

Inspection report for Greenside Children's Centre

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Local authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 362488 |
| Inspection dates | 12-13 October 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Philip Mann HMI |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Centre governance | Local Authority |
| Centre leader | Beverley Thompson |
| Date of previous inspection | n/a |
| Centre address | Culverhouse Road Luton Bedfordshire LU3 1PZ |
| Telephone number | 01582 594 632 |
| Fax number | 01582 594 632 |
| Email address | Greenside2005@yahoo.co.uk |

| | |
|---|---|
| Linked school if applicable | William Austin Infant School and William Austin Junior School |
| Linked early years and childcare, if applicable | Greenside Nursery EY292201 |

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.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, representatives from the local authority and other external organisations, health services, parents and carers of children. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Greenside Children's Centre is a phase one stand-alone children's centre working alongside Greenside Nursery to provide the full core offer. It was designated as a children's centre in March 2006. A management board provides necessary oversight on behalf of the local authority. The centre is adjacent to both William Austin Infant School and William Austin Junior School located on the same site in an area of mixed housing with some pockets of deprivation. Levels of employment are broadly average but about 11 per cent of families are in workless households and in receipt of benefits. The local population is predominantly of Asian background, primarily Pakistani, as well as Bengali, Kashmiri, Indian, White British, Irish, African, Afro-Caribbean and Polish. Many families speak English as an additional language. Children's attainment on entry into the Early Years Foundation Stage is below average overall.

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

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

This is a good children’s centre with some outstanding features. Enterprising leadership and strong teamwork is building a wide range of integrated support services for families within the centre’s geographical area, known as the ‘reach area’, and the wider local community. The centre’s reputation for high-quality care and support for young children and their families is fully justified because it is in fact outstanding. The centre is welcoming, inclusive and effectively promotes equality and diversity. Activities and services reflect the community’s cultural mix and community cohesion is promoted well. Day to day management of the centre is excellent and planning for future improvement is good. Excellent governance arrangements ensure that there are clear lines of accountability between the centre, its partner organisations responsible for the effective use of resources and the local authority. Communication between the centre and key partners is excellent. Based on the centre’s effective leadership, management and governance, its capacity for future improvement is good.

Outcomes are at least good in all areas; they are outstanding in those related to health. Children and adult users demonstrate very positive attitudes towards adopting healthy lifestyles. Health visitors provide excellent levels of guidance, support and information about children’s health and associated developments through weekly developmental sessions at the centre. Children are helped to understand about behaving safely and sensibly in a way they understand. For example they learn to handle wooden blocks carefully and take risks sensibly in a safe environment when climbing on apparatus. A good proportion of parents attend safety-training sessions, resulting in improved levels of safety awareness at home.

Personal and social outcomes are good and many children and parents make friends and grow in confidence as a result of attending centre-based activities. Analysis of data confirms that children make good progress in all areas of learning. Furthermore, local childminders are developing their skills well through effective training and useful opportunities to network at the centre through the ‘Stay and Play’ and ‘Stay and Eat’ sessions. Regular courses effectively support mothers and fathers develop their parenting skills in a range of areas such as managing the behaviour of their children.

The centre is increasing the numbers of fathers who participate in activities. However, not all potential users of services within the reach area are aware of or fully engaged in centre activities. In addition, opportunities for those parents wishing to develop their skills in preparation for work are limited.

The quality of provision is good. Staff provide a broad range of worthwhile services to a steadily increasing number of users. Staff are extremely caring and work very hard to provide a safe and nurturing environment within the centre. Good assessment procedures are used to monitor the development of children and to gain the views of users through satisfaction surveys to improve the quality of provision in the centre. The monitoring of users' outcomes to inform future planning for improvement is developing well. However, assessment is not used with rigour to fully target services to the needs of all users in order to improve outcomes significantly. Staff display a strong sense of teamwork in caring for all those who use the centre. They are highly self-motivated, resourceful and enthusiastic about providing the best possible levels of service and care for users. All safeguarding requirements are met and risk assessment is good. However, clear protocols between all relevant agencies to ensure the safety of all children in all settings and activities such as 'Stay and Play' are not fully established.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve outcomes by using assessment data to identify and target all hard to reach groups.
- Extend the range of services and particularly in preparation for work.
- Extend the quality of good safeguarding arrangements by implementing clear protocols between all agencies.

How good are outcomes for users?

| |
|----------|
| 2 |
|----------|

Children relish eating healthy snacks and fresh fruit because the centre promotes this aspect of learning exceedingly well. Recent initiatives such as healthy cooking and keep fit sessions are developing healthy lifestyles amongst adult users. These are very well received and effectively followed up at home. Such activity is resulting in a reduction in obesity rates for five-year-olds. The installation of the NHS Life Check kiosk provides further advice in different languages via the internet. Parents receive consistent messages from a wide range of health professionals, including support for treating minor ailments at home. An improving trend in breastfeeding rates is a result of strengthening links with health professionals, inter-agency working and carefully targeted individual support.

Outcomes for staying safe are good. They are improving further because there are effective systems for identifying children and families who are vulnerable or at risk. Staff effectively build trust with families. Children attending day care and other services settle very quickly and respond very positively to the excellent care provided by their key workers and other adults. There is good take-up of home-safety visits

and the use of safety equipment, resulting in a better understanding of safety issues.

Analysis of data confirms that the proportion of children attaining the expected outcomes for their age is significantly above those from other settings within the locality. Children play well together, displaying very positive relationships with others in all aspects of provision. Parents make new friends through attending centre-based sessions, and they display a good sense of enjoyment during activities. A strong focus on language development is helping children to overcome communication barriers. Furthermore, storytelling sessions and the book-lending scheme encourage parents to read with their children. Parents value these workshops greatly.

The contribution of users to the centre and local community is good. The 'Dad's Forum' is well attended. It is valued greatly by fathers as it promotes learning and a better understanding between different cultural groups. This diversity is further promoted by Arabic language classes on Saturdays. Children using the centre's facilities are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. An increasing number of adult users are attending courses that provide good levels of advice and support on how to access a range of services.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

| | |
|--|----------|
| The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them | 2 |
| The extent to which all users 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 users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre | 2 |
| The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training | 2 |

How good is the provision?

2

Assessment data is used effectively within the centre to fully inform planning and to provide a comprehensive understanding of each child's needs. Individual files provide a continuous record of children's development. The common assessment framework procedures are thorough and fully engage a wide range of professionals. Data gathered from user-satisfaction surveys are used well to record parents' considerable satisfaction and to identify aspects for further improvement to the range of services available. However, assessment data is not used sufficiently to identify and target hard-to-reach groups.

The centre's good range of services has continued to increase and clearly empowers those users who attend. Sessions such as the 'Baby Massage' and 'Baby Babble' groups instil a good sense of well-being among mothers and babies. Planning is good and fully supports the development of all children within the childcare setting. The centre staff provide good support and training for local childminders to improve the overall quality of childcare in the reach area. Staff adapt services effectively to meet both individual and community needs. As a result, participation rates are improving rapidly, such as those for the 'Stay and Play' sessions. Outreach work is becoming increasingly cohesive due to effective integration between professionals. However, there are limited opportunities at the centre for users to develop skills in readiness for work and to help them access future employment.

Excellent relationships exist between staff and users. Support is tailored very effectively to meet the needs of children and their families, and this is especially so in times of crisis. Family support staff are extremely successful at using activities, such as home visits and centre sessions, to reach out to families and involve them in the work of the centre. Quality childcare is offered on site and used effectively as a springboard for other services. These are personalised to ensure improvements to family health, safety and learning. The centre effectively uses support systems within the local authority and its close ties with local schools to ensure continuity of learning for those with additional needs. Parents are provided with high-quality support and guidance to access the right help at the right time for their children. For example, parents are provided with expert health advice during development assessments of their child by the local health professional.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users | 2 |
| The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users | 2 |
| The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community | 2 |
| The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community | 1 |

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Governance arrangements are very secure and clearly understood by all parties. Very clear lines of accountability and terms of reference are in place and overseen effectively by the management board. Day-to-day management is excellent. Roles and responsibilities are very clearly understood and delegated effectively to the centre staff. Leaders have successfully instilled a strong sense of teamwork and purpose among a dedicated staff team. The local authority plays a full strategic role in supporting the centre as part of its integrated network of local children's centres. There is good involvement of users in the partnership arrangements. Strong links

exist between the adjacent schools on the shared site. Services are well integrated to provide a cohesive range of support for users of the centre.

Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and effectively engages a wide range of staff, other agencies and users. Procedures for performance management are thorough and used very effectively to develop the skills and expertise of centre staff. A good start has been made in using a good set of data to inform improvement planning and to develop the range of services further. Key priorities for improvement are carefully identified and shared with leading partners. However, this planning is yet to have a significant impact on increasing the range of services and improving users' outcomes across the whole reach area.

Equality and disability legislation are fully implemented. Access to the centre's facilities is good and effective levels of support are provided for individual users with disabilities. Staff tailor support services carefully to suit the needs of individuals. For example, appropriate levels of support are provided for parents with poor literacy skills and those who speak English as an additional language.

Safeguarding is good overall and recruitment and vetting procedures are robust. There are clear procedures for monitoring the welfare of children and for sharing any concerns between agencies. Good support is provided for families in crisis. However, some safeguarding protocols for those working at the centre and other agencies are yet to be clearly defined to ensure all children are safe in all centre-related activities such as the 'Stay and Play' sessions when other adult users are present.

Financial resources are managed extremely well. The quality and range of resources are good overall. Resources are effectively deployed to provide a fully integrated package of services for users. Very effective use is made of accommodation. There is a very strong emphasis on sustainability within the setting. Taking all factors into account the centre provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|---|----------|
| The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood | 1 |
| The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community | 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 evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities | 2 |
| The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

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. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected the Greenside Children's Centre on 12–13 October 2010. We judged the centre as good overall. Many of you told us that staff are very caring and supportive. We agree with you and we judged this aspect as outstanding. We were also impressed with their ability to work as a team under the excellent leadership of the centre manager and the management board. With the support of the children's centre coordinator, they all work hard to support your children's development and your own skills and confidence. They provide you with good information on how to be healthy and safe, and they get extra help for your family. This is improving the health and well-being of yourself and your family really well. In future the centre is going to provide even more activities, including helping parents to return to work.

Greenside Children's Centre is a safe place for you to bring your children. The rooms are welcoming and allow your children to play happily while they learn indoors or outside. All of the children are making good progress in many areas of their development. The staff are carefully checked to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. However, in future the centre is going to make sure that all staff and professionals are very clear about what to do and who to talk to if they have a concern about your children's safety.

The centre provides a good place for you to meet other parents and people who can help you and your families. The staff use information well to plan activities for you and your children. However, we have asked them to use this information even better to make sure more parents and children from all backgrounds know about the centre and use it regularly.

We would like to thank all of you who found time to talk to us 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.