

Inspection report for Kingsleigh Children's Centre

Local authority	Bournemouth Borough Council
Inspection number	367824
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Reporting inspector	Penny Fisher

Centre governance	Action for Children
Centre leader	Anna Batty
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	None

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.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the children's service manager, the senior leadership team for the children's centre, centre staff who work directly with children and families and parents. They also met with representatives from the local authority, partners, the advisory board and Action for Children. 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

The centre is currently located on the site of Kingsleigh Primary School. The local authority commissions Action for Children, a charitable organisation, to manage the centre, which together with Kinson and West Howe Children's Centre, form an informal North Bournemouth cluster. Governance of both centres is through the North Bournemouth advisory board, which includes representatives from the local authority, health partners, the community and parents and carers. The service manager has responsibility for both children's centres in the cluster along with the nursery attached to the other centre.

The centre's designated area does not fall within the 30% most disadvantaged areas. The reach area includes the wards of Wallisdown and Winton West, Redhill and Northbourne. The large majority of housing is owner occupied and employment is relatively high when compared to the borough as a whole, with many partners supplementing income by returning to work part time following maternity leave. However, within the reach area there are pockets of deprivation and isolation,

surrounded by more affluent areas. The very large majority of families are of White British heritage. The low proportion of families from minority ethnic groups represents a wide range of backgrounds. There has been a slight decrease in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year at school in the reach area in 2010, but performance is above the national average.

The centre does not provide or commission childcare or early years provision that is registered by Ofsted. However, there are regular drop-in activity sessions for children and the centre is meeting the core offer. A range of integrated services are provided, including family support and outreach, community midwifery services and post-natal groups, workshops for parents and carers, play sessions, parenting support and employment and training advice, as well as signposting to other services such as adult learning. The centre is moving to Kingsleigh Early Learning Centre in September 2011 due to the increase in demand for school places across the borough.

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 overall effectiveness of the centre is good. Children and families access high quality services and support. Outcomes for users are good overall; parents and carers enjoy their time at the centre and are highly satisfied with the provision and services delivered. One parent said ‘the centre turned my life around’. Users participate enthusiastically in the very large majority of activities provided and have good opportunities to contribute their views and suggestions. However, their level of involvement in the governance of the centre is limited.

Through careful and sensitive assessment parents and carers are encouraged and supported to benefit from a wide range of accessible services appropriate to need, such as the family support and outreach team. Children are effectively safeguarded and safe working practices are employed. Parents and carers feel welcome. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged and outcomes improved through good partnerships with community health professionals. Provision for children is of high quality, well planned, and activities cover all areas of learning. Outcomes for children attending activities are, therefore, good. The centre ensures parents and carers have access to employment and training advice and accredited adult learning. Parents and carers enjoy and benefit from less formal learning activities, such as workshops. High levels

of attendance at parenting programmes are having a positive impact on families' lives.

Leadership and management are good and there is good capacity for sustained improvement. The centre has a good understanding of strengths and areas for development, as demonstrated through the priorities set within the self-assessment and action plan. The service manager and her team work well together and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. All staff share responsibility for improving the centre further and have ownership of evaluating and planning their services, which is good. Parents' and carers' views are taken into account when planning and delivering services. Governance and accountability are clear, as are the effective management and supervision arrangements. There is a well-established North Bournemouth Advisory Board, which provides good support to both children's centres in the informal cluster, although they are not currently fully involved in planning for improvement.

The centre's identity within the community is developing and good progress has been made in the last year. Effective work, in partnership with the local authority and health partners, is improving the quality of data available at reach area level, thereby improving the centre's knowledge and understanding of the needs of the families within the reach area. However, information regarding live birth data in the centre's reach area is not yet shared.

The management and staff demonstrate a clear commitment to equality and this strongly underpins the work of the centre.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Ensure parents and carers are fully involved in the governance of the centre.
- Ensure the centre is reaching those families most in need of services by continuing to work in partnership with the local authority and health partners to improve data sharing and quality.
- Develop the role of the advisory board further to ensure there is sufficient challenge to drive improvement.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Ensuring children and parents and carers enjoy good health is a high priority within the centre. Parents' understanding of how to keep themselves and their families healthy is improving through well-attended community midwifery sessions, popular baby massage courses and informative post-natal groups. The new Little Stars session, led by nursery nurses for parents and babies under 12 months, is already proving popular and offers a high level of support, information and guidance to new and young parents, in an informal social setting. Very positive outcomes from the new GroBrain programme piloted within Little Stars show that the very large majority of parents attending felt more able to empathise with their babies and comfort them

and had increased confidence in their parenting following the completion of the programme. The centre provides universal services, but ensures added value through effective signposting to other local, easily accessible services that meet need, for example smoking cessation and sexual health services. Centre staff and the special educational needs coordinator for the informal cluster work well in partnership with other agencies to enable effective early identification of additional needs, with the provision of universal services successfully leading to targeted support as needed.

Children are effectively safeguarded within the centre. Staff act as good role models and children are encouraged to be safe. For example, they are gently reminded to be aware of others at the 'Movers and Shakers' group while participating enthusiastically in music and movement activities. The premises are fully risk assessed and secure. Safe working practices, including the recruitment of staff, are closely monitored. Due to an above average rate of admissions to hospital following injuries in the North Bournemouth area there has been a good focus on preventing accidents in the home. Home safety checks have been effective and nine families in the reach area have benefited from access to safety equipment.

The family support and outreach team is an integral part of the local authority's early intervention and prevention strategy. Individualised support is available to meet families' needs appropriately. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is being used well to support families and prevent the escalation of problems and the need for specialist services. Although the number of families supported through the CAF is currently low, family support workers are finding it effective in identifying and meeting families' emerging needs. A priority within the centre's action plan is to now embed its use across the centre.

Children and parents and carers participate enthusiastically in a range of play and learning opportunities provided at the centre. Activities continuously evolve to better meet children's needs, for example by providing a separate group for more mobile toddlers and extending the level of challenge for those children. Early Years staff work closely together to plan sessions that meet children's needs and cover all areas of learning. All sessions are evaluated and evaluation is used to inform future planning. Children's progress is recorded and shared with parents and carers.

Children behave well and parents, carers, staff and children treat each other with respect. The centre continues to work hard to establish itself at the heart of the local community. Although parents and carers have good opportunities to share their ideas and influence the design and delivery of services, parents and carers from the centre are under-represented on the advisory board. The centre has tried to establish a parents' forum and encourage volunteers, which would lead to improvements in parents' and carers' personal development, but this is not currently proving successful. The popular and well-attended Parenting Puzzle programme has a positive impact on family lives leading to parents and carers saying, 'We are having happier days and don't shout as much.'

The extent to which parents are encouraged to access training and employment and

thereby improve their families' economic well-being is satisfactory. The centre promotes accredited literacy, numeracy and science courses that are easily accessible at a nearby venue; however, in 2010 – 2011 only six parents took up this opportunity, which is low considering the number of parents registered at the centre. Partnership working with Tribal Next Steps is developing and in the first quarter of this year four parents had received employment and training advice, which again is a low number, but outcomes for these parents were positive. The 'Sure Can' parenting programme effectively supports parents to build self-esteem. Parents report that the course has given them greater confidence to move into training or employment.

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	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?

2

The centre makes good use of assessment across all aspects of staff's work with children and their families. The family support and outreach workers use a range of assessment methods to identify needs early. The Action for Children E-Aspire system and the CAF are complementary and effective use of systems ensures staff avoid duplicating tasks. Good levels of supervision and safe systems ensure that staff are well supported and children's needs are closely monitored. The staff at the children's centre have highly developed informal assessment skills, which ensure that children and parents are introduced to services, such as the Parenting Puzzle programme in a sensitive and appropriate manner. Although there is no registered early years provision, the early years staff ensure that children's progress and development are recorded and shared with parents and carers.

The centre promotes learning and celebrates achievement well. Effective links with other early years providers across the area ensure consistent planning and collaborative work to improve identified outcomes for children, such as the achievement of boys and communication, language and literacy. Workshops provided are popular and highly valued by parents and carers, for example, 'Lets Talk' provides advice and strategies to enable parents and carers to support children's language and communication from an early age. The quality of the activities provided

at the centre is consistently good. Informal learning within the centre is successfully improving users' personal development.

The centre continues to learn more about the reach area and the families that it needs to attract to the centre. Better quality data from the local authority and health partners, some at reach area level, are helping to move this work forward although data on live births in the area are unfortunately still not available to the children's centre. The Health and Children's Centre Strategic Group provides a good example of ongoing partnership working to improve data and information sharing. Pockets of deprivation within the reach area have been identified and outreach work in these areas is planned. Budgets are being managed well to ensure that savings are not impacting on the delivery of services.

Parents and carers praise the good level of care, guidance and support received from the staff at the centre. Staff are approachable and friendly and parents and carers feel welcomed. The quality of care for young children and parents and carers seen during the activities provided is also good. Effective signposting to other services takes place frequently, and staff are beginning to record this so that they can better demonstrate improved outcomes. The quality of information, advice and guidance for parents on accessing appropriate learning programmes, seeking work and help with childcare costs is good.

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	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?

2

The 'informal cluster' arrangement, involving two centres under one service manager, has led to benefits such as economies of scale and access to services. However, the other centre, which is in an area of greater disadvantage, is better established. Before the current service manager came into post in May 2010, the Kingsleigh centre did not have its own identity and the different needs of users in this area were less well known. The service manager has worked hard on establishing Kingsleigh as a stand alone centre and local needs' analysis is improving due to better availability of data at the local reach area level. However, the centre acknowledges that further work is needed to ensure that services are targeted at those families most in need. Further outreach work is planned, with events taking place in the local community, using local parks and church halls in order to reach new families in targeted areas.

Governance and contractual arrangements are clear and well understood by all partners and staff. Accountability is well established and tight systems are in place to monitor performance, which is systematically scrutinised by both the local authority and Action for Children. Line management and supervision responsibilities within the centre are clear and well aligned and the regularity of supervision is closely monitored. Managers within the centre receive good support in their roles and undertake compulsory training in areas such as 'managing people', multi-agency safeguarding and equality and diversity.

The senior management team is highly motivated and committed to improving outcomes for families in the reach area. Priorities within the centre's action plan are appropriate and demonstrate a high level of ambition. Staff are aware of the centre's strengths and areas for development and all have contributed to the recent, largely realistic self-assessment. The Kingsleigh Children's Centre is represented on the advisory board for North Bournemouth children's centres, but the board is not yet fully involved in strategic planning and its role as a 'critical friend' to the centre is underdeveloped.

Service planning and evaluation are developing well within the centre. All staff and partners have responsibility for completing evaluations, which include parents' and carers' views of services, and inform future planning. Planning is increasingly, but not always, linked to outcome areas, baseline data and the centre's priorities, such as the planning for the recent first-aid workshop, which is clearly linked to evidence of the high number of children's hospital admissions following injury.

Careful monitoring of the use of resources means that budgets are managed well and decision-making is based on sound rationale. The service manager, well supported by the data and finance officer, has taken a proactive approach to managing savings, which have been anticipated across the whole year to avoid disruption to staff and services whenever possible.

There is a strong, fully inclusive vision for the centre. In January 2010 over 90% of children in the reach area spoke English as their first language. However, a wide range of languages are spoken within the reach area and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses are easily accessed from the centre. A good example of the centre adapting services to meet need is the recent introduction of the less formal 'welcome to ESOL' at the centre which is a four-week course delivered in partnership with Pathways International. Staff are further meeting the needs of parents and carers who speak English as an additional language by providing photographic evidence of their children's development in the accompanying crèche. Over two fifths of the registered parents at the centre are fathers. Some holiday and weekend Family Fun activities have been introduced to encourage even greater participation by fathers and extended family members.

The safeguarding of children is given the highest priority within the centre and processes are secure. Action for Children's policies and procedures for ensuring all

staff are appropriately and regularly checked are effective. All staff have received the appropriate level of training. Comprehensive protocols are in place with partner agencies and referrals are made appropriately to children’s social care services, with a clear escalation policy in place if needed. Thresholds for children’s social care services are understood. The centre is developing its knowledge and understanding of the extent of domestic violence in the reach area and discreet information is available to support parents and carers throughout the centre.

The centre strongly supports parents and carers to contribute their views on services, such as through suggestion boxes and ideas boards. Formal and informal consultation events, such as the recent teddy bears picnic, are held. The move to new premises is being managed well with parents and carers being fully informed and consulted. Feedback on parents’ and carers’ suggestions is provided in the ‘you said, we did’ section of the regular newsletter. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection said their views were valued and respected.

Building partnerships has been a key focus of the centre’s work over the last year. Established partnerships with children’s social care, health agencies, early years providers and the library service enhance services for users. For example, working with local childminders and other early years provision provides good opportunities to share good practice and discuss local priorities, such as boys’ learning and development, leading to a cohesive approach. Close links with health professionals and the special educational needs team ensure that additional needs are identified early and families provided with the appropriate support. Developing partnerships include Tribal Next Steps and Gateway, both of which will enhance opportunities for parents and carers.

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	2

commissioned to provide	
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

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Kingsleigh Children’s Centre on 8 and 9 June 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

The centre is ably led and managed by the service manager and her leadership team. Staff at the centre are welcoming and care about you and your families. They are good at recognising when you may benefit from other activities or services within the centre or at other venues nearby. The whole staff team is keen to improve the centre and your feedback on its services is welcomed and used to make the centre even better.

Sessions such as Little Stars, Wiggle and Rhyme, Movers and Shakers and Let’s Play are of good quality. Everyone is welcome and you tell us that these sessions reduce the isolation you may feel as parents and carers and are great places to meet other parents and carers with similar questions and issues. It is good to see that quite a lot of dads also enjoy the activities provided, especially during holidays and weekends. The centre places a high priority on your children’s safety and health. Parenting programmes that you may have attended are highly praised and you told us that they have a positive impact on your family life.

The staff at the centre are working well in partnership with other agencies such as community health and the library to ensure that what they are providing is making a positive difference to you and your families. Not many of you are currently benefiting from the information, advice and guidance that the centre can provide regarding employment and training opportunities in the area. The number of parents, carers and children registering at the centre is increasing and the centre is beginning to establish itself at the heart of your local community. However, more remains to be done to ensure that those using the centre are really the ones that need it most. To ensure this happens, staff are working with partners in the local authority and health services to share data and information about the needs of the local community.

I hope you are all now aware that the centre is moving premises in September. There are plenty of opportunities for you to make your views known on this and all of the other services that the centre is delivering for you. Please do take every opportunity to really contribute to the life of the children's centre. You may wish to consider joining the parents' forum or being a parent representative on the advisory board that governs the centre.

We enjoyed talking to some of you during the inspection and would like to thank you for your cooperation and time. Your comments and contributions were very valuable and helped us in our work.

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