

Inspection report for St Anne's Park Children's Centre

Local authority	Bristol City Council
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Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

Centre governance	Local authority
Centre leader	Sue Cripps
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	St Anne's Park Primary
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	St Anne's Park Children's Centre URN 963285

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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 additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, representatives of the local authority, health professionals and partners who offer services, parents and carers, members of the management committee, and headteacher of the link primary school. Inspectors observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

St Anne's Park Children's Centre is located on the site of St Anne's Park Primary School. It is a phase one children's centre in an area of high socio-economic deprivation and was registered in 2006 to provide family and outreach services. The centre is located in the heart of an urban conurbation of mixed housing in Brislington. There are 933 families with children aged nought to five in the centre's reach area. Sixteen per cent of families within the local area are on workless benefits and 10% are lone parent families. A small but increasing proportion of users speak English as an additional language.

The centre is accountable to the local authority and governed directly by a management committee. At the time of this inspection, the centre manager was on holiday and the team leader for the nursery was absent on long-term illness.

The centre offers Early Years Foundation Stage provision for a maximum of 60 children. The nursery provides part-time and full-time places and is open from 8am to 6pm, 48 weeks of the year. Children enter the setting with generally low levels of communication and emotional and social skills.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children’s centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

A noticeable feature of St Anne’s Park children’s centre is the friendly and professional approach of staff. They are held in high regard by users of the centre who appreciate the warmth and personal nature of their contact. Users feel confident in sharing their personal circumstances and concerns and, as a result, staff have a good understanding of individual needs. In the words of one, ‘I owe it all to this place, my child has grown up here.’ Detailed information on children’s interests, together with careful assessments of their abilities, are used well to ensure that children in the nursery make good progress in their learning and personal development. Senior leaders have acted on the recommendations arising from the previous inspection of the nursery to improve provision in the outdoor area and stimulate children’s creative development.

The centre is an inclusive and welcoming environment. The manager’s strong leadership has led to rigorous safeguarding procedures through regular communication with a range of professionals and partner organisations. These have had a direct impact on improving outcomes for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for safeguarding vulnerable children and families. Close liaison with other agencies has helped to provide well-organised support programmes for families in times of crisis. The centre can provide strong evidence that this has reduced the risk of harm and led to improvements for families. A coordinated approach to the early identification and the provision of support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that is closely matched to their needs has helped them to make good progress. As a result, the centre is successfully narrowing gaps in the achievement of different groups of children and improving equality of opportunity for users.

Close working partnerships with health workers have led to good outcomes for users. Breastfeeding rates at birth within the local area are higher than across the county and, although the proportion sustaining breastfeeding 6–8 weeks after birth is

average, this has increased over the last three years. There is anecdotal evidence that the use of text messages to provide medical alerts is increasing parental awareness and helping to maintain high immunisation rates for four-year-olds. Of particular significance is the recent improvement in the sharing and analysis of information of all new births within the centre's reach area. Staff increasingly use this information to identify families who have not registered with the centre.

The centre has helped to improve outcomes for families in many areas, but support for users to develop their skills and improve their employment prospects is adequate but underdeveloped. Users are making satisfactory progress in developing their economic stability and independence. This is because the centre's current arrangements for users to access suitable training and qualifications are limited. Within the centre's reach area, a relatively high proportion of families are claiming workless benefits. Partnership arrangements to provide financial information, advice and guidance for families are weaker than those with other agencies.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of the local community and have successfully developed the centre's services and provision. The senior leadership team are a close and united group of staff who are well organised and responded positively in the temporary absence of the manager. In securing and sustaining effective partnerships with a range of agencies and in ensuring generally good outcomes for users, the centre has a good capacity to continue to improve. Satisfactory systems to evaluate the long-term impact of the provision and to improve outcomes for users are in place. The centre is developing its collection of information and data to more closely monitor the engagement of lone parents and families on workless benefits and increase their participation. Over the last few years, the local authority has modified its arrangements to annually review the effectiveness of the work of the children's centre. Its current procedures to evaluate the centre's effectiveness do not pay sufficient regard to the quality of the centre's self-assessments or to the extent to which services and partnership arrangements are meeting the needs of priority groups of lone parents and families on workless benefits within the local area.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve economic well-being outcomes for users by providing:
 - increased levels of financial advice and guidance
 - more opportunities for adults to access further training and courses.

- Make more effective use of the centre's information and data to ensure that services and activities focus on increasing the participation rates of the priority vulnerable groups in the area.

- Ensure that greater levels of challenge are provided by the local authority in their annual conversations to ensure the centre provides services that are more closely matched to the needs of the local community

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Outcomes for children within the Nursery are good across a wide range of areas. Snacks of milk, apple and juice and nutritious lunches help to develop children's understanding of healthy foods. Children develop their physical skills well with free access to the outdoor area and a good range of large play equipment. They show good levels of independence and self-confidence when climbing and travelling on apparatus. Similarly, outcomes for adults are good across the majority of areas. Adult users are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles well through health clinics and antenatal and postnatal sessions held at the centre. Parents spoke enthusiastically about the well-attended baby massage sessions. In helping parents and carers to bond with their child at an early age, the centre develops families' emotional well-being.

Clear health and safety procedures and close supervision by staff ensure nursery children are kept safe. There are good arrangements to record and monitor children on the child protection register. The centre works closely with other agencies to provide good support for vulnerable families and children. The centre's innovative and rigorous arrangements for collecting and dropping off children ensure that all adults are known to the centre and to the child, and help to maintain good levels of safety. Adult users of the centre are encouraged to participate in first aid, and food hygiene courses are popular and increase adults' good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They receive regular information and guidance about healthy lifestyles during activities and through informative displays around the centre. Parents report that they develop and draw confidence from their contact with the centre and with other users.

Stay and play sessions provide a good range of imaginative activities and encourage children's creativity. Adults report that these activities make a difference to them and help them to support their child's learning at home. Good quality family learning programmes help parents and carers to develop their understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication with their child. These sessions build on the successful development of children's communication skills in the nursery. A speech and language therapist supports staff in planning individual language programmes and in helping to develop the quality of staff interaction and dialogue with children. A bilingual member of staff has helped adults who speak English as an additional language to be more engaged in their child's learning. They have made good progress in developing their understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and how to be involved in planning their children's next steps in learning.

The centre is working in partnership with the learning community team to develop training opportunities and courses for adult users. These have recently included first

aid courses and food hygiene courses. A minority of parents have been helped to complete housing applications and benefit claims by staff. A few users also access employment and financial advice and guidance via the centre's computer access. A financial loans company provides satisfactory advice and guidance on money matters for some families. However, this is a relatively new initiative and does not fully meet the needs of families within the local area.

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, 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	3

How good is the provision?

2

The quality of care for young children within the nursery is good. Staff clearly enjoy time spent with children. Their warm and caring relationships shown by staff help children to settle quickly to the setting and make a smooth transition from baby room to the Butterfly area. Similarly, users of the centre speak highly of the care and attention shown by staff across the centre. The centre is a friendly and welcoming environment where adults feel that they can express their concerns and provide their opinions. The centre makes good use of a range of new technologies to keep users informed of changes to timetables and to provide health updates and information.

Children with learning difficulties are provided with good support from a range of agencies. The centre is quick to ensure that assessments are completed to identify children's individual needs and establish any further support that they may require. Specialist professionals meet regularly with senior leaders to review individual children's progress and plan for their next steps. This approach ensures that children receive appropriate support and advice from an early age and that the centre is able to access specialist equipment and resources. The centre provides good support for users' personal learning and development; a range of activities help users to make good progress in developing their parenting skills and self-confidence. Parents are appreciative of the activities on offer and show high levels of satisfaction and enjoyment.

The centre works in close partnership with other agencies to ensure a common

approach to supporting and monitoring the progress of families facing challenging circumstances. Multi-agency meetings regularly review the effectiveness of activities and partnership arrangements that have been put in place to support families. The centre has devised a system to ensure that families are involved in selecting the most suitable programme. These options include attending regular activities with their child within the nursery setting or at family learning activities provided by the centre. Partnership arrangements to provide financial advice and guidance and to help users gain qualifications leading to employment are underdeveloped.

Adult users are regularly expected to evaluate the centre’s learning activities and they provide positive feedback. Their suggestions and views are used to adapt services and to modify activities. The centre is quick to respond to users’ views. For example, following a number of requests, it has recently introduced specific sessions to support parents who have had Caesarean sections. The nursery setting uses learning diaries well to share the personal milestones in children’s progress and to plan their next steps in learning. While adults’ achievements are celebrated, they are not provided with a similar approach to record and build on their qualifications through accredited courses.

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	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 centre has developed a number of strong partnerships with professional agencies which are effective in ensuring that support for families is timely and of good quality. These provide good value for money in that they are well organised to avoid duplication and have a clear impact in improving users’ health and safety and in developing their self-confidence. The management committee provides good support for the centre and involves the majority of key partners and a number of users. The centre and local authority are aware that partnership arrangements with employment advice and adult learning are weaker. The centre’s governance is satisfactory overall because the local authority’s performance management and annual monitoring procedures do not currently provide sufficient challenge to strengthen partnership arrangements and evaluate the engagement of priority groups.

Inclusion is central to the centre’s work and vision. Support is provided within the centre for families and children who speak English as an additional language. Good

quality activities help to engage fathers in their child’s learning and development. There is well-organised support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The centre is increasingly reaching out to engage the wider community and has actively engaged community groups by providing facilities and advice. In conjunction with the school, it has developed further spaces for adult and community learning to take place.

The centre’s safeguarding arrangements include child protection training for staff at regular and appropriate intervals. As a result, staff complete records and share concerns in line with local authority procedures. Close working partnerships with a range of agencies help to keep vulnerable users safe and to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting families. These include a range of activities within the centre where adults benefit from the support of staff in developing their parenting skills.

Self-evaluation has provided senior leaders with a clear picture of the centre’s strengths and weaknesses. The centre has developed a number of good and innovative strategies to ensure children and families are kept safe and vulnerable children make good progress. Systems are in place to evaluate the long-term impact of the provision and improving outcomes for users. For example, with support from the local authority’s information and data officer, the centre now regularly receives accurate information concerning new births in the area, and is using this to identify families and to begin to engage them in services. The centre is developing its own collection and monitoring of data to provide more accurate evidence of participation and impact. The centre is beginning to use this information to evaluate the participation rates of vulnerable groups of users. The centre has been effective in addressing weaker areas and has improved provision and outcomes in the nursery and for adult users. Their development plan satisfactorily sets out a range of appropriate actions but these do not include specific actions to increase the levels of engagement of vulnerable users in the area.

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	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
The effectiveness of the centre’s policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2

The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	3
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	2

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

St Anne’s Park Children’s Centre Nursery was previously inspected in June 2009. This inspection of the Children’s Centre was informed by the findings and judgements made at that time.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the St Anne’s Park Children’s Centre on 15–16 June 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

You were quick to tell us that you value and appreciate the friendly and considerate approach of all staff. You explained how they listened to your ideas and were quick to act on your concerns. The quality of the nursery setting is good; children clearly enjoy their time and make good progress in their learning. Staff in the nursery pay close attention to children’s interests and regularly assess their progress. This information is used well to plan activities to help individual children to enjoy playing and learning indoors and outside. The centre makes good use of text service and social websites to keep you informed of medical alerts and to let you know of any changes that take place. Some of you told us that these services help to ensure that you keep your child healthy.

Senior members of staff in the centre have introduced a number of new and imaginative systems. For example, the card system you use when you arrive to collect your child helps to keep them safe. The centre also regularly invites staff from outside the centre to meetings. These meetings help staff to work together to plan how to provide help and support. Staff use these meetings well to plan activities which will help to keep families safe and to help them in times of crisis. They are also used successfully to get help and equipment for children in the nursery with special educational needs.

The centre helps some of you to take part in training courses and gain qualifications. It has recently improved rooms in the centre so that it can put on a wider range of courses. There are a high proportion of adults in the local area who are on workless benefits. We have asked the centre to work with other professionals and volunteers to make sure that they increase their help and support to those of you looking to get back into employment. We have also asked the centre to provide more financial information and advice.

The centre asks you to register when you first attend and when you come to sessions and events. They are collecting this information and using it to check which activities are popular and to see how they can be improved. There are a number of lone parents and adults on workless benefits in your local area who are not attending. We have asked the centre to use their information to increase the numbers of adults from these groups that are attending sessions. Representatives from the local authority meet with senior leaders to monitor the work of the centre. Once a year, they formally evaluate the work of the centre. We have asked the local authority to make sure that this process is thorough and to make sure that they check the accuracy of the centre's own evaluations and the proportions of different groups of users that are attending.

Thank you to all of those who met with us and told us your views. We heard how much you appreciate the centre and how much it changes the lives of your children and families.

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