

Inspection report for Normandy Primary Children's Centre

Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	366397
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Kubiak HMI

Centre governance	Normandy Primary school governing body
Centre leader	Gillian Todd
Date of previous inspection	This is the centre's first inspection
Centre address	Normandy Primary School, Fairford Avenue, Barnehurst, Kent, DA7 6QP
Telephone number	01322 359475
Fax number	01322 333998
Email address	gillian.todd@normandy.bexley.sch.uk

Linked school if applicable	Normandy Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Normandy Children's Centre Playgroup EY415590

The inspection of this Sure Start children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

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

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

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

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

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

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

No. 100024

© Crown copyright 2010



Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

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

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

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager and staff, centre users, childminding network co-ordinator, representatives from the local authority, health services, crisis intervention team, governing committee, and from the school's senior leadership team. They spoke to parents and carers formally and informally around the centre. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation including key policies, case studies, satisfaction surveys, and the centre's self-evaluation and business plan.

Inspection judgements

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

Information about the centre

Normandy Primary Children's Centre was designated in 2007 and is governed by a committee which is a sub-group of the governing body of Normandy Primary School situated on the same site. The centre manager is also the assistant headteacher in the school and divides her time between the two roles. The centre is based in the school grounds. It is fully wheelchair accessible. Centre staff are employed directly by the school. The centre is open all year round, from 9am to 5pm weekdays, and on some Saturdays. The centre is a Phase 2 centre and provides the full core offer. Services are run within the centre with outreach work offered in the community. Users are encouraged to attend the most accessible locations to them. A playgroup which is part of the centre is provided on site for children from the local community. Playgroup attendance includes individuals referred from outside agencies. The playgroup will be inspected separately. There is also a nursery in the school.

The centre's catchment area is mixed in terms of deprivation. The local population is mostly White British, with approximately one third from African families. Around 5% of children under five are living in workless households, which is below the national average. There are approximately 33% of families living in poverty. Attainment on entry to nursery is below average.

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 overall effectiveness of the centre is good. There are very good links with the school and partner organisations, and these are enhanced by the excellent skills of the centre manager who ensures that the children's centre is an integral part of the local community. Parents and carers are seen as individuals and good support is available which meets their specific needs. The governing committee has been highly proactive in understanding the needs of the centre and its contribution to the work of the centre is outstanding. Senior staff have an excellent overview of its work and the challenges it faces. Self-evaluation is clear, linked well with other planning and is focused on improving outcomes for users. Up-to-date data are available and are used appropriately to shape the service and to measure the centre's successes and areas for development. However, some of the data available are borough-wide rather than specific to the reach area of the centre and this limits its ability to target resources effectively where they will have the most impact on improving outcomes for families.

Despite the weaknesses in some of the data, centre staff use their own and others' local intelligence, and so have an excellent understanding of the community they serve. Parents and carers report that they feel welcomed at the centre and value the support that they receive. Some activities are offered at the centre although space is limited. Centre provision is enhanced through work within the community. Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily, but resources and literature available in the centre do not reflect the diversity of the reach area and wider community. However, good levels of support are offered for all families in the community when needs are identified.

Case study information effectively demonstrates that the centre's work is having an impact on improving outcomes. Parents and carers report that they enjoy attending the centre and that it is making a difference to their lives and their families. The early intervention work by the outreach workers and family support worker for

children and families who need it most is making a significant difference. There are excellent links between other key professionals. Outstanding assessment practices for families ensure that parents and carers are well supported and receive excellent advice and guidance. The centre works closely with the school nursery and playgroup. However, there are missed opportunities, particularly in literacy and aspects of personal development, to work together to improve outcomes for children such as during other groups and on outreach visits.

Parents and carers have the opportunity to influence the centre in a range of ways. Their role on the governing committee is successful. The centre has been successful in engaging parents and carers in accessing further education and training. There are good links with Bexley Adult Education College.

Safeguarding procedures, including those for recruitment, are thorough and are understood by staff. The designated officer for child protection effectively monitors children where there are potential safeguarding issues. Training on safeguarding is given a high priority and this ensures that children are protected.

The manager and staff team are aware of the centre's strengths and where its challenges are. Resources are well used and targeted where they will have the most impact. As a result, the centre's capacity to improve is good.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Embed equality and diversity across all aspects of the centre's work to ensure that all areas of the community are represented and valued, and that information is accessible.
- Work more closely across the whole centre to improve outcomes for children, especially in literacy and personal development.
- Ensure that the local authority improves the availability of data which is specific to the immediate reach area of the centre, and for the centre to use this data effectively to improve, even further, the targeting of resources where they will have the most impact on improving outcomes for users.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

The centre is having a good impact on improving outcomes for families. Families are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and groups such as 'Football and Fun' are well attended and enjoyed by the children. The introduction of the fruit basket in the reception area where parents can purchase fruit is popular. Children have access to an enclosed outside area for play and exercise and use this frequently. Users regularly use the health-related information available in the centre. Breast-feeding support is offered at the centre, although take-up rates fluctuate. Parents' emotional health is also a priority for the centre and staff; parents and carers appreciate the support and signposting to specific services.

Programmes to develop parenting skills, and literacy and numeracy skills so that parents and carers can support their children more effectively, are well attended. Parents and carers report that they are better equipped to help their children and both they and their children are more confident. The centre has established good links with the Bexley Adult Education Department and users benefit from a range of courses run at the centre. Users are well supported in accessing external opportunities and some are successful in obtaining paid employment. Staff relate well to the parents and carers, and act as good role models, offering practical support. Parents' and carers' views are obtained through a suggestions box scheme and through evaluations of services. Parents and carers also have the opportunity to sit on the governing committee and these parents and carers represent the views of centre users successfully. In addition, informal feedback is encouraged and staff frequently act on this advice.

All services in the centre ensure that children are kept safe. Parents and carers are seen as individuals and staff can quickly identify any concerns and offer appropriate support or engage with external services. In times of crisis, parents and carers are well supported due to the positive relationships the centre staff have built up with them. Parents and carers report that the centre is making a big difference to their lives and they appreciate the support that is offered. The centre works closely with social services and other partner agencies with children who are subject of child protection plans and this is having positive impact in looking after vulnerable children. The Common Assessment Framework is used effectively when necessary.

Children benefit from the wide range of stimulating play experiences and this supports their transitions between centre, playgroup and nursery. The experiences help children develop positive relationships with adults and other children; behaviour is good. Parents and carers are encouraged to take an active part in their children's play with positive outcomes for both.

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, and 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 and employment.	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre has outstanding procedures for assessing the needs of children and families who currently use the centre. Effective multi-agency working and communication ensure that the needs of parents and carers are assessed promptly. Excellent integration of services means that services are co-ordinated and a holistic approach is offered to parents and carers. There are good links with the borough-wide outreach workers. The centre supports the work of the outreach service well by employing its own family support worker and this means that she is able to prioritise families for support. The family support worker is effective in engaging parents and carers who may find it difficult accessing the centre and support that is offered in the community. Case studies demonstrate the effectiveness of the joined-up approach in improving outcomes for families, particularly during times of stress. Data are used effectively to identify new needs but a weakness is that much of it is borough-wide which reduces its usefulness. However, local intelligence provided by centre staff and outreach professional compensates for this to a good extent.

Attendance rates are good and improving, and the centre is reaching more families in the community. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the community they serve and have built up links with specialist services, such as Orbit Housing, ensuring that parents and carers who are experiencing housing problems receive the support and advice they need.

The centre offers a good range of services. Parents enjoy attending the centre and feel that it makes a difference to their lives. As one parent commented, 'We would not be the parents that we are now without the children's centre.' Activities such as family learning support parents in improving their literacy skills to be more able to support their children. A crèche facility allows parents to focus on their own learning and their children join them at the end of the session. Parents value this time with their children, as echoed by one parent: 'I look forward to spending one-to-one time with my child as it is busy at home.' Parents are supported in accessing further training to improve their employability and, as a result, some parents have been successful in securing paid employment. However, despite the overall good provision, some opportunities are missed to support children's learning, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and in aspects of children's personal, social and emotional development. In these contexts, the opportunity to work more closely across the full range of centre services is underexploited.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	1
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	2
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Overall, the quality of leadership and management is good. The centre's staff work effectively and have built up purposeful links with partner organisations. The centre manager was consistently praised to inspectors by parents and carers and other professionals for her outstanding contribution to the centre and commitment to bringing about improvements for families who access its services. The centre manager reports to the governing committee which provides outstanding governance. Members actively hold the centre management to account through setting ambitious targets and evaluating the centre's performance against them. The governing committee is aware of the centre's strengths and areas which need developing. It is also aware of its own strengths and areas for development.

The centre manager, centre staff and relevant school staff work well together and management arrangements are secure. Supervision, performance management and role responsibilities are clear and understood. Centre staff have good opportunities for professional development and train alongside other colleagues such as from the school or with registered childminders.

The self-evaluation processes, business planning and action planning ensure that everyone involved at the centre is aware of the priorities for improving outcomes for users. Data contribute to planning and target setting. However, some data are not specific enough to the centre and this impacts on the centre's ability to target resources as well as it could. Resources are directed where they will have the most impact, for example the creation of the new family support worker to work within the community. All these qualities ensure that the centre provides services which are good value for money.

Parents and carers have the opportunity to contribute to the work of the centre through its suggestion box scheme, formal and informal feedback, and evaluation and membership of the governing committee. Satisfaction surveys are completed using a borough-wide format and show that parents and carers are very satisfied with the services they receive. However, there are limitations with the current system as the survey is not specifically tailored to the centre. There is effective parental representation on the governing committee.

Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily the centre. Resources in the centre that promote equality and diversity are limited. Literature about the centre is only available in English. There are some displays and images that promote diversity of the wider community, although these are limited. However, case study evidence demonstrates that good levels of support are offered for all families and appropriate resources are accessed when specific needs are identified. The centre has had some good success in engaging young mothers, Travellers and the users from Black and other minority ethnic groups. The Dads' group has been successful in engaging male parents and carers at the centre.

Policies and procedures relating to safeguarding in the centre are in place and ensure

that children are protected when there. All staff have Criminal Records Bureau checks and recruitment checks are properly undertaken. Centre staff are fully trained in safeguarding. In the wider community, all services are strongly focused on the safeguarding agenda to support the well-being of children and their families.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	1
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	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	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	2

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

None

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 Normandy Primary Children's Centre on 23 and 24 March. We judged the centre as good overall.

The centre provides you with a warm and attractive environment which you find welcoming and where you feel safe. The staff at the centre know you as individuals

and are able to support you well. They use their knowledge to ensure that they effectively assess your needs and offer you support and guidance. They have a good knowledge of other agencies that work in the community and can signpost you to where you will get the support you need. The other agencies, including health, midwives, adult education and Orbit Housing, work well together with centre staff to support you.

Many of you told us how the centre has helped you to become better parents. As one of you told us, 'We would not be the parents that we are now without the children's centre,' Many of you also commented on the contribution the centre manager has made to bringing about improvements for you and your families.

There are good links between the nursery, the playgroup and the children's centre. The planning of activities provided in the centre support your children in developing well. You and your children enjoy attending the different groups which run at the centre and, in particular, you seem to enjoy the 'Football and Fun' session. However, there are sometimes occasions when more could be done to help with the development of children's literacy and aspects of their personal development. We have asked the centre to improve this.

The centre has a strong governing committee and some of you are part of it. The committee knows the centre well, including what it does well and where it needs to improve. The centre receives data from the local authority and this is used by the centre when setting targets and ensuring that its work is having an impact on the lives of you and your children. Some of the data are not specific to the reach area of the centre and this limits how effectively the centre can set targets. We have asked the local authority to look at how they could improve the data and make it more specific to the area the centre serves.

The centre is satisfactory in how successfully it promotes equality and diversity. The centre provides a small number of resources that reflect the wider community in which you live. Written information about the work of the centre is only available in English. Displays do not represent the wide range of backgrounds of the community and celebrate the diversity of society. However, the centre has had some success in engaging young mothers, fathers, Travellers and the users from Black and other minority ethnic groups. So the centre has made a good start. We are asking it now to do a bit more.

Those of you who have accessed the services of the outreach workers and the family support worker benefit from this work. Case studies show the work in the community, as well as at the centre, is making a big difference to those of you who access services.

Thank you to those of you who took the time to come and talk to us. We wish you and your children all the best for the future.

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