

Inspection report for Chalvey Grove Children's Centre

Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	365860
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

Centre governance	The local authority
Centre leader	Donna Wood and Anne Evans
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Montem Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Chalvey Grove Early Years Provision

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.

Published: June 2011



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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 centre's registered early years/childcare provision was carried out separately on 21 September 2010 under Section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

An inspection of the co-located primary school was carried out on 29 and 30 March 2011 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the centre's staff, representatives from the local authority, members of the advisory board forum and representatives from some of the centre's partners. They had informal discussions with parents and users of the services. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including case studies, a range of policies, the centre's self-evaluation documents and its service plan.

Information about the centre

This phase one children's centre opened in 2004 and is situated in the south western area of central Slough. It serves the wards of Chalvey and Cippenham Meadows and there are 943 children under five in the reach area. The centre is located on the site of Montem Primary School and provides the full core offer and a wide range of commissioned services including health, family support, adult learning, and advice and guidance about the early years of a child's life. The centre is in an area that is socially and ethnically diverse and serves a community living in the 20–30% most deprived areas in the country. The largest ethnic groups are White British, Pakistani, Indian, Polish, Black African and Gypsy Roma. The proportion of workless families is 22% and rising, and the proportion in receipt of benefits is 17%. Children's levels of development on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage in the link school are low, especially in literacy and numeracy. About 10% of the children at the centre go on to

attend this school with most children going on to other schools in Slough and beyond. The centre is managed by the local authority, with several aspects of the services provided being linked and centrally led and managed across all 10 children's centres in the local authority. A forum represents service providers and the centre's users and a centre manager is responsible for the early years' provision and the day-to-day running of the centre. There is high inward and outward mobility in the area, including families arriving at short notice with little or no spoken English.

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

The centre provides a good range of services that are greatly appreciated by the children, parents and carers. They make positive comments such as, 'children want to come back even in the holidays' and 'staff are well trained and care about their work'. The centre's response to equality and diversity is good because there is a good welcome and provision made for families from all backgrounds and parents and carers told the inspection team that 'everyone is friendly'.

The outcomes for the centre are good overall, with social development being a major strength. Parents and carers gain self-esteem and notice a change in the independence of their children. As one parent put it, 'children are given confidence and they think on their feet'. Children make good progress overall in the early years provision. However, the progress of two year olds in aspects of literacy and numeracy is a relative weakness because not all two year olds in the area access these activities. In addition, their parents and carers are not learning enough about how to help them with these aspects of their development. Enjoyment is a strong feature of the work at the centre and users of all ages appreciate the fun they gain from taking part in activities. The healthy lifestyles of users are satisfactory because good healthy eating and oral hygiene advice is not followed up well enough by some families.

Rigorous safeguarding arrangements ensure that risks are identified and swift action is taken to support families in keeping safe. As one parent put it, 'you know your children are safe when you are at work' and another parent said, 'security is fantastic'.

The centre's self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory. Leaders, including members of the forum, understand strengths and identify priorities well. A wealth of information has been collected about the centre's provision and the resulting outcomes but this information is not being used rigorously enough to help demonstrate the full impact of activities on the lives of children and their families, or

for leaders to form specific local targets to improve provision. Nevertheless, the centre is flexible in meeting the diverse needs of their families and responds swiftly to changing circumstances. Suggestions made by service users and providers are acted upon and used well to help improve provision and outcomes, showing that there is a good capacity for sustained improvement. There is good evidence of some particularly valuable work with families with exceptionally challenging circumstances and in times of crisis.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Work with parents and carers to extend support for two year olds in speaking, listening, mark-making and counting.
- Increase support for families in maintaining healthy lifestyles, especially in tackling obesity and gum disease.
- Strengthen self-evaluation procedures so that leaders, including the forum, can demonstrate the impact of the centre's work on all users more clearly, by:
 - analysing data specific to the centre and the impact of provision on the outcomes of children and their parents and carers
 - setting measurable targets for improvement that are linked to local needs.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Children and their parents and carers improve their emotional health by sharing their feelings confidently with each other and members of staff. As one parent put it, 'you do not feel alone'. 'Buggy walks' and organised visits to the park are helping to improve the fitness and safety awareness of adults and toddlers. Programmes to help pregnant mothers to give up smoking have a positive impact. Training in healthy eating is appreciated by parents and carers who are pleased to use the recipes at home and notice that their children enjoy eating more fruit after observing other children trying it at the centre. Despite these positive activities, obesity rates remain above average in the area and a significant minority of children have gum disease.

Close partnerships across various agencies ensure that welfare needs are identified quickly and specific support ensures that children are kept safe and are protected well. Parents and carers are positive about the support they receive to improve home and road safety. Accident rates vary slightly from year to year, but are usually of a minor nature. Parents and carers were especially appreciative of the home safety kits that were distributed recently and the advice on how to deal with minor injuries. Case studies show that vulnerable children and families, including those with child protection plans, are kept safe and have their needs met well. All external agencies, including those responsible for managing the Common Assessment Framework, liaise closely with the centre to provide the right level of support for children and their families.

Users of the centre are enthusiastic about the sessions they attend. Parents and carers at the adult literacy course took delight in challenging and competing with each other during a spelling game and a member of the Roma group said, 'I would attend the group everyday if it was possible.' Children in the 'Tops' play session, enjoyed rolling the ball to each other, singing and matching colours. Children make good progress in the early years provision and parents and carers who take part in adult learning are proud of their achievements and the way they have been helped to gain employment. The centre has information to show the relative progress of groups of children, and provides specific activities for children at risk of falling behind their peers. For example, children with hearing impairment attend the 'chatty monkeys' class and their parents and carers learn how to help them to develop skills.

Children behave well at the centre and parents and carers appreciate the guidance they are given to help them manage behaviour at home and when they take their children out. Parents and carers take part in making decisions by belonging to the parents forum or in informal discussions at activities such as 'stay and play'. They feel that their suggestions are always welcomed and they are involved well in making decisions about the centre and its events.

Adult users are given sound support in accessing training opportunities, including from other providers. A recent influx of families seeking work has required the centre to adapt to a change in needs. For example, training is being provided to help parents and carers with form filling. There are convincing case studies that demonstrate noteworthy successes of adults who have taken part in training. For example, one grandparent recently started work following gaining qualifications in literacy and several adults have taken part in training in early years education to prepare them for employment.

Children's preparation for starting school is good. Children develop an understanding of how to behave, and transition into local nursery schools is eased by the close working between the centre and schools in the area.

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, 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

Procedures for assessing needs are rigorous and involve a wide range of agencies. The centre is responsive towards requests made by other providers to meet specific needs. For example, the centre works closely with health professionals to provide individual support for weaning and breastfeeding, increasing the uptake in the area. There is a good focus on children with specific and complex needs and adults with low qualifications.

A crèche is provided for all adult activities and this helps to keep children safe and to increase participation rates. The centre reaches out well into the community and through its close links with other agencies. Parents and carers say that they often come because the centre was recommended by a friend or by the primary school. The centre frequently seeks parents' and carers' views on activities attended and this information is used to assess and adapt the services it provides. There is less information to evaluate the views and needs of families that do not access services and, with the high mobility in the area, it is difficult to keep an up-to-date picture of the local population. The health visitors hold their clinics at the centre and have increased the frequency of medical checks so that fewer transient families fall through the net. The majority of children spend a year or less in the early years provision and consequently, through necessity, three year olds take priority. Leaders are keen to expand the provision for two year olds so that they can make an earlier start to developing their skills in speaking, listening, mark-making and counting.

The centre provides a vast selection of free advice and guidance in information leaflets and members of staff are on hand to act as interpreters when required so that users who are learning to speak English as an additional language are given the necessary support. For example, a small number of families of Gypsy Roma heritage attend a supportive group that has a Romanian speaking development worker. Statistics show that where families have attended, their children do better when they go on to school because parents and carers learn how to help their children at home. There are good relationships between centre staff, parents and carers and external agencies. The centre is flexible in the way it works, and many families appreciate the way members of staff respond to their particular needs. For example, the centre is good at working with vulnerable families to ensure that children are kept safe.

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

Clear lines of responsibility and roles that are fully understood by members of staff have ensured that the centre is led and managed successfully in the long term and on a day-to-day basis. Leaders and managers at all levels are motivated and understand what needs to be done to make the centre even better. Parents and carers are positive about the way the centre is led and managed and say that 'anything going wrong is dealt with straight away'. Self-evaluation is accurate but the vast amount of information that demonstrates the impact of the centre's work on the outcomes of users is not clearly organised and analysed to help form targets that are specific and easy to measure for success. The advisory forum is enthusiastic about supporting the work of the centre and the diverse skills and experiences of its members are used to good effect to support families. The centre serves the area well and makes effective use of a wide range of resources, including other providers, to ensure good value for money.

Safeguarding has a high priority at the centre and visiting adults are clearly labelled to show the level of access they have been allowed. Well-trained members of staff ensure that concerns are identified and dealt with as soon as they arise and there is strong cooperation between various agencies to ensure that vulnerable families, including those subject to domestic violence, are supported and protected. The emotional health and well-being of all the centre's users are well considered and supported. Care is taken to ensure that adults working within the centre, in whatever capacity, have been suitably checked and vetted. Risk assessment is rigorous and parents and carers are made aware of health and safety issues on-site and in their homes.

The centre is socially inclusive, and cultural barriers are broken down so that all users can benefit from the activities. For example, consideration is given to the cultural needs of Muslim women enabling them to be confident about attending. The centre is equipped to support the needs of children with disabilities and has a delightful sensory room to help increase the learning and motivation of children with specific difficulties.

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	3
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

The inspection took into account the outcomes of the inspection of the registered provision for early years. The overall effectiveness of that provision was judged as being good.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Chalvey Grove Children's Centre on 24 and 25 May 2011. We judged the centre as being good overall.

We would like to thank those of you who were able to speak to us. Your views were greatly appreciated and were very helpful to the inspection team. We agree with you that members of staff are friendly and welcoming and want to do the best for you and your children. We found that the centre runs well and offers many valuable activities that are greatly enjoyed by those who attend them.

We found that those of you who are experiencing difficulties in your lives feel that you can approach the centre for help and that you are pleased with the support you have been given. We were pleased to hear that you and your children feel safe and gain confidence at the centre. This is because there are rigorous safeguarding arrangements to identify and rectify risks. It is good that you and your children have a good time when you attend the sessions and we were pleased to observe you enjoying taking part in the activities such as adult literacy and 'chatty monkeys'.

We have asked the centre to make some improvements by:

- Working with you to extend support for two year olds in speaking, listening, mark-making and counting.
- Giving you more help in maintaining healthy lifestyles, especially in tackling obesity and gum disease.
- Strengthening self-evaluation procedures so that leaders can show more clearly the impact of the centre's work by:
 - analysing information about the centre and how well this helps to improve outcomes for you and your children
 - setting measurable targets for improvement which are linked to the needs of local families.

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