

# Inspection report for Bowes Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Enfield
<b>Inspection number</b>	383638
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 March 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jon Bowman HMI

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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Bowes Primary School
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Willow Day Care

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 an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, representatives of the school, local authority, partners, parents, frontline staff and volunteers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Bowes Children's Centre is a phase one centre designated in September 2006 and delivers the full core offer. The centre is located on the site of Bowes Primary School which includes a nursery with 60 part-time places. Willow Day Care, located on the same campus, offers 12 full-time equivalent day care places for children aged two to five years old. The centre serves 597 children under 5 years of age.

The centre is accountable to the local authority. It is led and governed through the school governing body and Children's Centre Forum, the advisory board for the centre. Direct line management is provided through the deputy headteacher. Services are delivered by the centre manager, one outreach worker and one part-time crèche worker. Support services are shared with the school. Programmes are commissioned both by the local authority and the centre. New arrangements to cluster local centres under single governance and operational structures and the federation of the school are imminent.

The centre is situated in a residential area which is socially, culturally and economically diverse. In recent years the area has seen an increase in home ownership and a greater proportion of economically active families resident. The demographics of the area continue to change with the development of new social housing in the locality. Two of the eight super-output areas served by the centre are within the 30% most disadvantaged areas nationally. The local community is mainly from White British and White Eastern European backgrounds, with a smaller

Asian/Indian and Black African population. Just over half of all children in the area speak English as an additional language. Levels of unemployment among adults are rising but are low compared to the area average. On entry to Early Years Foundation Stage provision, children’s skills, knowledge and abilities are at 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**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**2**

## Main findings

The centre provides a safe, welcoming and vibrant environment. Parents have a strong sense of belonging to the centre. They and their children achieve a range of good outcomes. Children who have attended the centre have been tracked and Early Years Foundation Stage data demonstrate the excellent progress and achievement that they make. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest is closing well. Excellent transition arrangements ensure that children are very well prepared for their next steps in learning. The quality and effectiveness of the care, guidance and support that users receive is outstanding. Those users with more acute needs are supported well to take greater control over their lives and offer better support and help to their children. In these instances support is characterised by effective multi-agency work that is tailored effectively to the individual needs of parents and their children.

The centre is led well and managed by the deputy headteacher and centre manager. A culture of continuous improvement and effective action by managers and staff has successfully secured improvements in the quality of the provision and outcomes for users. Outcomes are good overall. The centre has increased the proportion of families and children from the local areas who attend regularly. A greater proportion of families who live in the most deprived areas and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable now engage effectively with the centre. Many benefit from accessing different services and programmes over time. The capacity of the centre to make further improvements is enhanced by the effective sharing of expertise across the school campus and the joint work between the on-site services. Self-evaluation processes are effective and partnerships further enhance the breadth and quality of

provision.

The use of data to review performance is improving. Information and data on the performance of the centre are regularly considered through the school's management structures. However, this is not the case with the advisory board. The need to better track outcomes for users and improve the use of performance data is recognised by the centre. User views inform well the development of services and programmes at the centre. However, at a time of much change, users are not sufficiently involved in the strategic oversight and development of the centre.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Further improve the use of performance data and the tracking of outcomes for users so further improvements in performance are secured.
- Ensure that users are effectively involved in the strategic development of the centre so that programmes and services continue to meet their needs.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

<b>2</b>
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A good range of programmes support healthy outcomes for users. Mental health and well-being are effectively promoted through specialist services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). As one user said, 'It allows me to get a lot off my chest.' Another commented, 'They have made me feel a lot stronger.' Through attending the centre, users develop friendships and important social networks that help reduce feelings of isolation. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their parents have good access to effective integrated care, education and health services through the work of the centre. There is a good focus on promoting the oral health of children resulting in a greater number of centre users registering with, and visiting, a dentist. Parents develop well their knowledge about diet, nutrition and exercise. The percentage of children who are obese when entering Reception has reduced. Data for the area show that initially more mothers choose to breastfeed their children. However, the proportion doing so declines after six to eight weeks.

Users of the centre report feeling very safe on site. Children who are subject to a child protection plan receive good support. The safety of users is effectively secured through the high priority placed on it by the senior managers and staff. Those whose circumstances make them vulnerable are very well served through effective outreach and partnership work. They benefit over time from the continuity of support provided by very good joint work between the centre, school and nursery. The most vulnerable are supported well to engage with both universal and specialist services. Good use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) ensures that support is coordinated well and there is good oversight of the safety of more vulnerable children and families. Good support is available for those experiencing domestic violence. Women and their children are successfully supported to access safe

accommodation. Through attending counselling, they better understand and manage the risks to themselves and their children. Parents are able to share their concerns easily with staff and place a high level of trust in them.

Safe practice and behaviour are modelled well by staff through programmes such as Stay and Play where children and parents are supported well to develop safe behaviours, such as the safe use of scissors. Attendance at first-aid courses ensure that parents are better informed and more confident in dealing with accidents, illnesses and recognising medical symptoms.

Children develop very well their social skills and become more independent and confident learners. Parents develop a good understanding of what to expect when their child moves to nursery and school through, for example, the successful Bring your Dad to School days. Programmes are highly enjoyed by all and are closely tailored to the individual needs of children. Close tracking of children's progress, in particular for those who have more complex needs, supports the outstanding progress that they make. Through coaching, parents develop well their knowledge and understanding of their child's behaviour and development and how to effectively support their development.

Feedback from parents on the services and programmes offered is regularly sought by staff. Programmes are adapted well in the light of the experiences and views of users. For example, the operating times of sessions have been changed to better meet the needs of users. A bespoke Stay and Play session for children under a year has been developed so that activities are better tailored to their needs. Parents and children develop well their sense of social responsibility through regular fundraising events for good causes.

The centre delivers programmes which support the economic well-being of families effectively. Adults have good access to a range of adult learning courses. English as a second language (ESOL) courses enable them to develop well their confidence and ability to use language skills in their everyday lives. Information and communication technology (ICT) classes develop basic ICT skills effectively. Sound practical advice helps users understand better how to manage debt, where to borrow money from and their rights. Outreach work provides practical support and effective advocacy on matters such as housing. The progress that parents make is recorded through their 'learning journey' and helps them reflect on their achievements well. The number of adults who are supported to volunteer is increasing.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for families*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

<b>2</b>
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Managers and staff know the community well and understand the needs of individual users. The centre is promoted effectively by outreach work including to new parents through joint work with health visitors at the baby weigh clinic. Most target groups take part regularly in the centre's programme. A good proportion of fathers take part in a weekly dads' group that improves their relationships with their children. More vulnerable families are prioritised, ensuring timely access for them to programmes and specialist support services. Where specialist support, for example to improve breastfeeding rates, has not been available managers and staff have worked effectively to ensure that the needs of users are met through existing programmes.

The centre provides a very positive learning environment for users. Programmes are structured well to support children's developmental needs. Activities engage children very well and are adapted effectively to meet their individual needs. Children's achievement is very well supported by sharing expertise from well-qualified and experienced Early Years Foundation Stage practitioners from across the campus. The contribution from other agencies such as Pre-School Speech and Language and the Early Years Library Outreach Service enhance the outcomes achieved. A wealth of useful information for parents is available throughout the centre. Parents develop a good understanding of what to expect when their child moves to nursery or school. Their achievements are celebrated well through certificates and presentations.

The care, guidance and support provided by staff are excellent, particularly for users who experience crisis and for those who need on-going help. As one said, 'When I am low I can come here and the staff will listen.' Users have an exceptionally high level of trust in staff and could not value the support and help they receive more highly. As one commented, 'The staff are like family to me.' Another added, 'I'm so comfortable here; I can just be myself. No one is judging me and everyone is so supportive.' Specialist support from CAMHS and the Citizens Advice Bureau is equally valued by users. Vulnerable families and those who have more complex needs are supported very effectively through outreach work so that, over time, they begin to take greater control of their own lives and provide better support for their children.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>

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

<b>2</b>
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The centre is managed effectively. Governance arrangements are clear and effective overall. Good links between the governing body and the centre ensure the centre has a good profile within the campus and the community. The deputy headteacher and centre manager work well together in managing and developing the centre. There is a culture of continuous improvement, high ambition and leaders have a keen critical oversight of provision.

The advisory group meets regularly and most partners attend. However, they do not routinely consider data and performance information. The use of data to review performance is though improving. The lack of availability of some data at a local level hinders analysis. The centre recognises the need to better track outcomes for all users more effectively to better inform judgements on performance.

Self-evaluation is effective. Service managers know well the strengths and areas for improvement and these are reflected well in the self-evaluation and the action plan for the centre. However, the action plan does not always contain specific and measurable targets and actions to achieve and these are not always clear. More generally, the evaluation of programmes and groups is routine and well established and leads to improved services that better meet the needs of users.

Resources are used well to support the good outcomes users achieve. The centre is well resourced and the available space used effectively. Resources are shared well across the campus and the limited outdoor space available is used wherever possible. The school's media room is made available for ICT classes for users. The centre provides good value for money.

Equality and diversity are effectively promoted. All activities are free to users. The crèche effectively supports users to access programmes including adult learning classes. During sessions parents and children from different backgrounds work and play together harmoniously. Displays around the centre promote cultural diversity well and cultural and religious events are regularly celebrated. Users of the centre reflect the community and target groups well.

Comprehensive policies and good support from managers ensure that users are effectively safeguarded at the centre. Staff are alert to the welfare needs of users



and are experienced and competent in safeguarding them. Recruitment and selection procedures ensure that new staff are appropriately vetted prior to commencing employment. Risk assessments are routinely undertaken and control measures to minimise risks do so effectively.

Partnership arrangements support well the good outcomes that service users achieve. The engagement of users is supported well by the high number of referrals received from health visitors and midwives. The breadth of support offered to users is greatly enhanced through the contribution of partner agencies. While user views are sought and help shape programmes, the centre recognises the involvement of parents in the strategic development of the centre is less well embedded.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

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

The nursery was judged to be good at its inspection in 2009. This finding contributed to the children's centre inspection and report.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Bowes Children's Centre on 28 and 29 March 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We very much enjoyed our visit to your children's centre and would like to thank all of you who gave your time to speak to us and tell us your experiences of using the centre. Your views have helped inform us of how well the centre is doing and we have mentioned some of your comments in the report.

Bowes provides a safe and enjoyable environment. Many of you take part in a wide range of activities and services that help improve the health and well-being of you and your families. Children who attend make very good progress and are exceptionally well prepared to take their next step in learning. Those of you who need additional help receive excellent support through the staff at the centre and from partner organisations. Those of you who attend adult learning classes develop your skills and knowledge well. The centre is led well by the deputy headteacher and centre manager. The range of services is enhanced by partners who deliver services with or from the centre.

The centre does most things well but there are two areas that we feel could be improved. Firstly, while your views are considered well when changing the content of sessions and in developing new programmes, more of you could play a fuller role in the wider development of the centre, particularly at a time when changes are planned. Secondly, the use of data and information on outcomes for users to inform managers of how well the centre is performing is underdeveloped. In these areas, we have made recommendations for further improvements.

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