

Inspection report for Bilborough Children's Centre

Local authority	Nottingham City
Inspection number	362441
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Georgina Beasley

Centre governance	The Local Authority
Centre leader	Pauline Wilkinson
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Wigman Road
	Bilborough, Nottingham
	NG8 4PB
Telephone number	0115 9157777
Fax number	
Email address	Pauline.Wilkinson@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Glenbrook Primary and Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Greenfields Day 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.

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, parents and carers, health professionals, Greenfields Day Nursery and Glenbrook School staff, and representatives of the local authority, and held discussions with members of the advisory board, library staff, and Jobcentre Plus, welfare rights and family information representatives.

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

Information about the centre

Bilborough is a Phase 1 Sure Start Children's Centre that provides full care provision. It is situated on the outskirts of Nottingham city. Four hundred and sixty five of the 590 children who live in the reach area access at least one service provided by the centre. The majority of families are White British. The remainder are from a number of different ethnic minority backgrounds. The economic position of families is low. The centre serves an inner city community which is in one of the 30% most deprived wards in the country. Around 175 children live in families that receive workless benefits, which is 31% of families who live in the reach area.

The Centre provides a base for a range of health, educational and social services that take place on site, in the home and in local community venues. The centre hosts Greenfields Day Nursery which provides 30 places including 27 under twos. There are five childminders in the reach area who provide additional child care. The children start pre-school with skill levels well below those typical for their age. The local authority manages the provision and works closely with a local advisory board made up of representatives of all partner organisations, and parents and carers. Recent restructuring has led to changes in staff responsibilities and closer partnership with Multi-Agency Locality Teams (MALT). There was no full-time centre teacher in post during the inspection.

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

The children's centre is good and serves its local area well. The Community Services Manager and team know the reach area well and so are clear about what needs to be done and why. High expectations for the children's achievement and a strong belief that the family's contribution is vital are shared across centre staff and partners. As a result, everyone works as a cohesive team for the benefit of users. Parents and carers make a positive contribution to the centre through volunteer work. Priorities for improvement and activities are relevant to reach area needs. Improvement targets are challenging but not all are related to precise data about the reach area to enable the centre to measure the success of its work more accurately.

Outcomes are good for children and adult users. Every family has at least one contact, usually with the midwife or health visitor when their children are born. There is still a significant minority of families who do not make contact again until their children start nursery. Excellent multi-agency support for individuals and families enable children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make excellent progress from their starting points. Children included in the two year old project make excellent progress due to focused support. Children enjoy the weekly Stay and Play and PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership) sessions and those who attend make good gains in their communication and language development. Although planned well to meet the 'Every Child a Talker' programme, the purpose of the groups is not clear to parents and carers. As a result, parents and carers who attend are not always involved enough in their children's play and so learn how to build further their children's learning and language development when at home.

Users feel safe, and have a good awareness of how to keep families healthy. Adults who access training build good skills to help them to back into work. Lone parents receive good advice from Jobcentre Plus and the Family Information Service to ensure they receive the right benefits. Staff signpost childcare and training for those who want to go back into work. Nevertheless, a significant minority of workless families do not access the weekly support offered by these services, sometimes because the wider community do not always know they exist.

There has been good and sustained improvement to key aspects of the centre's work. Excellent systems for ensuring users' safety are fully embedded into practice. Excellent partnerships with schools and health ensure a cohesive team that works for the benefit of those children and their families who access services. The centre staff and health partners monitor important procedures rigorously. Care, support and guidance are good and excellent for users with an urgent need and families in crisis. This sustained improvement reflects the centre's good capacity to improve.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Communicate and signpost the centre's work more effectively to the wider community and to those groups in the reach area not yet accessing services.
- Monitor more closely the effectiveness of activities designed to support parents and carers' ability to join in with their children's play and so build their learning, communication and language development further when at home.
- Sharpen the use of data to assess more accurately how well users benefit from the centre's work and to measure more precisely the success of improvement strategies against outcomes.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Every new mother receives a visit from the Health Visitor to promote healthy lifestyles and signpost the centre's services available to her and her family. Despite active promotion, fewer mothers than average initiate and sustain breast feeding. There has been success in increasing the numbers of families immunising their children against childhood illnesses. Free toothpaste and toothbrushes given out at every health check and at activities and events held at linked nurseries have led to improved dental hygiene for those children who attend. A significant minority of families fail to keep some health check appointments and so miss out on vital supports. There has been good success in the number of pregnant mothers who manage to give up smoking. Over half who said they would did so successfully. The centre continues to offer active support for smokers to give up or to smoke outside. Parents and carers enjoy the Cook and Eat sessions and use fresh ingredients to produce healthy and low-cost meals.

Children achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills from well below average levels when they start in nursery. Staff in the adjacent school endorse that 'children who access centre supports are prepared well for learning in Nursery and Reception'. Behaviour is good. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress. They receive high quality individual support both in the home through portage and the specially organised group for autistic children and their families. Children involved in the 'two-year-old pilot project' make excellent progress and attain levels similar to the local authority average. As a result the achievement gap between Bilborough Children's Centre and the local authority and national averages

is closing faster than the national rate. In 2010, a greater number of this group achieved an average six points or more on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile than other groups in the reach area in personal development, communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Similarly, more of this group achieved an above average eight points.

The centre staff work very effectively to raise the awareness and develop the knowledge of parents and carers about how to keep their families safe. Everyone who uses the centre say they feel safe physically and emotionally. They say that 'staff are ready to listen and give useful advice and practical help'. Families value the support and services offered and take up of free home inspections from the fire service is good. Over 44 families invited ROSPA to inspect the home environment and welcomed subsequent safety advice and support. There have been very few referrals from the hospital accident and emergency (A and E) for accidental or intentional injuries to children under five, all of which prompted immediate child protection plans. The data the centre currently receives records all visits to A and E which is not useful for monitoring against this national indicator. It also indicates a need to give families more specific advice about who to consult if their child is ill.

A good number of parents and carers and members of the community volunteer in the centre or adjacent day nursery and school. The experience and good training opportunities have helped some to get back into work and others to achieve accredited qualifications. Through the work of a strong partnership with Connexions, over a third of teenage mothers attend education or training. Good partnership with Jobcentre Plus gives good support to workless families, especially to lone parent families. The precise numbers across the reach area of people successfully returning to work or education as a result are not available. As a result of concerted efforts to meet their particular needs, about a quarter of fathers who live in the reach area access centre services. A good number of children offer their views through individual conversations with adults, and parents through the Voices4Families group.

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	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
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

Home visits play a large part in the centre's work. Planned activities with individual families focus on specific and identified needs from comprehensive assessments. Weekly group activities support the needs of children and their families well. The autistic group meets weekly and offers good advice to parents and carers about behaviour and language development. Weekly library sessions during term time include stories and rhymes to help build the children's early language acquisition. There is a missed opportunity to extend these during holiday times to supplement the good range of holiday activities. 'Getting Ready for Nursery' gives good support and so families are well informed and children settle quickly.

Attendees value and enjoy family learning sessions and the many accredited courses run by Jigsaw which can be added to CVs to help when looking for work. The 'Aiming High' project is particularly beneficial to adults, teenagers or children with a disability in helping them socialise, to gain independence and to build new skills. Formal feedback after courses, events and activities, and the work of the Voices4Families group, enable centre staff and health professionals to listen to users views and to make changes to the programme as a result. For example, following a review of the visit to Gulliver's Kingdom, the centre staff and carers' group made sure the next venue had fewer steep hills to make it easier for pushchair and wheelchair users.

The centre foyer is welcoming and contains an extensive number of leaflets about activities taking place in the reach area, both run by and at the centre and those run at other local venues. Leaflets are displayed at other community venues and at the library and keep those who access these venues well informed. While users of the centre benefit greatly from the range of services offered, a significant minority of the wider community are not aware of the services regularly offered. For example, lone parents are able to attend Jobcentre Plus appointments at the centre which is more convenient than the local office. Jobcentre Plus and Family Information Service do not currently promote their services to community events and groups and, as a result, weekly sessions are not well attended. Families enjoy using the outdoor play area 'for picnics, to meet friends and to play with their children'.

Relationships with parents are extremely positive. Parent and carers are confident to talk with staff about any concerns because they know they will receive practical and emotional support. Work with the most vulnerable children and families is exemplary. Children and families supported through the Common Assessment Framework receive excellent support in the home from health and education specialists, and through placements at the linked day nursery.

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,	2

development and enjoyment for all users	
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	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The centre improvement plan details how it will reach its priority targets. Quarterly reviews of data enable the centre leaders to evaluate whether the centre is on track to reach most of its targets as measured by current trends. Data does not always relate directly to the reach area and this makes it difficult for the centre to evaluate accurately whether it is reaching all of the people it needs to reach. Leaders regularly invite feedback from all users and use the information to adjust services and events. Soft Smart data is beginning to give the centre confirmation that access from potential users within one area of its reach is low in comparison to others.

The centre works very closely with its partners. All service agreement contracts are embedded in practice. Multi-agency staff have regular contact with the centre and are able to 'hot desk' which supports constant communication with each other about the effectiveness of services. This effective teamwork results in immediate and relevant supports for families in need of emergency support. Representatives from health and community partners and nominated users attend advisory board meetings and their views are taken into account when planning service delivery.

All centre activities are free, except for the annual trip for which a small charge is made. Everyone who wishes to can attend. The centre reaches all of its minority ethnic families at least once and the large majority on numerous occasions. There are still a number of families and wider community members that do not access services. The centre has a view that people may access activities elsewhere, but does not have objective data to confirm this.

Safeguarding procedures are excellent. The recruitment process checks all applicants' identity, qualifications and suitability. All staff follow comprehensive risk assessments to ensure excellent supervision of children and users, and that the centre and off site venues are safe. Procedures cover the safety of pregnant mothers and people who may need special support. Child and adult protection processes are robust. The numbers of adults disclosing domestic violence is growing because they know staff will listen and give practical advice and help. Regular multi-agency meetings log any concern about a child's care and monitor it closely afterwards. Home visits record if a child has been seen or if not of where they are so follow-up checks can be made. Embedded systems ensure family support staff see the children regularly.

The centre gives strong focus to ensuring sustainability and good value for money. The administrative officer analyses the centre's costs closely to ensure best value

from resources. For example, a recent cost analysis of Stay and Play in one local venue has led to successful negotiations for a rent reduction. The local authority gives good support. However, the centre has found it difficult maintaining the quality of some activities due to the lack of a full-time teacher and Children Centre worker this term. Meetings with childminders have lapsed this term.

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 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	1
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	1
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 other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The findings from the inspections of Greenfields Day Nursery, and of the Early Years Foundation Stage at Glenbrook and Firbeck Primary Schools 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. 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 Bilborough Children's Centre on 11–12 November 2010. Thank you for talking to us about yours and your children's experiences at the centre.

We judged the centre as good overall. Some aspects are outstanding. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress due to the personalised support they receive during home visits and when they come to special groups. Excellent support and guidance is given to those of you who have a very specific short or long-term need or family emergency. Centre and multi-agency staff work very closely together. This excellent teamwork ensures all staff get to know you personally and that your specific needs are met.

Safeguarding arrangements receive high priority from the centre staff and advisory board's work to ensure yours and your children's safety not only when you are at the centre but also when you attend one of the groups held at one of the local community centres. You all told us that you felt safe at the centre. Many of you told us how much you valued being able to talk to staff in confidence and how you trusted the advice and support they subsequently gave to you, your children and your families.

The Community Services Manager and Community Team Manager know the reach area well. Managers provide strong and caring leadership. All staff have high expectations for you and your children, especially for personal wellbeing and your children's academic achievement. They realise that they cannot do this without your support and so welcome you and your views openly. The centre environment is welcoming. Your children enjoy playing with the toys in the small play area in the foyer and the fruit on offer for them to take.

The varied range of groups, courses and services meet all of your needs at some point. Those who use the groups and parenting programs enjoy the company and value the support they get from staff and each other. Children who attend pre-school and 'Getting Ready for Nursery' sessions are well prepared for their learning when they start school. Feedback from parents and carers reflect their children's enjoyment of visits, Stay and Play and PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership) sessions. Attendance at the large majority of groups is growing although a significant number of families still do not use the centre services and activities regularly. The centre has fair and equal processes to try to make sure it includes as many of you as possible. Sessions are free and open to all. The centre with local authority support provides good information about other activities in the area for families to use. These include the numerous activities organised during school holidays.

Cook and Eat sessions enable those who attend good opportunity to learn how to use fresh ingredients to make nutritious, low-cost meals. Health visitors and midwives give good support to those of you who wish to breastfeed, although the numbers initiating and sustaining breastfeeding is below average. The good news is that over half of you who were prepared to have a go managed to give up smoking and the rest have agreed to only smoke outside. Dental hygiene is stressed at all

healthcare checks and through the nursery curriculum. As a result of this and your support, dental hygiene for those who attend is good.

Volunteers play an important and significant role in supporting the centre's work. Feedback is welcomed. The Voices4Families group is a positive forum through which you can express your views. The centre adjusts services and events as a result. An example of this is the change of venue for visits. Those of you who attend Family and Adult learning at Jigsaw will be pleased to hear that the tutor is writing an accredited course for those who expressed a wish to start their own business.

We have asked your centre in partnership with the Local Authority to improve three things.

We know that the centre is always asking for feedback from those of you who use its services regularly and involve you in making decisions about its activities, groups and services. Some of you told us that the people in the wider community think the centre is there for only those families with children under the age of five and not the whole community. Therefore, we have asked that the centre, in partnership with the local authority and its partners, to promote its work to the wider community to encourage as many people as possible to use its services and so benefit from its good work.

The centre organises many varied activities for you to enjoy not least PEEP, Stay and Play and holiday activities in partnership with Jigsaw and parent and carer and community volunteers. Children who attend the two-year-old pilot group in nursery make excellent progress in their communication and language development. We want all children to benefit from this excellent work. We have asked the centre to monitor more closely parent and carer involvement in Stay and Play and PEEP activities to raise your awareness of how you can join in with your child's play and help to build their communication and language development further when you are at home.

The centre collects a lot of information to help plan individual services that meet your specific needs well. We have asked the centre to gather more precise information about the reach area to help it assess where it is more successful and why, and what it needs to do to reach those people who are not yet using the centre's services.

Thank you again for welcoming us to your centre and telling us how you, your children and your families have benefitted from its work.

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