

# Inspection report for Knowle West Children's Centre

---

<b>Local authority</b>	Bristol Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	383355
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 January 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steve Nelson

<b>Centre manager</b>	Sarah Salmon
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Centre address</b>	Leinster Avenue Knowle West Bristol BS4 1NN
<b>Telephone number</b>	0117 903 0214
<b>Fax number</b>	0117 377 3453
<b>Email address</b>	head.knowle.west.eyc@bristol.gov.uk

<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Not applicable
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Knowle West Early Years Centre

The inspection of this Sure Start children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

---

**Report published:** January 2012



Corporate member of  
Plain English Campaign  
Committed to clearer communication

**361**

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

No.100080

© Crown copyright 2011



## Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

An inspection of the registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, the local authority, the children's centre manager and members of the governing body. They met with a number of representatives of services who work through the children's centre, including health visitors and the outreach workers. Inspectors spoke to groups of parents and carers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's self-evaluation, improvement plan, user evaluations and case study information.

## Information about the centre

The Knowle West Children's Centre is a phase two children's centre that provides full core offer provision. This includes early education integrated with childcare, family support and outreach to parents, child and family health services and adult education. The centre is an integrated centre which operates from one site in the Filwood Ward of Bristol with the Knowle West Early Years Centre.

The head of the centre is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre. The local authority funds the centre. The governing board consists of parents and carers, staff, local authority representatives, strategic and local partners.

The majority of the families who use the centre are from White British origin. A growing number of families are from minority ethnic groups. Data for the reach area place the user base in the bottom 30% nationally for deprivation. The children's centre has 786 children under 5 in its reach area, with the majority using it. Approximately 23% of children and adults who use the centre come from homes that

are dependent on benefits and where no one is in work. On entry, the majority of children's skills, knowledge and abilities are well below those expected for their age.

The range of activities offered by the centre includes local community baby clinics, child development checks, breastfeeding support and special needs support groups. The centre has links with health visitors and speech therapists. It provides a range of adult education and courses and activities designed to support parents and carers back into employment. The centre opens 52 weeks each year on weekdays from 8.00am until 6.00pm.

## Inspection judgements

**Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

### Overall effectiveness

**The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for families**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

**The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management**

**2**

## Main findings

The Knowle West Children's Centre is a welcoming place and serves the families that live in the reach area well. One user expressed a view that was typical of many others, 'I don't think the centre can offer anymore for my children.' Inspectors confirm that this is a good centre, although there is still more to do to make it outstanding in the future.

Staff are very welcoming and are always there to help. The centre manager and senior management team provide effective leadership. Leadership is characterised by good organisational and communication skills and values the work of everyone. As a result, the centre runs effectively on a day-to-day basis.

Outcomes for users are good. Families using the centre enjoy activities. The majority of children make good progress in developing the skills they will need for the future. However, the centre does not provide enough opportunities to help adult users develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and computing skills. Staff morale is high. Their relationships with parents and carers are excellent. Parents and carers were keen to speak to inspectors about how the centre has helped them. They mentioned developing parenting skills, how the centre has assisted them in moments of crisis and accessing support they might need through services, such as advice on benefits.

The centre staff have a clear sense of drive and passion and a good understanding of the difficulties they face in the reach area they serve. As a result, users are supported well. Partnerships with the local community and other agencies are effective. Regular partnership meetings are arranged, which ensure services are fully integrated to deliver cohesive provision for users that impacts positively on their lives.

The centre offers a broad range of services and activities that meets the needs of most users well. The centre works particularly well in coordinating support and guidance to empower families to make changes to their lives. A carer said, 'I can't thank the centre enough. Staff worked with me to form effective approaches that have improved the children's behaviour.'

The governors provide effective supervision and support for leaders and managers to improve provision. Rigorous self-evaluation takes account of the views of centre users and partners. This leads to an accurate identification of priorities for improvement. Good prioritisation of safeguarding ensures all users are safe. The number of users accessing the centre's good-quality provision has consistently increased. However, targeted outreach work for lone parents is not developed sufficiently. The strong teamwork of staff and high levels of commitment by all stakeholders contribute effectively to improved outcomes for users. The local authority and governors support developments well and have good systems to monitor the outcomes for users. This demonstrates the centre's good capacity to sustain improvement.

## What does the centre need to do to improve further?

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Provide further opportunities for adults to develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills by developing stronger links with training providers.
- Increase the centre's outreach work to engage more effectively with lone parents who are hard to reach, to encourage them to use the centre's services

## How good are outcomes for families?

2
---

Families with young children show that they develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy. They are confident about making healthy lunches during healthy eating sessions at the centre. Children are encouraged to eat fresh fruit during the centre's activities. They develop good hygiene habits through clear routines such as washing hands for snacks and cleaning their teeth. Data supplied by the centre indicate that increasing numbers of mothers are continuing to breastfeed. Obesity rates for the reach are improving well.

Effective individual family work helps adults cope with anxiety and isolation.

One parent said, 'I was at my wits end. I have made new friends and now look to the future with confidence.' The smoking cessation clinic is helping adults to give up smoking. A participant commented, 'I am pleased with myself for giving up smoking.' Case studies indicate that targeted support has a positive impact on the emotional well-being of vulnerable parents and children, for example, those experiencing family breakdown and those with child protection plans.

The centre's good safeguarding procedures help to ensure that all children and their families are safe and protected. Children behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. For example, they help tidy away toys in the play areas. They show an increasing awareness of the importance of being safe in all situations when using equipment. Staff supervise children well throughout the day. They ensure that parents and carers develop good observation skills in this respect. A teenage parent who attended a parenting programme said, 'I am much calmer and have more confidence and understanding about dealing with my child's behaviour.'

The use of the Common Assessment Framework is well established and effective in highlighting users that are at risk and in need of support. Case studies show very effective impact and improved well-being and welfare for children on child protection plans. Robust assessments and safeguarding systems support and promote the safety of looked after children and any adult in need. Early intervention ensures families are effectively supported and, where necessary, gain access to vital services.

Outcomes for children, parents and other users are good. Children make good progress from their starting points in developing the skills that will help them in the future. Their behaviour is good and, as a result, they form positive relationships within the centre. The centre is taking effective action to identify and narrow the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest. The majority of children's attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is average and improving.

Services offered by the centre are popular and groups have high levels of attendance. Families enjoy the 'Stay N Play' activities that provide structured opportunities for parents, carers and children to play have fun and learn together. A parent said, 'I am so happy with the play sessions. Most of all, my son is happy and loves coming.'

Most families using the centre develop their skills, including their parenting skills, well and demonstrate good personal, social and educational development. The 'Mellow Parenting' programme is particularly effective in engaging hard-to-reach families and improving vulnerable mothers' confidence and self-esteem. One mother's confidence grew during the course and by the end was offering help to some of the other parents in the group. Staff are well qualified and they know their key group of children well. They identify gaps in children's learning and achievement and take effective steps to reduce them. Children are well prepared for transition into nursery.

Families make positive contributions to the community. Users express verbally, and

through their written evaluations, that they enjoy the activities offered. They actively participate in the centre's governance and decision-making process. For example, parents suggested, and then set-up, a 'Stay N Play' session. Also, in response to an unfortunate break in, a parent committee organised fundraising, including raffles and toy sales, for new bikes. Community involvement was high, with families and older people coming to the centre to donate, raising £3,000.

Families are very appreciative of the financial advice and guidance provided by the centre, in particular for budgeting and saving money over the winter months. Information on child and working tax credits, as well as help provided to the increasing housing needs of families, is effective in improving their well-being. However, there are insufficient opportunities for adults to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. A growing number of unemployed adults have progressed on to paid work.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment</b>	<b>3</b>

**How good is the provision?**

**2**

The centre works effectively with other agencies to ensure assessments, such as those carried out for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are robust and well informed. Families gain access to a range of focused services through these services. Outreach staff identify and target effectively families with issues such as attendance, sleep routine and behaviour management. As a result of this, parents report that they are increasingly confident in parenting skills. One parent said, 'I gained more knowledge and confidence on how to deal with my child's sleep routine.'

The variety of services and activities include a 'Garden Group', which is involving a growing number of fathers, providing fun and learning opportunities. The 'Gym Tots' sessions are popular. One parent commented, 'My child loves going and it is great

exercise from an early age. It is developing his social interaction with other children well.'

More families from ethnic minority groups are accessing the centre. The centre promotes the diversity of the community effectively with displays and celebrations of different faiths. The English for speakers of other languages course, delivered at the local college, is meeting the needs of the increasing number of users who speak an additional language. The 'Childminders' Group' is regularly attended. Feedback shows that the childminders are effectively improving their skills in planning, making observations and promoting positive interactions when developing children's communication and social skills.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the centre is good. Children behave well and follow staff instructions. They are provided with a good range of activities and learning opportunities from birth that effectively supports their development. Staff make effective use of children's achievements to plan the next steps in learning.

High-quality resources that are age appropriate and interesting encourage children's engagement well. The centre promotes purposeful learning well, including the development of curiosity and plenty of physical exercise. For example, the outdoor play area offers planned play experiences in the meadow, windy day/rainy day resources and sensory herb gardens. There are active and challenging learning experiences. A parent commented, 'I love the amount of space and my child loves the outside play area.'

Good use is made of learning diaries, ensuring children's next steps are shared with parents. They are used effectively, with parents bringing in learning and experiences from home to be included, such as wedding photographs to celebrate children's lives. The centre is good at recognising users' personal development and achievements through displays of work produced by children and families.

Care, guidance and support arrangements are effective. Good tailored support develops families' well-being. Families express high levels of satisfaction with the level of care. The open-door policy provides a listening ear to support children and families all year round. Effective individual family services work has impacted positively on families' lives. A parent who had benefited greatly from the counselling said, 'I have had tremendous support, advice and help when I needed it so desperately.'

The centre works well with the speech and language therapy team. It has been effective in consistently moving referrals off support. The centre is good at supporting and integrating children and families with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The centre works productively with the specialist family support services to ensure the particular needs of vulnerable children and their families are met. Good quality information, advice and guidance mean families are effectively signposted to the appropriate support services.



These are the grades for the quality of provision

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

**2**

Governance and accountability arrangements are clear. They provide appropriate supervision of the centre's services, such as undertaking regular observations of the centre's activities. Links between strategic planning and service provision are effective. Morale is high and belief in the centre's success is evident at all levels.

The head of centre and senior leadership team consistently communicate high expectations to staff about securing improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and supported by evidence of the impact on outcomes for users. The evaluation has resulted in changes to the provision, for example, increasing workshops to help parents and carers take responsibility for their children's behaviour. The inclusion of all children and their families is central to the centre's vision. Actions to promote greater equality for different groups are effective in removing barriers, especially for children and families with special education needs and/or disabilities. The centre has identified where further improvements can be made to overcome any variations in outcomes and has good strategies to overcome them.

Good safeguarding arrangements are in place and there is a system to maintain and update them. Training of all staff, particularly in relation to child protection, domestic violence and for those working with children or adults with disabilities, is of good quality. The centre is proactive and collaborates effectively with other key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children. Agencies working in the centre understand the implications of the wider safeguarding agenda. Robust vetting procedures help to ensure that only suitable people are able to work with children and families. Criminal Records Bureau checks are accurately recorded and maintained. The premises and environment are safe and security is good. The risk assessments of the environment are effective in minimising risks and are monitored to ensure that this remains the case. They are acted upon to make regular improvements to the safeguarding systems.

The centre works well with a wide range of services to provide good quality provision that has a positive impact on the lives of users. Relationships between statutory partners are increasingly clear and understood and are being more effectively managed.

Users have regular opportunities to be involved in shaping services and evaluating the effectiveness of provision. For example, outreach services are improving and targeting identified needs in the wider community. They have been effective in engaging minority ethnic groups, such as Polish families. The centre's engagement with lone parents is not fully developed to sufficiently involve them in the centre's activities. Nonetheless, the improvement in the centre's impact on the community, in consistently improving outcomes and increasing the good quality provision that engages the majority of families, means that the centre's resources are managed effectively. The centre represents good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection**

The inspection findings of Knowle West Early Years Centre.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Complaining about inspections*, which is available from our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Summary for centre users

We inspected Knowle West Children's Centre on 11 and 12 January 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We are very grateful to all the parents, carers, representatives from the centre and professional partners who took the trouble to come and tell us about the work they do. You gave us a very positive picture of the centre, and what you said was very useful in making our final judgments.

At the core of the centre's success is the strong leadership provided by the centre manager and the very good teamwork of the centre's staff and its effective relationship with professional partners. This means that the workers at the centre communicate well with each other and their feedback provides a good knowledge and understanding of the community's needs.

Those of you who use the centre are much better now at staying safe and looking after your families. We know this because many of you told us of what you had learnt. We agree that the centre is a very welcoming place to come to. Staff have worked hard to make it very safe for you and your children. The centre works effectively with other agencies, such as the health service and social services in particular, to help vulnerable children and families.

Parents, carers and children are benefiting from the good provision provided by the children's centre. You are keen to attend classes to improve your skills. These must be enjoyable because we noticed that attendance on these courses is high. Good quality sessions are prepared for you to improve your parenting skills and for your children to develop basic skills. This means that you gain more confidence and expertise and your children are well prepared when they start nursery school.

We have found a few areas for improvement and the centre's managers are already aware of these. We are recommending that the centre's managers increase opportunities for you to develop your basic skills in literacy, numeracy and use of computers. We are also asking managers to increase the number of lone parents using the centre's services.

We wish you every success for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).