

Action for Children The Meadow Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY355864
Inspection date	07/02/2012
Inspector	Karen Byfleet
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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*.

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.

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Description of the setting

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 creche provision, to support training courses and workshops. The centre is open every weekday for 48 weeks of the year, between 8.30am and 3.30pm. A maximum of 44 children under five years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 75 children on roll of which 29 receive funding for nursery education for three year olds and 21 receive funding for nursery education for two year olds. The nursery supports children with a range of additional needs and learning difficulties.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

All staff within the setting recognise and value the uniqueness of each child that attends. The children are settled and happy in the highly resourced, inviting environment. Highly effective procedures have been implemented by the staff to monitor and assess children's progress and development. Partnerships with parents and other providers are very well established to ensure children's welfare needs are consistently met and all relevant information is shared regularly. All the required documentation is in place which ensures children are very well safeguarded. Staff constantly evaluate their provision and formulate action plans which ensure all improvements are well monitored and maintained in order to help them to further develop the already excellent provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- develop further the partnerships with local services to ensure children's

understanding of how they keep them safe in the community is embedded.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All staff within the setting demonstrate a high level of knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and child protection. They know and follow the robust policy and procedures which are in place to ensure children are securely safeguarded. Within the policy is a clear procedure to be followed if any allegations are made against the staff. Highly detailed and effective risk assessments are in place and monitored regularly to ensure risks to children both within the setting and when on outings, are minimised. The risk assessments for each room are checked daily by staff. Partnerships with other professionals significantly enhance the well-being and education of children in the setting. Staff work very closely with all staff within the children's centre. These close working partnerships enable staff within the setting to provide effectively for all children and to meet their individual and diverse needs, enabling valuable information around the welfare of children to be shared effectively with other agencies. Equality of opportunity is given utmost priority. All children and their families are welcomed into the setting with equal regard. The setting is very well resourced and is pro-active in adapting or purchasing resources to meet the needs of individual children. There is a clear line of leadership. All staff hold relevant early years qualifications and are highly skilled and experienced. Robust recruitment procedures ensure staff are suitable and regular supervision and appraisal are used to review and assess their ongoing training needs. All the required documentation and parental permissions are fully in place and reviewed regularly. Accident records are risk assessed to ensure recurring accidents can be minimised.

A comprehensive self-evaluation has been undertaken and staff have been very pro-active in developing an action plan to ensure the priorities for further improvements to the provision can take place in a timely manner. All previous recommendations have been addressed successfully and demonstrates how the setting has the capacity to maintain continuous improvements. All staff have been involved in contributing to the self-evaluation process. The views of parents and children are creatively gathered through questionnaires, comment books and interactive displays. For example, through questionnaires, parents identified the need for car parking spaces to be allocated for parent and child. The setting effectively addressed the issue and created parent and child parking spaces. Enabling parents to park outside the doors and not have to walk children across the busy car park. Highly innovative ways of gathering children's views are also used. For example, children are involved in the recruitment of any new staff. Candidates are invited to plan activities and to spend a day in the setting. Staff use this time to observe how the children interact or engage with the prospective new employee and afterwards they ask the children for their opinions of the activities the candidate had planned.

A highly effective key person system is in place. All parents are offered a home

visit prior to their child starting at the nursery and these are undertaken by the child's key person. Staff use this opportunity to observe the child in their own environment and to discuss with parents any issues or concerns they may have. These home visits also assist the key person in establishing home routines, children's interests and their likes and dislikes, which form part of their initial assessment of the child's starting points and aid a smooth transition between home and nursery. For all parents and children a 'settling in' period is also offered.

Transitions for children moving into mainstream education are excellent. Staff have made superb liaisons with teachers from a number of schools and they have worked extremely hard in engaging them in helping with the smooth transition for children. All of the teachers from schools where the children move onto have made visits to the setting and highly innovative ideas have been implemented. For example, the children and their parents made 'treasure boxes' together which they were encouraged to fill with pictures and small items that were of special significance to the children. The teachers were also included in these activities and when they were completed the teachers took the boxes to their school. When the children then started to attend the school the boxes were there waiting for the children and they were able to have familiar objects and photographs to hand, making the transition smoother.

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

The environment is inviting to all children and fully reflects their backgrounds and the wider community. Staff are enthusiastic, highly motivated and passionate about their role. They have excellent knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They plan challenging and stimulating activities around individual children, their interests and the next steps that have been clearly identified through the observations made by the staff. Assessments of children's learning are regularly updated by the key person and parents are encouraged to contribute to these, enabling them to play an active role in their own child's learning. The assessments clearly show the outstanding progress making in their learning through all areas. Through the use of continuous provision, children develop high levels of independence as they make informed decisions and individual choices of the activities they wish to pursue. There is excellent balance of child initiated and adult-led experiences children are able to learn at their own pace. Staff provide support and extension to the learning environment through the activities and opportunities they plan and provide. Children in all areas of the setting have access to free flow play between the indoor and outdoor areas enabling them to extend their indoor activity to the outdoor area. Safety of children is paramount. Staff supervise children at all times. They are unable to leave the premises unsupervised and all visitors are requested to sign in at reception. Children are very confident at using a range of tools independently. For example they use tools for woodwork activities and wear safety equipment such as eye goggles, developing their awareness and understanding of how to handle tools with care. They use a range of other tools such as cutlery at meal times and scissors in creative activities. Their understanding of safety outside the setting is promoted through projects such as road safety and although there are strong

partnerships with the local police and fire service this has not been fully embedded to secure children's understanding of their roles in keeping them safe within the community.

Children have a strong sense of security. They are very sociable as they play well together forming strong friendships, approach staff with confidence and welcome visitors into the setting. Meal times are very sociable. Children sit together in small groups and the very young children come together for meals. They have a high regard for their own personal health and hygiene. The older children independently serve themselves at snack and lunch time and are able to help themselves to drinks of fresh water throughout the day. Staff sit with the children and use the time very effectively to reflect with the children on what they have been doing during the morning. The children know and follow hygiene routines with regard to hand washing and they do this with no prompting from staff. For example children were observed using the toilet independently and knowing to wash their hands afterwards. Through the continuous provision children freely access an extensive range of toys, games and activities toys which encourage and develop skills in all areas. For example, they explore various mediums in messy play activities, role play, sorting and matching, jigsaws, small world and physical toys. They particularly enjoyed the activity where they were able to watch ice melt outdoors as it was a very icy day. The children helped spread the grit on the outdoor surface, listening to the ice cracking and staff explained to the children how the grit would make the ice go away and make the ground safer to play on. This helps to develop children's understanding of how to stay safe. Children have independent access to a wealth of resources and activities that promote their knowledge and understanding of the world. They have access to information technology and clearly enjoyed taking photographs of their friends and the inspector during her visit. Children's work is very attractively displayed and the interactive boards such as the new achievement and celebration display, promote high levels of self esteem. Parents and children are able to display photographs and comments on their individual news and achievements such as having a new pet in the home, their holidays and being successful at toilet training. Other interactive displays include healthy eating and recycling. Children and parents awareness is raised of these issues as they are encouraged to bring items for recycling and the health display consists of books, play foods and a model of a healthy lunch box. Children participate in planting and harvesting a wide range of fruits and vegetables outdoors and they enjoy searching the outdoors for bugs and mini beasts.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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