

Inspection report for Brearley/Teviot Children's Centre

Local authority	Birmingham City Council
Inspection number	383389
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2012
Reporting inspector	Daniel Grant

Centre leader	Susan Stewart
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Brearley Street Newtown West Midlands B19 3XJ
Telephone number	0121 675 2880
Fax number	0121 675 2881
Email address	enquiry@brearley.bham.sch.uk

Linked school	Brearley Nursery School 103121
Linked early years and childcare	Brearley Playgroup 229137

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: February 2012



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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at 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
W: 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 maintained nursery was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with members of the advisory board, parents and service users and representatives from the local authority. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Brearley/Teviot Children's Centre is a phase one centre which opened in September 2006. The centre is linked with a nursery school and is under its governance. The centre provides services from a single main site within the community to a population made up of a broad range of economic and social circumstances. The number of families attending schools in the area who are known to be entitled to free school meals is high, as is the proportion of children aged under four years who are living in households where no-one is working.

The majority of families within the area served by the centre are of Black African and Black Caribbean heritage. The centre meets its core purpose and provides a wide range of supporting services, incorporating a crèche, drop-in health support, adult courses and workshops. The centre has an advisory board made up of representatives from the local community, professional agencies and parents. Most children enter early education with a range of skills that are well below those expected for their age.

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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

Overall effectiveness of the centre is satisfactory. Leaders and managers are developing a clear vision and understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for improvement, which has helped the centre become increasingly well established in the community. Staff work effectively to provide good activities. Outcomes for those who attend the centre's activities have improved.

The centre promotes its services satisfactorily and has increased the number of families registering and benefiting from the centre. Families in the wider community also benefit from the work the centre undertakes to support other providers. However, the proportion of families registered including those from targeted groups is low.

Staff are experienced and have good understanding of safeguarding children, which they use effectively to provide a safe and secure environment. Parents and carers share concerns with staff because they trust them and know that they will receive effective help. Families attending develop a good understanding of dangers and how to keep themselves and each other safe. Families are listened to and feel they are included in making decisions about how the centre is run. Children behave well and develop positive relationships with each other and adults.

Some parents and carers who registered with the centre at a time when they had little confidence and low self-esteem have developed greater self-assurance and improved their personal well-being. Parents who attend the very popular 'stay and play' sessions learn essential skills which help to strengthen bonds with their children.

Children make enough progress preparing for school. However, the centre does not provide enough opportunities for adults seeking help to find work, undertake training or gain accredited qualifications. Jobcentre Plus has withdrawn from the arrangements to work in partnership with the centre.

Leaders manage the centre appropriately. The implementation of arrangements to

cover for absent staff has been slow and this has delayed establishing more effective strategies. The centre has satisfactory capacity to improve because managers know what has to be done and are determined to make progress. However, leaders and managers do not focus enough on developing more detailed written action plans which identify targets and priorities. This is because self-evaluation processes are not incisive or detailed.

The local authority provides useful data and information about the population of the area it serves, which the centre uses satisfactorily to establish local targets. However, the centre has been slow to develop a more accurate understanding of the needs of the community, outreach provision is weak and has been slow to identify target groups and increase the number of families registering with the centre. Although many families benefit from the work of the centre, insufficient numbers access services to improve outcomes for more families within the area.

Partnership working with the local authority's services for children and families is well integrated with health provision and the work of the centre. There are satisfactory arrangements with a broad range of partner organisations. A few parents gain accredited qualifications in childcare but arrangements to support adults seeking advice about training, education or help to find paid employment are currently inadequate.

Arrangements to ensure equality of opportunity and the promotion of diversity are satisfactory. Barriers to attending services are effectively overcome and there is a positive trend in the reduction of the achievement gap in Early Years Foundation Stage profiles. However, arrangements to engage some targeted groups such as children with disabilities are inadequate.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the quality of services and performance of the centre by working with the local authority in developing detailed written action plans which identify targets and priorities, and introduce more robust and inclusive self-evaluation processes.
- Increase registration and participation through better promotion of the centre's provision, more effective outreach work and by more precise identification and targeting of those most in need, including young parents and disabled children.
- Jobcentre Plus to work with the centre and its other partners to improve and increase the level of service offered to adults, including better information and support for those claiming benefits, and opportunities for those interested in seeking paid work, training and education.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

The centre is attractive, bright and welcoming, which encourages families to respond well to the wide range of activities relating to exercise and lifestyle, improving diet and development. Outcomes for the children and parents who use the centre are satisfactory overall. Health outcomes are improving with an increasing number of

mothers commencing and continuing breastfeeding. Mothers who choose to breastfeed their babies receive good support and encouragement from staff and health professionals, including home visits and monthly health workshops. Obesity rates are decreasing and support to promote awareness of the benefits of stopping smoking and immunisation are effective. However, the centre is not yet having a significant impact on a sufficient proportion of the community, including those with greatest need. This is a priority for improvement.

Children and adults enjoy attending the centre and they feel safe. Arrangements to help keep children and families safe when accessing services are particularly effective because staff have a good level of expertise and the building is secure. Staff encourage children to explore and understand risks and dangers through play and experience. Children respond well to the established routines and settle quickly in the crèche because they have positive relationships with the adults. Children’s behaviour is good.

The centre has a satisfactory range of interesting and rewarding courses on offer, such as ‘French Fridays’ where language support is provided for families from Congo. Families value the support they receive and make good use of the sessions because they recognise the benefits, such as improving their children’s learning, increased confidence, and promoting good parenting skills. The centre is making a positive contribution towards narrowing the gap between the lowest attaining children and others. However, opportunities for adults seeking to improve their educational qualifications, undertake training or find paid work are limited and not promoted well-enough. The centre provides expert advocacy services for families facing legal, economic and immigration challenges.

Families engage with activities well because staff are supportive and build strong, trusting relationships with them. These relationships support the good work that is undertaken through the Common Assessment Framework, through child protection plans with looked after children. This support is highly valued by users, for example one parent told the inspectors: ‘My family is back together now because the staff helped me develop better awareness of my children’s needs. I do not think I would have got this far without the support of the staff’.

Tracking of individual progress in centre activities is at an early stage but where this works effectively it demonstrates how contact with the centre has enabled children to have a better start to school life. The children’s centre consultant teacher works effectively with child-minders and other local early-years providers to improve the quality of their provision and so improve outcomes for children.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2

The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
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	3
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	3

How good is the provision?

3

The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Assessment is generally used well to plan individual support for users and cover the whole range of needs, including the needs of those from some target groups such as fathers. The staff and the centre's partners are becoming steadily more effective at supporting those who use its services and are increasing the number registered. The local authority provides the centre with accurate information to help it identify the needs of the local community. Staff are working increasingly effectively with partners to meet those needs.

The proportion of families currently registered with the centre is low. Staff work effectively with the local authority and health partners to provide early intervention and support for families referred to them, such as new births. However, outreach work is inadequate. The centre has been slow to target those most in need of support. Families who are brought to the attention of the family support workers receive good support because staff use their knowledge and influence effectively.

Evidence shows that families using the centre receive satisfactory care, guidance and support and achieve improved outcomes. The centre provides strong support through its work with the Somali women's group and the 'Dads' group. These parents are actively engaged with a whole range of activities to help improve outcomes for their families, such as writing curriculum vitae, developing a social enterprise and health-related English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Information about opportunities for further support with parenting, counselling and general well-being is good. Parents have fun at the centre and engage in exciting activities, whilst building their confidence, relationships and parenting skills. One parent told us 'Coming to the centre is of great benefit. Staff and other parents are helpful, give me information about other groups and are always welcoming'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	3

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The range of interesting activities is leading to a steady increase in the number of families registered. The centre leader is determined to increase the performance of the centre. Staff are well-motivated and recognise the strengths of the centre. However, arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of all services and addressing priorities promptly have not been fully implemented. Staff are not given performance targets and are unclear about priorities and actions to improve.

The centre has an established steering group, which includes active and enthusiastic parents. Members recognise the value of negotiating protocols for partnership working and establishing meaningful targets for performance. Parents and carers participate well in decision-making. The developments to improve the arrangements for evaluation of the centre's work are progressing. The centre's leadership team have engaged external consultants and mentors for managers have been identified.

The development plan sets out the centre's ambition and identifies some of the improvements needed. However, it does not correctly identify the need to increase the number of families using the centre, or to identify and engage with target groups. Actions for improvement are neither detailed nor prioritised. The centre leader has arranged specialised support for the leadership team to ensure the centre continues to improve. The centre provides satisfactory value for money because it uses its resources appropriately to meet the needs of families who use its provision.

The centre promotes equality satisfactorily in its activities, some of which involve the celebration of different cultures and beliefs. The staff are representative of the communities they serve and speak many different languages. Discrimination, where it occurs, is dealt with promptly and effectively. The centre has contributed well to narrowing the gap between the lowest 20% and the rest in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The centre is committed to inclusion and removing barriers, including those faced by users with the greatest needs.

The centre leader has introduced effective arrangements to ensure safeguarding regulations are met. Staff receive good training, have a good level of awareness and know what to do if action needs to be taken. Integrated working ensures staff get ready access to expert advice on safeguarding and protecting children. Arrangements for staff vetting are comprehensive. Staff have good understanding of arrangements

for safeguarding adults whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and almost all staff members have received training to help them identify and support victims of domestic abuse.

Satisfactory partnerships are in place with a range of key organisations including the linked schools, health, social care, Early Years Foundation Stage providers and voluntary and private sector organisations. However, partnerships with organisations that provide adult education, training and employment advice are inadequate and these services only provide support for a few users. The centre is developing increasingly effective procedures with all partners to improve targeted services for individual children and families.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	3
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
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	3
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	3

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

The findings from the most recent inspection of Brearley Nursery and Brearley Playgroup were taken into account.

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. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected Brearley/Teviot Children's Centre on 19 and 20 January 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We enjoyed our visit and meeting so many of you. We would like to thank those of you who helped us with our work. We found the staff to be committed and keen to support children's learning and development and to help adults' become more confident and effective parents.

The centre provides an interesting variety of sessions and activities which are well attended and increasingly popular. It is a pleasant place for families to meet with staff from other organisations and to get more support and guidance.

We found the centre to be a safe place for you and your children. Some of you told us how the centre is a bright and attractive place and we agree. The rooms and play equipment are of a good standard and the staff have lots of experience and skills to make sure your time there is well spent. The children we saw enjoyed what they were doing.

Some of you told us that the support of the centre is very important when you are having problems. We found the staff to be effective at providing support for individuals and that they are determined to become even better at supporting families with the greatest needs. However, not enough families are involved in the life of the centre.

The staff have established partnerships with other professionals and organisations to ensure you have access to a full range of support and guidance. They are providing good guidance on how to keep families healthy and safe, and have placed great efforts on increasing children's development through many of the interesting and exciting activities.

Some of you said that sessions, such as 'French Fridays', are very valuable. The centre asks for your views on activities and courses and some of you are involved in helping to manage the centre.

We found that under the guidance of the centre leadership team, the staff work well to provide satisfactory levels of care, guidance and support. However, we think the centre and Jobcentre Plus needs to provide better services for adults who want help to find work, undertake training or increase their education.

The centre manager makes sure that the services the centre is providing meet your needs and interests, and we have asked the centre to make sure these arrangements are of good quality and that they continue to improve.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

