

Inspection report for Burnbush Children's Centre

Local authority	Bristol City Council
Inspection number	366089
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Mann HMI

Centre governance	The governing body
Centre leader	Susan Pennell
Date of previous inspection	N/A
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Linked school if applicable	N/A
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Abbeywood Tots Nursery

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.

Report 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 co-located/partner primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and centre manager, representatives of centre users and parents, and members of the governing body and advisory board. They met with representatives of the local authority and visited the linked early years provision, Abbeywood Tots Nursery. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Burnbush Children's Centre was designated in March 2008 and is a Phase 2 centre. It is situated on the site of Burnbush Primary School. The governing body of the school is responsible for the governance of the centre. The school's headteacher has overall management responsibility for the centre and the centre manager is responsible for day-to-day management. The centre offers health services, outreach, family support and adult learning. A breakfast club is run from the centre for children who attend Burnbush Primary School. Childcare and early education are provided by local childminders and the centre's linked early years setting, Abbeywood Tots Nursery, which is provided by a third party at a separate location. Governance of the centre is provided by the governing body and the centre receives support from the local authority.

The centre provides services for families in the local area. This area is a very mixed area, with a high number of households living in social and economic disadvantage. The majority of families living in the reach area are of White British heritage, and there are several families of Polish and eastern European heritage, as well as other minority ethnic groups. The number of workless households is above the national average and 19.7% of households with children aged nought to four are dependent upon workless benefits. Children start school with levels of attainment that are variable, but overall these are below the national average.

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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

Burnbush children's centre is a happy and welcoming centre that offers satisfactory effectiveness overall, with some good elements. Since opening in 2008, the centre has developed its services appropriately through setting realistic targets. As a result, provision and outcomes are improving and the centre's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

There are several good aspects of the centre and parents who attend call it their 'lifeline'. There is positive partnership working with a wide range of other agencies, such as health services, the Family Information Service, Jobcentre Plus, Abbeywood Tots Nursery and the Learning and Communities adult learning service. These services work well with the centre to provide cohesive and integrated services which significantly improve outcomes for families using the centre.

The quality of care, guidance and support is a strength of the centre's provision and parents demonstrate trust in staff by sharing their personal circumstances and difficulties. The centre is proactive in giving good levels of emotional support alongside practical help with housing, childcare and signposting to relevant agencies. One parent summed up how they felt about the centre, 'It is not just for kids but it supports adults as well and really reaches out to parents. They just listened to me and you feel like you are being helped.' Most families who use the centre are actively engaged in purposeful learning which they find satisfying. Outcomes for enjoying and achieving are consequently good. Many adults demonstrate significant improvements in their educational achievement and personal development.

Arrangements for safeguarding children's welfare are good. Procedures to promote the best outcomes for vulnerable children are effective. Staff give children's safety a high priority throughout the centre. Adults say they feel they and their children are safe at the centre and they feel comfortable with trusting staff and discussing confidential matters.

The centre promotes an inclusive environment for all families who use it. One parent describes it as her 'second home'. Those parents who come from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Polish and eastern European families, benefit from the Burnbush Cultural Group. This provides a forum for all users to share issues arising from living in a diverse community. Recent data provide pertinent information about the reach area, including those groups which are hard-to-reach. The centre is beginning to use this information to target services accurately to secure the engagement of these groups, but this is not yet embedded. For example, data indicate that, at present, only 17% of fathers and 36% of children from a minority ethnic heritage who live in the centre's reach area are registered with the centre. As a consequence, some families who may benefit from the services are yet to access them.

The local authority is in the process of reorganising some elements of the support given to children's centres. As a consequence of this, the most recent annual conversation was carried out at Burnbush centre in August 2009 for the year 2009–2010. Therefore, the centre has not benefited from objective strategic evaluation of its services in recent months. The centre's leadership has worked well to ensure forward planning is robust, but this lacks the strategic aspects provided by consistent local authority input.

Governance of the centre is provided by the school's governing body, which fulfils its statutory responsibilities and governance arrangements are satisfactory. However, not enough consistent focus is given to the needs of the children's centre to provide rigorous challenge and accountability. The advisory board at the centre meets infrequently and the centre has already identified the need to make this body more effective. Some parents are actively involved in the governance of the centre, and many give their views on services through completing evaluation forms and satisfaction surveys, as well as discussion with the centre manager and staff. A few parents volunteer their time and skills to enhance services offered. For example, the facilitator of the Burnbush Cultural Group has recently left the centre, and parents are training to take on the role of leading the group. This allows it to continue to support adults wishing to attend the group, and in particular those who are from a minority ethnic background. The centre has already identified that parent participation needs to be supported in a more formal manner to enable more parents to give their time and views to the centre.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the dialogue between the centre and the local authority to provide consistent and rigorous strategic evaluation, in order to improve the outcomes for children and adults using the centre.
- Use all available information, including data about the centre's reach area, to target outreach and services so that more potential users, and especially those hard-to-reach groups, are successfully engaged in the centre.
- Develop the role of parents at the centre further by establishing an effective parents' forum and a parent volunteer programme.
- Develop the existing governance arrangements so that:
 - the governing body gives a consistently high priority to the needs and development of the children's centre
 - the advisory board evolves into an effective body which meets with reasonable frequency.

How good are outcomes for users?

3

Outcomes are satisfactory overall. Outcomes for staying safe are good, as are those for enjoying and achieving. Effective partnership working with health services, and in particular with health visitors, helps some families to have a healthy lifestyle. It also enables efficient referrals for those who require this, including teenage parents. There has been some success in helping adults stop smoking by provision of information and individual support. Children benefit from universally provided speech and language support which promotes early detection of difficulties to facilitate referral and assessment when needed.

Children and adults demonstrate good attitudes towards staying safe. Children learn about road safety with their parents. The forest school located at the centre provides meaningful opportunities for children and parents to learn about assessing risk and carrying out tasks safely in a natural environment. At present, there are no children subject to a child protection plan or Common Assessment Framework process and there are no looked after children registered at the centre. However, staff demonstrate a good understanding of how to promote successful outcomes for children and can evidence past success in this.

Adults and their children make good progress at the 'Peeps' group which supports communication and early attachment. There is case-study evidence of how this helps improve levels of attachment, including for those more vulnerable families. One parent said how the group had helped her with her parenting skills, 'It really makes me feel good about myself.' Children who attend the stay and play sessions are settled and happy, and make good progress in their learning and development across

all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children who attend the linked early years provision at Abbeywood Tots also benefit from a suitable curriculum which promotes development in all areas of learning. Adults make good progress in their learning in a range of academic and skills-based courses. They are supported in their learning by the good quality crèche which provides free childcare while parents are learning. There is strong anecdotal and case-study evidence that those who take literacy and mathematics courses have a good level of success in successfully gaining qualifications.

The centre is becoming more established in the community, and more families are accessing its services. Adults using the centre are respectful of one another and of staff. Some users are actively involved in the decision-making processes of the centre and in giving feedback on services. However, this is not yet sufficiently widespread or consistent.

Families who need support and guidance in accessing benefits and work are given appropriate help. Case-study evidence suggests that a number of parents use the services provided by the Family Information Service (advice and guidance) and Jobcentre Plus to improve the economic well-being of their families. A computer with internet access is readily available to adults so they can make applications and complete forms online if needed.

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	3
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	3
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	3

How good is the provision?

3

The centre engages with some groups in the community and meets the needs of these families reasonably well. The centre has a clear view of the needs of those who do use the centre and provides a sound range of services. Groups such as 'Dads R Us', Twins Group and Grandparents Group provide tailored provision for specific needs which improve outcomes in parenting and general well-being and enjoyment. The centre has very recently obtained a wealth of information about the groups that make up its reach area. However, at present, the centre does not carry out a

comprehensive assessment of the area's needs to target all of its services effectively. The delivery of outreach services has recently changed. Up until March 2011, the outreach post of Community Family Support Worker was provided by Barnados. However, this post has ended and the early years practitioners at the centre now carry out outreach. The transition has had a slightly negative impact on some services but current arrangements are working well and the practitioners are developing this new element of their work well.

The centre provides good opportunities for adults and children to learn and develop. Staff are trained to a high level and are proactive in ensuring learning meets the individual needs of children and adults well. Adults access a wide range of courses, such as literacy and mathematics, and careful assessment ensures they achieve a suitably challenging and manageable level of achievement at the end of the course. Many adults feel empowered by these opportunities to learn and express high levels of satisfaction. A parent explained the courses had given her 'lots of confidence in parenting and in looking for work'. Local childminders receive advice and support from the on-site early years advisory teacher and this helps develop the quality of their provision which is promoted by the centre. Sessions for children at the centre are of good quality with interesting activities which hold their interest well. For example, a group of children in the on-site breakfast club have great fun making masks from collage materials and they chat happily to one another and to staff as they make them. The quality of care, guidance and support given to adults and children who use the centre is good. Families benefit from family and parenting support delivered through classes such as 'Peeps' and the 'Stay and Play' group. All those working at the centre take time and care to get to know those who use the centre. This enables the delivery of a high level of personal rapport and guidance for each family using the centre.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	2
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	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

The leadership of the centre is satisfactory. The centre manager is influential in developing the provision to meet local need and she leads an enthusiastic and dedicated staff team. The headteacher works well in partnership with the manager to provide a cohesive approach to meeting the needs of the local community. Governance arrangements are acceptable and children's centre issues are discussed at each governing body meeting. However, there is insufficient challenge and rigour in these discussions and governance arrangements are not consistently understood. The local authority makes itself accessible to centre management for advice and support as needed. However, the level of robust and objective evaluation has declined in the last year owing to the review of processes and this has hindered the centre's opportunities for some elements of its strategic planning.

Accurate self-evaluation is used to plan realistic development of services. Users routinely complete evaluations of groups to give their views on quality and impact. Partners are actively involved in the evaluation process to ensure their services meet the needs of the centre and its families. The centre offers satisfactory value for money. The centre uses its accommodation efficiently and rooms are in use for the majority of the day and a reasonable number of families attend each session: some sessions are very popular, such as 'Peeps' and some 'Stay and Play' sessions.

The centre meets the duties that apply to it with regards to equality and diversity, although some processes are not yet sufficiently embedded, such as user engagement. It has recently obtained precise data on the make-up of its reach area that provide a clear indication of the priorities for focusing services. For example, the number of mothers sustaining breastfeeding at six to eight weeks is well below the local average and the centre is currently working with health agencies on how to improve this. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff are thorough. The centre gives high priority to developing the emotional health of children and adults to improve the quality of their well-being.

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	3
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	3
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	2

adults	
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	3

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

None.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Burnbush Children’s Centre on 25–26 May 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We would like to thank those of you who came to speak with us and tell us about your experiences at the centre to help us with the inspection. It was enjoyable to meet you. It was very helpful to hear what the centre means to you, and to learn about the difference the centre has made to your lives.

Many of you told us you feel you and your families are safe at the centre and we agree. The centre manager and staff team provide a friendly atmosphere and you trust them to give you support and help when you need it. There is good partnership working to deliver a better range of services, with organisations such as health services, the Family Information Service, Jobcentre Plus, Abbeywood Tots Nursery and the Learning and Communities adult learning service. The quality of learning and development opportunities for you and your children are good so that you can achieve and develop skills and knowledge.

Many families who live in the centre’s area use it regularly, but some families do not. This might be because they do not know what services the centre has to offer. We have asked the management to use all the information it has to make sure families living in the area know about the centre so that they can use it if they wish.

We learned that some of you already volunteer to help at the centre, and some of you are involved with making decisions about how the centre is run through being on the governing and advisory boards. We have asked the centre to develop the role of parents further by carrying out plans to start a parent volunteer programme, and to provide a forum for parents to give their views about the centre and its services. We have also asked the governing body to give more priority to the development of the children's centre so that it can continue to develop services further. The advisory board is in place but does not meet very often, and so does not have much impact on services at the moment, and we have asked the centre to make sure this board meets more frequently.

The centre receives support for its development and future planning from the local authority. Recently, there has been a reduction in this support while systems are reviewed and improved. This means the centre management has not had useful external monitoring which helps it develop services more. We have asked the local authority to make sure the centre receives more support in this.

Finally, we were impressed by the quality of the care offered by the staff, which makes the centre a happy and welcoming place for adults and their children.

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