

Inspection report for Reedley Hallows Nursery School and Children's Centre

Local authority	Lancashire County Council
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Reporting inspector	Gillian Bishop HMI

Centre governance	Local authority
Centre leader	Brenda Hargreaves
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Reedley Hallows Nursery School and Barden Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY409485 Burnley Campus Social Enterprise Company (Twinkle Tots).

The inspection of this Sure Start Children's Centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with staff and senior managers from the centre and the local authority, parents and carers, members of the governing body, children's centre partners and practitioners, including health and Early Years Foundation Stage professionals. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Reedley Hallows Nursery School and Children's Centre is in the north east of Burnley. The centre achieved designation as a phase two centre in 2008 following the amalgamation of Barden Lane Nursery School and Elm Street Nursery School. The centre is located in a purpose built facility which forms part of the Burnley Campus, which also includes Holly Grove Special School, Barden Lane Primary School, a sixth-form college, and a public library. Sessional and full day care is provided in the nursery school for two to four-year-olds from 8.00–17.00 during term time only. Provision for two and three-year-olds is led and managed by the children's centre but is self-sustaining and funded through the Burnley Campus Social Enterprise Company, which manages all extended services across the campus.

The centre serves a community that is ranked within the top 30% of the most deprived areas in the country although six of the twelve areas are in the top 40% - 70%. The reach population has high levels of unemployment with 28% of children aged under five years living in households dependent on workless benefits. A large majority of children are from minority ethnic backgrounds, most of whom speak English as an additional language. The reach population is culturally diverse with significant communities of Pakistani and White British people and smaller numbers of East European, Filipino and Bengali residents. Most children enter childcare and early education with a lower range of skills and abilities than those expected for their age, particularly in their communication, language and literacy and social skills.

Governance is provided by the governing body responsible for Reedley Hallows Nursery School and Children’s Centre. The head of centre carries out day-to-day management of the whole provision. The area outreach team, which includes a Family Support Team and early years workers, are based at the centre. The centre is closely located to Chai Children’s Centre which is a phase one centre. Both centres fall within the same footprint and centre users access health and maternal services provided by the phase one.

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

Reedley Hallows Nursery School and Children’s Centre is promoting satisfactory and improving outcomes for children and families. The centre has experienced a slow start to the development of services due to a combination of senior staffing changes and the amalgamation of the two nursery schools into the large purpose built Burnley Campus. Initially, priority was given to establishing a stable and secure nursery school provision and the development of the children’s centre provision proceeded at a later stage. This hesitant start has resulted in a slower pace than expected and this is reflected in the leadership’s view that ‘The centre in many respects, is at the start of its journey’.

Outcomes for families are at least satisfactory and in some aspects good. The centre provides a warm and friendly environment for families and they benefit from a wealth of resources within this busy campus. Comments such as ‘I can’t believe how lucky we are, there’s always something to do’, confirms this. Good quality learning and development for children within the centre and the systematic support and guidance from Early Years Foundations stage (EYFS) leaders and speech and language therapists ensures outcomes for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending the centre are also good. However, adult learning programmes and services to promote users economic stability are less well developed.

Safeguarding arrangements are adequate but a breach in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) specific legal requirements has compromised safeguarding policies and

procedures. However, centre staff and partners have developed a cohesive approach to reducing the risk of harm and preventing difficulties escalating. This includes the successful implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

The centre strives to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. As a result, attendance by all user groups are steadily increasing. The centre has a secure understanding of the profile of the community and community cohesion is reportedly strong. However, the centre has yet to develop a more meaningful way to promote the engagement of parents and carers who speak English as an additional language as well as their access to English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.

Families benefit from a good range of provision overall, however, the extent to which provision is leading to sustained improvements for families is less clear because impact is insufficiently monitored over time and across all services. This prevents the centre from demonstrating stronger outcomes for the reach population. However, provision is growing at a good pace due to many effective partnerships and families' willingness to engage with outreach services. Taking into account the satisfactory outcomes overall, the centre's overall effectiveness is also satisfactory

The leadership and management of the centre are satisfactory. The senior leadership team are reflective practitioners who demonstrate a firm ability and commitment to take the centre forward. However, roles and responsibilities are not consistently understood, which on occasions, compromise the smooth running of the centre. Some parents and carers have embraced the opportunity to take a greater role in service development but such opportunities are limited, which prevent a wider range of views being collated and used more formally, to inform and shape provision.

The governing body alongside the local authority provide appropriate support to the centre. Strategic meetings take place to assess centre performance and both provide guidance in relation to the development of service, improvement plans and wider priorities in the Children and Young People Plan. However, the quality and accuracy of self-assessment and the monitoring and evaluation of centre services and activities is not sharp enough and this has not been sufficiently challenged by the governing body or the local authority. As a result, the centre is prevented from demonstrating the full impact of its work. However, the leadership's determined focus on improvement, identifying and meeting needs, indicates that the centre has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve outcomes by:
 - increasing opportunities for users to communicate their views more formally and by engaging more users in strategic planning, decision making processes and volunteering opportunities
 - improving users' economic well-being through social independence, financial stability and their preparedness for employment, training or

further education.

- Improve provision by providing purposeful learning and development opportunities for adult users which provide for their needs, abilities and progression in their educational achievements.
- Improve leadership and governance arrangements by:
 - conducting a swift audit and confirm compliance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Specific Legal Welfare Requirements and improve safeguarding policies and procedures in general
 - ensuring that the governing body and the local authority play a more robust role in the monitoring and evaluation of service provision to enable them to provide rigorous challenge and hold the centre to account
 - improving support for users who do not speak English as their first language or who have limited literacy skills to access information and ESOL courses
 - developing robust systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of all services and impact on outcomes for users, particularly those related to adult learning.

How good are outcomes for users?

3

'I can be myself here, there's always somebody to help and nobody to judge you' describes how parents and carers feel about Reedley Hallows Children's Centre. Although maternal services are directly provided off site, access to these services is smooth. Consequently there are good outcomes for many breastfeeding mothers who are helped to sustain breastfeeding past six-to-eight weeks. A tooth brush exchange programme and referral to the Dental Access Scheme has resulted in more families registering with a dentist which is helping to reduce the high levels of dental decay across the borough.

The introduction of Healthy Hero's and the emphasis placed on living healthier lives is helping families to eat better, access good advice about weaning and healthy cooking and engage in physical activities, such as 'Water Babes and Movers and Shakers'. All of these initiatives are designed to tackle the recent increase in obesity levels. Parents and carers report they are more motivated to cook because they '...didn't realise healthy cooking could be so cheap and easy'. Others confirm their young babies are safer because of the 'Give Me Room to Breathe' and 'Smoke Free Homes' initiatives. As a result, parents and carers are pursuing their pledges to give up smoking or at least, restricting smoking to a designated room.

Parents and carers describe a sense of peace and safety in the centre. They state that their homes are calmer, happier and safer places because of strategies learnt during parenting courses and home safety schemes. Comments such as 'I hardly shout at all now because it doesn't work and now I know better' confirm this. However, centre users are less aware of the role they play in promoting safety and reducing risks for their children when participating in group activities. Families have

established good relationships with staff and outreach workers, encouraging them to share their concerns at times of worry or crisis, encouraging their willingness to engage in the CAF process. Support for children on child protection plans is effective with families benefiting from targeted and well-received interventions, which in some cases have prevented difficulties escalating. Parents and carers experiencing domestic violence are well supported through the Freedom Programme as a result of improved self-esteem and readiness to make positive lifestyle changes. However, related posters provide insufficient information to speakers of languages other than English and the centre does not track outcomes of the interventions in relation to repeat incidents.

All children in the Early Years foundation Stage make good strides in their development. Centre data confirms that despite children's very low starting points, particularly in their speech, language and social skills, children make good progress in their learning and in the skills they require for the future. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported well through well-planned speech and language programmes, the use of sign language, music and song. Learning Journey's are used well to engage parents and carers in their children's development and help them to make the connections with the lessons learnt within Play Workshops, Stay and Play and Talking Together. 'I play with children so much more now' and 'It is great being able to help my child with his speech'. Such comments demonstrate the impact of good 'child focused' learning opportunities available to parents and carers.

Centre users state that a key strength of the centre is '... the approachable staff and the strong welcome everybody gets'. Users who spoke with inspectors confirmed that they can use the suggestion box or just talk to staff if they wish to raise any views or concerns, although few actually recall doing so. A small number of parents and carers play a more strategic role through governance arrangements and they undertake this role admirably. However, parents and carers are generally unaware of governance arrangements or the potential to influence service delivery because there are only informal means to do so. Furthermore, users have few opportunities for formal volunteering; impeding their ability to gain work based experience and to improve their economic stability and independence. Centre data confirms that some parents and carers respond to signposting and undertake some accredited courses, such as literacy and numeracy, but the breadth of access to job related schemes, training and ESOL classes is not sufficiently monitored to determine short and long term outcomes and the extent of users' access to Jobcentre Plus, Citizen Advice Bureau or any financial services is not known.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	3

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	3

How good is the provision?

2

Assessment of individual cases is sound and the use of the CAF processes is successfully ensuring multi- agency teams can be gathered quickly to support children and families identified as being in need. The Family Learning Opportunities and Well-Being Project has enabled parents and carers of young children to access bespoke packages of care and guidance designed to tackle a range of social and economic family difficulties. In addition, Early Notification Forms provide families with an early introduction to the centre and an opportunity for outreach staff to conduct home visits and where necessary, agree Family Plans. As a result, families have accessed a counselling service, Home Start support, referral to domestic violence agencies and Calico Housing. The centre has a secure understanding of the profile of the community which has enabled them to develop services and activities which best reflect their need. For example, school holiday provision widens access to the centre and ensures that siblings are provided with good quality provision out of term time. Equally, the Play Bus provides services remotely ensuring people less likely to attend the centre are able to access play services, advice and guidance as required.

Families benefit from a good range of provision which meets the wide range of needs within the community. However, the lack of information to verify families' engagement in wider services, such as Jobcentre Plus, and the relative newness of some of the courses, services and activities prevent the centre from demonstrating much stronger outcomes. Effective signposting to health and maternal services and the From Bump to Birth and Beyond programme ensures that families receive timely information about smoking, breastfeeding and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Pamper packs provide new parents with the Top Ten Tips for keeping baby safe. Specialist groups are provided for children with hearing impairment and a well-established Saturday Dad's group is well attended and local childminders receive good levels of support in developing their Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The centre makes effective use of the sensory room, the soft play area and hydrotherapy pool to extend their resources and activities. The centre is aware that they need to increase the engagement of teen and young parents and plans to address this are being developed through the delegation of a Teen Parent Champion.

A clear focus on improving the quality of early years provision has ensured that the children's achievement and their motivation and willingness to learn are improving

strongly. Furthermore, strong partnership working between on-site school provision ensures the transitions are well planned, particularly for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Adults engage in a number of useful courses, including the Empowering People Course, which looks to improve their confidence, self-esteem and provide them with work and life skills, for example, interview techniques. However, learning and development opportunities for adult users are less well planned. Information about individual learning needs are not routinely sought which prevents adult learners building on their requirements and aspirations.

Sensitive individualised and tailored care, guidance and support are provided for those families and children who access the centre. Targeted outreach work is carefully focused on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable families ensuring interventions are put in place at the right time for the right people. As a result, case studies demonstrate how this has prevented some families being drawn further into crisis. Parents and carers describe how staff 'go that extra mile and are always on hand to help', and as a result, parents and carers will seek additional support when difficulties feel '... like they will spiral out of control'. All centre users refer to the centres 'friendly welcome', and the positive experiences shared by all the parents and carers confirm that it is a good place to be.

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	3
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?

3

The leadership and management of Reedley Hallows Children's Centre are satisfactory. Following a difficult start, the pace of development is beginning to quicken. Governance arrangements are embedding with an active governing body and children's centre sub-committee, which meet routinely and includes some active parent representation. The senior leadership team are thoroughly committed to the ongoing development of the centre and they ensure performance management arrangements include professional supervision and a secure programme for continuous professional development. As a result, staff are well trained, skilled in their roles and motivated to improve the lives and opportunities of their service users.

The day-to-day management of the centre is led by a head of centre alongside her deputy and an extended services manager. Individual roles are allocated to designated leaders. However, some of the responsibilities of these roles are not fully understood by the whole leadership team, which prevents them from maintaining an full overview of the centres work.

The governing body meet regularly and provide good levels of support to centre leaders, in whose expertise and knowledge they have great confidence. However, some governors have a limited understanding of the wider aspects of the children's centre work, which limits their ability to hold the centre to account. The local authority has provided intensive support during the establishment of the centre, as well as a good range of strategic policy guidance. However, the annual conversation lacks rigour and has prevented the centre from providing robust evidence to support its self-evaluation. In addition, the lack of measurable success criteria and targets within the current action plan prevents the centre from demonstrating a more robust performance over time.

Leaders are beginning to move away from a provision-led approach towards an outcome-based approach as a means to demonstrate the difference the centre makes to users' lives. Evaluations of services include users' views and steadily increasing detail about impact. As result, leaders and the governing body are more secure in their assessment of need and the success and potential viability of services. This is informing the development of provision in the wider community and ensures the centre provides satisfactory value for money. However, the centres' self-evaluation is too optimistic, because the systems to monitor and evaluate outcomes for centre users is generally inconsistent. This prevents the centre from demonstrating stronger outcomes for families because evaluation is not sufficiently based upon evidence of impact. Furthermore, there are missed opportunities to collate and analyse evidence of outcomes from external partners because the data is not always understood or requested.

Security within and around the large campus building is good and includes good arrangements to monitor visitors. Families experiencing significant crisis in their lives are well supported through good links with the East Lancashire Women's Refuge in Action project and children's social care. Staff receive good training which aids them in their safeguarding roles and duties and ensures that referral procedures are clearly understood and acted upon where difficulties escalate. Appropriate policies and procedures for the recruitment and vetting ensure the suitability of staff and partners working with families. However, the centre has been slow to adopt a procedure for routinely updating Criminal Record Bureau checks. Additionally, systems to audit compliance with the specific legal welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage have not been developed. As a result, not all safeguarding requirements have been met because there are gaps in children's personal details and records. Therefore, safeguarding arrangements are only satisfactory.

Equality and diversity is at the heart of the centre's work. Attendance by minority groups is monitored to ensure activities and services are well matched to a wider

range of need. Parents and carers describe the centre ‘... as a place for everybody’ and this is confirmed by the engagement of fathers, grandparents and the participation from a range of cultural groups. The fully integrated provision for children with specific needs and shared resources, such as the hydrotherapy pool creates a positive environment where individuality is celebrated. However, less is done to provide alternative means for users with language barriers to access policies and procedures or to contribute their views in a meaningful way, all of which limits the inclusiveness of the centre.

Partnerships are a key strength of the centre. This exciting campus brings a rich range of on-site partners and a wealth of resources that each is willing to share. This provides a seamless and cohesive provision between Early Years Foundation Stage, primary and specialist educational provision. This aids successful transitions for some of the most vulnerable children and families. Despite having no on-site health provision, relationships with designated health professionals are maintained which ensure their crucial input into current health promotions. Equally, the frequency and quality of the support from speech therapists ensures that children make good progress in their communication and language skills, despite some significant language barriers. The centre places great value on partner roles, their engagement and the enhancements they bring, and thus their continued commitment to increase their involvement in strategic planning within the centre.

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 adults	3
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

Ofsted reports for Reedley Hallows Nursery School and Barden Lane Primary School have been considered as part of this inspection. The nursery school was inspected in November 2009 and the primary school in April 2010. Both achieved good outcomes with some outstanding features and their reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. Separate inspection arrangements apply for the affiliated childcare provided by Burnley Campus Social Enterprise Limited (Twinkle Tots) as it was not inspected at the same time as the children's centre.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Reedley Hallows Children's Centre on 9 -10 June 2010. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

'I couldn't do without it', 'I don't need to shout anymore' and 'It is great to have somebody to turn to, just to make sure I don't slip back' are typical comments from centre users whose lives have improved due to personal counselling, new friendships and access to parenting classes. Others have followed the advice and guidance from services, such as Bumps, Birth and Beyond, which have helped them to carry on breastfeeding, give up smoking, register with a dentist and change the way their baby sleeps to reduce the risks of cot death. Equally, parents and carers have taken steps to improve safety in their homes because of home safety visits, by fitting safety equipment and by moving dangerous objects.

Parents and carers who spoke to us described how they feel safe and secure in the centre because of the 'lovely welcome, the approachable and friendly staff and because everybody wears a badge to show they are a visitor'. Some parents and carers described how the outreach team has enabled them to seek help and address their housing problems and get specialist help from organisations which support families experiencing domestic violence. As a result, children and adults at significant risk have been protected. We agree that that the centre is safe and secure and that the staff and outreach teams work hard to keep everybody protected. However, we

also found that the centre was not meeting all its safeguarding responsibilities so we have asked them to rectify this very quickly.

You told us that the range of activities and services are good, which is why they keep coming back. You particularly like the uniqueness of the building and all the extra resources it has, for example, the hydrotherapy pool, sensory room and soft play. You also said that you have learnt so much about how to help your young children in their learning and development because you have attended Play Workshop or Talking Together. This you say, has enabled you to implement some of the learning at home and help your children in their preparation for school. However, we found that the centre is not doing enough to help adults with their own learning and development, particularly where adults speak English as an additional language. In some cases, adults are accessing training programmes to improve their own literacy and numeracy skills, but information about this is not always gathered to show how well adults are doing alongside their children. We also found that you are not provided with enough opportunities to share your views, access the right information or make decisions about the centre's future. So we have asked the leadership to consider more ways to involve you in the future development of services.

Centre users know the people in charge of the day-to-day running of the centre and they are confident that these people work hard to provide them with activities they want and need. Although we agree with this, some roles and responsibilities of the governing body and children's centre committee are not always clear, which prevents them holding the centre to account for its work. We found that the centre staff and leaders work hard too, but they miss opportunities to monitor and record information about the impact of their work and the work of their partner agencies. So we have asked them to develop systems to improve this.

We found that the centre is a pleasant place to be because everybody is respectful of one another and resources, such as the 'Faith Room' help children and adults to respect and understand one another's cultures and beliefs. Parents and carers we spoke with agreed that this was the case. We also found that the centre caters very well for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for children with language difficulties. However, less is currently done to support adults who speak English as an additional language. So we have also asked them to look at ways to improve this too.

We really enjoyed our time at your children's centre and we thank you for your willingness to speak with us. We are very grateful for your help and wish you every success in the future.

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