

Inspection report for Rookery Children's Centre

Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	367489
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Crawford HMI

Centre governance	The governing body
Centre leader	Kelly Bagnall
Date of previous inspection	N/A
Centre address	Rookery Road
	Handsworth Birmingham
	B21 9PY
Telephone number	0121 675 0069
Fax number	0121 675 0070
Email address	k.bagnall.rookery.bham.sch.uk

Linked school if applicable	Rookery Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Saplings Nursery EY307246

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 the centre manager, the senior management team, representatives from the children's centre committee and a range of agencies, and parents, carers and other users of the centre.

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

Information about the centre

Rookery Children's Centre was designated as a phase two children's centre in October 2009. The centre moved to new purpose-built premises in September 2009 which are on the site of Rookery Primary School. It provides the full core offer of services. Additional services are provided at a satellite centre which is based at Grestone Primary School. The local authority has delegated the management and governance of the centre to the governing body of Rookery Primary School. The centre serves Handsworth and Handsworth Wood where there are high levels of deprivation. It also supports 14 super output areas. The centre is in an area where there is vast diversity of language, ethnicity and economic status, with high numbers of families in workless households living on benefits in rented accommodation. Unemployment is higher than the national average but lower than the city average.

Evidence indicates that the skills and knowledge with which children enter the local Early Years Foundation Stage are below those expected nationally for their age. On-site 'Stay and Play' sessions and crèche facilities are provided by the centre.

Health staff deliver a range of services from the centre, including, breastfeeding support, development baby clinics, parenting advice, midwifery booking-in clinic, and

specialist support for children with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including speech and language difficulties.

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

Rookery Children's Centre is a good centre. Users say that it is, 'At the heart of the community' and that it has helped them re-build their lives and enjoy their children. This is because the good leadership of the centre has ensured that families, particularly those that are vulnerable, benefit from a range of good-quality services that are carefully tailored to meet users' needs. Excellent links exist with the school where the children's centre is located. There is a seamless approach to many aspects, such as transition arrangements, which means that children are ready to learn as soon as they start school. The primary school and centre share policies and procedures. This promotes a cohesive approach to the efficient running of the centre.

Procedures for safeguarding are good, which ensure that children are protected from harm. The centre is rightly recognised by users as a place of safety. The strong emphasis on promotion of safety in the home and community, with access to free home visits and safety equipment, helps parents and carers develop a good understanding of how to keep their family safe. Relationships with parents and carers are good, and the centre rightly prides itself on the warm welcome it extends to all. Users speak very positively about what the centre provides and say that all staff, without exception, are welcoming and very helpful. Particular strengths are the work of the family support workers, and effective links with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), midwives, health promotion and community involvement co-ordinator.

The centre encourages adults to take part in a range of activities and values their feedback, making changes and introducing their ideas in response to their views. Members of the children's centre committee and governing body are fully supportive of the work of the centre. However, currently there are limited opportunities for users to contribute to the decision making and governance of the centre through

structured groups such as a parent forum to ensure that their views are used to shape future services and to inform practice.

The centre's self-evaluation covers all the necessary areas but it is not yet securely based on sufficient and up-to-date data from the local authority to enable the centre to plan effectively for future services. The centre has successfully identified some areas of need and shortfalls in provision because of the good-quality information that health promotion and other professionals provide, as well as their own local knowledge of their reach area. This enables the centre to target groups of people to ensure that their needs are met. Inclusion is central to the centre's vision in engaging the community. Barriers to services are removed as the centre provides a crèche for courses in order for users to access services which promotes inclusive practise.

One reason that provision is good is because of the way that services are tailored to meet individual needs from 0 to 19 years. For example, a range of services is developed to ensure that all groups access the centre, including those who are hard to reach and families who are vulnerable because of their circumstances. They are provided with a wide variety of advice and support which is communicated to them effectively in their own language.

The children's centre has good capacity for improvement. The centre manager demonstrates a passion and relentless determination to improve the life chances of families in the local community. The centre has clear management and staffing structures. There is a strong sense of teamwork and shared goals, and staff show a clear commitment to the centre's work and to improving services in order to reach more families. Senior leaders trust that staff undertake their work effectively which reflect the centre policy's and procedures. On occasions, the practise does not reflect policies; for example, the signing-out of children is not completed on a consistent basis. Nevertheless, all staff work together well across the whole of the site. They have a shared vision which is evident throughout the centre.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Ensure that senior leaders have spot checks regularly to measure the impact of the centre's policies and procedures on provision.
- Enable a wider range of parents and carers to contribute more effectively to the decision making and governance of the centre
- Work with the local authority and other agencies to ensure that more refined data is provided in a timely manner so that all hard-to-reach groups are targeted effectively.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

The centre's good-quality services are helping to improve outcomes for families attending the centre and for those who receive more targeted support in their

homes. Outcomes are promoted well through the strong partnerships and effective teamwork between most health, social care, family support, education professionals and all centre staff. Families who are vulnerable due to their circumstances are referred to the centre and are effectively assessed to ensure that support is well organised between the agencies. All relevant staff are trained in the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and they support the children with good engagement of agencies, parents and carers.

Children are developing a good understanding of how to behave in ways in which are safe for themselves and others. They enjoy visits from the community police officers who talk to them about how to keep themselves safe. Users behave in ways that ensure the safety of children and themselves in the centre. A significant majority of parents are becoming increasingly aware of how to keep themselves and their children healthy. Parents are able to access a wide variety of health promotion workshops which tackle health inequalities effectively. The centre openly encourages healthy eating options and has good outdoor facilities which are available to children throughout the year. Staff influence parents to see the value of the 'stay and play' sessions and the opportunity to engage in their children's play. They are gaining a greater understanding of how to support their child's learning and development. The staff provide stimulating and enjoyable play and learning opportunities in which they relate effectively to parents and children. During sessions parents are supported in a variety of ways to share their views about the services they receive. A significant number of children receive opportunities to play, have fun and learn at the centre and at the linked setting Saplings Nursery, this helps to prepare children well for school.

The centre is currently developing opportunities for users to have a voice through a parents' forum. Senior leaders, partners and centre staff encourage regular feedback from centre users through discussions and written evaluations which allows some parent's views to shape future services. The centre has a good understanding of the needs of the community and has identified most of the excluded and vulnerable groups. There is a good range of universal activities and courses which are well attended and promote parents economic stability which in turn help them to improve their child's well being. Advice relating to health matters, housing and access to benefits is readily available with which the family support workers assist. Parents know they can always seek advice and say that they receive good quality responses and information. The inclusive approach and welcoming environment ensures that once users register with the centre they go on to engage with a full range of activities.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2

The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre provides a good range of integrated services and activities which are matched well to the needs of users. Parents and carers are seen as individuals and the centre assesses their needs effectively to ensure that those with the greatest level of need are prioritised. The assessment of children's learning needs and progress has been enhanced by support and advice from the qualified teacher. Good-quality professional development promotes good practice in the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. This is enabling practitioners to make informed decisions about the developmental progress children are making. It also helps them to plan effectively to ensure children's purposeful learning and high levels of enjoyment. Staff provide plenty of help and support to families in crisis and those who are facing particular challenges. For example, one family told the inspectors that the centre's staff provide 'invaluable help' and have helped them access services which have significantly improved the quality of their life. Case studies indicate that well-coordinated multi-agency support has brought about positive outcomes.

Good relationships are established with an extensive range of key partners, including school, health, social care, child development centre and CAHMS. These partners ensure that families receive a coordinated approach to the delivery of services. 'Team around the child' meetings take place weekly which ensures that children's needs are reviewed and the best services provided. Home visits are provided to support those who have difficulty accessing the centre. The staff use their knowledge of the services available to help families to engage with other services. The good links with midwives have ensured that information is passed onto parents and carers to enable them to access the centre when their children are still very young. This ensures that new parents and carers are quickly made aware of what the centre has to offer. Activities and services are advertised through effective links with other providers and community groups, including local schools.

Parents and users are signposted to services by Family Support Workers which ensures that they have access to a range of information. Family Support Workers are skilled at developing trusting relationships with users in order to engage with families in their own homes. On occasions this is in partnership with key agencies, this is particularly when working with those subject to child protection plans or with a Common Assessment Framework in place. The centre assesses the needs of all groups to ensure they are providing a good level of support and guidance. Crèche facilities enable parents and carers to attend courses at the centre, such as the

'Triple P' courses which helps parents to develop their skills to manage their children's behaviour.

The quality of care, guidance and support for young children, parents and carers in centre-based activities is good. The centre provides good-quality information and guidance documents in its main reception area and throughout the centre. Its website provides basic information but is not reflective of the good-quality information available in the centre. Provision in the centre is of good quality which enables all users to access activities which support their personal development. The centre signposts users to local colleges. The centre promotes transition into the Early Years Foundation Stage well by providing induction days during the summer holidays. This supports children's learning and development effectively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The whole staff team show enthusiasm, motivation and a commitment to improving outcomes for users and striving towards high-quality services. There is good use of collated data which is used to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the services provided and to identify any gaps in provision. However, this data is not always readily available and does not always provide the necessary detail to identify all vulnerable groups.

There are some good examples of the impact that the centre is having on the lives of parents and carers. Line-management arrangements are clear and understood by most staff, who value the supervision and professional development they receive. The children's centre committee provides challenge and support in decision making. In addition, the centre works well with the local authority to monitor its effectiveness through methods such as the 'annual conversation'. There is an appropriate cycle of monitoring which includes regular reports to the committee and governing body... However, monitoring is not effective enough to ensure that practise fully reflects the centre's policies and procedures. The self-evaluation process involves others and links into the centre's service development plan, which shows detailed targets.

The centre has built effective links with external agencies and other providers to help staff provide good-quality services. Community cohesion is given high priority and

the community link co-ordinator helps to provide an inclusive environment. By removing barriers for those who are harder to reach, the coordinator enables them to access services. For example, a free crèche is provided so that parents and carers can access courses. The centre is efficient in using its resources to support inclusion and provides good value for money. The tasks of the family support workers are carefully planned to reach out to the community. Documentation is available in the different languages used in the wider community, such as Urdu and Punjabi. The centre is narrowing the gap for children, particularly those with special educational needs. The centre has achieved this by implementing programmes such as healthy eating and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). These courses benefit parents and carers so that they can help their children. The centre promotes equality well it is fully utilised by users, the wider community and partners.

Safeguarding arrangements are good and all staff are highly aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns. They actively promote the safety and welfare of users and work proactively with other key agencies. Safe recruitment practices are followed rigorously and the centre has effective systems to ensure all visitors to the centre follow safe practices.

Users' views are sought from sessions and activities in a variety of ways. The centre has consistent and productive partnerships with users, and users share their satisfaction of the centre's work. They feel well supported and welcomed. However, the parent forum is in a development stage and all users are not fully engaged in shaping services and the governance of the centre.

These are the grades for leadership and management<

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	2
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been 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	3
--	----------

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

The inspectors considered the findings of the most recent inspection report for Rookery Primary School which was judged to be good overall and the Early Years Foundation Stage was judged as outstanding. The linked setting, Saplings Nursery have not been inspected in the last twelve months so could not be considered.

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 Rookery Children's Centre on 23–24 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 families are provided with a wide range of good services tailored to meet their particular needs.

The centre is making a positive difference to your children's well-being and learning. It is 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 steps into nursery. They make good progress in their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Thank you for contributing to the inspection. Your comments proved invaluable to the inspection. Inspectors think that with the centre's encouragement, many people now make a positive contribution to the centre services and the life of the community. Indeed, two parents are on the children's centre committee. 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 support you and help raise self-esteem and confidence and encourage you to achieve. The care, guidance and support of families and children are good. This is

largely as a result of the successful partnerships that staff forge with you and the way they engage you in their work. The successful work of the staff from across the different agencies ensures that you access the right services as quickly as possible. Several of you believe that your contact with the centre has been life changing. Professionals working in multi-agency teams have developed good working partnerships with the children's centre.

The leaders and managers of the centre understand your needs well. We have asked them to conduct spot checks regularly to measure the impact of the centre's policies and procedures on provision. We have also asked the centre to make some other improvements by ensuring that more of your views can be gathered to enable you to have a say in the decision making and governance of the centre. In addition, we have asked the local authority to provide data promptly and to give better detail so that more people in your community can be helped.

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