

Inspection report for Butterfly Children's Centre

Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	365658
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Deborah Udakis HMI

Centre governance	Action for Children
Centre leader	Keith Alexander
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Butterfly Children's Centre Nursery EY343414

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 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 senior managers and leaders, members of the advisory board, health and education professionals, representatives of the local authority, members of the local town partnership, adult learning services, family support workers and other support workers, parents and carers.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Butterfly Children's Centre is a phase one centre and was designated in March 2003. The centre provides the full core offer through a range of integrated services that include health, family support, adult training, and childcare provision. The head of centre reports to Action for Children and the local authority which are responsible for the governance of the centre.

Statistical data for the area indicate that it is ranked within 30% of the most socially and economically disadvantaged in the country. The percentage of workless households and those dependent on benefits is above average. Children start nursery with skills and knowledge that are below the expected levels. The population is predominantly White British with a growing population from minority ethnic backgrounds, predominantly Asian from South Pakistan.

Full and part-time day care is provided in the nursery which is located on the ground floor of the centre.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

Butterfly Children's Centre is a well-established and effective centre that users say is 'at the heart of the community'. The effective leadership and management inspire trust and encourage and promote high-quality services.

Parents and carers make a significant and positive contribution to the governance of the centre. The centre's Advisory Board, chaired by a service user, includes good representation from parents and carers and community partners who are all extremely keen to be involved in the life of the centre.

The centre's development plan includes key actions but does not clearly prioritise targets or indicate specific measures for success. Not all leaders at the centre are aware of the priorities for the service and the rigor of the monitoring of the centre's development plan is not consistently applied.

Children placed on child protection plans receive timely support and the whole family is supported and included in improving outcomes for the child. Inclusion and equality are firmly placed at the heart of the centre's vision, policies, procedures and practice. Service users from minority ethnic families, children and families with English as an additional language, teenage parents, and families living in workless households are all strongly represented within the centre. As a result of the excellent care, guidance and support they receive parents and carers report a substantial increase in confidence and self-esteem and a sizeable reduction in their feelings of isolation. The staff are committed to further improve services to meet the needs of the community. The existing strong infrastructure provides a platform to drive forward improvement and the capacity for improvement is good.

The outcomes for users are good. Some examples of highly effective multi-agency partnerships and the highly effective outreach support ensure that there are positive improvements to the well-being of children and their families. These are supported through the delivery of a highly cohesive package of integrated services. For example, immunisation rates are above national average, breastfeeding take-up rates have increased albeit very marginally and the number of children classified as obese is around the national average. In addition, the proven success of the work of

the Citizens Advice Bureau has reduced users' debt and increased the take up of welfare entitlements. In some instances, evidence shows significant increases in income as a result of the excellent support received to improve users' economic well-being. However, some partnerships are proving less successful in targeting the complex needs of the community. For instance, transition arrangements are fragile as children move on to their next phase of education and are not firmly embedded. Evidence from partner agencies to demonstrate improving outcomes for the local community and service users is not consistently shared. As a result, some children are at risk of not receiving the vital assistance needed as they move into school. The centre does not always have the local knowledge from its partners to help it evaluate its effectiveness.

The provision of high-quality training courses has led to many parents and carers achieving nationally recognised qualifications. This has resulted in further training for users and a higher uptake of voluntary work and paid employment. Safeguarding arrangements are extremely comprehensive and exceptionally thorough. The centre intervenes swiftly in response to the needs of children and their families and is quick to recognise mental and emotional health issues and take appropriate steps to safeguard users. Children and their families say they feel welcomed, safe and secure in the centre.

The centre is highly effective at reaching out to engage with members of the community, including teenage parents, those from minority ethnic families and those made vulnerable by their circumstances. The centre's outreach work is highly commendable and staff use a range of very effective communications to promote outstanding care, guidance and support, and the engagement of users.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Extend the partnership arrangements to maximise opportunities to support improved outcomes for children and their families through meeting the wide range of local community needs.
- Ensure all leaders at the centre are aware of the priorities for the service and are actively involved in the setting of specific and measureable targets which are supported by rigorous monitoring.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Children and their families are provided with invaluable support and detailed information to promote their good health. There is clear evidence of improving outcomes and the increased uptake of health promotion groups including 'Moving Tots', and 'Get Cooking' has resulted in sessions being over-subscribed. The centre has been awarded a five star food hygiene accreditation in the last year and is well placed to promote good food hygiene. Health visitors and midwives employed by the health service provide well-integrated services within the centre with the excellent support of family support workers. Many staff and volunteers are experienced and

trained in breastfeeding support. Health professionals identify potential breastfeeding mothers at the antenatal stage. Breastfeeding rates at birth are showing signs of slow improvement. Where it is provided, breastfeeding support is well received by parents.

Risk assessments are skilfully completed, including safety and safeguarding audits. Parents and carers receive advice on safety and many have accessed home safety equipment such as fireguards and stair gates. The arrangements to ensure the safety and well-being of children are outstanding, understood by all partner agencies and are highly effective. Parents and carers access emergency first aid training and this meant that when one mother's six-month-old baby began to choke she knew what to do. Users report that they feel safe at the setting and that they have a strong sense of belonging.

The centre is proving successful in improving the achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and there is clear evidence that the gap between the lowest achieving children and their peers is narrowing. According to the centre's own data, children have made outstanding progress in personal, social and emotional development and good progress in communication, language and literacy as a result of targeted support including speech and language therapy and the use of 'Every Child a Talker' initiatives.

Safeguarding arrangements are exemplary and children are very secure within the centre. The use of the Common Assessment Framework and Team Around the Child processes are firmly embedded throughout centre and its partner agencies. The effective use of these assessment processes and the sensitive arrangements that support information sharing between agencies ensures that appropriate early intervention strategies are identified and implemented. Children on child protection plans and their families receive high-quality support and monitoring from staff and, as a result, most children are successfully removed from child protection plans.

The economic well-being of many families, and in particular those who are made vulnerable by their circumstances and those who experienced isolation, is greatly improved because of their engagement with the centre services. Several parents and carers have engaged positively in the well-established volunteer programme. Volunteers are supported well and many are helped to achieve nationally accredited awards. A hugely successful example of how the excellent support provided by the centre has resulted in significantly improved outcomes for service users is the case involving a parent who went on to set up her own award-winning support group for Survivors of Domestic Abuse (SODA). She has shown great enterprise and business know-how as she successfully applies for grants and has developed her expertise and skills in the highly complex issue of domestic abuse.

Regular consultation events involving parents, carers and partners are used to inform local need and service provision. A large majority of residents say that people from different communities get on well together. Parents and carers are instrumental in making valuable choices and decisions, and have excellent opportunities to express

their views. They make extremely valuable contributions to the work of the centre through their involvement in the parent forum, the advisory board and regular evaluations and consultations.

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	1
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 use of assessment and evaluation is firmly embedded and informs the work of the centre. The effective use of assessments covers the whole range of need and ensures that children and their families get the help and support they need. Skilled use of pre-Common Assessment Framework documentation ensures that children and families receive personalised services and excellent support.

Improved assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage results in clear and effective learning plans. As a result, children are making good, and in some instances outstanding, progress. Centre workers develop strong relationships with private, voluntary and statutory services and regular network partnership meetings are used to share information and develop initiatives. Together, they ensure that parents are fully engaged and contribute to the effective assessments and evaluations of needs and services and are supported to make a positive difference.

The range of outreach services and activities provided by the centre, including baby massage and 'music tots', are extremely popular. The centre is flexible and adapts its services to meet the needs of users and the wider community. For instance, parents and carers told the centre that they wanted a family group session so that all of their children could attend. As a result, 'Family Matters' sessions were introduced. Like all the other groups, these sessions are over-subscribed and so a priority need assessment is undertaken by staff in consultation with the parents and carers where additional support needs are identified. Some places are then allocated based on a criterion of need. Parents have also commented that they would like more health visitor input during baby sessions at the centre. This information has been noted by the centre leaders.

Access to good-quality adult learning and activities are improving parenting skills and life chances. One parent, new to English, who benefitted from training opportunities via the centre leading to a National Vocational Qualification and employment in a local school commented: 'It has changed my life. It has broken down barriers. I feel safe in this centre as it is multi-cultural. I feel confident in what I do now'.

The success of outreach work has been instrumental to many of the achievements of the centre. Experienced and skilled staff are employed at the centre, who provide a wide range of on-site and outreach support to children and families. They work with ease across different agencies and partner agencies hold the centre in high regard. The work they do is easily understood by the majority of parents and families and is reducing isolation and supporting positive outcomes for families and the community. Targeted support, including community walks and cold calling to reach out to families living in very difficult circumstances, has reaped dividends. For example, the centre is extremely successful in engaging teenage parents, fathers, minority ethnic families, parents and carers with special education needs and/or disabilities, and increasingly with survivors of domestic abuse. As a result, the membership of the centre has increased year on year and outcomes for the most vulnerable children and families are improving. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Users from different age groups and ethnic and religious backgrounds express high satisfaction with the way the centre and partners engage with them.

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	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Leaders at all levels make valuable contributions to the success of the centre. The centre manager reports to the two strands of management and leadership which are provided by Action for Children and the local authority. Both organisations provide clear lines of accountability and share ambitions for the centre. Aspects of their management include regular audits and inspection. However, the centre's development plan is not sufficiently rigorous in its target setting, measures to evidence improvement or monitoring. There are high-quality systems for the effective governance, professional supervision and day-to-day management of the centre. Leaders and managers work well together sharing ambition and expectations. Users play a key role in the governance of the centre and they participate in the centre's decision-making process through formal membership of the parents' panel

and advisory board. The 'Have Your Say' initiative is commonly used by parents and carers to air their views and make suggestions. These are used to influence the work of the centre.

There are clear policies on promoting equality and diversity and the promotion of inclusive practice. Respect for yourself and others are part of the key ethos of the centre. Parents and carers seek out the 'diversity calendars' published by the centre and use them effectively to learn about other cultures and improve their organisation. The effective use of the calendars has helped parents and carers to manage their time and resulted in a significant reduction in missed appointments.

Good quality speech and language support is provided to ensure that children with identified language delay make good progress in their communication and language development. Several children and families who learn English as an additional language attend useful group lessons to develop their skills in the use of English. They receive excellent support from the centre's bi-lingual support workers. The centre works in partnership with the 'Kids Orchard Centre', which is located nearby, to deliver services to children with special educational needs/and or disabilities and their families. This ensures that children maximise their skills and achieve their potential, irrespective of impairment or ability.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are extremely rigorous and child protection strategies are exemplary. All staff have enhanced criminal records bureau checks and these are updated regularly. Staff recruitment procedures are very comprehensive and are designed to ensure all staff employed at the centre are suitable to care for children. Excellent multi-agency partnership working arrangements including the good use of Common Assessment Framework and Team Around the Child processes securely safeguard children. They ensure that children and families receive timely supportive interventions through the effective assessment processes. Staff receive regular high-quality training opportunities to develop their expertise and skill in safeguarding and child protection. This includes in-house training during team meetings where safeguarding is a standard agenda item. The centre makes a significantly positive contribution to community cohesion with its focus on meeting community needs, empowerment and reducing social isolation.

Good use is made of all the available data to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the services provided and to identify any gaps in provision. This helps the centre to shape and improve services and activities when viewed with responses and suggestions from users. This important feature of evaluation is integral to the centre's guarantee of providing good value for money and informs the delivery plan, the local authority's 'Annual Conversation', and commissioning arrangements.

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	2

integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	
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	1
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	1

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

Butterfly Children's Centre Nursery was inspected at the same time as the centre. The overall effectiveness of the nursery was judged to be good. A number of aspects of the inspection were judged to be outstanding including learning and development, partnerships with parents, staying safe, being healthy, and use of resources. No aspect of the nursery's provision was judged to be less than good.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Butterfly Children's Centre on 23 and 24 March 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Your children's centre is at the heart of the community and is relied upon for the well-being of large numbers of people. The strong leadership and highly successful teamwork means that families are provided with a range of good services tailored to meet their particular needs.

The centre is making a very positive difference to children's well-being and learning. It is particularly making a significant difference in helping children to experience a

safe start to childhood. Children are having good opportunities to develop their play and learning within the centre and this is helping them to prepare for their next phase of their education. They make good or better progress in their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Thank you for contributing to the inspection. Your comments proved invaluable to the inspectors. It was great to see that fathers are contributing strongly to their children's care and activities in the centre. Inspectors think that with the centre's encouragement many people now make an outstanding positive contribution to the centre services and the life of the community. You were unanimous in your praise of the work of the centre and, in particular, the family support workers. You were really keen to tell the inspectors about how well staff have supported families, helped to raise your self-esteem and confidence and have encouraged you to achieve. The care, guidance and support of families and children are excellent. This is largely as a result of the extremely successful close partnerships that staff forge with you and the way they engage you in the work of the centre. The work of the staff from across different agencies ensures that you access good-quality services as quickly as possible. Several of you believed that your contact with the centre has been life changing. Professionals working in multi-agency teams and voluntary organisations have developed some strong working partnerships with the children's centre. The centre and the work of its staff are held in very high regard.

Leaders and managers understand the needs of the families extremely well. They have some effective systems to monitor that staff are doing a good job and that the services on offer are making a positive difference to people's lives. They show that they are determined to improve the lives of users even more. Inspectors have no doubt that the good work will continue.

We have asked the centre to make some improvements by strengthening the partnerships with some agencies to improve the transition arrangements when children start school; and to provide clear evidence of improving outcomes, and to ensure targets and actions for improvement included in the centres development plan are clear, measureable and are closely and effectively monitored.

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