

Inspection report for Bushbury Triangle Children's Centre

Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	365656
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Joy Law HMI

Centre governance	The Heantun Care Housing Association
Centre leader	Sharon Leonard
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Bushbury Triangle Neighbourhood Nursery EY290081 Triangle Childcare EY346372

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.

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 one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the local authority, centre staff, partner agencies, parents and carers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the centre's self-evaluation form, data provided by the local authority and the centre, documents and policies and minutes of the advisory board meetings.

Information about the centre

Bushbury Triangle Children's Centre is located in the north-east of Wolverhampton, approximately three miles outside the city centre. The purpose-built centre was designated as a phase one children's centre in 2006. The area is served by a number of local amenities such as shopping parades, library and health clinics. It also has three churches, four primary schools, one nursery school and an academy. The majority of the children's centre reach area is classed as being in the top 10-20% most deprived wards in England. The ward is predominantly White British with only 8.09% of the population being from minority ethnic backgrounds. There has been significant housing regeneration over the past five years in the immediate area of the children's centre.

The centre provides the full core offer of a range of integrated services that include health, family support, adult training and early years advice and guidance. There is no on-site Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The day-care and crèche facilities are provided for children from the local community at two nurseries catering for a diverse range of backgrounds and needs. The skills and knowledge with which

children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage are below those expected nationally for their age.

The local authority has delegated the governance and management of the centre to the Heantun Care Housing association. The advisory board is made up of a cross-section of highly-skilled professionals, parents and carers. It is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day running of the centre and its strategic development.

Within the community served by the children's centre, there are seven super output areas. The children's centre serves a population of 910 families, of which 465 are lone parents with dependants 0 – 15 years. There are 505 children aged under five years. A relatively high proportion of children are living in workless households in the reach area, 26% of whom are receiving benefits.

Most centre services are delivered from the children's centre. There are designated rooms for family activities including a community classroom complete with information technology equipment for adult learning, a room to house ante-natal appointments and rooms to deliver sessions such as 'stay and play'.

The centre works closely with cluster children's centres on a number of joint initiatives delivering integrated work within the community. It has established working relationships with other professional services to deliver a universal programme to meet the local community's needs.

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 outcomes for users are good. The centre is well led and managed and supported by a committed team that works extremely effectively together and with their partners. They set realistic targets to improve the health, safety and economic well-being of the local community. This has ensured that families benefit from a range of good-quality services that are tailored to meet their particular needs.

The centre provides a warm, welcoming and safe environment for all its users, who value the work it does and recognise the positive impact it has on themselves and

the lives of their families. A particular strength of the centre is the learning and return to work opportunities for adult users. The combination of the centre having a community classroom, outreach work and the excellent partnership working between the local academy and partner agencies enables users to access an excellent range of learning opportunities. Users have gained many qualifications, some of which have resulted in voluntary and paid employment. In addition, users confirmed how the sessions such as breastfeeding, nurturing and communication enrichment had improved outcomes for their families.

The centre has good quality arrangements for safeguarding all users. Parents and carers say they feel safe and are confident that their children are safe and well cared for while attending the setting. Staff work closely with parents and carers, both within their homes and at the centre to help them understand and adopt safe practices. The innovative home safety project is an excellent provision that has contributed to reducing the number of accidents to children under five years of age. Users' comments reflected how highly valued the interactive workshops and home visits were and how these had made them more aware of the hazards around the home and the action to take to prevent accidents. This project is an invaluable asset to enabling staff to reach families that otherwise may not have engaged with the service. The centre has a good record of improving the safety of children who are subject to a child protection plan. Excellent systems are in place to support families identified as being in need, for example those suffering from substance misuse. However, the lack of early identification of these issues frequently hinders early preventative strategies being put in place.

The centre's self-evaluation is mostly accurate. Evaluations about the impact of its work are largely based upon case studies and staff's knowledge of the families they serve. Systems currently in place do not fully enable users to be effectively involved in providing their views, evaluating the effectiveness of the provision and influencing decisions to improve services. The improvement plans show that priorities, in most cases, are based on a sound understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for further development. Managers are fully aware of the need to reach more families, particularly fathers, and are developing strategies to address this. Children and families are signposted to early years provision and although the centre has links with childminder networks, their presence within the children's centre is limited.

The children's centre demonstrates good capacity for improvement. The centre manager, together with the rejuvenated and reconfigured advisory board demonstrates a clear understanding of the work of the centre and its priorities for improvement. There is a strong commitment amongst the staff to improving the life chances of families in the local community and to promoting equality and diversity. Staff are effective in ensuring that all children, parents and carers, regardless of background, achieve well and have the same access to a range of experiences.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- In order to identify and meet the needs of members of the community, develop the strategies currently in place to reach out and engage with those who are not accessing the services, particularly fathers.
- Develop the systems currently in place to enable users to be more effectively involved in providing their views, evaluating the effectiveness of the provision and influencing decision making to improve services.
- Develop a greater understanding of the increasing problems relating to substance misuse within the reach area. Implement effective preventative strategies for earlier intervention to provide more timely support to protect vulnerable adults and children from harm as a result of these issues.
- Develop stronger links with childminder networks in order to increase their presence within the children's centre.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Children's healthy lifestyles are promoted well. The centre is developing good strategies to promote healthy eating, for example through supporting parents and carers in learning about, and preparing, healthy and nutritious food. The breast-feeding sessions are well received and very well attended. As a result, there is an increasing number of mothers breastfeeding their babies and sustaining this for longer periods of time. Parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to baby-led-weaning sessions and really enjoy sharing their experience and supporting others.

Parents and carers talked passionately about how staff have supported them through difficult times very well, particularly with physical and emotional difficulties. They said that, without the help, their lives would be very different. They talked about how their health and well-being have greatly improved and how this has had a positive impact on their ability to become better parents and carers. For example, parents and carers have been supported through dealing with post-natal depression and coming to terms with their child having a disability.

Children and users feel safe at the centre. Participation in risk assessments within their home, training in first aid and safeguarding have provided parents and carers with detailed information about how to create and maintain a safe environment for young children. The centre, in collaboration with partner agencies, is effective in identifying and responding to the safeguarding needs of children and their families. The use of the Common Assessment Framework for recording and coordinating support programmes is consistent. Children with child protection plans are supported extremely well. Case studies featuring family support workers illustrate how effective their support is in helping parents and carers to become more confident and successful in managing their family lives.

Partnerships with early years settings and local primary schools are developing well and are effective in improving outcomes for children. Early Years Foundation Stage

profile data show an improving trend in key outcomes in children's personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy. Most children make good progress given their complex needs. The gap between the lowest scoring 20% of children and others is narrowing. Baseline assessments are completed within four weeks of a child attending the nursery. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to contribute to their children's learning. Staff work with parents and carers, at the centre and within their home, to model positive approaches to support their child's learning. The centre provides a book and toy loan service. 'Capturing the Journey' tracking systems have recently been put in place across the city. This is a positive step to improving consistency in recording children's progress based on their starting points.

Evaluations of activities, discussions with parents and carers, and individual case studies provide positive feedback on the difference that activities and support have made to parents' and carers' own and their children's well-being. Through attending training they have learned new skills which have improved how they interact with their children. Parents and carers talked proudly about how the centre has helped build their confidence and how the literacy and numeracy courses have helped them support their children with homework.

Staff provide strong role models that successfully support children's positive behaviour, and a culture of respect is evident throughout the centre. Parents and carers say they feel included and comment on the difference that the centre has made to their confidence, aspirations and achievements as well as their children's progress and development.

Volunteers, many of whom are parents or carers, regularly enjoy helping with the centre's activities. For example, they help facilitate children's 'stay and play' sessions, and support new parents and carers with breastfeeding and baby-led weaning. They talk proudly of how their confidence and belief in themselves, a result of the support from the children's centre, have enabled them to go on to further training, gain qualifications and employment. For example, in the last year, 71 qualifications were gained by learners engaged on centre courses and six were supported in entering employment.

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

2

How good is the provision?

2

The assessment of the needs of families is good. Family support workers are highly successful in supporting children and families. They expertly assess the complicated needs of families who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances. They work with families directly or engage the appropriate service to meet a specific need, acting as advocates for users. The use of the Common Assessment Framework is well embedded. Partnerships with other agencies ensure that assessments of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are accurate. The range of services provided includes outreach work to families, such as lone parents, and sessions within the centre, such as those with speech and language therapists. Joint training between health visiting staff and the centre's staff provide information about ante- and post-natal care, early weaning and breastfeeding.

The children's centre has successfully engaged with some fathers and has run monthly sessions. These enable and encourage fathers to spend quality time with their children and help them learn more about how to support their children's learning and development. Fathers talk confidently about how the centre gives them the confidence to become actively involved within the setting and enjoy the opportunity to spend time with their children. However, users comment that the centre does not promote this service well enough to encourage more fathers to be involved.

Children's and parents' achievements are celebrated within the centre. To mark the end of the academic year and to recognise learners' achievements, an annual 'Learners Celebration Day' takes place. An inspiration to all learners was the 'Learner of the Year' award recently presented to a lone parent who had successfully gained several qualifications and secured employment.

The family support team work creatively and flexibly to meet the needs of children and their families. Parents and carers are highly satisfied with the services and support they receive. Their views are taken into account and contribute to shaping services to some extent, although they are not as actively involved in the evaluation and decision-making process.

Good care, guidance and support, together with good multi-agency working, ensure that families have personalised support. This includes parenting groups, one to-one guidance and advice in the centre or at home, family support and specialist health services. There are clear programmes in place to promote the health and social well-being of users, including a strong emphasis on providing emotional support to boost their confidence and raise their self-esteem.

The centre is very good at working in partnership with family support teams and other agencies to meet children's individual needs. The centre is used effectively for supported and supervised contact with parents, carers and children.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The centre is led and managed effectively. The manager has been in post since April 2010. She communicates high expectations and has created stability within an excellent team who have a shared vision and are dedicated to making a difference to the children and families they serve. Engagement with users has increased considerably from 483 in 2007 to 629 in 2010 and is still rising.

Professional supervision is good. There are clear performance management structures and target-setting with staff, which help to ensure that their work is effective. All staff have continuing opportunities for training and many are developing their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the centre.

All staff feel valued, and managers respect the contribution each makes to improving life chances of users. Consequently, the concerted and effective work of the centre has created a safe, friendly environment where there are high expectations of its users. The centre offers good value for money because of the great care taken to provide services for users that are specifically tailored around their needs.

The advisory board includes a cross-section of people representing a range of interests, such as educational providers, the local authority, the health service, and parents and carers. The governance and accountability arrangements are clear and effective. All partners understand their roles in supporting and developing the provision which meets almost all identified needs.

All provision is of good quality and helps to improve outcomes for children, parents and carers who come to the centre. The centre is successful in breaking down the barriers that vulnerable users experience, ensuring equality of access to services. For example, users report how the work of the centre has helped them to feel less

isolated. Staff successfully ensure that the Common Assessment Framework is used effectively so that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the services to which they are entitled.

Diversity is explicitly valued and promoted. Welcome signs in different languages are displayed within the setting. Effort is made by centre staff to work with families in need, including those who are hard to reach.

Partnerships, in most cases, are of a high quality and a particular strength of the setting because a strong belief in collaborative working is at the heart of the centre's ethos. These services, together with the home-visiting outreach work have increased the attendance and take-up of services by members of the local community.

Staff are diligent and understand their duty to safeguard every child. Robust procedures and protocols for sharing information, together with good partnership working, ensure that children and families at risk and in need are prioritised for support. However, the lack of early identification of such issues as substance misuse sometimes means preventative strategies are not always put in place as early as they could be. All appropriate policies and procedures are in place and up to date.

The vetting of staff is secure, and they are well trained. Staff are aware of key safeguarding policies and are vigilant in identifying and responding to any potential dangers that users may encounter. Staff are effective in promoting the on-going safety, emotional health and well-being of children and their families. The centre provides a safe environment that is appreciated by users and partner agencies.

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	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	2

commissioned to provide	
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 children's centre has links with two early years settings to which they signpost children and families. Bushbury Triangle Neighbourhood Nursery and Triangle Childcare. Both settings are managed by Heantun Care Housing Association. The nursery adjacent to the children's centre received an inspection in November 2010. The quality of the provision was satisfactory and meeting the locality's needs well. The inspection report for this inspection is available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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 Bushbury Triangle Children's Centre on 9–10 February 2011. We judged the centre as good overall. We talked with some of you, your children, staff, and a wide range of partners and members of the local authority linked to the centre. We observed the centre's work and looked at a range of documents.

The strong leadership by the centre manager and her dedicated team has provided families with a range of good-quality services that are carefully tailored to meet your particular needs. Those of you who spoke with us said that you feel the centre is very supportive and staff are kind and caring, and give you good advice. Most importantly, you said it helps improve your lives, particularly for those of you who are facing difficult challenges. Your children's centre staff team has drive and ambition; they meet regularly to discuss the centre's work and to plan for improvement. All staff place the utmost importance on you and your families and provide a listening ear for you. They are passionate about creating an extremely warm and welcoming environment where you feel at home and are able to talk freely about things that matter to you or are causing you concern. As a result, you value the centre and use the services regularly.

Staff listen to what you have to say about the centre and what you need. As a result, the centre offers a good range of services and activities which are led by skilled and dedicated professionals and which are tailored for all families in the area.

Those of you who use the centre are now much more able to stay safe and healthy and to provide for your families. Staff provide you with access to safety equipment and workshops, home visits and advice on how you can prevent accidents in and around your home to keep your children safe. They are helping you to keep yourselves and your children healthy by encouraging mothers to breastfeed and by giving advice on weaning babies onto solid food and preparing healthy and nutritious meals.

The parents and carers we spoke with are particularly proud of their achievements. These ranged from becoming better parents and carers, gaining qualifications to entering voluntary or paid work because of the skills they learnt at the centre.

The children who use the centre are also well catered for. This means they settle well into the local nurseries and make good progress because they have benefit from the centre's services. The staff at the centre encourage you to engage in play with your children from a very early age at sessions such as 'stay and play'. You told us how much you and your children enjoy the activities you access at the centre and the positive effect these are having on you and your families.

We think that the children's centre does well to provide you with a good range of services. To develop further the work of the centre, we have asked the centre manager and local authority to devise ways to increase the uptake of users, particularly fathers so that they can benefit from what the centre provides. We have also asked them to increase the presence of childminder networks within the centre, and develop a greater understanding of the increasing problems relating to substance misuse within the reach area. We would like them to implement effective preventative strategies to provide more timely support to protect vulnerable adults and children from harm as a result of these issues.

We would like to thank everyone who came to speak to us. It was a privilege to be able to talk to you. Your honest and open discussions with us helped us immensely during the inspection. We thoroughly enjoyed spending time at your centre, and we wish you and your families the best for the future.

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