

Inspection report for Rose Hill and Littlemore Children's Centre

Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	362554
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Wendy Ratcliff HMI

Centre governance	The Governing Body of Rose Hill Primary School
Centre leader	Sylvia Dolan
Date of previous inspection	N/A
Centre address	The Oval, Rose Hill, Oxford OX4 4UY
Telephone number	01865 716739
Fax number	N/A
Email address	Sylvia.dolan@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Rose Hill Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	The Cooperative Childcare Rose Hill 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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 100024

© Crown copyright 2010



Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

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

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Early Years Inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the head of centre, the centre manager, representatives from the governing body, staff, volunteers, members of the management group, a local authority representative and partner agencies, including representatives from the health service. They had informal discussions with parents and children, and visited a session in Littlemore.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including key policies, the centre's self-evaluation documents, its development plans, evaluations of services and data about people who use the centre.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Information about the centre

Rose Hill and Littlemore Children's Centre was designated in April 2007 and provides the full core offer on behalf of the local authority by the governing body of Rose Hill Primary School. There is a parent forum known as the MAG group. Rose Hill and Littlemore are two separate communities separated by the Oxford Bypass. The centre's catchment area is varied in terms of deprivation. The majority of the areas have high deprivation levels, although two others are more affluent. Overall, the area

the centre covers is one of the 30% most deprived areas in the country. Around 40% of the local population are from minority ethnic groups. Approximately 30% of children under five in the area are living in workless households and 30% of those aged 16–74 do not have any qualifications. Around 36% of children achieve a total of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile with communication, language and literacy being the weaker area.

The centre is open on weekdays from 8am to 5.30pm and on Saturdays from 10.30am to 1.30pm for a father’s group. It is open for 52 weeks of the year. The centre runs a crèche, which is registered on the Early Years and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The crèche opens on some weekdays for parents attending courses offered at the centre. The Cooperative Childcare at Rose Hill Nursery, which is run by Midcounties Co-operative Limited, provides childcare facilities for the centre. The centre is working towards the UNICEF Baby Friendly Status.

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

Rose Hill and Littlemore Children’s Centre provides a varied range of services which are contributing to the good and strongly improving outcomes for a wide range of users. The centre knows the local community well because they analyse available data to identify different groups and use assessment sensitively. As a result, it has an excellent understanding of individual user’s needs. Good partnership working with a wide range of providers, particularly health and adult education professionals, is making a significant contribution to improving outcomes for users.

The leaders of the centre are demonstrating a clear vision and have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas to improve. Targets to bring about improvement are not always precise as they could be to enable leaders and governors to fully measure the impact of outcomes for all users. The governors and local authority work well together in monitoring the services the centre provides and are clear on how to sustain and improve these. There are plans, for example, to increase the numbers of children and families with disabilities accessing services at the centre and to develop services for the Littlemore community.

The centre manager is very much at the heart of the centre’s success and is ably supported by senior leaders. Together they implement the centre’s model of working together to create long-term sustainability. The model is effective and follows a cycle for users of providing information, engaging in services, consulting and volunteering,

which leads to community and self-development. Users acknowledge that this cycle works well and confidently share how they are engaged in shaping and developing services. Volunteers explain how they first attended services at the centre and were supported and encouraged to gain 'basic skills' qualifications, attend the 'Parenting in the Community' course and then go on to start their own drop-in groups. For example, one volunteer now runs a coffee morning at Littlemore and actively raises money to organise trips for users, such as a trip to Cotswold Wildlife park. As a result, the centre has a good capacity to improve and build on its success further.

Inclusion is central to the centre's vision and everyone who uses its facilities feels welcome. Crèche places are provided for children so parents can access a variety of adult training courses. The staff are friendly and approachable and have built high levels of trust among families who feel very well supported, including when they feel vulnerable or are experiencing a crisis. One parent, when talking about the centre, reports, 'I don't know what I would have done without it!' The centre meets all safeguarding requirements and works effectively with key agencies to ensure the well-being of children and users.

Extensive use of the café by parents and children is promoting healthy eating extremely successfully. This facility is extremely popular as it provides opportunities for users to enjoy a variety of healthy choices including cooking on a budget and Asian cuisine. Fathers report that they are better able to support their partners because of strong support systems in place, particularly in relation to breastfeeding. Home safety packs provided to families with babies under a year are enabling parents to make their homes safer. The extent to which users develop positive relationships and contribute to decision making is a particular strength. Children behave well and develop extremely positive relationships. Volunteers are nurtured and their skills developed extremely well. They then become highly enterprising in how they support the centre and the community. One volunteer reports, 'When we come to the centre, we realise we have got skills. We get asked to do things. We get back into work.'

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Strengthen and make more precise the centre's targets to:
 - enable leaders and governors to fully measure the impact of outcomes for all users in both the short term and long term
 - inform planning for further development.
- Continue to develop the plans to engage with those groups that the centre has already identified as not yet fully benefiting from the centre's services, including the community at Littlemore and children and families with disabilities.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

The centre is developing systems for evaluating the impact of its work and available evidence demonstrates that the centre's work is improving and in some cases strongly improving the outcomes for its users. Families in times of crisis feel confident to approach the centre for support and trust adults to help them. Outreach workers are key in this work, particularly when supporting children and families, who are subject to 'team around the child' or child protection plans. Users behave in ways that ensure the safety of children and themselves in the centre, for example by following the 'E safety' policy.

A significant majority of parents are developing an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy. The numbers of parents breastfeeding their young babies is increasing. This is due to the excellent advice and support they receive, for example by attending the Baby Café drop-in. Fathers also highly appreciate the guidance, which they say enables them to better support their partners when breastfeeding. Children settle well in the crèche as they have positive relationships with the adults and quickly become familiar with routines. Parents enjoy opportunities to engage in their children's play and gain an understanding of how to support their learning when attending the drop-in sessions. This is most effective when adults leading the sessions model how to do this. Specific input from sessions such as OXPIP is benefiting both parents and children and helping children make progress. Evidence is building that those children who have contact with the centre have a smoother transition into school. The children's centre teacher works well with the early years provider and this is reflected in the good Ofsted early years inspection judgement and the improved judgement of satisfactory for the crèche.

Parents are increasing their confidence and self-esteem by attending a range of adult learning courses. They enjoy these courses and benefit from gaining recognised qualifications, increasing aspirations for them and their children. Parents recognise that taking courses in basic skills for mathematics and literacy helps them to support their children's learning. There are many examples of how individuals, who have attended training courses, become volunteers and then successfully go on to further education or employment. Children and families using the centre treat each other with respect. Parents represent the different views of users on the MAG group and two parents sit on the governing body. As a result, users feel highly valued as their views are listened to and they are actively involved in shaping services. One parent, when talking about organising groups and parties such as the Eid party, reports, 'I have found out things about myself I didn't know.'

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	1
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

The centre is highly effective at sensitively assessing the needs of individual users. This is particularly evident when outreach workers skilfully allocate work with those who are most vulnerable and may be subject to social care involvement. For example, they prioritise well according to an individual's need and take into consideration which worker has the best skills to engage with the family. They have a strong knowledge of the local community and their particular needs. Provision is tailored to meet these needs through targeted and managed services, for example the 'Parenting in the Community' course, which leads to 'gateway' groups for specific users, such as the Polish drop-in session and the Arabic women's group. The centre is skilful in directing parents to access different services by effective encouragement and timetabling of activities. For example, the new parents who attend the baby clinic are introduced to the baby drop-in with PEEP and baby massage, as these are planned on the same day. The centre is proactive when they see a need and seek different ways of funding projects through partnership working, for example encouraging 'gateway' groups to become constituted so they can access their own funding.

There is a good range of services that reach the wider community including the minority ethnic groups, fathers, teenage parents and lone parents. There are a few gaps, which the centre has identified for further development such as disabled children and children of disabled parents and providing more services for the Littlemore community. Parents are fully engaged in a range of purposeful learning, particularly through the courses they attend, such as, 'Hit the Ground Crawling', a course for new and expectant fathers. One parent reports that this course 'gives me confidence that I can be a good dad'. The centre celebrates achievements and users value this, as receiving a certificate of qualification is a first for some. Overall, the provision for children across the centre and childcare nursery is good, although there is some variation in the quality of the children's learning experiences in some drop-in sessions.

The centre provides a warm and welcoming environment, which has a 'family feel' where users take ownership. Families feel well supported by the centre and the services it provides. It is successful in the range of services, as the number of users is rising and those users then become providers; for example, groups such as the African women's group and 'Every Dad Matters' are run by users.

A comprehensive range of information is provided for all users in a wide range of formats including leaflets and discussions with staff and outreach support. The support for those accessing training and employment is good. The way in which volunteers are nurtured and used within the centre is an example of its commitment to developing users' confidence and they move into further training education or employment, including within the centre itself.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	1
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

The centre's leaders work well as a team. They have built strong and effective links with other agencies and providers in order to provide good-quality services, which are matched well to users' needs. Line management arrangements are clear and understood and staff value the regular supervision and professional development they receive. This includes the professional supervision received by partnership agencies, for example the joint sessions provided by social care professionals. The centre has a strong commitment to providing an inclusive environment and removing barriers. Resources are used well to meet the specific needs of individuals and the wider community. For example, those who speak English as an additional language are fully considered when allocating outreach workers and crèche facilities are available so parents can access courses. The senior leaders are effective in focusing the centre's efforts on prioritising and celebrating diversity, for example the effective work to engage minority ethnic groups, which is highly valued by the community. One user reports, 'The centre is a great place to come. All the staff make everyone feel wanted.'

The centre has strong and effective relationships with partners and professionals in health, social care and adult education. The different groups who use the centre appreciate the partnership with the housing association. Both the African and Arabic Women's groups have benefited from funding accessed by the housing officer for exercise classes. A recent training day was successful in helping staff, users and partners to develop an understanding of how to demonstrate the impact on outcomes.

The head of centre involves staff and users in the process of self-evaluation in order to identify strengths and areas to improve. Staff and users are actively involved in

'development' days and contribute to every child matters outcome targets on the 'visual' development plan to shape services. There are many targets within the development plan and these are not always precise enough with clearly measurable success criteria for governors and leaders to fully assess the impact on outcomes. Parents from all groups are represented on the MAG group and are keen to share their views to shape services, such as establishing drop-in sessions for fathers/male carers. The centre is using creative ways to consult with the community, including using students to focus on particular areas, such as engaging those with disabilities within the centre and the use of a Facebook page. Staff use a variety of ways to evaluate services, including the use of bottles in the reception area so children can let the centre know the activities they enjoy.

Governance and accountability are clear. Governors are working with the local authority well to ensure front line services for users are sustainable. They have a clear understanding of safeguarding arrangements and have effective systems in place to ensure these are met. The centre has robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place, including risk assessments. Centre staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the procedures to follow if they have a child protection concern and make effective use of the 'no name' referral system in place within Oxfordshire.

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	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 other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The inspection judgements from the early years inspections carried out at the same time as the children's centre inspection were used to inform judgements. The overall outcome for the inspection at the Cooperative Childcare at Rose Hill Nursery was judged as good. The crèche, which is provided by the children's centre, was judged as satisfactory overall. Both judgements show the improvements that have been made since the last inspections.

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 Rose Hill and Littlemore Children's Centre on 17 and 18 November 2010. We judged the centre as good overall.

Your children's centre provides parents and their children with a warm and welcoming environment where they feel safe and secure. Staff and centre users have built trusting relationships and show mutual respect for each other. Parents told inspectors that they fully appreciate the way they feel valued and included at the centre and it feels like a 'second home'. Parents told us that they feel the activities and support they access are helping to improve the outcomes for their families.

Parents and children enjoy the range of activities on offer from drop-ins to courses such as 'time for PEEP' and 'Mums&Dads2B'. Parents enjoy and benefit from a range of courses available. They value the opportunities to develop their skills in literacy and mathematics in order to help support their child's learning. The centre is helping to strongly improve the outcomes for healthy lifestyles and a positive contribution. This is because of the excellent range of advice and support that is available; for example, to help mothers when breastfeeding and for fathers to have a greater understanding of the benefits and how to support their partners. The café is extremely well used by all groups throughout the week and is actively promoting healthy eating. Funding accessed by the housing association worker is used for exercise classes for both the Arabic and African women's groups.

Users report a sense of achievement when they successfully gain qualifications or receive a certificate, raising aspirations still further. Those who attend the 'Parenting in the Community' course gain confidence and recognise the skills they have to

support others. One parent reports, 'I have found out things about myself I didn't know.' Volunteers are used well and are key to the centre's work. They are supporting the different groups in the community as they set up 'gateway' groups such as the Polish drop-in, Arabic Women's group and a coffee morning at Littlemore.

The centre has established some strong partnerships with other professionals to ensure users have access to a wide range of inclusive services. This partnership working ensures those who may be experiencing a crisis are well supported and can access the services, which help them the most. One parent reports that the centre has been a 'lifeline'. The centre actively seeks the views of its users and asks how it can do things better. Parents who attend the MAG meetings represent the views of different groups of users. As a result, users feel they are involved in shaping services for the community. The centre reaches out to the community by consultation and initiatives such as using a Facebook page set up by one of the volunteers.

Those in charge manage the centre well and have a good understanding of the strengths and where to improve. They identify many targets and include parents and other professionals in developing these. The targets are not always precise enough to allow the governors to fully measure the impact services are having on improving the outcomes for users. The governing body, which includes parent representatives, meets regularly to ensure that the services the centre provides meet the needs of the users. The governors are working well with the local authority to ensure that resources are used effectively and the services that have the most impact for children and families can continue. Centre staff look at ways of providing interesting activities and courses that will have the most benefit. They have identified gaps in the service for some groups who are not yet fully accessing a range of services and have plans in place to improve this. The groups the centre wants to reach further include disabled children and children of disabled parents, as well as providing more services for the community at Littlemore.

We would like to thank the centre users for speaking with us and contributing to the inspection at Rose Hill and Littlemore Children's Centre.

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