

Inspection report for Beddington Park Primary Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Sutton
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Linked school if applicable	Beddington Park Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	N/A

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.

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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 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 centre users, managers and staff, outreach workers, partners and representatives from the local authority. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Information about the centre

Beddington Park Primary is a phase two children’s centre and was opened in 2008. The centre is situated within an estate run by housing associations on behalf of the council and with some private housing. The governance of the centre is undertaken by the London Borough of Sutton, supported by an advisory board made up of users of services, local authority personnel and health and social care professionals. The centre is managed by a head of the attached primary school. The centre occupies purpose-built accommodation comprising a playroom, a consultation room, a kitchen and an outside play area.

The centre provides all elements of its core offer including family support, child and family health services and links with employment agencies. The centre works closely with a number of agencies to bring linked services to the local community. This includes early learning, health services, training and work opportunities, outreach and family support.

The centre serves an area that has been identified as disadvantaged. In the centre’s outreach area, a significant number of children live in workless households who claim out-of-work benefits. The area has a large number of families from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, although most are from White British backgrounds. Most children enter early years provision with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age.

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

Beddington Park is a good children’s centre. It works exceptionally well with its partners to provide a wide range of services that are accurately targeted to meet the needs of the majority of its users. The centre is effective in encouraging parents and carers to come together and in supporting the early development of their children. One user commented, ‘I have been able to gain access to games and books at the

centre and even take them home. It's so nice to be able to let the children do the 'messy activities' that we can't do at home.' The good care, guidance and support demonstrate how all staff subscribe to the centre's core focus of making a difference to the lives of its users. For example, a number of users commented on how the cookery sessions are helping them to prepare cheap but healthy meals.

Equality and diversity are promoted well. Users who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are provided with translation services and bilingual workers enable them to access the centre's facilities. Good attention is given to providing sessions that meet the needs of individuals and small groups. For example, one-to-one clinics are very well attended and help mothers with breast feeding, postnatal depression and all aspects of their baby's development. Users comment on how helpful they find the cookery classes and the availability of a wide range of 'cheap recipes'. They are particularly appreciative of the 'stay and play' sessions that help with their children's social, emotional, speech and language development. Many users comment very positively on the snack sessions that really encourage the children to eat healthily.

Parents and carers are very pleased with the opportunities to comment on the range and quality of the activities provided by the centre. They believe their suggestions and views are listened to and taken into account. Occasionally they are disappointed when some sessions are no longer available, but recognise that the need for variety to attract a wider range of users. Users are aware of the advisory board and its function in managing the centre. However, too few users come forward to contribute to the running of the centre and in becoming influential in its strategic development.

Leadership and management of the centre are strong. Self-evaluation is rigorous and those in charge have a very clear view of the centre's strengths and areas for improvement. There is no complacency and leaders are actively seeking ways to improve the range of facilities to engage more people. Through the local authority, a wide range of data are collated that provides a clear picture of the effectiveness of the centre in reaching out to those most vulnerable in its reach area. The leadership uses this data effectively to target its resources to areas of greatest need and to establish partnerships to support its programme. The views of its users are sought for all activities through evaluations and satisfaction surveys. Users take the opportunity to put forward their comments through the 'post it' boards in the centre, confident in the knowledge that the leadership will take note of them. Outreach services are effective in encouraging family and individual participation. The advisory board supports the local authority well in governance of the centre. It has, however, had some difficulty in recruiting board members from the local community. Because of the good outcomes for users, good management and governance of the centre and good-quality self-evaluation the centre has good capacity to improve.

Users rightly comment on the welcoming and inclusive nature of the centre. It has good strategies in place to ensure vulnerable users are engaged. For example, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively. It 'signposts' users at an early stage of learning English as an additional language to

courses at one of its partner colleges, enabling them to gain accredited qualifications. Literacy and numeracy sessions held at the centre improve users' confidence and one-to-one sessions with the 'Into Recruitment Officer' are effective in helping with employment and training opportunities. Effective safeguarding practices are well established. All staff are appropriately trained and adults and children are looked after well. Users say they feel safe and are able to speak in confidence to staff if they have issues or concerns. The centre is proactive in promoting the safety of its users, for example contact points for those who might be subject to domestic violence. There are good systems and procedures in place to ensure users are safeguarded. Effective systems are in place to ensure that the most vulnerable families receive the support they need. The success of interventions seen in case studies, is evident in the good progress families make in coming through difficult times.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Encourage greater involvement of the local community in the governance of the centre.
- Explore opportunities for users to become more involved with the strategic development of the centre.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Good-quality provision enables users to achieve emotional, social and physically healthy lifestyles. The centre provides good courses to help bring about changes to the dietary lifestyles of families. One user commented that they were consciously eating more healthy meals without any increase to their food budget. Children really enjoy eating the healthy snacks that are a good feature of the 'stay and play' sessions and users enjoy being able to pick the fresh fruit and vegetables that they grow at the centre. The centre works effectively to prevent dental decay, with advice and free toothbrushes for users through its engagement with the 'Smile for Life' award. Children's physical skills develop well through opportunities to use the large play equipment. Parenting courses have brought about improved outcomes for the children. For example, baby massage courses have helped to enhance the bond between mother and child. Emotional health is successfully promoted through counselling and helping mothers suffering from postnatal depression. A male carer, who was a first-time attendee at a 'Men Behaving Dadly' session, commented how it helped him to become more aware of the sort of play activities that were beneficial to his children.

Parents and carers are very happy with the good facilities offered by the centre. A number of parents expressed their delight with how centre staff were able to 'look after' their second child while they were receiving advice about new family additions. Users are pleased with the good support offered by the centre. For example, they know the centre will provide good advice for children with speech and language problems and can offer useful information where they are having problems with their children's behaviour. One parent commented, 'The staff have helped me with my

son's behaviour and how to manage it as all children are different.' There are good procedures to ensure the safety of children on the child protection register. Effective links between agencies and good expertise among centre staff ensure that children supported by the Common Assessment Framework are well looked after. The range of activities available for children in the centre ensure they make good progress and are well prepared for entry into nursery education. Data, gathered by both the centre and the school, show over the last three years an improving profile in skills and abilities when the children enter the nursery.

Parents and carers are happy that their children are able to play, explore and discover in a happy and safe environment. Children rapidly gain in confidence and develop good behaviour and social skills as they learn to play with each other. Parents and carers develop an increasing understanding of how to keep themselves and their children safe. There are good opportunities for them to get in touch with health visitors and family support workers at regular times during the week. The centre is effective in supporting parents and carers back to work. Good support is provided, particularly for lone parents, to enable them to undertake training or guidance to help gain employment. The partnerships with the colleges help with the provision of crèche facilities to enable users to take a full part in courses without the worry of looking and paying for childcare.

These are the grades for 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, 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

The centre has robust assessment procedures which provide it with a clear picture of the needs of its users. It uses this information, together with data collated by the local authority, to determine its provision. The leadership utilises this information, together with its local knowledge of the area, to identify specific social and cultural trends. Consequently, the provision is well matched to users' needs. Considerable attention is paid to the needs of lone parents and male carers. Through its own evaluation the centre has identified the need to encourage its users to eat healthily,

effectively taking account of the cultural and social diversity of its users. Effective work by local outreach workers identifies emerging needs within the reach area and indicators provided by the local authority show the centre has been successful in reaching targets for its hard-to-reach groups, the only centre in the borough to do so.

There is a very clear understanding of the needs of the most vulnerable families already identified by the centre. The Common Assessment Framework is used well by all of the children's centre staff. All members of the family are considered when the centre undertakes its needs assessment. The effectiveness of this approach is seen in the careful and professional methods in dealing with child protection plans.

Activities are planned carefully by experienced and well-qualified staff. Where evaluations by users indicate needs are not being met, activities are then changed and tailored to meet requirements. Where it is not viable to provide services on site, the centre very effectively signposts users to other centres or partner organisations. For example, teaching of English as an additional language is provided at one of the local colleges. There are effective links with a local prison, accommodating both female and male inmates. Support workers provide a wide range of help and guidance, enabling families to move forward. Provision is well integrated because those who contribute to the running of services work well together. Staff are keen to help all users who feel confident in approaching staff with issues or concerns. The needs of individuals are well catered for. Discussion with users and evidence from case studies show that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well.

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 arrangements for governance and accountability are understood well by senior leaders and managers. There are strong links between school governors, the advisory board, local authority and senior leaders, and all demonstrate high ambitions for the centre. A service level agreement has been written that formalises the governance arrangements and was awaiting signatures at the time of the inspection. The strong links, together with the detailed and accurate self-evaluation, ensure that strategic planning and action plans provide a firm foundation for their

ambitions. The advisory board, well supported by the local authority provides good challenge to the centre. However, the local community is not well represented on the board and, consequently, is not sufficiently influential in the strategic development of the centre.

The excellent partnership that exists between the centre and other services ensures that the needs of the local community are identified accurately and served well. The centre is extremely successful in engaging users to take part in 'play and stay' activities and 'messy play'. These sessions are always very well subscribed and users miss them when they are not on the programme. Work with local colleges, other centres, health and social services, ensures the centre's users are exceptionally well served, ensuring their emotional health and well-being. Excellent arrangements to provide confidential support those who are at risk of domestic violence are greatly appreciated by users. Childminders are very pleased with the excellent links they enjoy with the centre, enabling them to provide more interesting and exciting opportunities for the children in their care. The centre's facilities are spacious and well equipped to provide well for families and individuals with disabilities. Close monitoring by the local authority and effective data interrogation by the centre's administrator ensure the centre exceeds its challenging targets for reaching hard-to-reach groups. Centres within the local authority work well together, sharing resources, ideas and expertise.

There is a high priority given to safeguarding provision. All staff are acutely aware of their responsibilities and users are made aware of the systems in place. All staff have been trained in child protection procedures and strong interagency links ensure this aspect of the centre is well coordinated. Senior leaders have undertaken safer recruitment training and the centre closely follows local authority guidance. The centre works closely with family support workers to reduce incidents of domestic violence. Equality and diversity are promoted and encouraged. Users enjoy opportunities to learn about, and celebrate, major festivals from different cultures. Documents and leaflets are provided in many different languages to enable all users to have access to the centre's services.

Systematic evaluation of the centre's activities by users, providers and senior staff enables the centre to respond to users' views effectively. The leadership has tried hard to engage additional users to become more involved with the strategic development of the centre. However, its attempts have met with limited success. The centre is able to identify users who are not coming forward to make use of its facilities and works hard to engage them. Where there is a drop off in attendance at courses and sessions, the centre follows this up with the users to determine the reason. Performance management and appraisal of the staff ensure they are held accountable for the success of sessions and the centre. Senior leaders work hard to ensure the centre provides positive outcomes for its users and, consequently, it provides good value for money.

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

Not applicable

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Beddington Park Primary children's centre on 26 and 27 May 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you for those of you who took time to talk with us about the centre. It was very helpful to get your views on how the centre helps and offers support to all those who use the centre. The discussions helped us to understand how well you think of the centre and what you value most. You say you particularly enjoy the 'play and stay' sessions, 'messy play' and the healthy snack sessions that really encourage your children's healthy eating. You told us, and we agree with you, that the centre welcomes you, whatever your background. You trust the centre staff to give you

good advice. The centre has enabled a number of you to take courses that have improved your confidence, enabling you to consider further training or to seek employment. You also feel that the centre has enabled you to make many new friends from different cultures. The excellent partnerships with other organisations and agencies provide you with many activities that are tailored to your needs.

The centre is very welcoming and inviting, enabling users to feel at ease and enjoy the wide range of activities on offer. The centre ensures children are kept safe and well looked after and there is a good range of play equipment both indoors and outdoors. There are good opportunities for you to evaluate the activities in which you participate and you feel the centre listens to your views. However, there are too few local users who serve on the advisory board that governs the centre and consequently they have insufficient influence on the strategic development of the centre.

The centre is effective in meeting the needs of its users through the good range of activities and services. Those in charge of the centre know the community well and they make effective use of the data to determine how well it is meeting everyone's needs. The centre works exceptionally well with a wide range of services and partners to provide for families and individuals in the local area. It provides good care, support and guidance for its users and a number of you commented on the friendliness and approachability of the staff.

Those in charge of the centre provide good leadership and management and actively seek to improve the facilities and range of activities so that it fully meets the needs of all its users. They ensure that translations are available so those of you at an early stage of learning English can take a full part in the centre's activities. The close links the centre has with the school ensures your children are provided with a good start to school life.

We have asked the centre to:

- encourage greater involvement of the local community in the governance of the centre
- explore opportunities for users to become more involved with the strategic development of the centre.

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