building provides ample space that is well organised to meet the children's needs. Much storage is directly accessible to children or staff. The toilet facilities are inviting and appropriate for children of different ages.
- Drinks are provided regularly at the U5s, and both food and drink are always available to at the OOSC. Detailed records are kept of children's dietary needs and there is good focus on healthy snack foods.
- Strong relationships are formed with families to support the care and development of each child. Parents are kept well informed through informal conversation, regular notices and letters. The highly appropriate methods to manage behaviour are fully shared with parents. Good information is given to volunteer helpers and managing committee members.

What needs to be improved?

- the procedure to obtain parents' signatures on all accident records
- the children's hygiene practice before eating at the out of school club
- procedures to ensure out of school club records are accessible and include a detailed fire log, records of consent for medication and risk assessment on out of school club activities.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
7	Ensure parents sign the written records of accidents.
14	Ensure that all records relating to out of school care activities are readily accessible on the premises and available for inspection at all times.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Little Meadows Under Fives provides good quality nursery education overall. Children make generally good progress towards the early learning goals (elgs) in most areas of learning and very good progress in mathematics development.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have good knowledge of the elgs to observe children's achievements and link these to curriculum planning. Regular checks are made on the coverage of stepping stones linked to assessment of children's progress. Staff offer very good mathematical challenges, though some aspects of literacy and creativity are not given sufficient depth or regular emphasis. Adults have excellent rapport with children and use some good teaching methods to help them progress, including focus on learning through play with some excellent resources. However, after free play children are inactive for long periods and later routines do not promote their independence or decision making. Clear explanations of activities and expectations are given so children are very well-behaved at all times. Those with special needs are particularly well supported to learn.

Leadership and management of staff are generally good. The leadership is enthusiastic and staff are forming a good team. Careful consideration has been given to the outcomes of the recently achieved quality assurance award. The provision is regularly evaluated though some aspects are not given sufficient emphasis. Staff training needs are fully considered and the group regularly liaises with local settings. All concerned are highly committed to improving the care and education for all the children.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are well informed about the setting and are encouraged to talk about their child. Staff do not actively share children's progress records during children's time in the group so parents have little input. Families have very good opportunities to be involved through management and day-to-day support.

What is being done well?

- Children gain excellent confidence to settle, interact with the adults and play with others. Clear expectations are often shared with children so they are very well behaved.
- Children's mathematical development is very good. They have a secure understanding of number and shape through everyday opportunities and enjoy highly suitable activities with excellent adult support.
- Staff are effectively using their knowledge of the elgs to closely link curriculum planning to the assessment of children's progress. This is particularly effective in the support of children with special needs.

- The group is led and managed with enthusiasm. Staff are keen to improve wherever possible and are enabled to make learning exciting. For example, different and highly attractive resources are offered, such as the quality, wooden 'farm' and an excellent 'shopping' area.

What needs to be improved?

- the children's independence and decision making opportunities during snack-times and outdoor physical play
- regular opportunities for children to share books one-to-one and in small groups, and to access to drawing, painting and other craft materials for their own purposes
- regular opportunities for parents to share and contribute to children's developmental records during their time at the under fives group.

What has improved since the last inspection?

This is the setting's first Foundation Stage inspection.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children confidently leave their parents, settle quickly and are well behaved. They are keen to play, concentrating and persevering until tasks are complete. There is good interaction with enthusiastic staff. Children play with and care for each other, share resources and willingly take turns, for example on wheeled toys. There is wide choice in free play though independence is restricted afterwards, for example during snack and physical play. Children tidy, manage hygiene and dress competently.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children develop very good speaking and listening skills to talk clearly and confidently to individuals and in larger groups. They learn many new words, such as 'grapefruit' and 'liquid', to express ideas and simple stories. Rhymes and repetition occur often in songs and stories. Children see many words and pictures on labels and group books, but do not regularly share books one-to-one with adults. Children use many one-handed tools though are not always able to freely draw or paint.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children show a keen interest in numbers and recognise some figures. They eagerly count to high numbers in routines, for example, to 23 register names, saying this number comprises of '2' and '3'. They often solve problems in play, including counting vegetables onto weighing scales. They correctly compare numbers of objects, take one away in number songs, and know 'one more plate' is required. Children have excellent understanding of position and of how shapes, such as oblongs, are drawn.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are very curious to investigate a wide range of objects and materials connected with seasons, cooking, gardening or interesting experiments. They build competently with construction sets, though craft materials to construct with are not freely available. Children do not yet have a strong interest in technology. They effectively learn about the wider world through role-play, walks and visitors. Personal events are often recalled and meaningful customs are explored through craft and food.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children show very good awareness of their physical needs. They move spontaneously in the spacious room and to songs, though have limited response to rhythm and music. Children control wheeled vehicles expertly to negotiate around painted roadways and can stop whenever necessary. They safely enjoy the adventure playground and competently use a wide range of small equipment, including wheelbarrows to push. Children develop good skills with different tools but have a limited choice to make marks.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy exploring colour and texture, for example, to paint clay pots with fluorescent paint and to whisk coloured foam. However, limited craft materials are available for children's own purposes. Children explore the sounds of musical instruments and learn some songs. Extensive imagination is used in small world activities and excellent role-play. Children are keen to handle and taste the real fruit and vegetables and some eagerly respond to suggestions to draw their favourite.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- consider the routine to increase the children's independence and decision making opportunities during snack-times and outdoor physical play
- provide regular opportunities for children to share books one-to-one and to access craft materials for their own purposes
- develop opportunities for parents to share and contribute to children's developmental records while they are at the setting.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.