

Inspection report for Besses Children's Centre

Local authority	Bury Greater Manchester
Inspection number	367749
Inspection dates	6 - 7 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Berni Ryan

Centre governance	Ribble Drive Primary School governing body
Centre leader	Jill Williams
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Ribble Drive Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Toddlers Pre School Learning

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/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with parents and carers, staff, centre partners and representatives of the local authority linked to the centre. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Besses Children's Centre is a purpose built Phase 1 Children's Centre on a site that is shared with Ribble Drive Primary School and a private nursery. It serves an area of Bury which is recognised as one of the top 30% most deprived nationally. Besses represents 16% of Bury's population and is made up of 92% White British heritage, with a growing number of asylum seekers adding to the local community. A quarter of the families in Besses are headed by a lone parent. The number of children affected by income deprivation at 20% is higher than Bury average.

The centre delivers the full core offer and provides a full range of integrated services for children and their families including crèche places. The centre is open 51 weeks of the year. Many children attending the centre have skills and levels of development below those expected for their age, especially in their personal, social and emotional development.

The centre is governed by the Ribble Drive Primary School governing body and an advisory board. The school headteacher has overall responsibility for the services offered by Besses but the current centre leader, who has been in post since the centre opened, is responsible for the day-to-day running 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

Besses Children’s Centre provides good quality services. It has a positive impact on the lives of those who use its facilities, who take part in activities that the centre organises or those it directs to other organisations. Adults and children who attend the centre talk positively about what it offers. A parent representing the views of many stated ‘The staff always makes you feel welcome and that makes me want to keep coming back’. Staff relationships with users are good and users feel they are well supported in tackling the challenges they face in their lives. ‘I feel I can talk to them about anything’ said a regular user.

The centre is well managed. The centre leader and headteacher work well in partnership to ensure that the day-to-day running of the centre is effective and well organised. Together with the centre team they have contributed much to the centre’s success. Partnerships with other services are outstanding and enable the centre to provide relevant, cohesive provision. They make a significant impact in meeting the needs of the wider community and they are making a positive contribution to improving the quality of people’s lives. The centre is also excellent in engaging users to enable them to contribute to the centre’s governance. The very effective advisory board reports to the school’s governing body. Active members of the advisory board include parents, midwives, teachers, local authority representatives, local councillors and childminders. The advisory members are then given the opportunity to attend the school’s governing body meetings and put forward their views

The centre has a very inclusive approach to all its work. It ensures that users who have difficulties in accessing services are well directed to specific activities. Users are supported well in attending training by the provision of crèche facilities and good

support is also provided to those parents and carers who need to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. An adult education class provides participants with a stepping-stone to move on to other courses or improve their employment opportunities. 'I never believed I could do maths and English, but I know I can now thanks to the centre' is representative of the views of users. Children are well safeguarded and families and individuals who need additional help and guidance are well supported by the strong inter-agency work between the centre and external partners. All staff undergo appropriate checks on their suitability to work with children.

Data collected by the local authority does not enable the centre to fully measure the impact it has upon the community and how it contributes to government requirements. This has been recognised by the centre leader and headteacher. The self evaluation lacks depth as is not supported with evidence of the impact on users. Action plans are being put in place to address this issue. The centre leader and team, supported by the headteacher, demonstrate good capacity to improve. The action plans and development plans show clear indicators and actions for improve the centre has outstanding partnerships that impact on the wider community and effectively promotes and celebrates the diverse backgrounds and cultures of its users through a range of activities, including themed events for 'healthy eating days'. Fathers and grandfathers are welcomed to the centre and take part in a range of activities that are well attended. A large majority of users say that the centre has helped them to get out of the house and develop new skills. Users feel safe and the centre's health and safety procedures are effective. The site is secure.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve self-evaluation and planning so that they show the impact of the centre on outcomes for children and families.
- Improve the collection and analysis of data regarding the work undertaken by the centre to more effectively identify strengths and areas for further development.
- Further review the government data required from Local Authorities, to measure the centre's impact in these areas.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Effective and proactive multi-agency partnerships significantly contribute to improvements in the health outcomes for the children and their families. Breastfeeding uptake rates have increased and now stand at 33%. Increased take up of immunisations, as a result of targeted intervention, has now reached 84% of local children. Smoking cessation has achieved significant success with more than 60% of those on the programme quitting smoking. The centre works closely with partner agencies, including health visitors and midwives.

Parents and carers who expressed a view unanimously agreed that the centre is a safe and secure place where they and their children feel safe and welcomed. Safeguarding arrangements at the centre are thorough and well established. The use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is very effective and is firmly embedded throughout the centre and its partner agencies. This information is well used to enable intervention strategies by the centre staff and partners providing a greater chance of success if a child is at risk.

Regular community consultation events involving parents, carers and partners are used to inform local need and service provision. Service users work well together and consult about the services on offer and they make recommendations for improvement to the staff at the centre. The centre carries out many evaluations with parents and carers, schools and partners and these are instrumental in making valuable contributions to improving choices and decisions. The centre values these views and has implemented a number of improvements to the service provided to the community.

The economic well-being of many families, and in particular those who are made vulnerable by their circumstances and those who experience isolation is greatly improved because of their engagement with the centre services. The outreach worker from Besses Children’s Centre has an excellent knowledge of the area including the most deprived wards and spends much of the time out on the streets, in cafe’s and delivering information leaflets by hand. This targets the hardest to reach and is very successful. Many parents say that ‘I am not only improving my parenting skills, but I am getting more confident and looking forward to getting a job’. A number of parents and carers have achieved one or more learning and skills qualifications. Twelve service users have progressed to be volunteers and they are all now in full time employment. Jobcentre Plus attends the centre every week and sees up to 12 clients at pre-arranged appointments. Currently 18 clients are actively seeking employment and a further four are in training for work.

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	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?

The centre very effectively personalises services in order to meet the specific needs of users. Although the analysis of data is a relatively new process, staff have good local knowledge. Strong links with other agencies and providers ensure that users' needs are well catered for, including those who are most vulnerable. A wide range of case study evidence indicates that users who face challenges can show improvement in their lives as a result of their engagement with the centre. An example of this is the 'Mums Aloud' project targeted at the most vulnerable lone parents. Staff interact with the children who attend the centre very well. Good assessments based on staff observations on children and parents in the centre inform staff if there is a need for intervention or offer of support to enable them to make progress, whether it is in learning or personal development.

Activities are of good quality, For example, a numeracy session for parents and carers is particularly well planned to ensure that they are both enjoying and achieving. Non-attendance is always followed up rigorously to ensure that it is not a result of a safeguarding issue. Families receive high levels of care and they are well supported in times of personal difficulty.

The range of services on offer at Besses Children's Centre meets the needs of a wide range of users. Fathers and grandfathers speak positively about their activities, whilst vulnerable lone parents are passionate when they speak about what the centre does for them and their children. One parent said that she always knows that 'When things get bad, she can come always come to Besses'. Attendance continues to increase.

The care, guidance and support provided to service users are good. The centre team know and understand their community extremely well and the good quality provision is tailored accordingly. Staff secure the support, trust and commitment of parents and carers to enable them to take control of their economic well-being and improve their quality of life. A strong commitment to inclusion and safeguarding is at the core of all the work undertaken at the centre. Outreach work is very effective and the member of staff works tirelessly to target as many vulnerable groups as possible. There are five outreach centres situated in the most deprived wards, with activities on each day, for example, a session for children or a drop-in for parents and children. Parents and carers who use the centre and outreach sites regularly say that their self-esteem has been raised and they are more confident in their lives.

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,	2

development and enjoyment for all users	
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

Leadership and management are good. Leaders and managers have worked hard to improve the effectiveness of the centre. Arrangements for governance are clear and well organised. The staff have clear lines of accountability and responsibility and the management of the centre is very effective. The centre manager has generated considerable respect from partners and users of the centre by her care and commitment to improve the lives of those in the community. Resources are good and are used effectively to impact on the centre's success. Users state that the centre generally meets their needs, the facilities are good and they always feel welcome and safe in the centre. Funding has been sought in order to supplement the children's centre budget. As a result the centre provides good value for money.

Evaluation of services is good through a range of methods, including questionnaires, research, evaluations of activities and a suggestion box. The self-evaluation involves all staff, parents and carers, partners, childminders, the advisory board and the school's governing body. Users all contribute to the service provided by Besses as their views are sought and they are given many opportunities to inform decision making by the staff. However, insufficient attention is given to government requirements for data that would enable the centre to identify and measure targets in a more quantitative manner to clearly show the impact it is having on improving outcomes.

Staff are committed to promoting the equality and inclusion to all families within the reach area. The provision is good and staff have started working on a disability action plan to develop the centre's core offer to improve resources for children and parents with learning and physical disabilities. This is a new initiative and the centre manager is expecting it to be fully operational by the end of the year.

The arrangements for safeguarding are robust and meet all statutory requirements. The 'team around the child' approach ensures that a wide range of professionals work together well to safeguard and protect children and families. Parents and carers are well informed of the centre policy on protecting children and sharing information with other relevant agencies. The centre has a copy of their policy in the main reception and all parents are aware of its purpose.

The excellent partnerships established include social services, local area partnership coordinators, local councillors, the school's headteacher and other agencies working with the centre on various projects. All of these partners value greatly the work and impact of Besses Children's Centre. A head teacher from a partner primary school

stated 'I can see the impact the centre is having on the children in my school who have attended Besses as they communicate better with teachers, interact well with other children and when they start school, they are always motivated and raring to go'. Social services staff say the centre is invaluable to the work of the social services team, whilst the member of staff from the local area partnership stated that Besses Children's Centre has had a significant impact on anti-social behaviour in the area, which has been reduced by 40% over the last two years. The relationships that the centre has with partners is particularly effective and collaborative, and everyone works together to ensure cohesion in the community.

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	1
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 Besses Children's Centre on 6–7 April 2011. We judged the centre to be good.

Thank you for making us feel welcome and for contributing to the inspection by sharing your experiences of your children's centre. Many of you told us that the staff at the centre are friendly and welcoming. We could see that children, parents and carers enjoy many of the activities on offer. The centre is outstanding at ensuring that parents and users make a positive contribution to the decision making process and as a result they have developed more confidence and improved their employability skills.

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 very positive difference to children's well-being. It makes a significant difference to help children experience a safe start to childhood. Parents, carers and families who made their comments known, were unanimous in their praise for the work of the centre staff. Parents and carers were extremely keen to tell inspectors about how much support they receive, which has helped raise self-esteem and confidence and encourage them to achieve. Many of you told us that for the first time in your life you have gained qualifications.

Professionals working in multi-agency teams have established very effective working relationships with the children's centre. All of these partners said what a difference Besses Children's Centre had made in the community.

We have asked the centre to make some improvements by:

- Improving self-evaluation and planning so that they show the impact of the centre on outcomes for children and families.
- Improving the collection and analysis of data regarding the work undertaken by the centre to more effectively identify strengths and areas for further development.
- Further reviewing the government data required from Local Authorities, to measure the centre's impact in these areas.

Thank you once again for your time and we wish you well for the future.

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