

Meadows Mere Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	507796
Inspection date	10/05/2011
Inspector	Susan McCourt
Setting address	1-2 Alfred Road, Kingsmere, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN23 6TA
Telephone number	01323 461114
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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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.

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Description of the setting

Meadows Mere Nursery School is one of six provisions run by the same owner, under the organisation of Places For Children Limited. It opened in 1998 and operates from purpose-built premises based in Sussex. 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 8am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year and is registered on the Early Years register, and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 120 children aged from one year to under five years on roll. Of these, 77 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 10 members of staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery is effective at meeting the needs of children. Staff give close attention to the children's educational and welfare needs, and work closely with the families. The leadership and management of the setting is well-established with robust systems in place and minor weaknesses in the management of resources. The commitment to staff development and staff's involvement in self-evaluation ensures that the capacity for continuous improvement is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the behaviour management for the two-year-olds to give support in learning co-operative skills
- review how local facilities and nursery spaces are used to enrich children's opportunities and learning experiences.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery's approach to safeguarding is robust. All staff are checked and undergo a probationary period before being allowed unsupervised contact with children. All staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding child protection and this is underpinned by the policies and procedures. The risk assessment is robust and covers all aspects of the nursery. Staff report any concerns they have, and issues are quickly dealt with by senior staff, who retain responsibility for all regular checks. Children's registration forms are thorough and all staff are aware of any allergies or health needs that a child may have. The staff team work together on the self-evaluation which is in its early stages. Staff have regular appraisals and opportunities to undergo further training which brings a great deal of knowledge about best practice into the setting. The nursery ethos is clear and practical, and as a result children are kept safe with their needs met. The drive for improvement means that issues, such as the development of the outdoor space, are tackled with the needs of the children at heart. Resources such as the play equipment and wall space are used very well to provide children with stimulating play spaces, and staff are well deployed to meet children's needs, with all senior staff taking a hands-on role. Access to local facilities and flexible use of the nursery environment as a resource however, is not always underpinned by that same drive and commitment. For example, children's continuous access to the whole range of play materials through concepts such as free-flow play have not been considered to extend and enrich further, the outcomes for children. Similarly the benefits of outings have not been evaluated to promote children's wider experiences with the outdoor environment.

Planning and observation systems pay great attention to children's individual next steps and individual learning styles which helps to narrow the achievement gap as every child is given tailored opportunities to learn. The nursery embraces a variety of cultures and languages and is very clear that discrimination will not be tolerated. The nursery works well in partnership with other agencies, such as the speech and language therapists, children's services and receiving schools, so that children benefit from the continuity and consistency of care. Parents are very positive about the nursery, saying that their children are happy to come and make good progress in their learning. Staff give parents a lot of information to demonstrate what they are doing and why, and this is available in the parents' home languages. The manager takes responsibility for greeting parents every day to ensure that she is always available to them and knows each family well. Parents receive written and verbal feedback about their child's day and can meet with key staff at any time to discuss their child's progress. Parents views are highly valued and noted in the children's learning journeys.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The provision is strong and well-established. Children are given a warm welcome and settle in happily. Their key staff get to know them well, so children can be confident that their individuality is nurtured. The learning environment is bright and stimulating, with good displays of children's work and a wide variety of play equipment and toys on offer. The garden is being developed to provide the full curriculum outside, which suits active learners. The daily routine takes account of children's needs for activity and rest, and within the times dedicated to play, children can be independent in choosing what to do within their home room. They also have access to other areas of the nursery, including the garden, on a rota basis to ensure that they play in and out of doors every day. Staff have a strong awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and plan interesting activities along a variety of themes to engage the children's interests. Staff make careful note of children's next steps and play alongside the children to bring out the learning, while children play freely. This means that a child absorbed in playing with cars can still be learning about numbers or positional language, making learning a very natural experience.

Children have time to really engage with what they want to do and enjoy spending time exploring the play materials and developing games with their peers. For example, a large cardboard box became a variety of things before being used as a hide and seek game for one group of friends. Later in the day it was decorated with craft materials. Interesting themes, such as the rainforest, provide a basis for learning about animals, plants, other cultures and weather. Standing with umbrellas under a watering can brings the sounds and sensations alive in a fun and enjoyable way. Children are confident learners and approach new experiences with curiosity. They have access to a range of technology, such as stereos with headphones and laptop style toys, and can operate them confidently. This gives them good skills for the future.

Children learn about safety very effectively, because staff are vigilant about following the nursery guidelines. For example, children walk up and down stairs one at a time and know to hold the banister throughout. Children remind each other about these established rules, and are careful of each other, for example, when wheeling buggies around the playroom. Children can also be confident that they are secure in the setting as staff are checked and all doors and gates are closely monitored. Children benefit from daily outdoor play and enjoy a healthy diet with regular snacks and easy access to drinking water. The nursery hygiene routines ensure that the potential for cross-infection is minimised, and children have picture guidance as well as staff support on hand-washing. Children build friendly relationships with their peers and behaviour in most age groups is very good. Typical two-year-old behaviour that is more challenging such as taking toys or showing frustration is not always consistently addressed. This results in children not always being given the opportunity to see how rules can work for everyone. The nursery reflects the diversity of the local community and a variety of languages and cultures are routinely woven in to nursery life. Children learn about the lives of other people through first hand experiences when travellers visit, or

when staff members use their home languages. This enriches the experience of the children attending and helps them to respect people's differences.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	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