

Inspection report for Daisyfield Children's Centre

Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	366346
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Gillian Bishop HMI

Centre governance	Governing Body of St Stephen's Primary School
Centre leader	Joanne Dalton
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	St Stephens Primary School Colville Drive Bury BL8 2DX
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Linked school if applicable	St Stephens Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY407671 St Stephens After School Club EY302503 Wellington Villa 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.

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 one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the senior leadership team; representatives from the local authority; representatives from the advisory board and management committee; health services; frontline workers; representatives from local childcare providers and school, parents and other users of the centre's facilities. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Daisyfield Children's Centre is a phase two centre, which is located in the grounds of St Stephen's Church of England Primary School in Bury. The centre serves the Church ward and a small part of Radcliffe North and is within the 70% of most deprived wards in the country. The centre received designation in 2008 and it delivers the appropriate core offer. A high percentage of local families comprise of working parents and carers, although centre data indicates that 2.2% of parents in the area are in receipt of Jobseekers allowance. There is a high percentage of grandparents living in the area and caring for their grandchildren. A multi-agency team, which includes health professionals, outreach, Home Start, Youth Service and Jobcentre Plus provide services. Centre policy dictates that local families have priority access to services.

The majority of local families are of White British heritage although there is a small percentage of East European's, Asian families and a growing number of asylum-seeking families. The proportion of children attending schools in the area who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is variable across the Church ward. Most children enter school with skills and knowledge that are expected for their age.

Governance arrangements are delegated from the local authority to the governing body of St Stephen's Primary School who work in partnership with a sub-management committee and advisory board. The day-to-day management of the centre lies with the children's centre coordinator who is accountable to the head of centre. The affiliated day care provision is with Wellington Villa Nursery and an after-school facility is provided by St Stephen's Primary School. Separate inspection arrangements apply for these settings and their most recent inspection reports can be found at www.Ofsted.gov.uk.

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

Daisyfield Children's Centre provides satisfactory and improving support for children, families and centre users. The strong sense of welcome from staff and the friendly atmosphere within the centre provides a safe and protective haven for all those it serves. Typical comments from users are, 'It's so nice to know there is somebody looking out for you', 'the help is informal, no pressure to do, and just join in when your ready'. Such comments demonstrate how centre staff have effectively built trust and developed constructive relationships with their local community.

The centre makes a good contribution to improving the health and well-being of expectant and new mothers and their children through a range of maternity services, family health promotions and parenting support. Children and users report that they feel completely safe in the centre. This reflects the good safeguarding arrangements which ensure that all staff are subject to appropriate checks, the site is safe and comprehensive assessments are undertaken to eliminate risks. Collaborative work with health professionals ensures prompt support for families in crisis or at risk, through effective use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

Users are respectful and supportive of one another, which ensure the centre is a pleasant and enjoyable place for everybody to be. Parents and carers and children benefit from a good range of services and activities which provide sound opportunities to promote their learning, social and economic independence however, the lack of evaluative information prevents the centre from demonstrating the full

impact of the provision on outcomes. This is particularly so for adult and family learning as systems to collate, interrogate and analyse data are not fully developed. Consultation processes with users are good enabling leaders to capture a range of views and evaluate service delivery. The engagement of users in the Parents Forum provide some good examples where parents and carers have influenced the range and availability of activities however, very few are engaged in service development at a strategic level.

The increasing range of data and improving relationships with some key partners is providing leaders with a better understanding of the profile and needs of their reach population. As a result, activities and services are being continually developed to match their needs. Services promote equality and inclusion therefore increasing the engagement of teen parents, fathers and a growing number of minority groups. However, only 48% of the reach population are currently participating in centre and outreach services.

Effective working relationships between the head of centre and the centre coordinator ensure the centre is well managed on a day-day basis. The centre coordinator is extremely capable and highly respected by professionals and parents and carers alike. The sub-management committee of the governing body works in partnership with the local authority to provide good levels of support to the senior leadership team through performance management visits and meetings. Together with the advisory board and management committee, they have a good understanding of the quality of provision, strengths and areas, which require further development.

Leaders know their community well, which enables them to identify local priorities and align these to national priorities within their service delivery plans. However, business plans lack rigour, as they do not include a secure success criteria or locally agreed targets. This prevents the centre being challenged robustly in its performance. Furthermore, weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation systems across many services hinder the centre's ability to show outcomes to demonstrate the full impact of its work. However, the leadership's determined focus on improvement, identifying and meeting needs, indicates the centre has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- With the local authority, advisory board, management committee and children's centre partners:
 - continue to develop outreach work to increase the engagement of families within the wider community yet to access centre services, particularly those already identified as harder to reach
 - develop robust systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of all services and impact on outcomes for users, particularly those related to family and

- adult learning
 - update the children's centre service plan to set challenging targets against local and strategic priorities so progress towards these priorities can be effectively measured over time.
- Improve leadership and governance arrangements by:
- engaging more users in strategic decision making processes and the future shaping of services by recruiting them to the advisory board and the management committee
 - improving systems to collate and interrogate pertinent local data to enable centre leaders to conduct of a firm analysis of need for their community
 - ensuring the advisory board, management committee and the local authority play a key role in the monitoring and evaluation of service provision to enable them to both support, challenge and hold the centre to account.

How good are outcomes for users?

3

Outcomes for centre users are variable but improving steadily. Early intervention strategies and the concerted effort and commitment from staff are beginning to have a positive impact on the lives and aspirations of the families they work with. 'I'm so much stronger than I was, my confidence and self esteem are so much higher' 'I don't know where I would be without the centre, it's a godsend' are some of the typical comments from parents and carers. Triple P and the Top Parenting Tips workshop have enabled parents to manage their children's behaviour through positive distraction techniques. A typical comment is, 'I'm so much calmer, now, I stop and think, and I don't shout so much'. As a result, parents and carers feel home life has dramatically improved.

The priority placed on addressing high levels of obesity, smoking and the low prevalence of breastfeeding is beginning to have a good impact on family's general health and well-being. Cooking courses introduce parents and carers to new healthy recipes on a budget, which has resulted in more families cooking from scratch instead of buying convenience foods containing additives. Courses are fun and highly informative; as a result, parents and carers frequently report how they now cook at home with their children and centre data confirms that obesity levels are beginning to reduce. Baby Bistro and peer support volunteers provide much needed support to breastfeeding mothers ensuring a steady rise in the prevalence of breastfeeding within the borough. Parents and carers receive lots of reassurance and advice about health and maternal matters because health visitors are routinely available at the Advice Drop-in and regular health promotions raise awareness of sexual health issues, smoking and alcohol misuse. A growing number of teen and young parents are now engaged in groups and the health trend shows a decline in teenage conceptions. However, this data is not localised or reliable enough to show the impact for this particular group.

Parents and carers confirm that they feel safe in the centre and that they understand the centre’s safeguarding duties. A typical comment is, ‘I can share anything and it will stay private and between us, if they have to tell somebody else they will always be upfront and tell me so first’. Parents and carers state they have now adopted safer practices following first aid and fire safety courses. ‘It really made me think about having an emergency evacuation plan’, commented one parent. Parents and carers respond well to the centre’s guidance due to trusting relationships with the staff. As a result, they willingly engage with specialised support agencies and CAF processes. Some describe how children in need plans and targeted outreach work have provided focused interventions for the family as a whole, therefore, preventing their difficulties escalating and reaching crisis point and avoiding the necessity for child protection plans.

The extent to which children and adults enjoy and achieve is satisfactory. Activities within Play Pals, Messy Play and Creature Extravaganza and targeted interventions from the Speech and Language Therapy Team (SALT) are helping to develop children’s speech and language skills. This, parents say, has contributed to their children’s increased vocabulary, confidence and self help skills. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided for within the full range of activities and through signposting to specialist services such as Portage and SALT. A transition project is developing with some anecdotal evidence to indicate children’s increased preparedness for school. However, the tracking of children’s progress generally is very much in its infancy, which prevents a firm picture of outcomes within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Consultation with users and the wider community is well established providing stakeholders with prime opportunities to influence services such as the retention of Baby Yoga and introduction of Book Swop. However, insufficient numbers of parents and carers are actively engaged in the strategic shaping of services. Parents and carers display an eagerness to engage in adult and family learning opportunities because they recognise that this increases their self-confidence and aspirations for the future. Data relating to the use of the Information kiosk confirms some users are proactive in searching for work, furthermore, centre information suggests that some of the reach population are seeking access to accredited numeracy and literacy courses. After a period of turbulence, Jobcentre Plus are providing monthly advice sessions about training and employment opportunities alongside user access to the Benefit Bus. However, data is not systematically collated for any of these services preventing an informed analysis of their impact on users' economic well-being.

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	2

concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	3
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	3

How good is the provision?

3

More effective multi-agency working is beginning to help identify and engage some families who are harder to reach. For example, young and lone parents now regularly attend and systematic consultations with fathers have led to their increased and regular engagement across all groups and activities. Following a concerted effort, the centre is now working with more asylum-seeking families and a growing number of the reach population from ethnic minority groups. The building is extremely well used and adapted on a day-to-day basis but staff are conscious of those unable or willing to come to the centre so they routinely provide 'What ever the weather' sessions in the local park. Everybody is welcome, as activities are adapted to cater for childminders and older siblings, ensuring users benefit from lots of activities during school holidays when they need it most.

The growing availability of live birth data is enabling the centre to conduct an earlier assessment of need and provide targeted support for those most at risk. Outreach work is intensive where it needs to be and provides a secure foundation for families to make fundamental changes in their lives. The assessment of individual cases is becoming more secure due to increased links with health professionals and improved referral pathways both from and to the centre. As a result, services, training and activities are being appropriately matched to particular vulnerable families through children in need plans and CAF's, preventing difficulties hitting crisis point. However, secure assessment is hindered due to the lack of accurate and meaningful data from the local authority and partners; furthermore, data is not systematically used to inform and guide service development.

There is a good range of training programmes such as All about U, Transition Project and Hanan all firmly focused on raising parents' and carers' self-esteem, confidence and practical knowledge of child development. As a result, parents and carers state they are more able to promote their children's social independence and support their early literacy and numeracy skills. A few parents and carers have become active volunteers by helping to run play sessions and nominated editor of the children's centre news letter. One parent has proceeded to run Infant Massage classes and a volunteer peer supporter is being supported through an accreditation process. Personal achievements are valued and celebrated by awarding achievement

certificates for courses and by celebrating the success of the dads' football team when they won the five-a side competition. Retention and participation rates are generally good, however, the evaluation of such programmes is not refined enough to demonstrate the long-term benefits for those engaged.

Care, guidance and support for families are good. Sensitive outreach work and effective assessments of need ensure families receive the right information at the right time. 'They think of things before you realise that you need it' states a parent provided with information about a dentist and another who received help with childcare through the two-year funding programme. Parents and carers describe how staff always keep in touch and provide a little 'hand holding' encouraging them to try new groups and activities. In fact, anybody new to the centre is always greeted and escorted into sessions ensuring their first contact with the centre, is a particularly positive one. A vast range of literature is readily available relating to sexual health, safety in the home and helpline notices are carefully positioned to ensure they can be viewed discreetly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

3

The leadership and management of the centre are satisfactory. Centre managers have high expectations of their staff and partners and they ensure the management committee are well informed and engaged in the full range of centre business. Regular professional supervision ensures staff receive the necessary support, training and challenge appropriate to the roles they undertake. This may be in the form of family case reviews, which ensure family, and outreach support is concerted, effective and progressive.

A stable, three-tier governance model exists and includes representation from most key partners and small numbers of parents and carers, all of whom have a clear perception of the centres strengths and areas for improvement. The local authority and sub management committee provide good levels of support, however, performance management arrangements have not been rigorous enough. The annual

conversation processes have not been fully implemented and governors have not identified key targets and performance measures within the service delivery plans or within monitoring visits, to demonstrate how they challenge and hold the centre to account.

The centre's statutory safeguarding responsibilities are well met due to secure recruitment and vetting procedures, which ensure the suitability of those working and delivering services within the centre. Staff and centre partners are well versed with safeguarding policies and procedures and referral routes are swiftly initiated where children and vulnerable adults require protection and tailored support. Recent links with Women's Housing Action Group and close working relationships with local police is enabling the centre to address a new priority associated with a rise in domestic violence incidents. Staff take appropriate steps to alert parents and carers about their safeguarding duties which ensures their work is open, transparent and supportive.

Users from a variety of backgrounds and cultures report a strong sense of respect and belonging within the centre. The well-utilised crèche provision allows more users to attend courses and this is reflected strongly in the testimonies from many parents and carers who state that they 'couldn't complete any of the training if I didn't have the crèche'. Recent priorities focused on increasing the engagement of vulnerable groups and individuals is beginning to show signs of success. However, the attendance of these families is not routinely tracked to show the range and benefits of services they are actually participating in.

Activities and events are evaluated through pre- and post-evaluations, which seek to confirm the effectiveness of provision. Parents and carers who engage in services are encouraged to reflect on their learning and their views are generally used well to adapt, improve and develop provision. However, the quality of these evaluations varies across services and partners and focus more specifically on provision rather than the impact on users' outcomes, preventing a more profound view of the overall effectiveness of the centre's work.

The centre provides good value for money. Resources and services are very well utilised with an increasing range of services being offered within homes and through local community venues and events. The building is creatively used to provide appropriate space and facilities for a wide range of play and physical activities, professional consultations and a training venue. Central finances are spent wisely to provide quality provision at the best possible price by negotiating costs with facilitators and by searching for cheaper external venues where group costs become too expensive. Outreach work is now clearly focused on being part of and visible within the community, which is beginning to have an impact on improved engagement with families in the wider community, schools and local childminders. However, leaders are aware that more needs to be done to engage the remaining families yet to register with the centre, and they continue to develop various innovative plans to address this.

The centre has established some firm partnerships, such as those with the Youth Service, Home Start and particularly with the police and health professionals and this is enhancing the provision for families potentially at risk and in need. The centre now has a link health visitor, who is providing a secure steer in relation to understanding and addressing health trends and by improving referral and assessment routes through multi-agency working. However, key partners, such as Jobcentre Plus are not fully on board which inhibits the development of a seamless service and prevents the centre knowing the extent to their work and, therefore, the impact for their families.

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	3
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	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	3
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	3

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

Inspection outcomes for local schools and day care providers have been considered as part of this inspection.

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 Daisyfield Children's Centre on 16 and 17 March 2011 and we judged the centre satisfactory overall.

Those of you we spoke to said the centre provides a friendly and happy place where you and your children can make new friends. All parents and carers agreed that staff work hard to make you feel welcome and they listen to your ideas about how some activities could be better. You also told us that you always feel safe in the centre because it is extremely well looked after and the building is safe and secure. You told us how you welcome extra support in times of crisis because you have complete trust in staff because you know they have your very best interests at heart. We agree with this because we found that staff work particularly well with health visitors when trying to identify and help families at risk of danger or in crisis. As a result, parents and carers have been able to make some positive changes in their lives because they have been helped to find new homes, get help for postnatal depression and in some cases, parents have become volunteers.

You told us how your lives have improved because of courses such as Triple P and Top Parenting Tips workshop as you now manage your children's behaviour through distraction techniques and not by shouting. Those who have enjoyed the cooking course are very excited about your newfound cooking skills and ability to provide healthy meals on a budget, which are exciting and tasty. We found that the range of services for new parents helps them with problems with weaning and in some cases, attendance at Baby Bistro has ensured worried parents get the help they need enabling them to carry on with breastfeeding. Many parents described how first aid and fire safety courses had helped them to devise a fire escape plan and to reduce the likelihood of accidents at home by making sure dangerous objects were kept out of reach of young children.

Through our discussions and observations we could see how respectful and supportive you are of one another, which ensures the centre is a pleasant and enjoyable place for everybody to be. You tell us that you don't know what you did before you had the centre and you explained how staff always greet you with a warm smile and big welcome. This, you told us, helps you when you are feeling down and lonely. You also told us how pleased you are with the range of activities because you enjoy Play Pals, Messy Play and Baby Yoga. You tell us there is something for everybody. We found this too, because dads, grandparents, teen parents and people from different cultures and backgrounds are all starting to use the centre. However, despite the best efforts from staff, over half the people in the local area are still to access the services and in some cases these may well be families in greatest need. Centre leaders know they must consider other ways to

increase this number so everybody can benefit. They must also develop systems to help keep the right sort of records to show the difference activities and services make to your lives. They must do this by asking some of the other agencies who work with them, to provide better information about how the community are using their service so the centre can help to provide the right sort of services in the future.

Some of you told us about the Parents Forum and about how the staff encourage you to make suggestions about what to provide next. A few parents and carers are beginning to play a bigger role in formal decision-making processes because they have or intend to join the management committee. However, it is important that more of you understand how you can be involved in shaping services because you know the community best. Therefore, we have asked leaders to make sure more of you join the management committee and advisory board.

We found that the centre is very well managed, particularly by the centre coordinator, because she has high expectations of her staff, the management committee and the agencies with which she works. She works closely with the head of centre, the local authority and the management committee, which ensures everyone helps to decide how well services and activities meet your needs. This also makes sure centre leaders get the right amount of support because the governing body helps to oversee the development of action plans for the future. Although these action plans are based correctly on what the community needs, they do not show how well the local authority and management committee will monitor progress towards them. Therefore, we have asked them to review their action plans to make sure the centre is able to show the difference services make to your lives by holding centre leaders more accountable for their work.

Thank you for speaking with us and we wish you all the very best for the future.

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