

Inspection report for Canley Childrens' Centre

Local authority	Coventry
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Charter Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Mosaic Nursery EY330560

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.

An inspection of the co-located/partner 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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the local authority, centre staff, partner agencies, and parents. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's self-evaluation form, data provided by the local authority and the centre, documents and policies, and minutes of meetings.

Information about the centre

Canley Children's Centre is based in the south-west of the city and is located on the site of Charter Primary School. It operates services from Canley community centre and Templar's Primary School.

The centre was designated in February 2006 and serves a community that falls into the 30% most deprived areas nationally. The area is served by a number of local amenities such as community centres, health visitor base and housing association base. The large majority of early years provision is provided by the private and voluntary sector.

Canley Children's Centre serves 944 children aged under five years. The percentage of workless households and those dependent on benefits is below average. There are approximately 265 lone parents within the reach area. The children's centre serves a community of which the vast majority is White British, with the remaining population being from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.

The centre provides a range of services including health and family support services, play and learning experiences for children and adults. The centre provides full-time

early years provision and crèche provision to support families identified as in need of accessing services. The centre offers advice and guidance to parents on the day-care and childminding facilities available within the local community. A large majority of children, on entry to early years provision, have skills, knowledge and abilities which are above those expected for their age.

The centre is governed directly by the local authority with a partnership advisory board. The advisory board is made up of a cross-section of professionals, including representatives from the voluntary sector and parents. It is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day running of the centre and its strategic development. The centre has a parents' forum.

The centre works in partnership with agencies to deliver new services or enrich existing ones. The centre's family rooms and other venues are used to run group sessions. It has established working relationships with other professional services to deliver a programme of universal and targeted services to meet the local community's needs.

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

Canley Children's Centre serves the needs of its community well. Leadership and management are good and there is effective team-working and partnership working with other services. The staff's passion, commitment and determination to do their best for the community they serve have been recognised by users, partner agencies, the local authority and partnership advisory board. Comments such as, 'Staff go that extra mile', 'They are a great team' and 'The help they give is fantastic' are typical.

The leadership team has successfully managed reductions in funding and staffing and yet developed the centre to deliver services at a good level. Leaders target and adapt the provision well to meet local needs. The centre manager has implemented a systematic approach to evaluating the effectiveness of the centre's work and this is becoming well embedded. The centre manager can clearly demonstrate a trend of

improving outcomes for users over the past two years. For example, the uptake of services by users has increased from 36% in 2009 to 79% in 2012. At the same time, outcomes for most children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved to be above those expected for their age by the time they enter school. Consequently, the centre has a good capacity to improve.

Leaders set ambitious targets to improve the health, safety and economic well-being of the local community. The good-quality provision, together with effective family support, ensures that the large majority of families, whose circumstances have made them vulnerable or who are disadvantaged by economic and social circumstances, benefit from a good range of services that are carefully tailored to meet their particular needs.

The outcomes for children and adults within the centre's reach area are good overall, although outcomes for economic and social well-being are satisfactory. Parents participate in activities and courses which build their confidence and develop their parenting skills, such as 'Stay and Play' and 'Family Learning'. Some adults are successfully supported in accessing training and education. However, for those adults who feel isolated, lacking in confidence or rejected by the wider society and, therefore, less likely to enter a further education establishment, there is limited local access to training which would lead to gaining qualifications. The centre is very good at assessing users' needs, particularly their welfare, and satisfactorily assessing further learning and development needs of all adult users. Staff effectively signpost or support families in accessing services such as benefits and housing advice. However, these services are not readily accessible to them within the centre or local community venues and there is no reliable system in place to track or monitor the outcomes for these families.

Good inter-agency working supported through weekly 'Raise, Share and Review' meetings means that highly skilled professionals identify the needs of potentially vulnerable families at an early stage and intervene appropriately. This prompt action and good use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) ensure efficient use of resources. As a result, outcomes are improving for the large majority of children who are subject to child protection plans. Partnerships with health professionals ensure that new and prospective parents have access to onsite pre- and postnatal midwifery and health-visiting services. In addition, sessions, such as 'Baby Start' and 'Baby Massage' help parents develop their understanding of child development and how to interact and communicate with their children.

Users say they feel safe when attending sessions and during home visits from staff, and many say the centre is their first port of call if they face difficulties. Children contribute their views and adult users evaluate activities routinely. Where users make requests for services, the centre strives to provide them. Users say they feel listened to and respected. Children who attend the centre's 'Stay and Play' and crèche sessions benefit from good-quality, focused support and a good range of play opportunities that help develop their communication and social skills.

The centre positively promotes and encourages users to be actively involved in the work of the centre. For example, some parents help out at 'Stay and Play' sessions and others share their culture, beliefs, religion and customs during activity sessions with children. However, the number of volunteers engaged is low.

The range and quality of data available to the centre are variable. For example, the centre does not have access to all of the local data such as live births, and some data are city-wide and not specific to the families within the reach area. However, the centre has effectively used the information available to them, such as case studies, knowledge of its community and feedback from service providers and users, to accurately evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes. Staff and partner agencies routinely evaluate the services they provide and contribute towards shaping what the centre does. The improvement plans show that priorities are based on a good understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for further development.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Implement a more effective system to make services more accessible to adult users in order to improve their economic well-being by:
 - assessing their learning needs more accurately
 - delivering education and training, which lead to qualifications, at convenient locations such as the children's centre or community centre
 - providing direct access to key services, such as Jobcentre, and benefits and housing advice, at convenient locations such as the children's centre or community centre.

- Make more effective use of data to evaluate performance and plan for improvement by
 - increasing the range of data the centre collects about its reach area
 - developing the systems already in place to analyse the additional data effectively
 - systematically evaluating the effectiveness in improving outcomes for families who are referred to other services, such as adult education and employment.

- Improve users' community involvement within the centre and promote sustainability by increasing the number of volunteers who currently work at the centre.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

The centre is focused on improving the health and well-being of families. Families are supported in developing their understanding of living healthy lifestyles. For example, parents reported how the 'Funtastic Food' sessions, the cookery sessions delivered by a leading chef, and the advice given by the nutritionists, have enabled them to have a better understanding of eating healthily and how to produce simple, healthy and low-cost meals using fresh local ingredients. Families also engage in activities

outdoors. The 'Buggy Fit' sessions, together with the improved outdoor play environment to support children's physical skills and the introduction of the allotment, have increased physical activity. Consequently, the majority of children in day care are securely developing their physical skills in line with expectations. However, data show that obesity levels in children of Reception age remain high.

The effective inter-agency working with partners such as health services, portage, social care and family support workers result in positive outcomes for families. For example, parents experiencing isolation, challenge and difficulties in their lives, and children with additional needs, are supported effectively at the centre or within their own homes. Teenage mothers and those new mothers considered to be most vulnerable are supported in developing parenting skills. Health partners report a good success rate of parents initiating and sustaining breastfeeding. Comments from parents such as, 'This centre has changed my life', 'I don't know where I would be without the help of the staff', and 'I am coping better' confirm how the support is making a difference to their own and their children's lives.

Parents say they feel safe when attending sessions at the centre and during home visits, and how their awareness of keeping their children safe has increased through activities within 'Stay and Play' sessions and attending paediatric first-aid training. Home-safety checks, including carbon monoxide testing, carried out at every initial home visit and 'Safe as Houses' funding to provide home-safety equipment, contribute towards children's safety within the home. Parents report that they have a high level of confidence in the staff. Many say the centre is their first port of call if they face difficulties and feel the staff are like an extended family.

The centre's good partnerships with childminders and private and voluntary childcare providers ensure children's needs are met effectively and parents are well supported when looking for childcare provision. Good transition arrangements between home, childcare provision and school enable children to settle very well, having a positive impact on their learning and development. Parents reported positively on how their children settled well into school and had come on leaps and bounds.

The promotion of children's learning and development is good. The Early Years Foundation Stage is embedded in all aspects of the centre's work. Parents feel play is at the heart of the centre and they value this. Strong emphasis is placed on promoting children's speech and language through play. Children particularly enjoy rhyme and story time. Staff encourage parents to sing with their children at home by giving them the words of rhymes and show them how to use story sacks when telling stories. Parents say how much they value the 'Stay and Play' sessions and how their knowledge and understanding of child development has improved. Parents comments such as, 'I now understand how my child learns through many activities' and 'Children learn to share and take turns' are typical. Evaluations of the success of courses and activities are positive and show improving outcomes for families. Consequently, the gap between the outcomes for the most vulnerable groups and others is narrowing.

The manager has successfully secured funding to support a group of young parents to become volunteers, although this is in the early stages of development. Staff talked positively about how they had observed adults developing their confidence and how children had enjoyed learning about cultural festivals as a result of the voluntary work.

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	2
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?

2

The centre team knows and understands its community well and works effectively with its partners to improve the life chances and personal development of parents and children. The centre is successfully engaging with the most socially isolated families through providing services within the community. For example, 'Stay and Play' sessions are delivered at the community centre and local schools. Parents expressed appreciation of the support they receive and of the positive changes that have resulted for their children and themselves. Comments such as, 'I don't feel isolated anymore, I have made many friends here' and 'I don't know where I would be without the help of staff' confirm this.

The assessment of users' needs, particularly welfare, and the tracking of progress are good. Interventions that are used and the progress of all vulnerable families are well documented and monitored and provide a bank of case studies to help subsequent evaluations. The centre has forged good links with family and children's statutory, community and voluntary services. Its close partnership working has resulted in very effective support for all of the most vulnerable groups, such as teenage parents, lone parents, families in crisis and those experiencing domestic violence. Consequently, it is improving the life chances and personal development of parents and children well.

The staff team demonstrates a very good understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and promotes children's learning and development well

during sessions. Staff also effectively support parents' understanding regarding the quality and range of age-appropriate activities they can provide for their children. Parents talked about their increasing confidence in playing with their children, developing their speech and managing their behaviour.

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	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The centre manager provides good leadership and management for the centre. Leaders and staff are well qualified and experienced. They are fully focused on the needs of the immediate community. Their expertise and the skills of a united staff team combine to ensure that a good quality of service is provided across the centre's operations. Regular and effective supervision supports the personal and professional development of staff well. All staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities.

Staff are committed and willing to go that extra mile. They refuse to give up, even when services are threatened by financial cutbacks. The manager has successfully secured high staff morale and the services continue to run seamlessly, with no significant impact on users. Partner agencies and parents expressed how highly valued staff are. For example, one partner stated, 'The manager is a strong leader, she has real drive and determination.' Parents talked positively about the staff saying, 'staff are very supportive' and that 'the support I have received has been significant'.

Although live birth data are currently unavailable to the centre, the good links with health partners mean that pertinent information is shared with the centre and families so that early intervention takes place with positive outcomes. The centre's self-evaluation, despite the lack of some data, is broadly accurate and based on a sound understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for development. Priorities for action are articulated and communicated clearly so that all can contribute to meeting them. The manager has plans for ambitious projects for the future.

Safeguarding is the centre's highest priority and at the heart of what they do. The safety of children and their families is embedded into the ethos of the centre. Leaders are effective in ensuring children and families are safe. This is through rigorous attention to child protection and vetting and recruitment procedures. It is also the result of a sensitive approach to the variety of needs the centre's users present, which ensures that families feel comfortable with staff and protected. The

effective use of the Common Assessment Framework and team around the child processes are firmly embedded to ensure children who are subject to child protection plans are well safeguarded.

The environment is warm, welcoming and safe. The inclusion of all children and their families is central to the centre's vision, equality is promoted and diversity is celebrated. The centre provides good value for money by working in partnership with other agencies and commissioned services. The centre meets its community's needs very well and extends its services to those living outside its designated area. The centre makes a positive contribution to community cohesion and the breaking down of barriers between families of different backgrounds.

The centre has an established and effective partnership advisory board, made up of a good cross-section of members representing a range of interests, such as educational providers, the local authority, the health service, and parents, and an established but developing parents' forum. It is very supportive and has a strong commitment to the centre and to the ongoing development of its role in the community. All are actively involved in promoting the good-quality provision. The advisory board's accountability arrangements are clear and all members are trained and fully aware of their roles and responsibilities.

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	2
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	2
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	2
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	2

Any other information used to inform the judgements made

during this inspection

The inspection report for the early years childcare provision, Mosaic Nursery, at Canley Children's Centre, inspected on 29 June 2009.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Canley Childrens' Centre on 14 and 15 March 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We talked with some of you, your children, staff, and a wide range of partners and members of the local authority linked to the centre. We observed the centre's work and looked at a range of documents and concluded that the centre provides a good range of services that are tailored to meet your particular needs.

The centre is an inclusive and welcoming place which is run by dedicated adults who want to serve you well. You speak highly of the centre as being a place where you feel safe, secure, supported, included and listened to. Other partner agencies also speak positively about the good work staff do for you. Comments such as, 'Staff go that extra mile', 'They are a great team' and 'The help they give is fantastic' are a sample of what we were told.

You comment on the difference that the centre has made to your confidence, self-esteem, social skills and achievements as well as your children's progress, development and behaviour. Others of you report on how your parenting skills have improved and how you have made positive relationships. Comments such as, 'I now understand how my child learns through many activities', 'I don't feel isolated anymore, I have made many friends here' and 'I don't know where I would be without the help of staff' are typical of the views you communicated to us.

You and your children are developing a good awareness of how to lead healthy lifestyles. Children enjoy physical activities as they take part in sessions such as 'Buggy Fit' and work on the allotment. You learn how to prepare nutritious meals on a budget through the 'Funtastic Food' sessions and support from the dietician. You are supported in making your homes safe through the home-safety checks and the home-safety equipment you are given.

Some aspects of the centre's work are stronger than others. For example, effective multi-agency working, such as with the health visitor, local support team and outreach workers, is a particular strength and contributes well to improving outcomes and supporting those of you whose circumstances make you vulnerable.

Your children are developing good skills which prepare them well for when they move on to school. You participate in activities and courses which build your confidence and develop your parenting skills, such as 'Stay and Play' and 'Family Learning'. Some of you access training and education. However, for those of you who feel isolated or lacking confidence and, therefore, unable to go to a college, you have limited access to training which would lead to gaining qualifications. Staff effectively signpost or support you in accessing services such as benefits and housing advice. However, these services are not readily accessible to you within the centre or local community venues. The centre has no reliable system in place to track or monitor how many of you benefit from the services staff help you access. Therefore, we have asked the centre leaders to deliver sessions that will lead to qualifications and provide you with easy access to advice at convenient locations such as the centre or community centre. We have also asked the centre leaders to introduce systems to evaluate how many of you access these services.

We know that the centre is good at responding to those of you who have been identified as in need of help and that staff undertake timely and appropriate assessments. We found that the centre is satisfactorily assessing and identifying individual learning and development needs of all adult users. Therefore, we have asked the centre leaders to improve the way in which they find out what your learning needs are, and use this information where appropriate, to target resources more effectively.

The centre is successfully reaching 79% of the families they are expected to reach and are providing a good range of services for you. Staff have made good use of the information available to them, such as case studies, knowledge of the community, feedback from service providers and you, to accurately evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes. However, we know that the centre is not provided with all the necessary data they need to help them plan and deliver services. Therefore, we have asked the centre leaders to increase the range of data the centre collects and use this to plan more effectively what services they provide.

The centre has successfully supported a small number of volunteers, during which time you have achieved qualifications and employment. Those of you who engage in voluntary work told us how much you enjoyed it and the difference it has made to your lives. However, there are only a small number of volunteers engaged at the centre. We have, therefore, asked leaders to increase the involvement of community volunteers in the work of the centre to develop a feeling of ownership and engagement.

We would like to thank everyone who came to speak to us. We thoroughly enjoyed spending time at your centre, and we wish you and your families the best for the future.

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