

# Inspection report for Anthony Road Children's Centre

Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	362428
Inspection dates	28–29 October 2010
Reporting inspector	David Speakman AI

Centre governance	The local authority
Centre leader	Pradip Panchmatia
Date of previous inspection	N/A
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Linked school if applicable	N/A
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Sunshine Nursery

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.

## 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 registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the children's centre manager, the operations manager, the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Advisory Board, the deputy director of Spurgeons, and volunteer workers. They met with a number of representatives of services who work through the children's centre, including the leader of health promotion, health visitors, outreach workers, a family support worker and a representative of social services. Inspectors spoke to groups of parents and carers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Anthony Road Children's Centre is a phase one children's centre that provides full core offer provision. This includes: early education integrated with childcare, family support and outreach to parents, child and family health services. It operates in three areas and from two sites: one in Saltley where it shares a building with City College, and one in Ward End on the Ward End Primary school site. Outreach work in Bordesley Green is from the leisure centre, a local school and church facilities.

The head of the centre is an interim executive head (four days each week). He works closely with the centre's operations manager who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre and has a full role in strategic planning. The centre is funded by the local authority, which has joint responsibility for running the children's centre with Spurgeons, a children's charity. There is an advisory board consisting of a

Spurgeons Director, a community development worker (Chair), two parents from each of the three areas (six in total) plus local partners, four school headteachers, representatives from Job Centre Plus, Extended School and City College and the Birmingham East and North Primary Care Trust.

The majority of the families who use the centre are from a Pakistani background. There is a growing number of families using the centre from a White British origin and from a range of other minority ethnic heritages including Black African and Bangladeshi. Data for the reach area place the user base in the bottom 10% nationally for deprivation. The centre serves two of the most deprived areas in Birmingham. There are 2226 children under five in the children’s centre’s reach area. Around 40% of children and adults who use the centre come from homes which are dependent on benefits and where no-one is in work. The levels of skill shown by children when they start the nursery are below those expected for their age.

The range of activities offered by the centre includes local community baby clinics, child development checks, breast-feeding support and special needs support groups. The centre has links with health visitors and speech therapists. It provides a wide range of adult education and courses and activities designed to support parents and carers back into employment.

The centre opens 48 weeks each year on weekdays from 8am until 6pm. The centre has an arrangement with three other centres, Highfield, Washwood Heath and Adderley, to provide services at one of the centres on Saturday for families registered at any one of the four centres.

## 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 users and the wider community**

**1**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**1**

## Main findings

Anthony Road Children’s Centre provides an outstanding level of support for children and their families. This is because the welfare of the whole community, whatever individual or group needs are, is at the heart of the centre’s work. Children’s centre staff demonstrate an exceptional understanding of individual users’ needs. These are

initially assessed extremely well, with high levels of sensitivity, giving children, parents and carers and their families high levels of confidence in what the centre is doing. 'Here they don't just talk about things, they actually do something. That's what makes the difference,' said one father. Centre staff believe that by improving the lives of parents and carers, helping them to be better parents, children's life chances will automatically improve. Through excellent support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, centre staff are helping parents overcome discrimination towards disability based within some cultures. Through the example set by the centre staff, adults learn to respect and fully accept disability within their immediate and wider families. Parents are now challenging this form of discrimination from within their immediate community. This highly positive attitude is worthy of further dissemination.

The work of the centre is fully focused on equality of opportunity. The multilingual skills of some staff and parents are used very effectively to support those who speak very little or no English. This approach gives new users confidence that they will be understood and gives them a wide knowledge of what the centre can provide them to enhance their lives in this country.

Skills such as the ability to speak a range of languages and positive attitudes like those towards disability are very useful to promote the work of the centre within its community. There is scope to organise and extend this essential work further and for those users with success stories to formally act as ambassadors to the centre's excellent work.

Safeguarding of children and other users takes a high priority in the centre's work. The centre exemplifies high quality practice. Practitioners have a strong knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children. All staff have received appropriate professional training to enable them to provide exceptionally high levels of care and protection. Policies, procedures and practice are very strong and consistent, and they enhance the safety of children and vulnerable adults. Robust procedures are in place with regard to suitability checks for new workers, and stringent safe recruitment procedures are implemented. Thorough risk assessments are in place. There is a common database through which integrated services ensure children and adults are fully protected and safeguarded. Robust procedures and referral mechanisms ensure that concerns are followed up and support, where needed, is offered.

The centre has seen a number of changes in terms of its leadership over the last few years but, working closely with the local authority and Spurgeons, the managers and advisory board have worked relentlessly towards constantly improving its impact on the community it serves. Leaders and managers, exceptionally well supported by the senior leadership team and the advisory board, consistently review and evaluate the impact of their work so that, now, all outcomes are outstanding and provision is excellent. The relationship between the staff, advisory board and partners is exceptionally strong, and they all work very effectively together. Staff morale is very high and all show high levels of commitment to the community and pride in their

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work. There is a far higher level of engagement with the community than in the past and now 77% of children under five in the centre's catchment area have been reached. The centre has good success in engagement with fathers. The city average for contact with fathers is 15% and the centre has seen 27% over the past year. Demand to attend the centre's activities is such that extra sessions, including 'Stay and Play' and 'Family Fun', have been put on. High rates of success in adult education have fostered a hunger for more learning in the community. The improvement in the centre's impact on the community and the exceptionally high quality of provision means that the centre has an outstanding capacity to sustain further improvement.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Explore further and formalise ways to capitalise on the skills and talents adults acquire through the centre to deepen the impact on families new to the centre by:
  - establishing a group within the parents' forum to support families of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - having parents to be ambassadors for the work of the centre
  - using the multilingual skills of parents to communicate fully with non-English speaking families.

### How good are outcomes for users?

<b>1</b>
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Users are developing an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and their families healthy. There is a very strong focus on the promotion of healthy living. Consequently, users have developed a very positive attitude towards healthy lifestyles, and are improving their knowledge and understanding, which are supported well from within the health promotion agenda. There are extensive opportunities for adults and children to play, have fun and learn together in sessions such as 'Family Fun', 'Stay and Play' and 'Cook and Taste'. An excellent range of learning activities for users of all ages enables them to achieve high levels of knowledge and understanding in relation to their starting points. In the 'Cook and Taste' sessions observed, groups of young children were busily engaged in making healthy wraps and vegetarian pizza from ingredients such as tuna, sweet corn, peppers, cucumber and chopped tomato. So engrossed were they that they were not interested in any form of conversation, and the quality of their products was well in advance of what could reasonably be expected for children of this age. An extensive range of other activities is provided, such as free-flow access to outside play, self-serve snack bar, yoga for parents and children, and breastfeeding cafes. These activities enable users to keep children healthy and have a positive impact upon their health. Emotional wellbeing is an important aspect of the centre's work. The centre has developed strong working relationships with professionals, who advise on health

issues and provide a wide range of services relating to the care and protection of vulnerable children and adults. Smoking cessation sessions are having a positive impact on users. Hygiene is promoted effectively throughout the daily routine and widely promoted through notices, for example, relating to hand washing in washrooms and toilets. Outcomes are maintained at a high level.

Children are active learners. This is evident through observing different groups where they confidently lead their own learning and happily pursue their own interests. Children and other users develop excellent skills for their future lives and self-development. They are fully prepared for transitions into nursery and school. Parents develop confidence, stability and independence through training and volunteering opportunities.

The centre provides an extremely safe and supportive environment. Users feel comfortable and confident to approach practitioners to discuss issues, and their own awareness of children’s safety is promoted very well. Additionally, invaluable home safety checks are offered to raise users’ awareness of safety within the home environment. Case studies show significant impact and improved outcomes for children on child protection plans. Robust systems are in place to support vulnerable children and any adult in need. Early identification of families with additional or special needs is undertaken by outreach, in partnership with health professionals. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are exceptionally well supported and mix freely with others within the setting.

Adults using the centre are instrumental in making choices and in providing valuable feedback on their experiences. Through the parent forums, and the parents’ panel, users have opportunities to express their views and are engaged in the governance of the centre. They are actively involved in decision-making and proactively communicate their views. Active parents’ forums have significant financial resources through their continual fund-raising events. The centre’s role in the life of the community is well established; it is described as ‘an oasis within a hectic, built-up area’. Community cohesion is very well enhanced. Professional partners say they value working with this centre because it is so highly thought of within the community, it enables them to reach far more families than might be the case otherwise..

*These are the grades for the outcomes for users*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>governance of the centre</b>	
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>	<b>1</b>

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

<b>1</b>
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Users' needs are assessed extremely well, and are reviewed sensitively and consistently in order to ensure their suitability and effectiveness. Assessments such as those carried out under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) are very clear and effective, and ensure appropriate and highly effective care is provided. Facilitators demonstrate an exceptional understanding of individual users' needs and, through effective partnership assessment, services fully meet users' needs. Provision is very carefully managed so that users in each of the centre's three areas have equivalent provision. Practitioners are dedicated to supporting users based on feedback provided through the centre by those using the services. Parent panels, user surveys and customer feedback are used to assess need and design change.

Cohesive teamwork in planning learning activities for young children is evident and highly successful. Early Years Foundation Stage planning is completed on a staff group basis and exceptionally high quality early years' provision takes place on site. The children's centre teacher and staff are extremely knowledgeable, fully aware of children's starting points and consistently consider these when planning the learning intentions for each session. Effort and achievement are celebrated consistently; for example, graduation days for pre-school children are enjoyed immensely.

For adults, the quality and range of services are excellent. The centre promotes individualised, purposeful learning of a high quality. Providers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and sessions are expertly tailored to support individual users' needs. External speakers are invited to sessions to provide specific advice and guidance, such as the sessions provided through partnership working with Jobcentre Plus, or classes to help adults pass the theory section of the driving test. On-going evaluations are routinely completed to ensure that all sessions and resources continue to promote purposeful learning. Specialist staff are often used to deliver services, ensuring accurate learning takes place. Statistics indicate that there is a very good take-up of services by those living in the centre's reach area.

The centre displays excellent quality and range of guidance and support. Through personalised support users feel safe, find staff readily accessible, obtain good quality information and engage with great enjoyment in the centre's activities. Practitioners have specific areas of expertise and are extremely well deployed to give users confidence in the work of the centre. Users express high levels of satisfaction with the level of care, guidance and support offered at the centre, which runs on the ethos that 'every family matters'. The centre is making a hugely positive, noticeable difference with the users they are reaching.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>

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

<b>1</b>
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Governance and accountability are clear. Strong lines of monitoring, evaluation of performance and outcomes, through both the local authority and Spurgeons, are highly effective in ensuring the centre performs at a high level in all aspects of its work. This level of cooperative leadership embraces leaders at all levels and there is a strong sense of teamwork, through which all staff contribute to the centre's success. High levels of commitment to the centre's work are evident at all levels.

Very clear structures support the excellent day-to-day running of the provision. Finance is monitored very closely to ensure that all available funds are used to full effect. Management within the centre is so effective that, despite a significant cutback in the level of funding, the centre has managed to maintain its level of services. This is helped through volunteers working in the centre. The centre provides outstanding value for money.

The centre demonstrates high-quality safeguarding. All policies are in place and practice is of a high quality and ensures the safety and security of all users. The centre's managers and senior staff place a high priority on all aspects of safeguarding. Staff are fully vetted before appointments take place. This robust process extends to volunteers who are required to provide a written application detailing suitability, to pass through an interview process and then undergo safe recruitment checks. All staff are trained in child protection to levels that are appropriate to their responsibilities. All are fully aware of a range of processes relating to child protection issues and have a strong knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This enables early intervention and the centre is able to draw on a wide range of expert services to support most needs, ranging from family relationships to issues supporting emotional health. Similarly, the centre is fully committed to the promotion of equality and diversity. Practitioners go to extraordinary lengths to ensure the full inclusion of all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, background or need, including special educational needs and/or disabilities. In this way it is able to meet the needs of all users.



*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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</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>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision</b>	<b>1</b>

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

An inspection of the registered early years/childcare provision, carried out during the same week as the inspection of the centre under Section 3 of the Childcare Act 2006, contributed to the children's centre report and judgements.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Anthony Road Children's Centre on 28–29 October 2010. We judged the centre to be outstanding.

We are very grateful to all of the parents, carers and representatives from the centre's professional partners who took the trouble to come in to tell us about the work of the centre. You gave us an extremely positive picture of the centre, and what you had to say was very useful indeed in making our final judgements.

Anthony Road has so many strengths that it is difficult to pick out any individual outstanding features. At the core of the centre's success is the strong leadership of the centre's executive head and operations manager, the exceptionally strong teamwork of the centre's staff and its relationship with professional partners. This means that the workers at the centre communicate exceptionally well with each other and their feedback provides a deep knowledge and understanding of the community's needs. These are met in full. Additionally, staff members continuously evaluate their own work and build on their practice to further improve performance. Centre workers are keen to improve their own skills and take up any training available so they are able to provide high quality. There has been a great deal of improvement in what the centre provides and how well the children, parents and carers are now doing. The number of families using the centre's facilities has improved dramatically over the last few years. The centre is now 'a centre of excellence at the heart of the community'.

The centre's work on promoting health within the community is having a tremendous impact. Families are now thinking much more about their health through diet. Medical practitioners have established a high level of contact with families, and support young and expectant mothers very well. The emotional health of people within the community is of high importance and is supported effectively through outreach work. The safety of all centre users is high on the agenda. The centre's safeguarding procedures are exemplary, and adults and children alike feel safe and confident while there. Children are very well prepared for transferring into nursery or school. Similarly, adults who engage in courses and adult education opportunities are empowered to improve their own lives. Adults' views contribute to the centre's improvement through the parent forums and through feedback after attendance at sessions.

It is clear that the centre provides high quality for a wide range of community needs. So many families within the reach area are now accessing the centre's services that managers have had to put on extra sessions. This is true testimony to the centre's success. Care is taken to ensure that community members in each of the three areas receive similar opportunities at the different sites.

There are very few areas that require significant improvement and the centre and managers are aware of these anyway. The centre has such a good level of provision

and a strong relationship with its users that, between you all, you have built up a high level of expertise and positive attitudes. We are recommending that the centre managers explore ways of using this valuable skill base and source of knowledge. We are asking them to capitalise further on your skills and talents by perhaps establishing a group within the parents' forum to support families of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We have also suggested they deploy parents as ambassadors for the work of the centre and use the multilingual skills of parents to communicate fully with non-English speaking families.

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