

Inspection report for Heybrook Children's Centre

Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	383450
Inspection dates	6–7 March 2012
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	105770 Heybrook Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY356128 Heybrook Children's Centre
	EY347649 Hamer Sure Start Children's 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: March 2012

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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.

An inspection of the co-located primary school 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 managers and staff from the centre and the local authority, parents, members of the advisory board and local partners including health, early years education and an advice and guidance agency.

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

Information about the centre

Heybrook Children's Centre is within the grounds of Heybrook Primary School in central Rochdale. It is a phase two centre, designated in January 2008. The current manager has been in place since May 2011 and most team members are relatively new to this centre. Facilities include two rooms which are used for the delivery of early years activities and lead out into an enclosed outdoor area, a room for use by parents and a room for health related services. Childcare is offered through the playgroup EY356128 also known as Heybrook Children's Centre. It is inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act. A separate report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

There are 1088 children living in the reach area. There are high levels of social and economic deprivation with most parts of the reach area falling within the 10% most deprived areas in England. There are high levels of worklessness and 31% of children live in households dependent on benefits. The large majority of the population are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. Children enter early years provision with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in relation to their communication and social skills.

The centre is governed by the local authority and has an advisory board made up of representatives from the local community, one parent and partner professionals.

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

Heybrook Children's Centre satisfactorily meets the needs of families. It gives a satisfactory service overall and some outcomes for users are good. Care, guidance and support offered to families and target groups are strengths of the centre. The large majority of families using the centre and who participate in learning activities develop skills well. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate but has not fully identified all weaknesses. This is in part due to some insufficiently detailed data. Some targets to secure improvements for target groups have been set. However, not all are specific and challenging or sufficiently aimed at minority groups, such as those of White British heritage and lone parents to ensure all groups achieve well. However, improved performance-management systems are having a positive impact on outcomes for users, thus ensuring a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

The centre has maintained services in a climate of change. These include the delivery of health services through dedicated teams based at the centre with which families engage well. The centre is sensitive to the needs of most groups in this diverse community. Children's achievement has improved and is now good. Planned learning activities are of good quality and structured to promote the skills children and their parents need to develop, such as speech and communication. Staff are well qualified and experienced and high standards are expected and promoted by the centre manager.

Some parents help with activities and produce items such as toys and food for events held at the centre. They give feedback and make suggestions for improvements. However, the limited formal involvement of parents in the advisory board and decision making at the centre does not currently represent the community. This is being addressed by way of a 'Parent's Voice' group. Although currently there are no volunteers, the centre has begun to

address this situation. A small number of potential parent volunteers may begin once Criminal Record Bureau disclosures have been received. Courses are available to build confidence and communication skills; for those parents who take part, skills which contribute to their economic stability improve. Currently there is a limited choice of courses at different levels to help those who may want to volunteer or seek employment.

Safeguarding is given a high priority. The number of children who are subject to a child protection plan has decreased slightly. There are good arrangements for multi-agency work to protect children and ensure good outcomes for their safety. Families feel well protected in the centre and are comfortable to talk to staff about any issues or concerns.

Teenage parents and disabled children are two of the centre's target groups and all of those who are registered engage with services. There is a dedicated young parent worker who gives good support to all young parents up to the age of 21. For other target groups, such as lone parents, engagement has been less successful with only a minority using the centre's services. Staff are particularly good at advising and guiding families with a wealth of good quality information and good signposting to other agencies. Vulnerable families are supported well through skilfully coordinated multi-agency working. There is a good process in place to ensure families are engaged with the children's centre before a family support worker's case is closed.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Ensure parents make a better contribution to decision-making and the governance of the centre by:
 - building on the initial work of the 'Parent's Voice' group and making sure it represents the community
 - ensuring more parents play an active role in the advisory board
 - developing an easily accessible volunteer programme which draws on the wide range of skills in the community.
- In collaboration with partners, extend the opportunities for training and learning for adults in terms of progression routes and breadth of options.
- Develop further the use of data to inform how well target groups, including the White British minority group and lone parents, are being reached and how well the achievement gap is closing by:
 - ensuring the format of data received from the local authority and partners can be utilised by the children's centre and advisory board to measure impact
 - ensuring challenging and specific targets are set to secure improvement in outcomes.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Most families in the area engage well with health services based at the centre. Healthy living is promoted particularly well and the family healthy eating sessions and the morning breakfast club are popular. There is a good emphasis placed on physical activity and a well-resourced outdoor play area. Good support is given to mothers who are breastfeeding and most mothers continue breastfeeding up to eight weeks after the birth of their child. Data clearly show in 2011, 55% of mothers sustained breastfeeding, which is an increase of 10% from the previous year. Obesity levels remain stable at 10% at Reception Year. There is good support for smoking cessation with a small reduction in 2011. Specialist services work well with disabled children in the home and at the centre and half of the children with complex needs access stay and play sessions.

The centre is a busy and particularly warm and friendly environment. Parents comment on the friendly professional staff, who they feel they can go to at any time. One parent commented that, 'Staff can't do enough from the receptionist to the staff, to the manager. They make you feel that your child is special.' This is typical of how parents feel about the centre and staff. Parents feel safe and secure and they talk about their developed knowledge of safety in the home with confidence. There are effective procedures in place to work collaboratively with partner agencies to ensure that the actions and services provided achieve improving outcomes for children, such as improving the bond between parent and child and helping parents manage their child's behaviour better.

Children are making good progress from low starting points, particularly in communication and language. Achievement, as demonstrated by the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores, shows a steady improvement from 48% in 2010 to 51% in 2011 and this upward trend is continuing. The percentage gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and their peers has narrowed by a further 4%, from 26% to 22%. Action has been taken to engage boys more effectively and this has seen an improvement in their achievement. There are good transition arrangements in place for children from the playgroup to nursery and school with good information sharing between practitioners on assessments and care needs. Parents show a good increase in their confidence and ability to help their children learn through play to communicate with their children. Parents make comments like: 'The children love it and they get to do these messy things that they can't do at home'; and, 'The centre is helping me to be a better mum.'

Children are well behaved, helped by being fully occupied and engaged in the centre's good learning activities. Parents contribute to the centre through the use of their sewing skills, producing items and toys for the centre. However, opportunities for parents to contribute to the decision making and governance of the centre are in the early stages. For example, the 'Parent's Voice' group has very recently been set up. Here parents will come together to discuss services and offer suggestions for improvement. In addition there is currently only one parent representative on the advisory board.

Families improve their financial stability and independence through the individual support of family support workers. For example, young parents in particular increase their budgeting skills, which many find difficult, partly because of their inexperience. All families have access to an advice and guidance agency to which they are signposted for the necessary support. Staff support families by taking parents to appointments when necessary. A number of courses help parents develop communication skills and understand better how their children learn. However, there are limited progression routes for adults who may wish to seek employment or volunteering opportunities.

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	2
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	2
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 centre knows its community and meets the needs of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani community particularly well. Registration of families is currently 79% and although this is a large majority of families, the centre has set a higher target of 85%. Currently, just over one quarter of fathers access services and this is steadily increasing. There are no data to indicate how well the White British group, which is in the minority, is accessing services.

Vulnerable families benefit from learning opportunities at the centre. There are plenty of learning opportunities for children through the playgroup. Family support workers make sure that families are aware of centre activities and support parents to attend appropriate courses and play opportunities for their children. Learning is celebrated and certificates are awarded at events specifically set up for this purpose.

The centre provides good quality information and advice. There is good exit advice and guidance when adult learning is completed. Attractive displays are carefully designed and are accessible to those who speak English as an additional language, and key information is

translated into the various languages used by the users. The quality of care, guidance and support are good. For example, a crèche facility is provided specifically to offer respite care for families whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. Family workers are based at the centre and provide good quality support to families. Many parents talk about how the centre has positively impacted on the quality of their life saying such things as, 'Staff listen to my problems, I can't say enough about how good the staff are.' and 'If they see you upset they ring you.'

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.	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

The centre is led by an enthusiastic and supportive manager who has established and helped to build good team working and partnership arrangements in the relatively short time she has been at the centre. Partners and parents talk very enthusiastically about the quality of communication received from the manager and her staff. In spite of a reduction in resources, universal services have been maintained as well as some good outcomes for families, demonstrating good value for money. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate although all areas for improvement are not fully identified.

Governance arrangements are clear. Although some targets for continuous improvement are set, those set for the centre's purpose in relation to universal services are not sufficiently challenging and specific. The data available are not sufficiently broken down to measure how well different areas in the community are engaged and how well the gap in achievement is being closed between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest. The lack of challenge from parent representation on the advisory board has been acknowledged by the local authority and good plans are in place to address this.

Safeguarding is given a high priority and good processes are in place to ensure the protection of children. The multi-agency approach works very well in meeting the needs of families and developing safe practices in the home. A record of effective action taken and progress made is completed for each family and there are robust systems in place to ensure that all agencies remain fully involved with families as necessary. There is a shared understanding by partners of how the Common Assessment Framework process is used. Staff are well trained and effectively challenge parents in a supportive way if a child's safety is compromised. There are particularly good arrangements in place to protect families when there is evidence of domestic abuse. The centre recruits all staff through a robust

recruitment process. A single record of Criminal Record Bureau checks for all staff, practitioners and those using the centre is in place.

The centre reflects the cultural diversity of the community in all aspects of its services and play resources. Some staff are bilingual and translators are available if required to ensure families receive any necessary information. Families who use the centre interact in a warm and respectful way towards each other. Many religious and cultural festivals are celebrated throughout the year, which families enjoy. This is evidenced by comments from parents, such as, 'Staff consult fully with parents to make sure they get it right and that displays reflect our cultures.' The gap between boys' achievement and that of girls is narrowing as a result of specific actions taken to better engage boys. Managers interrogate data to see how well they meet the needs of most families; however, this has not been done effectively for the smaller number of those of White British heritage. Although some of these families engage, the centre does not know, for example, how many of these families have children under the age of five years.

Good working partnerships established with health partners, in particular with midwives and health visitors, impact positively on the well-being and health of families. Partners work together in a very flexible way to better meet the needs of families. Relationships between partners are clear and well understood.

Children's views are sought and used well to inform provision. The centre also seeks and takes account of users' views through surveys, feedback after sessions and in the newly formed 'Parent's Voice' group. However, the evaluation of these surveys is limited and not currently fully effective in ensuring they feed into the development plan for the centre. Parents contribute their views and provide challenge through the advisory board. However, the community is not well represented on the advisory board which currently has one parent.

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 secures 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	2
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	2
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

Information from the recent Ofsted inspection of Heybrook Children Centre playgroup has been taken into account when writing about early years' provision and outcomes for children in the report.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Heybrook Children's Centre on 6 and 7 March 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

During our visit we evaluated your centre's work and the quality of its resources, as well as its plans and documents. We talked to some of you and the professionals that work with you. There have been many changes in how the local authority arranges services to your families. In spite of this your centre has kept all the main services in place for you and you cannot speak highly enough of how much you appreciate your centre and the enjoyment you get from going to your centre.

You engage well with the health services run from your centre and this is having a good impact on the health of your families. You particularly enjoy the healthy eating sessions and would like more of them. You make good use of the play and stay sessions and the group sessions that help you understand better the importance of play and how your children learn. This has resulted in significant improvements in your children's achievements, and particularly in their speech and language. You have also said how much better prepared you feel to help your children learn and how you use everyday objects at home for play. Although some of you have taken up opportunities for further training, numbers are quite low. We have asked your centre to ensure you have the right level and range of training opportunities open to you and to do this in partnership with other agencies.

Your centre always makes you feel welcome and safe. The staff are friendly and supportive and many of you who we spoke to talked about how much your family's life has changed

and improved as a result of the support you have had. This may have been help with financial worries and help with budgeting, particularly for those of you who are young parents. Also, those of you who have experienced domestic abuse have been very well supported by your centre.

For those of you who do not speak English confidently, there are staff to help translate but you also help each other to understand and communicate. Your centre is running sessions that are specifically aimed at helping you to feel more confident and improve your communication. The families that use your centre come from many different backgrounds and you treat each other with respect and learn about each other's culture and experiences. Your centre has done a great deal to understand the needs of the community and make sure they meet the needs of most families; however, they do not know enough about how many White British families are living in the community and how well their needs are being met.

You are happy and comfortable to give your ideas and suggestions to your centre about what you would like to change or improve but at the moment there is no parents' forum where you can meet and discuss your centre's services. Also, there is only one parent representative on the advisory board and the board is not challenging your centre sufficiently at the moment. However, your centre has recently started a 'Parent's Voice' group to enable you to do this. Although many of you contribute generously to the centre by use of your skills such as sewing, there are no volunteers at your centre. Your centre is not making best use of all the skills and support you could offer and we have asked your centre to focus more on helping to engage volunteers and make sure you are playing an active role on the advisory board.

The manager and staff of your centre are working hard to improve services to you and also continue with good partnership working. The local authority continues to improve and develop the different services that impact positively on your children's centre. They know they need to do more to ensure that the evaluation of services offered by your centre is more refined and accurate. We have asked them to develop data so that the centre finds them easier to use. We have also asked the local authority to make sure that the structure of the advisory board can support and direct your centre more effectively.

Thank you very much for your warm welcome and for your frankness with inspectors. We are very grateful and wish you every success in the future.

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