

Inspection report for Redcliffe Children's Centre

Local authority	Bristol City Council
Inspection number	384064
Inspection dates	22-23 February 2012
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI

Centre leader	Elizabeth Carruthers
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Redcliffe 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.

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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.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with parents and carers, centre staff, representatives from professional partnerships, the governing body, and the local authority.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Redcliffe Children's Centre and maintained nursery school evolved from being a purpose-built nursery school. It became a children's centre in September 2003 presenting the full core offer. The centre is set amidst a group of high rise, social housing flats in Redcliffe, close to the centre of Bristol in the heart of a 30% deprived area with pockets in the 50% deprivation category. The maintained nursery school is sited within the centre building. The nursery offers full day care 48 weeks of the year, 8 am to 6 pm Mondays to Fridays, for children aged from six months to school age. When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage their levels of development are often much lower than would normally be expected. In addition the centre runs a crèche when needed, an after-school club for children aged 3 to 11 years, and provides holiday play schemes for children until the age of 11. These provisions are inspected separately and inspection reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Although most families come from White British heritages, there is a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds within the reach area, with 27% of parents having a black or ethnic minority heritage. Many families have English as an additional language and nearly all their children are at the early stages of learning to speak English. In the nursery, 64% of children have ethnic minority heritages. At least 17 different first languages are spoken by families at the centre, the most commonly

used after English is Somali, representing 15% of families. A small number of family services are delivered from the centre. However, due to space restrictions and growing demand a wide range of outreach services, universal and targeted, are conducted from Redcliffe Methodist Church Hall and other community venues, including Leigh Woods. A home visiting service is also offered. Currently, the reach area is being reassessed.

In the reach area, 25% of children live in workless households and 6% of them are under five years of age. The majority of households live in high rise flats and receive benefits through being unemployed or of low-income. The centre also serves families facing issues of lone parenting, isolation, drug and alcohol misuse, and debt.

The centre is managed by a governing body made up of representatives from the local community, professional partners, parents and carers. It also has a parents' forum. It has recently become an early years teaching centre.

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

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

1

Main findings

Redcliffe Children's Centre is outstanding in every way. The key to the success of this exceptional centre is the vision and drive of the headteacher and her team. Morale is exceptionally high among all staff, valuing their opportunities to work as a close knit group, accessing top quality training and engaging in innovative national and international research. There is no complacency and everyone is always striving to improve the opportunities for the centre users, including those that use its services or who live nearby.

The extremely strong ethos and set of values based on equality and inclusion underpin all that the centre does. These form the foundation on which all provision is planned, delivered, monitored and evaluated. For example, signage in the centre and letters home are produced in languages relevant to the reach area and bi-lingual staff and interpreters are provided when needed. Fathers and male carers are offered specific, fun and supportive sessions to access the centre's resources so they

can help their children in their learning through play. Lone parents and those who feel isolated develop and build on existing relationships with staff and others at the centre, considerably improving family mental health and well-being. The centre's advice and development worker is highly effective in supporting parents back into work or education. The centre has rightly evaluated that expansion of this role would provide even more opportunities for families to be supported.

Each child in the nursery goes to the forest for a whole day each week. Here they learn how to make dens, investigate nature with their peers and get plenty of exercise in fresh clean air, often in the company of members of their family. These and other outdoor opportunities are especially important due to the large number families who live in flats.

Health professionals play a vital role by regularly visiting the centre. The counsellor is a key force for support and change. Through her outreach work she has identified a group of young expectant mothers who were not being supported effectively when leaving a local hostel. The centre leaders and local authority are now acting upon this information to ensure the safety and well-being of these young women and their imminent children. The involvement of other health related services also encourages parents who would benefit most from the centre to know what is on offer and to become part of its community. Examples of this are through 'Baby Massage' and the new 'Baby Clinic' run at the Methodist Hall.

Children and families who are most vulnerable due to their circumstances achieve highly positive outcomes because they are supported extremely well by individual intervention programmes, organised in conjunction with specialist health and care agencies. The excellent care, guidance and support ensure that children and families feel safe and secure. Relationships with families are excellent, enabling the staff to provide one-to-one support for a variety of issues, particularly in times of crisis. The flexible approach taken at the centre means that they can respond quickly to families' changing needs. The centre also provides a warm, homely environment for looked after children to meet with their parents in a supervised manner.

The capacity for sustainability and improvement is exceptionally secure with financial resources coming from an ever growing business section through the centre's training provision. This is a forward looking, highly innovative, extremely successful thriving centre which has a clear strategic vision for the future.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Expand further the role of the family advice and development worker.

How good are outcomes for families?

1

The number of fathers involved with the centre has steadily increased. Some of them enjoy being involved in a dedicated 'Fathers Group', and specifically organised activities for fathers; others prefer to be involved in the general courses and activities provided, especially the 'Forest Visits'. Swimming is also offered weekly for different groups. The 'Wiggle and Giggle' sessions provide active 'big soft play' experiences indoors. Such activities and the 'Creative Food Project' (now in its fifth year) have helped child obesity levels to continue to drop well-below those seen elsewhere. Parents also report that the whole family is more emotionally and physically healthy through their interaction with the centre.

Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning and are exceptionally well prepared for starting school. They are confident, behave very well and are responsive to each other's feelings. This is due to outstanding team work, high quality training of staff, use of relevant academic research and outstanding teaching, where the child is at the heart of all learning experiences. There are no differences between the achievements of girls and boys. Disabled children, those who have special educational needs and/or those who use English as an additional language are quickly identified during home visits and extremely well supported through provision specifically planned to meet individual requirements. There is specialist language support in small groups for those with an identified need. This occurs due to the excellent liaison and coordination between nursery staff and the speech and language therapist. As a consequence, there are no gaps in their achievement compared with their peers.

Seamless partnerships with other agencies and service providers help to ensure that vulnerable families are kept safe and receive a package of support that encompasses all their needs. This happens at the earliest opportunity with the result that although staff are trained in the use of the Common Assessment Framework it is often not needed as the centre's early interventions and support pre-empt its use.

Families are very well supported to express their views about how the centre is managed and where improvements could be made. For example, parenting sessions in Victoria Park Primary School were set up as a direct result of responses from parental questionnaires. Parents and carers have full involvement through the parent forum and have five representatives on the governing body. Staff are exceptionally well trained so that even the youngest child's views are taken into account. Parents, carers and the local community make their own positive contribution to the centre's work. They do this by joining in activities such as: the daily nursery visits to the forest; reading with children; holiday day trips; community celebrations held at the centre; or through volunteering.

In the reach area the levels of literacy and numeracy in some households hinder their future life chances. The centre has been responsive by instigating courses, in partnership with community learning services, to improve language skills for those who are at the early stages of learning to speak English. This is helping these families become more independent. Parents are also very effectively supported, often from very low starting points, to access training and to enter the world of work. The

appointment of an advice and development worker has been instrumental in helping parents during a time of flux in other local 'return to work' services.

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	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	1
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	1
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	1

How good is the provision?

1

Families living in poverty are sensitively identified and supported so that they can access the centre's activities, resources and services. There is a regular holiday provision for targeted families and a crèche is available for parents who are attending sessions or meetings. Parents returning to education or work are helped through the provision of flexible day care and wrap-round sessions throughout the year.

Whole centre day-trips during holidays are always full and give families without transport the chance to experience different types of outdoor environments, most recently to a working farm and previously to the seaside. Visits to the forest and the 'Creative Food Project' are just two other examples of stimulating activities that support children's growing understanding. In the forest they develop highly complex problem-solving skills and experience a safe but wild environment. The 'Creative Food Project' helps them to develop mathematical skills and experience new foods. Here, they often use vegetables that have been grown on their own allotment. Therapy provision through art, along with speech and language development at the centre is also a notable strength.

The centre continuously adapts its provision to meet changes in family needs. For example, in September 2011 a new 'Stay and Play' was established in a different part of the reach area, enabling the centre to engage with new families. The centre employs a male link worker to help support fathers and encourage them to join in and share with their child's learning. In response to the increased proportion of Somali speaking parents in the locality, the centre has employed a bi-lingual Somali speaker. This was based on evaluations from Somali parents who overwhelmingly

said they preferred to have information given to them orally rather than as written translations. To help aid understanding, augmented communication systems are also implemented throughout the centre, using signs, symbols and music.

Activities such as one-to-one support and targeted group sessions for a variety of specific, often hard to reach groups, are successfully building understanding and confidence, removing barriers to learning and progress. Long-term friendships often begin at these groups and long-lasting relationships develop with family support staff, based on mutual trust and respect.

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	1
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	1
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

The governing body fulfils its duties exceptionally well. Since 2006 it has helped the centre's leadership team to successfully complete eight separate building projects that have considerably improved the space available to families. Training, experience and a body that listens very carefully to families as well as staff ensures that they challenge and support all of the work conducted through the centre highly effectively. As a result, the centre provides well-organised, high quality services and resources are highly targeted to meet identified needs, providing outstanding value for money.

There is an extensive programme of staff development available that is highly tailored to individual need and interest. A considerable number of staff continue to develop life-long learning patterns through gaining a first degree or undertaking post-graduate certificated courses and research. The centre has hosted national research conferences and in 2011 five members of staff presented papers at the European Early Childhood Education Conference, based on their own research conducted at the centre. This is helping others to learn from their best practice.

Performance management is robust and lines of accountability throughout the centre are clear, understood and followed. This, in conjunction with an excellent mentoring scheme, ensures staff are held to account whilst being effectively supported by more experienced colleagues.

National and local data are used to inform the centre's priorities and to set highly ambitious targets. These are reviewed regularly and are informed by the views of staff and families in the locality, along with evaluations from the different activities

undertaken through the centre. All of the work conducted through the centre is rigorously evaluated by staff at all levels. The results are used to inform the next session and/or future planning, ensuring that they are meeting the needs of their evolving community exceptionally well. Staff also write case studies on individual families, who are in the target groups or who are the most vulnerable, highlighting their interactions with centre staff, some spanning several years. All of the case studies are carefully evaluated and the results shared with the whole team, again to inform future planning, continually improving the services and support provided.

The underpinning ethos of the centre is that 'inclusion is a human right'. The centre's policy and procedures for the promotion of equality and celebration of diversity are strictly followed by staff. Consequently, the protected rights through the Equality Act 2010 are promoted exceptionally well and discrimination is tackled highly effectively. Prejudice-based bullying or harassment of any kind is immediately challenged and recorded. Children with disabilities are fully included in all activities with their peers. Health professionals come to visit disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the centre when needed.

Child protection procedures and recruitment procedures comply with current requirements. Highly effective systems are in place and followed to ensure the physical safety of children and vulnerable adults when engaged with the centre's activities. The onsite provision of a counsellor enables families to have professional support to aid their mental health and well-being.

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	1
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
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	1
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	1

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

The Ofsted inspection in June 2011 of Redcliffe Early Years Centre where every aspect was judged to be outstanding.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Redcliffe Children's Centre on 22-23 February 2012. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Thank you for helping us to find out about your centre. We enjoyed talking to those of you we were able to meet. The parents and carers that talked with us said your centre was an extremely safe and friendly place. We also found that it has excellent methods to make sure that staff and helpers are suitable, have excellent training and are highly skilled to work with your family.

The way staff work in partnership with other professionals, like the health visitors, social services and the speech and language therapist is exceptionally successful. You explained to us how much you trust the staff working at the centre. You and your children are guided, cared for and supported extremely well.

Your children make excellent progress in their learning and behave exceedingly well. The activities at the centre help to prepare your children particularly effectively for the next stage of their education. They also help you to develop a range of skills that is highly beneficial to your family's future.

The centre welcomes people from all backgrounds and treats everyone equally fairly. You all have a say in how activities should be organised and have representatives on the governing body and parent's forum that make informed and important decisions about the centre.

You, along with the leaders and managers, have clear well-focussed ideas about ways to improve the centre. Your centre is outstanding in all that it does. We have asked leaders to improve one minor thing is to expand the role of the advice and development worker, who helps parents access training or employment.

It was a real pleasure to meet you and your children. We hope that you continue to enjoy and benefit from your time in Redcliffe.

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