

Inspection report for Tyersal Children's Centre

Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	366315
Inspection dates	19 – 20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Janet Stacey HMI

Centre governance	Sure Start Bierley, Holme Wood and Tyersal
Centre leader	Glynis Pedder
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare	Munchkins Childcare and Education Centre EY276649

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 early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, members of the senior leadership team, a member of the advisory board, users, local headteacher and a local authority officer linked to the centre. They observed the centre's work, and looked at sessions in operation in the children's centre and in nearby locations. They also looked at a range of documentation including the centre's development plans, evaluations, key policies and safeguarding procedures.

Information about the centre

Tyersal Children's Centre is one of three centres operated by Sure Start Bierley, Holme Wood and Tyersal (BHT) which is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by a board of directors. The centre evolved from a former Sure Start Local Programme and became a Phase 1 children's centre in 2008. The centre is based in Sutton Community Centre and serves a community that experiences high levels of social and economic disadvantage being located in an area which includes some of the top 20% deprived wards in the country. The number of lone parents and families in receipt of benefits in the area is higher than the national average. The centre works in cooperation with its partner centres to provide services that complement each other and to share resources and staff.

The centre serves a population that is culturally diverse; this includes families who are of White British heritage and South Asian and Traveller communities. There has been an increase in Eastern European and asylum seekers recently moving into the area. Family support services are based in the centre. The centre primarily works with Tong Medical Practice, Bowling Hall Medical Practice and Rooley Lane Medical Practice to provide health services. The centre also has tentative links with three other practices based out of the reach area. The centre takes referrals from and supports families with children in six local schools. Most children enter childcare and

early education with a much narrower range of experiences and skills than that expected for their age. The centre operates full-day childcare provision with places for 26 children from birth to five years at Munchkins Childcare and Education Centre based in Fearnville Primary School. The childcare provision was last inspected in November 2007. It was not inspected as part of this inspection.

The board of directors of BHT, which includes representatives from parents, neighbourhood partners, health staff and centre staff, contributes to the strategic management and direction of the centre.

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 overall effectiveness of the centre is good. The centre and its satellite sites provide a friendly and welcoming place for families to make new friends and enjoy a wide selection of activities. Throughout the inspection, users were keen to share their experiences of how the centre has benefited their families, in some cases helping to transform their lives.

Outcomes for users are good. Children and families who regularly use the centre are learning to lead healthy lifestyles; they enjoy a wide range of activities to help improve their knowledge of healthy eating and physical exercise. One parent described how attending the 'Food 4 Thought' course had made her want to eat more healthily, as before she just did not know what to make. Parents attending the centre report that they feel safe and that their children are happy to be there. The centre has some success in helping adults gain formal qualifications and have supported some volunteers in the community to gain full time employment. Financial support and advice is one of the key strengths of the centre. A dedicated Family Finance Coordinator has helped many families receive benefits that they were not aware of and given them advice on how to manage their family finances.

Ofsted reports from local primary schools show that children are starting school with levels of skills and abilities which are well below national expectations. Local authority data show the percentage of five-year-olds achieving the early learning

goals in the reach area is starting to improve but is still well below the national average. This aspect has rightly been identified by the centre leaders as an area where they can be instrumental in helping to raise standards and they have already put good strategies in place to start to address this.

The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users is a strong feature of the centre's work. Good quality outreach work and effective one-to-one support, particularly to support speech and language development are making a positive contribution to breaking down barriers, particularly for families who are feeling isolated or who are new to the area. Family support and outreach work ensures that families in particular need or with child protection issues are referred to the centre. This and the purposeful use of the Common Assessment Framework ensure timely intervention for those in need.

The strengths of the centre are in the good leadership and management provided by all of the leadership team. There is a clear sense of drive and passion to improve the life chances for all the families in the area. This commitment is shared by all the staff who work at the centre and is central to the good morale, strong teamwork and sense of pride in the centre's work. Some partners can demonstrate clearly the positive impact of their work on the outcomes for children and families. Whilst the centre has noted some improvement in the sharing of live birth data from the Primary Care Trust (PCT); the lack of up-to date data has impacted on the centre's ability to be familiar with all the families with young children in the area.

Staff and other adults give high priority to safeguarding. All procedures and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and their families are up-to-date and meet statutory requirements. Case study evidence indicates that families have received well-integrated and sensitive support in times of crisis. The centre has worked hard to establish effective links with the local Traveller and South Asian communities and has worked tirelessly to win their trust. The benefits of this commitment to reach out to all the groups in the area are starting to show dividends as more users from these groups are starting to access and benefit from the services the centre has to offer.

The governing body provide a clear strategic oversight to determine the provision offered through the children's centre. However, how the board is subjected to the scrutiny of its decisions is not clear. Whilst the governing body includes a good range of partners, including parent representation from the BHT areas, this does not include users from the Tyersal area.

Given some of the successes the centre has had so far and the dedication to reaching all the vulnerable groups in the reach area it has good capacity to improve further.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Ensure that Jobcentre Plus and the Primary Care Trust provide the Children's Centre with the information and input it needs to deliver appropriate services to the most vulnerable and the wider community.
- Improve governance in the centre by:
 - strengthening the way in which the board of directors act as critical friends in challenging and holding the centre to account for its work
 - ensuring that the views of parents and carers in the area contribute to the governance of the centre and to shaping services.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Outcomes for parents and families are good. The centre provides a good range of activities which are developed extremely well in partnership with other agencies and professionals. Uptake of all courses is high and attendance is generally sustained. The centre has supported many women from the community to train as nursery workers. Some users are being supported to gain level 2 to 4 qualifications in childcare and degrees in community care. This not only builds self-esteem for users but also helps to promote good role models within the community and encourage others to take up opportunities that will help to improve their future life chances.

The 'Family Nurturing Programme' enhances self-esteem and helps to build bonds between the parents and their children. Through this course parents learn about behaviour and the impact of their actions on their children's lives. Parents spoke positively that by attending the course it had helped to change their perceptions of what they had perceived to be negative behaviour. One parent commented 'I am a better mum now after attending these courses. I now understand there are better ways of dealing with my children than just shouting at them'.

Parents report that they are benefiting extremely well from the good range of advice and opportunities that the centre provides. All families that are known to the centre are supplied free weaning 'goody bags' which not only contain a very good range of resources but help parents to develop a better understanding of the key milestones in their young children's lives. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well through 'Food 4 Thought', 'Jiggle Tots' programmes and free membership to the gymnasium in 'Tong High School' for all mums and dads in the area. This good advice and support helps users to be active, make smart food choices and understand that in addition to providing health benefits, regular physical activity can be educational, teach social skills, and boost their and their children's self-esteem.

The priority of the centre on improving children's communication, language and literacy skills through 'Little Talkers', 'Talking Together' and 'Every Child a Talker' has begun to reap benefits; the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile points, whilst still below the national average, show a narrowing of the achievement gap in this area. A local headteacher spoke highly of the support he has received from the centre and

confirmed improvement in children's educational achievements in preparation for their transition to school. The support given to children with additional needs is first-rate. Good links with the nursery and local schools help to minimise the disabling barriers that can confront young children in their education and ensure very good transitional arrangements are put in place as they transfer through the various settings.

Good procedures ensure that children are well safeguarded. Parents say that they feel safe in the centre and that they trust the staff to help them in times of crisis or personal difficulties. Family support workers undertake safety visits to homes. All families in receipt of benefits are signposted to the 'Home Accident Prevention Scheme'. Qualified fitters visit the home and install a wide range of equipment free of charge. The scheme helps parents, in particular new mums to understand how home safety equipment plays an important part in keeping their inquisitive children safe.

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	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	3

How good is the provision?

2

All parents who spoke to inspectors were positive about the centre and the positive impact different services have had on their families. They were particularly complimentary about the care, support and guidance and the services they can access at the centre. For example, a parent commented how her life had been made much easier and she now attended all her ante-natal appointments due to the midwife being based in the centre three times a week.

Strong links with most of its partners enable the centre to understand its users' needs well. The centre works very hard to address any shortfalls in partnership work through signposting families to the appropriate service. Some partners, such as the local social work team, educational psychologists and the midwifery team share the impact of their work with the centre. However, whilst Jobcentre Plus is clearly visible in the centre, outcomes for parents accessing their services are not known as this

information is not routinely shared with the centre. Furthermore, some health data is limited, for example the uptake of immunisation programmes and limited information on live birth data. As a result the centre is often hindered in gaining a clear understanding of where to target their support and advice.

A dedicated Family Finances Worker simplifies the benefits system for families and helps them to navigate a whole range of agencies and forms that in the past have deterred many disadvantaged families from claiming their entitlements.

Assessment of individual cases is secure due to the manner in which the Common Assessment Framework is used for both prevention and intervention strategies. The centre is very good at finding ways to support individual children and families and offers a rapid response when urgent help is requested or a critical need is identified. Provision is enhanced through the committed work undertaken by the family support team. Its members are dedicated in trying to reach those in the community who they know are in crisis. The strong outreach team is very well-respected in the community. This view was epitomised by a parent's powerful response when she talked about the intensive one-to-one support she had received from the centre staff 'We lost a child, the centre arranged counselling for us and organised lots of support. This contributed to keeping us stable and kept our family together'.

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is good due to the intensity of the support by educational leaders, speech and language team and the strong partnerships with the local schools. Educational outcomes, whilst still well below average, are improving year-on-year. The transition to school is carefully planned. All parents and carers are invited to attend 'Ready 4', a course that helps them prepare their children for school and gives them advice on oral health, healthy lunchboxes and provides them with ideas how to help their children play and learn in the home environment.

The centre provides good quality information and guidance documents in its reception, and a vibrant website provides users in the community with a good insight of what the centre can offer them to improve their life chances and add enrichment to their lives.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

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	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Leadership and management are consistently good at all levels. The centre manager and her senior leadership team provide clear leadership with high expectations for the community firmly at the heart of the centre's work. The centre development plan suitably identifies local and area-wide priorities in order to improve the provision and outcomes for its uses, although it does not always reflect the views of its users. Performance management arrangements for front line staff are secure with regular reviews and opportunities for professional discussion. The centre offers good value for money. The centre manager acknowledges that her staff are the centre's most valuable resource. She has developed an enthusiastic and talented team that has benefited from a thoughtful investment in staff training and opportunities for sharing expertise. All staff are trained in all aspects of care and early education. This is a key strength, not only within the centre but also for the wider community. All staff work closely with local schools, other children's centres and key partners with a clear aim of narrowing the gap in outcomes between families who do well and those who do not.

Equality and diversity are promoted successfully. The centre has started to make valuable inroads in establishing relationships with the Traveller and South Asian communities. The dedicated Inclusive Services Coordinator works closely with the Bradford Traveller Community Team and has started to offer advice and support to a small group of individuals to win their support and help build trust with the wider Traveller community. The centre was successful in winning a bid to offer the 'Language For Life' course which enabled users from the South Asian and Eastern European communities to develop their comprehension of English. The course has been so successful that BHT has continued to fund the course and some women are now attending Level 2 in literacy. Careful consideration has been given to the design of the centre so that all users can gain full access.

The centre's comprehensive policies and procedures are well embedded in the centre and applied routinely. Safeguarding arrangements are good and comply with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board requirements. Clear procedures are in place for reporting child protection issues and are fully understood and followed by all staff and key partners.

The centre's leadership team share plans, progress and financial information with the BHT board at bi-monthly meetings. These meetings provide helpful updates on centre activity and opportunities for key partners to discuss current issues and plan future developments. Whilst the board fully supports the work of the centre there is no clear distinction between governance of the centre and how the board of directors are held to account about the decisions they make. Furthermore whilst BHT does have parents on the board of directors, representation does not include parents from the reach area. As a consequence the views of users in Tyersal area are not being represented at a strategic level.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional

3

supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	
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	3
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	3

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Tyersal Children's centre on 19-20 January 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

We spoke to many of you about the centre's work. We learnt a great deal. You told us how much you value the services and activities that the centre provides. Many of you said that coming to the centre has given you more confidence, has helped you to make new friends and has given you ideas about how to help your children learn and develop. You expressed your views very clearly and they were very helpful to us. The activities we visited were of good quality. You remarked that taking part in them has helped you to learn about the importance of play and find new ways of communicating with and understanding the behaviour of your children. The children themselves hugely enjoyed their sessions and we were impressed by your willingness to join in, particularly during the 'Jiggle Tots' session.

Many of you told us that staff are friendly, hard working and give you excellent support. We agree with you. Families who are facing complex or difficult times receive very good support. It is clear to us that staff in the centre know the local families and the wider community. We can see how the centre is working hard to reach all of you to ensure that they do everything they can to make a positive difference to you and your children's lives. We were particularly impressed by how much the centre has done to help raise attainment for children in your area as they enter their first year in school. Whilst there is still more to be done to ensure your children enter school with the same skills and knowledge as children of their age in other areas, this is still a tremendous achievement.

The staff work really hard to make the centre as good as it can be. To help them we have asked the local authority to ensure that all agencies that work with you share information and provide relevant data to help the centre prioritise and identify where help may be needed for the most vulnerable families. For example, many parents and carers have attended a variety of training courses and job interviews. However, we are not sure what difference these made to you, or if they helped you to get jobs and enrol for more training because the centre does not receive the relevant information it needs from Jobcentre Plus.

The centre has taken some steps, such as asking you for your comments, to make sure that everybody gets the services and activities they want. For example, when you finish one course they ask you what you thought about it and what you might like to do next. When we spoke with you it was clear you understood what the community needs most. However, we noticed that none of you are representing your area in the meetings about important decisions. We know the centre is keen for you to get more involved and we hope some of you take up this opportunity.

Thank you very much for your welcome and openness with inspectors. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and wish you all well for the future.

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