

Meadows Montessori Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY407996
Inspection date	05/11/2010
Inspector	Janet Keeling
Setting address	Katherine Semar Infant School, Ross Close, SAFFRON WALDEN, Essex, CB11 4DU
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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*.

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

Meadows Montessori Day Nursery is privately owned and was registered in 2010. The nursery operates from a purpose-built building in the grounds of Katherine Semar Infant School in Saffron Walden, Essex. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and to the school playground and playing fields. The nursery serves children and families from the local and surrounding areas. A maximum of 35 children aged under eight years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 59 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. The nursery receives funding for early years education. Children attend for various sessions. The nursery opens Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm all year round. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are six members of staff, five of whom hold appropriate level 3 qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and clearly enjoy their time at the nursery. Good priority is given to safeguarding children and most staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Children make good progress in their learning and development as they engage in a range of enjoyable activities. Excellent partnerships with parents and others ensure children's needs are fully supported. Managers and staff demonstrate a good commitment towards sustained and continuous improvement and strive to improve the learning outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review and improve induction procedures so that new staff and students are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities, this refers specifically to their understanding of the emergency evacuation procedures.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded well. All staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and know who to contact should they be concerned about a child in their care. There are effective recruitment and vetting procedures, which ensure that children are cared for by suitable people. Although induction procedures are in place, new staff and students are not always familiar with the nursery's emergency evacuation procedures, which affects their ability to keep children safe in an emergency. Staff routinely verify the identity of all visitors and

maintain an appropriate record. Good risk assessments cover all aspects of the indoor and outdoor learning environments. There are effective procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children. All required documentation is in place, well maintained and available for inspection. Staff are successfully deployed to support children's learning and welfare and make good use of the available space and equipment.

Staff are motivated, work well as a team and demonstrate a positive attitude towards continuous improvement. The nursery's self-evaluation system, together with parent questionnaires, helps staff to identify the group's strengths and areas for improvement. A positive equality and diversity policy promotes inclusive practice in the group and all children are welcomed. Staff are committed to continuing their own professional development and regularly attend relevant training courses to improve their knowledge and skills. Excellent links have been established with other early years professionals and with the host school to which many of the children transfer. The nursery is also welcome to use some of the school's facilities, such as the fixed play equipment, the playground and playing fields.

Partnerships with parents are outstanding. Staff dedicate time getting to know children and their families, fostering excellent relationships and helping to ensure that children settle quickly and feel secure. Parents are very well informed regarding their children's care and are routinely involved in their continuous learning and development. The daily exchange of information ensures that children's changing needs are consistently met, particularly for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Parents receive information about the nursery through a parents' notice board, regular newsletters and through the wonderful digital photo frame in the entrance hall. This shows children's involvement in a wide range of activities throughout the day. There are excellent opportunities for parents to become involved in nursery life. Recently, parents supported the nursery in raising enough money to buy wet-weather suits for all the children. Parents say that they are delighted with the excellent care and learning opportunities that their children receive at the nursery, commenting that they find staff approachable and helpful. One parent described the nursery as 'fantastic', while another said there was 'excellent communication' between staff and parents.

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

Children benefit from the staff's good knowledge and understanding of how to develop learning through play. Children are eager to learn, they are confident and very happy in this welcoming nursery. They have good opportunities to make choices about their own learning by freely accessing a wide range of activities and resources both indoors and out. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, which result in children being active learners, creative, and critical thinkers. Children respond to challenges with enthusiasm and show good levels of independence, curiosity and imagination. They work well independently and with their peers and are keen to share their ideas with the staff. All children

are valued and treated with equal concern, with any specific requirements being met sensitively through discussion with parents and other professionals. Staff have a good understanding of children's individual learning needs as they observe and record information on a daily basis. All children have a learning journey record and a development folder, which contain both photographic and written information of children's learning, achievements and records of children's own work. These are available for parents to see at any time and to take home each week.

Children confidently access a very good range of first-hand learning experiences. For example, they plant peppers and herbs, feed the birds each day and use binoculars to hunt for mini-beasts in the garden. They collect fallen leaves from the entrance to the nursery and help to scatter them in the 'nature area' along with pine cones and conkers. Children use natural resources to make their own bonfire; they throw leaves in the air and chuckle with delight as the leaves float down and cover them. Children learn that print carries meaning as they self-register on arrival and attempt to write their own name on their pictures. They develop a love for books as they access a wide range of interesting books in the nursery library, listening attentively at story-time and enjoy selecting books from the visiting library van. Children's creativity is fully supported through an interesting range of role-play equipment, construction toys and access to a wide range of media, such as chalks, paint, sand, water and dough. Children chat happily in small groups as they create beautiful designs on the table by mixing washing-up liquid and paint together. They explore dough by squeezing, pressing, rolling and cutting it using a variety of tools and equipment. Children relish outdoor play where they have good opportunities to develop their physical skills. They confidently climb steps on the mini-slide, skilfully pedal bikes, and throw and kick balls. Children have opportunities to investigate their local community, engage in nature walks, and enjoy the challenges of the pirate ship in the school grounds.

Children's good behaviour supports their learning. They develop confidence and self-esteem because the staff give regular praise, encouragement and support. They learn to negotiate, share toys, take turns with equipment and show consideration for each other as they play together. Children develop an understanding of the wider world through planned activities, discussion with staff and through access to toys that provide positive images of diversity. They learn how to stay safe by regularly engaging in emergency evacuation procedures and staff gently remind them to use equipment safely. They successfully develop personal hygiene skills, such as independent toileting and routinely washing their hands before snacks. Children develop a good understanding of healthy eating as they enjoy fresh fruit at snack time, access their own water bottles throughout the day and complete topic work. They enjoy a healthy cooked lunch each day, which they eat in the main school dining hall. Children develop a good sense of responsibility. They put toys away after they have finished playing with them and confidently take off their wellington boots and put on their shoes. They are acquiring skills that will help them in the future and prepare them for their transition from nursery into school.

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	2
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	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	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