

Inspection report for Broadway Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	366465
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Nina Bee

Centre governance	Local Authority
Centre leader	Lydia John
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	49 Brook Green Hammersmith London W6 7BJ
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Linked school if applicable	None
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Addison pre-school and Step by Step pre-school

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 additional inspector and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with staff, representatives from partner agencies, such as health, and a local authority representative as well as talking informally to parents and carers. They observed the centre's work including activities provided at the centre, looked at data, documents and policies including safeguarding documentation.

Information about the centre

Broadway Children's Centre was designated in September 2006 as a phase one centre serving one of the 30% most disadvantaged areas in the country. Although the local authority has had overall responsibility for monitoring the performance of the centre, arrangements are currently under review. An advisory board, called the local delivery board, is established and set up to implement strategies and targets set by the Children's Centre Strategic board.

Most families living in the area are from White British or White other backgrounds. A range of minority ethnic groups are also represented. A few families live in workless households. The centre provides the full core offer of services including education and family support, outreach and home visiting, health services and advice on training, employability and benefits. Crèche provision is available for users. There are two independent pre-school provisions on site.

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

4

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

4

Main findings

Although there are many positive aspects in the centre’s work it is inadequate overall because of weaknesses in its ability to evaluate and improve its services. Parents and carers reported that the centre makes them feel welcome and that they appreciate the activities on offer for them. Parents and children were seen enjoying their time in the centre, during activities and afterwards in sessions with friends and staff. Good relationships have been established between the two pre-school providers using the site, centre staff and its users. As a consequence, families move easily between all of the provisions in the building. Parents said they felt lucky to have the provision so near. The centre runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. It is a cohesive community where adults and children work and play respectfully alongside each other. The range of users generally reflects the community it serves.

Parents spoke confidently about feeling safe and secure in the centre and users and children were seen happily taking part in the activities on offer. Staff know about the importance of keeping children safe and risk assessments are made to reduce potential dangers. Satisfactory referral systems ensure that vulnerable children and those with additional needs are identified and supported. Arrangements for vetting people who work in the centre and for child protection are secure.

The head of centre has successfully established effective relationships between her staff and partners such as midwives, speech therapists, dieticians and dental hygienists. Activities and sessions provided by the centre enable children to develop satisfactory personal and social skills as well as an awareness of the need to eat healthy foods. The centre’s support in developing parenting skills is effective particularly for the more vulnerable families. A particular strength of the centre is its support for adults during and after pregnancy.

While these positive aspects of the centre’s work are recognised various weaknesses prevent the centre from having an effective impact on improving the lives of user families and their children. The local authority provides adequate guidance on how it expects children’s centres to operate and has identified areas for the centre to focus on, such as breast feeding, obesity, oral health and speech and language difficulties.

However, general meetings with the head of centre have not ensured that centre staff are accurately evaluating its work. Self-evaluation overall is inaccurate because it is not sufficiently specific so relative strengths and clear priorities for improvement are not identified. Current evaluations of activities record attendance figures and users' positive attitudes about the activities and sessions they attend. However, users are not encouraged to engage in the centre's management. The centre and its users have a clear picture of the range of provision on offer but no procedures for users' active contribution to its development. The available data is not sufficiently understood by centre staff or its partners. As a result, centre staff and partners are unclear about the centre's impact on its community or the extent to which they are improving outcomes for children and their families. This gap in their knowledge further restricts the centre's ability to improve.

Priorities and targets are not identified and planned to secure the centre's future improvement. The local delivery board, whose main job is to review strategies and targets set by the centre, are therefore unable to achieve their responsibilities. The capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate because of these identified weaknesses in self-evaluation and planning for further development. Furthermore, the local delivery board is not contributing adequately to the centre's future developments.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Work with the local authority to improve procedures for evaluating the work of the centre so that strengths and areas for improvement can be clearly and accurately identified by staff and partners.
- At the earliest opportunity, provide the advisory board and the local delivery group, with clear guidance on their responsibilities to enable them to review strategies and targets and provide suitable challenge.
- Develop a written plan linked to the centre's evaluation of its services to include:
 - priorities and clear targets for improving outcomes and provision
 - criteria by which the centre can demonstrate the impact of its actions
 - timings, with key milestones, clearly and appropriately identified
 - how and when progress will be evaluated
 - contributions from partners and stakeholders.
- Ensure that users are more effectively engaged in contributing to the management of the centre and developing and evaluating provision.

How good are outcomes for users?

3

A wide range of activities and sessions provided by the centre lead to satisfactory outcomes for participants. However, plans for improvements are impeded by the lack of self-evaluation and purposeful engagement of families to determine future needs. There are no effective systems to involve users in the centre's governance or decision making and as a consequence, they are unable to make a positive contribution.

Stay and Play drop-in sessions are always popular. Children and adults have good opportunities to socialise. Young children have the opportunity to take turns, share and learn from others. Sessions focus soundly on developing parents', carers' and children's understanding of the importance of eating healthily. Other activities such as Wriggle and Jiggle encourage young children to be active and learn how to respond to songs and rhymes. Sessions such as the Under Ones' Group help new parents acquire a range of parenting skills and learn how to keep their babies healthy. Baby boost sessions allow parents and carers to gain advice on breast feeding and weaning while older children learn to socialise with each other and participate in physical activities.

Mothers say they feel safe in the centre and have no concerns about their children while attending activities. They are particularly pleased with links with the other two childcare establishments on the site. However, there is little evidence to show the impact of such links on preparing children for school and in closing the gap in achievement between groups of children. They have sound opportunities to increase adults' awareness of hazards in the home. Outreach workers visit the homes of vulnerable families and those in crisis and advise parents where to get help and additional support. External agencies are appropriately involved, if necessary, to ensure that children are kept safe. Detailed documentation is kept for children with specific needs such as those with child protection plans or those undergoing Common Assessment Framework (CAF) monitoring. Children use apparatus and equipment safely as they play happily. Behaviour is good and children show much enjoyment in all rooms where activities take place, including the crèche which is available for all users. Parents and carers attend activities such as the Positive Parenting Programme which is a seven week programme. It is well attended and parents are presented with a certificate on completion. Parents in this group confidently share strategies to reward their children for example, for eating their lunch or behaving appropriately. Pregnant women and their husbands or partners gain good advice when they take part in well-attended ante-natal courses.

A few adults take part in courses to access further learning. Some users are engaged in adult education programmes to improve basic skills. Adults who speak English as an additional language have a satisfactory range of opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge. Some ladies have formed a group to develop their sewing skills. They spoke confidently about what they were trying to achieve and how proud

they were of their efforts. However, the centre has not successfully measured the impact or tracked the outcomes of training opportunities for those it has signposted to other agencies. Consequently, the centre is unable to account for any positive impact of these additional services.

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	3
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	4
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

Individual needs of users are satisfactorily assessed. Outreach family support workers are especially competent at directing families in crisis to different agencies so that aspects of their lives can be improved. Centre staff work soundly with partner agencies to provide support and provision for a wide range of needs, including vulnerable children or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, speech and language therapists work with parents and their children to develop strategies to help develop children's language skills. Courses on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) are also offered to adults who want to gain the language skills needed to find employment. Ante-natal courses are offered for pregnant women and their husbands or partners. These sessions are well attended by both males and females and effectively inform them on issues such as making a birth plan and care of their new baby. Attendance is also high in post-natal sessions which are run regularly to inform new mums and dads about what to expect during the first few months with their new babies.

Observations and discussions with staff indicate that learners' needs are individually catered for if they wish to participate in courses in order to gain employment. The centre signposts users to appropriate partner agencies for advice on benefits and seeking work. A focus on oral care has been promoted through a partnership with a dental hygienist. Although discussions indicated that individuals have been supported for example, in relation to trying to stop smoking, there is little evidence of advice and guidance given to users on smoking, alcohol and drug misuse and sexual health.

Provision, in the form of courses and activities are promoted effectively in an attractive leaflet. However, the centre does not evaluate the effectiveness of its services.

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	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	3

How effective are the leadership and management?

4

The centre has received sound guidance from the local authority on how it is expected to focus its services and has been given targets for improvement. Despite this, the work of the centre has not been adequately monitored by the local authority. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the centre are not sufficiently robust. Relationships with partners are good but there are no clear procedures for the impact of their work to be evaluated. Similarly, there are no clear procedures to monitor and evaluate how effectively the centre is reaching out to groups, such as lone parents and children in workless households as well as the targeted groups identified by the local authority. Governance is not fully developed and leadership at all levels is not sufficiently focused on ensuring the centre is effective in its work.

Self-evaluation is weak and so strengths and areas for improvement have not been identified accurately. The absence of a centre development plan has resulted in a lack of identified priorities of need, targets for improvement and criteria by which to measure the centre's impact on those who use its services. There is little evidence of documentation in the centre to show progress or information on how partners and stakeholders are able to contribute to centre developments.

Accommodation in the centre, both inside and out, is safe and secure. Arrangements are in place for child protection and for making sure that vulnerable children are safe. Staff are suitably trained and informed. Some risk assessments, especially those related to individual activities, however, lack specific detail. The needs of individual families are focused on appropriately when they attend activities and the centre actively promotes the inclusion of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents and carers say they are happy and enjoy the activities that the centre offers. Families from minority ethnic backgrounds use the centre as widely and confidently as those from the ethnic majority.

Resources for learning and development, for young children, are satisfactory in quality and quantity. Outcomes and provision are satisfactory. The centre is providing satisfactory value for money despite many weaknesses in its leadership and management.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	4
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	4
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	3
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	3
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	4
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	4

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

None

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Summary for centre users

Inspectors judged the centre as inadequate overall because of its weaknesses in leadership but we agree with many of you that there are positive and effective aspects of the centre's work.

Inspectors observed that the centre is a happy and welcoming place to visit. Staff are friendly and helpful. You told us that you are happy with the support you get from the centre. We also heard how some of you are supported well when you have particular family difficulties. You told us that staff provide contacts for you when you need additional support.

We saw that the centre helps you to understand how important it is for your children, and yourselves, to adopt healthy lifestyles by eating foods which are good for your body and by taking regular exercise. We saw lots of children munching away on a wide range of pieces of juicy fruits and others counting their strides as they played a game.

Lots of you attend the ante-natal and post-natal courses to learn more about how to care for your new babies. We saw future mums and dads listening very carefully about the best ways to cope during labour. These courses are delivered by experts who give both supportive and extremely helpful information to make life easier for you. You receive sound advice on learning more about how children develop and ways to improve your parenting skills. If you wish to take part in adult courses the crèche enables your children to stay and play in a safe and secure environment. The sewing course is obviously a great success. Those who spoke to us were so proud of what you have achieved.

We saw lots of activities and spoke to a number of you who were visiting the centre when we were there. We also looked at many evaluations you have filled in on courses you had attended. From this information, we can see that you all enjoy the activities on offer and feel safe during the time you spend in the centre.

The centre runs smoothly on a daily basis but the centre's leadership and management is not currently strong enough, at all levels, to ensure that it continues to improve. More effective systems need to be put in place so that centre staff can identify its strengths and areas for improvement. The local authority and the group of people who help to organise and run the centre need to be more aware of their monitoring and evaluating duties. A clear plan of action needs to be written so that leaders and managers can then check to see how well the centre is doing. Finally, it is important that you as users of the centre are more effectively engaged in contributing to the governance and management of the centre and evaluating provision. Perhaps when reading this you feel that you may like to go and volunteer your services.

It was a pleasure to meet those of you who we spoke to during the inspection. Thank you for contributing to our evidence base by sharing your comments and thoughts.

Yours sincerely

Nina Bee

Lead inspector

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