

# Inspection report for Bordesley Village Children's Centre

Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	365864
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

Centre governance	The Governing Body of Bordesley Village Primary School
Centre leader	Gemma Warner
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Bordesley Village Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	The Chestnut Centre, EY262417

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 senior managers from the centre, a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and a number of partners, including health services. They also met with centre users. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Bordesley Village Children's Centre is situated in a residential area to the south of Birmingham city centre. It provides the full core offer of services. The centre is located on the same site as Bordesley Village Primary School. The area is designated as among the 20% most deprived in the country. The large majority of families surrounding the centre are of Pakistani heritage. The remainder are from other groups, including Black African and White British. Around 58% of children are from households where adults are claiming benefits. Unemployment rates are above the national average. Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. The centre's full day-care provision is provided by The Chestnut Centre, which is also on the same site as Bordesley Village Children's Centre. This provision was inspected in January 2011. The inspection report can be found on the Ofsted website [www.Ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.Ofsted.gov.uk)

The centre is governed and managed by the governing body and senior leaders of Bordesley Village Primary School. They review and evaluate the work of the centre. The centre is in the process of setting up a separate advisory board which will comprise representatives from a number of local agencies, the local community, centre staff and school staff. Following the resignation of the previous centre manager in March 2009, senior leaders of Bordesley Village Primary School took responsibility for the running of the children's centre. In March 2010, the governing body with support from the local authority seconded a centre organiser from another local children's centre to oversee the day-to-day running of Bordesley Village Children's 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**

**3**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**3**

## Main findings

This centre's contribution to improving lives of children, young people and families in the local area is satisfactory overall. The impact of actions to promote healthy lifestyles is good because of effective partnership working with a range of health services. Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors were particularly positive about the way in which staff make them feel welcome. As one parent commented, 'Staff always take the time to listen.'

The centre does not have a coherent approach towards measuring, evaluating and clearly demonstrating the impact of the centre's activities on users. Case study evidence and feedback from users shows that outcomes for users, including those who are most vulnerable are at least satisfactory and improving. Sessions such as baby massage and 'Stay and Play' make a sound contribution to developing parents' and carers' understanding of children's learning and development. Users were particularly positive about the 'size-down' healthy programme. 'I am now aware of the sugar and fat content in food. I check the labels when I go shopping so that my family eat healthily,' reported one parent.

While the overall number of families attending the centre is steadily increasing, the number of users from the centre's target group, such as fathers and the Asian community, is low. Although senior leaders acknowledge that the centre's services do not sufficiently meet the needs of these groups, they have yet to identify the specific actions that will be taken to increase engagement. All staff promote equality and take positive action to tackle discrimination. However, because only some families who would benefit from the centre's services are doing so, equality and diversity is judged satisfactory.

Following a period of significant change of staffing at a senior level, the centre organiser has successfully created an ethos where centre staff work together well as a team and are motivated to continue improving the work of the centre. Since the appointment of the centre organiser, arrangements for safeguarding have been strengthened and are satisfactory. All staff have been suitably trained in child protection, and site security has been improved.

The governing body meets regularly to discuss the work of the centre but does not always challenge senior leaders about the impact of the centre's work on outcomes for children and their families. Similarly, partner agencies provide a useful range of service but not all agencies are held to account for the contribution they make towards the centre's priorities. Consequently, senior leaders and governors do not know if all services are as effective as they could be. The centre's development plan shows that senior leaders and the governing body have a sound understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for development. However, success criteria within the plan are not always measurable. The local authority is aware of these weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation and is providing a suitable level of support. Satisfactory and improving outcomes, together with the commitment of all staff and leaders to improve the life chances of users demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

## What does the centre need to do to improve further?

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Work with the local authority to improve the governing body's and senior leaders' abilities to monitor and evaluate the impact of the centre's work by:
  - ensuring governors and senior leaders provide a balance of support and challenge
  - developing a range of strategies to measure, evaluate and clearly demonstrate the impact of activities on users
  - ensuring all partners are held to account for the contribution they make towards the centre's priorities
  - making sure the centre's development plan includes measurable success criteria which focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and adults.
- Identify and implement the precise actions that will be taken to increase the proportion of users from the target groups accessing the centre's service.

## How good are outcomes for users?

3
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The centre places a strong emphasis on healthy lifestyles. As a consequence, parents and carers have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy. Users have responded particularly positively to health-related courses, such as the one on oral health, and, as a consequence, have subsequently registered with local dentists. Staff work effectively with professionals who provide antenatal and baby-clinic sessions from the centre. These sessions are well attended and popular. Local data shows that the percentage of babies born to teenage mothers, the proportion of obese children in the Reception Year and the percentage of low-weight babies have decreased.

Parents and carers told inspectors that the centre provides a happy and safe

environment for families. Many commented that they had made new friends. Personal accounts indicate that the centre is making a sound contribution towards developing users' understanding of safety in the home. 'Safety gates have prevented my child from crawling into the kitchen,' was one parent's response towards the home safety equipment provide in partnership with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. The Common Assessment Framework is used adequately to provide individuals with the specific support they need. The recently appointed senior family support worker is in the process of refining the centre's procedures so that vulnerable children can be identified more quickly.

One parent, representing the views of other users, commented, 'I have learnt how to communicate with my child because of the centre staff.' Children behave well when taking part in activities. Case study information shows that children, including those with child protection plans, make satisfactory gains in educational and personal development. Sometimes, users make good gains during sessions at the centre. This happens when staff demonstrate ways in which parents and children can learn and play together. An effective example of this was seen in the book library session. During the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*, staff successfully encouraged parents and children to use masks and musical instruments while reading and acting out the story.

By displaying job vacancies and hosting career events, the centre is becoming increasingly better at providing users with information about employment and training. For instance, following a recent taster session at the centre, a small number of parents have now embarked on a Level 2 health and beauty course at the local college. The centre regularly seeks the views of users through informal conversations and questionnaires about specific courses. Through the newly formed parents' forum, users are beginning to put forward their views about the centre's work and contribute to the decision-making process.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for users*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>	<b>3</b>

## How good is the provision?

3

Health-related services are well matched to the needs of the local community. Other services provided by the centre adequately match the needs of some users in the reach area. The centre acknowledges that more needs to be done to encourage fathers and families from the Asian community to access the centre's provision. The centre has had some success in involving young mothers in its activities. Case studies and discussions confirm that the number of young mothers attending the centre has increased. For instance, some have been successfully helped to engage in adult learning. A growing number of adults are participating in the English for speakers of other languages courses at the centre and progressing to further training opportunities at local colleges. Outreach work is at an early stage of development

Opportunities for promoting purposeful learning are developing well. 'The children's centre has made me a better parent to my children,' was one parent's response when asked about the impact of the centre. Sessions observed by inspectors were at least satisfactory. They engage children and their parents in enjoyable and creative activities, such as designing masks and making books, Chinese lanterns and Valentine's Day cards. Staff are in the process of introducing a 'learning journey' so that they can keep a closer check on children's achievements and identify what they need to learn next. The centre's outdoor area is underdeveloped.

Personal accounts show that the centre is making a discernible difference to some families. One user's view was typical of many, 'The centre staff are approachable.' Another commented, 'They are caring and kind.' The centre organiser is making appropriate changes to the centre's assessment procedures so that guidance and support can be better tailored to the needs of users and particularly for those in vulnerable circumstances. The centre has suitable plans in place for centre staff and agency representatives to meet more regularly and review the changing needs of users.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are the leadership and management?

3

Members of the governing body and senior leaders are committed to inclusion and improving the life chances of families, including those with special educational needs

and/or disabilities. Equality and diversity are promoted adequately. Further work is required to increase the proportion of users from the target groups accessing the centre's services.

The governing body and senior leaders fully acknowledge the shortcomings in monitoring and evaluation. Governors are keen to strengthen accountability arrangements. In order to improve governance and accountability arrangements, they are working with the local authority to set up an advisory board, which will include representatives from different agencies.

The centre organiser in partnership with centre staff has been instrumental in empowering centre staff following a period of significant change. Staff in the centre are enthusiastic and keen to contribute to improvements by sharing ideas and refining their practice.

All checks on the suitability of staff and the centre's records meet requirements. Staff recognise that the completion of risk assessments is not as meticulous as it could be. Multi-agency work is improving. Case studies indicate that, once vulnerable children and families are identified, they receive a suitable level of support. The centre offers satisfactory value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>

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

Inspectors looked at the inspection report for The Chestnut Centre. This was inspected in January 2011. The report states that children in this setting make satisfactory progress.

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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Bordesley Village Children's Centre on 2–3 March 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you for making us feel welcome and for talking to us about your children's centre. Your views were very helpful to the inspection. Many of you told us that the staff are friendly and welcoming. We agree.

Those of you who spoke to us were particularly positive about the differences the health services and courses offered in the centre make to your lives and your families. This is a good aspect of the centre's work. By working with partners, such as health visitors and midwives and offering courses such as 'size-down', the centre effectively ensures there are good opportunities to learn how to lead a healthy life.

One parent reflected the views of a number when she said, 'The children's centre has made me a better parent to my children.' Some of you told us that taking part in the centre's activities has given you the opportunity to make new friends and learn new skills. We could see how much you like coming to the centre and attending sessions such as the book library and 'Stay and Play'. We enjoyed looking at your books, Chinese lanterns and Valentine's Day cards. Children who use the centre make satisfactory progress in their learning development. Sometimes they make good progress. Centre staff will be introducing a 'learning journey' so that they can make sure all sessions are carefully matched to the children's interests and abilities. The centre has helped some of you to access training and gain qualifications. Senior leaders want more families to attend the centre. We have asked them to look at ways of developing the centre's services so that even more families can get the support and advice they need.

The centre organiser and all staff work together well and ensure the centre is managed well on a day-to-day basis. The governing body, senior leaders and centre staff are committed to making a difference to your lives and the families in the local area. The newly formed parents' forum is beginning to give some of you who attend the centre the chance to suggest ways in which it could be improved. We have asked



the local authority to work with the governing body and senior leaders to make sure the centre is doing as well as it can in meeting the needs of your community. The inspectors have asked the governing body and senior leaders to carefully check the work of the centre and all its partners. We have also asked them to make sure that the centre's development plan has targets which can be measured so that it is easier to check the improvements being made.

We would like to say thank you to those of you who made time to speak with us. We would like to wish you, your children and the families in the Bordesley area the best for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).