

Inspection report for Crossley Hall Primary School and Children's Centre

Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	365774
Inspection dates	19 – 20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Liz Godman

Centre governance	Governing Body of Crossley Hall Primary School
Centre leader	Wendy Knight
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Crossley Hall Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	N/a

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 additional inspector and one early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with representatives of the local authority, the head of centre and with members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. A discussion was held with the school's headteacher, deputy headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body and with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Crossley Hall Children's Centre received its designation as a phase two centre in March 2008. The centre provides family support, parental involvement and links with Jobcentre Plus, schools, colleges and health and other services. A crèche is provided at the centre during some adult learning activities. The centre is located on the site of Crossley Hall Primary School. This school was inspected in the same week as the children's centre. The school report can be viewed at www.ofsted.gov.uk. The centre works in partnership with other early years settings and children's centres in the area to ensure that children receive the two-year-old offer or respite care if they are entitled to either of these. The school's governing body is contracted by the local authority to govern the centre, in conjunction with a steering group and a parents' group.

Most children enter early education with knowledge and skills that are below expectations for their age. The centre serves a community which experiences high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of children who live in households without paid employment or with low incomes is high, as is the number of families in receipt of benefits. The area has a mix of social, privately rented or privately owned housing. The majority of families are of Pakistani heritage, with about a fifth of users from White British heritage backgrounds. A growing number of families from other minority ethnic groups, particularly of Eastern European heritage, are moving into the centre's reach area.

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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

Crossley Hall Children's Centre provides satisfactory services for young children and their families. Care, guidance and support and arrangements for safeguarding users are good. As a result, the centre ensures that children and their families stay safe. All the required checks on staff and other personnel are completed and recorded. Good safety information is provided and regular risk assessments and checks are made. The arrangements for governance and accountability are good, with a clear and shared understanding between the local authority, the school and the children's centre as to respective roles and responsibilities. The head of centre, her line manager and the school's governors have an accurate view of the centre's strengths and priorities and use this appropriately to plan for improvement. This, coupled with the centre's development and improvements to date, gives the centre good capacity to make further improvements. The centre makes suitable use of its accommodation which is well maintained and provides a comfortable and welcoming environment for adults and children.

The knowledge and expertise of staff are used well to support the more vulnerable families. The centre is effective in promoting the inclusion of families with children with special educational needs and has good access for users with physical disabilities. The engagement of users from a South Asian heritage background is also ensured because, when necessary, staff speak with them in their home language. However, access by users from other backgrounds is less secure. Although some men use the centre, services and activities to respond to their interests and availability are not well developed. Similarly, a growing number of families from Eastern Europe are moving into the area but, at present, make little use of the centre. The centre recognises this and is exploring ways to engage the interest and meet the needs of this group.

The centre's outcomes for adults and children are satisfactory overall and users comment that their children 'love it' and that it has made a 'big difference to the family'. However, in 'Stay and Play' staff sometimes miss opportunities to encourage parents to promote their children's learning and development more effectively, for

example through talking with their children and engaging in their role play. The teacher, provided by the local authority to support some sessions, models good practice to inspire parents, as do some staff, but this is not consistent. Health visitors regularly refer families to the centre, but currently do not deliver services at the centre. This means that, although the centre provides valuable sessions to promote healthy eating and exercise, opportunities are missed for work in partnership to further improve users' health, for example in relation to breastfeeding and smoking cessation. Although there are positive opportunities for people who attend the centre to contribute to its development, the role of the centre in the wider community is underdeveloped and expertise within the community is not used to full effect.

The centre assesses families' welfare needs well, giving good support to those who most need it. Consequently, the centre's services meet the needs of some users well. For example, there is a good track record of helping asylum seekers and those with financial difficulties. However, there is a lack of a coherent approach to assessing and promoting all children's learning. Links to build on good practice and to develop shared approaches with other early years settings and with the linked school to improve outcomes for young children and their families are underdeveloped.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Extend the centre's reach, particularly to engage more male parents and carers and more families of Eastern European heritage by identifying unmet needs and by planning and publicising activities to attract these groups.
- Improve outcomes for young children and their families, by extending partnerships particularly with health services, early years providers, schools and community organisations.
- Make greater use of the examples of good practice within the centre and more widely to provide a model for parents so that they gain a deeper understanding of how children learn and of the value of play, in order that they can build on this learning at home.

How good are outcomes for users?

3

Families with toddlers and pre-school children understand healthy eating as a result of the 'Cook and Eat' sessions. Adults prepare a healthy lunch and sit down with their children to enjoy the food, helping children to become familiar with new tastes and textures. Young children also enjoy 'Baby Ballet' and 'Mini-movers' and their parents comment that they practise this at home and grow in confidence and physical coordination. Although the centre has attractive outdoor play areas, their use was limited in some of the sessions observed. The centre's activities assist the emotional health and well-being of children, so that many are eager to attend and to make positive relationships with staff and other users. Children with special educational

needs and/or disabilities also make appropriate progress. Parents comment that help is given which improves children's mobility, communication and speech. However, across the reach, the levels of sustained breastfeeding are low and there is little evidence that the centre supports families with weaning difficulties. Data for the reach area also show that the centre has had little effect on the number of parents who stop smoking. Overall, it is too early to assess the impact of the centre's work on longer-term health outcomes, for example the incidence of respiratory conditions or obesity.

The centre provides a very safe setting where adult users and children feel comfortable and are physically safe. The centre staff are vigilant in ensuring that adult users abide by the centre's policies. The centre knows who the more vulnerable families are and works closely with other agencies to support those at risk, for example, of domestic violence. Families are kept safe through home visits, home safety checks and links with social care and through the initiation of the Common Assessment Framework processes, where necessary. Several parents comment positively that the centre has helped them improve their children's behaviour at home, improving relationships and helping them to share their toys more willingly.

The centre's course 'How children learn' is designed to help parents support their children's learning. Parents bring their concerns to the course and they work together with staff to develop the necessary skills and ideas to use at home. Parents say they find the session 'very useful'. The linked school comments that the centre helps children to make a good start in the Nursery Year, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. For children who have attended the centre's activities, there is evidence of increased skills across the areas of learning, when compared to those children who have not used the centre. Children attending sessions at the centre are inquisitive and are learning to play independently.

Children behave very well at the centre, enjoy themselves and make good gains in confidence and in relating to other children and adults. Adult users feel they belong and know that they can make a difference through the feedback they give and through the parents' group, commenting for example, 'I have found my family'. Parents know that their views are taken seriously by the governing body. Once families become involved with the centre, they contribute well to decision making and governance. Male users have fewer opportunities to be involved, as do families from Eastern European heritages. Some men also comment that they enjoy the Saturday sessions, but that these are too infrequent.

Individual families, particularly those who have experienced significant difficulties, have improved their economic stability and social well-being considerably as a result of the centre's help. For example, the centre has made a considerable difference in building their confidence, in reducing their debts and in helping them to gain access to the correct benefits. For a small number, this has also led to further training or employment. Parents recognise the centre's contribution to their well-being, saying, 'The centre has been very helpful'. However, there is less evidence of the centre's

wider impact on adults' longer-term gains in qualifications or employment. Adult users make steady progress in gaining basic qualifications, for example at entry level. However, some users have difficulty in finding a course at the right level to increase their skills in English. This creates a barrier to progress onto more advanced courses in other subjects and, consequently, to employment commensurate with the skills and qualifications some users bring from their home country.

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	3
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	3
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision making and governance of the centre	3
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	3

How good is the provision?

3

Effective partnerships with other agencies ensure that welfare needs are assessed well through an initial six week programme which takes place before the Common Assessment Framework processes are started. The centre is also aware of children at risk and communicates swiftly with other services, including health and social care, when it identifies children who may be in need of protection. The centre uses its assessments of sessions to modify the activities for next time. Although some records of children's learning and development are kept, opportunities to use observations to assess this are missed. Parents are too rarely involved in observing and assessing their children's learning and development.

The centre ensures that children and adult users enjoy themselves at sessions. It is also very effective in enabling adults and children to improve their personal development and confidence. Activities set out in the playroom provide opportunities for children to experience all the areas of learning and the centre provides relevant advice for adults on how to promote children's learning and development. However, although there are some examples of good practice, there is less consistency in the extent to which this is modelled by staff in sessions involving children and their parents and carers.

The centre provides good services to keep families safe and links well with other

schools and colleges to support teenage parents. It actively seeks users' views and puts on, or modifies, activities accordingly. The needs and interests of women of South Asian heritage are met particularly well. For example, popular courses for adult learners, including 'Mehndi', respond appropriately to interests and skills. Other courses, such as literacy and 'Money matters' help to build skills for the future. The centre provides effective services for families with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, assisting their development and increasing their inclusion. However, the needs of men and families from Eastern Europe are largely unmet. In addition, the frequency with which some activities, such as baby massage groups are programmed at the centre means that there are few activities available at any one time specifically to attract families with small babies.

The centre takes good care of children and adults when they attend activities and it offers good information, advice and guidance, signposting users to other services as necessary. This has a positive effect on users' personal development and well-being. Support is also good for families at times of crisis. Outreach and family support activities are of a good quality and help families who cannot attend the centre, for example, in some cases, by providing play activities and help with a small baby at home.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	3
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	3
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?

3

Good governance arrangements ensure that partner agencies are represented well on the centre's steering group, which in turn reports regularly to the governing body of the school. The school's headteacher provides good line management for the head of centre. Her supervision meetings with staff are also clearly and carefully recorded. These notes leave staff in no doubt as to what is expected of them. The centre's evaluation of its activities is rigorous and is informed by the views of users and partner agencies. There is positive evidence of how the centre has responded to evaluations and has improved services in light of this evaluation. Following rigorous discussion with the local authority, identified areas for development inform the centre's planning for development. The head of centre has high expectations of staff, who are eager to develop the services on offer. However, the centre recognises that

in practice, this is not always realised consistently in the quality of sessions provided.

Community resources are used to good effect to help the more vulnerable families. However, the wider use of expertise and resources in the community is less developed or effective in securing the involvement and in responding to the needs and interests of all the families and groups within the reach area. This includes those of Eastern European heritage or those with literacy difficulties, who may have difficulty in reading information written in English. Some users also comment that sometimes they have been unable to attend an adult learning session because no crèche was provided. However, when in the centre, all are welcomed and included. Resources and displays celebrate diversity well. Consequently, the promotion of equality and the celebration of diversity are satisfactory. The centre's impact on outcomes for adults and children means that it provides satisfactory value for money.

The centre's arrangements for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are good. This is a priority for the centre. The centre provides an environment where people feel able to ask for help. Vigilant staff and good partnerships with agencies help to safeguard families and to prevent concerns from escalating. The centre's partnerships ensure that its services secure satisfactory outcomes for users, with strengths in helping families to stay safe and in the care, guidance and support provided. Although there are good links with health service staff, there remains more to do to provide health promotion activities in partnership. Similarly, other partnerships with early years providers, the school and community organisations are less well developed. This places some limitations on their effectiveness in accelerating children's learning and in securing faster progress for adults in gaining qualifications and employment.

The centre regularly seeks the views of its users and uses these to develop provision. It actively and successfully encourages users to put forward their ideas through the parents' group. Most families who use the centre express high levels of satisfaction with the services and activities on offer, although some, for example men, would like to see more of direct interest to them. In addition, there are groups within the reach area who are not involved with the centre and, therefore, whose views are not known or acted upon.

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	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	3

The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
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	3
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	3

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

None

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 Crossley Hall Children's Centre on 19 and 20 January 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall. Thank you to those of you who spoke to us. It was very helpful to learn what you think about the centre. You told us, and we agree, that the centre looks after you and your children well and helps your families to stay safe. We found the centre makes all the checks it should and provides you with good information about safety.

Overall, we judge the way in which the centre is led and managed as satisfactory, but some parts of this are good. For example, the school's staff and governors and the local authority work well together to help the centre check how well it is doing in meeting your needs and to plan for improvements. The head of centre gives staff

clear guidance as to what they should be doing. We think that these strengths will help the centre to improve further. The centre makes suitable use of its comfortable and attractive rooms, which provide a welcoming place for you and your children.

Those of you who have had difficulties in the past told us how the centre has made a big difference for you. We agree that the centre has helped some of you to sort out problems and to have a much happier life. Some of you also told us that the centre has helped your children to walk, talk and learn more quickly, for example after they have had an operation. Some of you also said that since attending the centre your children's behaviour has improved and they get on better with others. There are good opportunities for those of you from South Asian backgrounds to be involved in groups and sessions and we saw how helpful it is to some of you that the staff can speak with you in Punjabi, Urdu or Gujarati. We found though that it is not as easy for other groups to get involved at the centre. For example, we know that some families are moving into the area from Eastern Europe, but are not yet coming to the centre. Some of the dads also said they would like more activities to interest them. We have asked the centre to improve this.

We found that the centre helps you and your children to make steady progress in becoming healthier and in learning. You told us how much your children love coming to the centre. We saw that some of you found the first session of 'How children learn' very useful and got good ideas to try at home. In 'Stay and play' though, staff did not always show you the best ways to join in and support your children's play. We have asked the centre to look for ways to help you with this and also to make stronger links with other early years settings and with Crossley Hall Primary School so that everyone is giving the best help they can.

We also found that, although health visitors refer families to the centre, they do not run sessions in the centre. This means that, although the centre provides good sessions to help healthy eating and exercise, like 'Cook and eat' and 'Mini-movers', there is no help at the centre for those with younger babies to keep going with breastfeeding or to help people who want to give up smoking. We have asked the centre to think about how it could work more closely with health to offer this at the centre. You told us that the centre asks you for your ideas. However, there are people who do not use the centre and people in the community with skills which are not shared for your benefit. Again, we have asked the centre to look into ways to get more people involved. The centre does give good support to those of you who most need it, for example, asylum seekers and those of you with money problems.

We wish you and your children all the very best for the future.

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