

The Meads

Mill Mead School, Port Vale, Hertford, SG14 3AA



Inspection date

31 March 2016

Previous inspection date

9 December 2015

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The management committee and staff work well together and have a positive approach to developing the setting. They have reviewed their practice and implemented a programme of sustainable improvements. This has contributed significantly to improving the setting since their last inspection.
- Staff develop their teaching skills by attending training and working with other professionals, putting any new knowledge into practice. Improved assessments enable staff to understand how children learn and to plan interesting, challenging activities that support children in developing the knowledge and skills required for school.
- Good partnership working enables parents to share information with staff about their children's initial abilities and ongoing development. Staff support parents well in extending their children's learning. For example, children enjoy borrowing books to share at home with their parents.
- The manager has improved her use of assessment information. She efficiently identifies any weaker areas in children's learning and takes prompt action to address these. Staff now make greater use of daily opportunities to support children in developing their skills in counting and recognising numbers.
- Children gain a realistic understanding of differences and learn to value and respect these. For example, they talk about their own family and homes. They compare experiences and start to look at how they are part of a wider community.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff do not always make the most of daily opportunities to support children in fully developing their skills in thinking and solving problems for themselves.
- Staff do not work as effectively as possible with other childcare settings that children attend to ensure that children's development is always fully promoted.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance the opportunities for children to think critically and solve problems they may encounter during daily activities and discussions
- build on the opportunities to work more effectively in partnership with other childcare settings that children attend.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning. She completed a joint observation with the leader of the three and four group.
- The inspector talked with staff and children in the breakfast club and in the three and four group.
- The inspector held meetings with the leader of the three and four group, the setting manager, the deputy manager for administration and human resources, the chairperson of the management committee and the nominated person who is also the headteacher of the school on which the setting is sited.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, such as the setting's self-evaluation, safeguarding procedures and evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector spoke to a small selection of parents during the inspection and took account of their views. She also viewed written feedback from parents.

Inspector

Kelly Eyre

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

Improved supervision means that all staff are well supported in developing their practice. Staff have used their experience and knowledge from their childcare qualifications to develop plans to successfully address all actions from the previous inspection. For example, children's attendance is clearly recorded and the outdoor area now offers children further learning opportunities. Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff understand how to promote children's welfare. Improved procedures mean that the use of mobile phones and cameras is securely restricted. Robust checks are completed to ensure the suitability of all staff. Improved risk assessments mean that the setting is secure and any hazards are removed. The management committee works well with staff to review the daily running of the setting and to make further improvements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff note children's interests and make good use of these as a way of reinforcing their learning. Children are excited as they search through straw to find toy animals. They extend their knowledge as they add farm buildings and vehicles and identify these in a book. Staff also work with children to make resources, using these as an additional way of promoting children's knowledge. For example, children make their own books to illustrate their favourite stories. Structured activities are well planned so that children enjoy varied learning opportunities. They count carefully as they sing number rhymes, and learn about rhythm as they play musical instruments at different speeds. Staff working in the out-of-school clubs ensure that children have time to relax. They also offer them creative-play opportunities, such as building models, that complement their formal learning and support their good progress in nursery and school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Improved procedures mean that parents receive accurate information about the setting and fully understand the daily practice. They share information so that staff understand their children's needs and support them in feeling settled and secure. Staff make good use of opportunities to praise children and help them understand their learning. For example, children eagerly describe their drawings and note how good they are at writing their names. This builds children's self-esteem and confidence, in readiness for school. Children participate in daily activities that promote their physical development. They enjoy an exercise session where they warm up and stretch their muscles. Children gain a mature understanding of how to manage their behaviour. They competently organise turn taking, using sand timers to help with this.

Outcomes for children are good

All children are making good progress and are developing the skills that underpin their learning and prepare them for school. Children are excited about their learning and show a positive attitude to new challenges. They enjoy discussions with staff and are well supported so that they eagerly participate in group sessions, such as reading and singing. This particularly supports children who speak English as an additional language and they make good progress, both in their language skills and overall development.

Setting details

Unique reference number	401994
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1034991
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	3 - 11
Total number of places	55
Number of children on roll	120
Name of provider	The Meads Management Group
Date of previous inspection	9 December 2015
Telephone number	01992 582055

The Meads was registered in 1995. The setting employs 33 members of childcare staff, many of whom are employed to work on a part-time basis in the school holidays only. One staff member holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 2, and six staff hold qualifications at level 3 or above. The three and four group is open each weekday from 9am until 3.30pm, during term time only. The breakfast club runs from 7.45am until 8.45am. The after-school club operates from 3.15pm to 6pm. Both clubs run in term time only. The setting also provides holiday care during each school holiday, with sessions from 7.45am to 6pm. The three and four group provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. They provide care for children who speak English as an additional language. The setting has strong links with the school on which it is sited.

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