

# Inspection report for Broomhill Children's Centre

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| Local authority     | Bristol         |
| Inspection number   | 365653          |
| Inspection dates    | 13–14 July 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Hazel Callaghan |

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| Centre governance           | Governing body of Broomhill Infant School                    |
| Centre leader               | Mrs Lesley Newman  |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected                                     |
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|---|----------------------------------|
| Linked school if applicable                     | Broomhill Infant School 108983   |
| Linked early years and childcare, if applicable | Mama Bear's Day Nursery EY267805 |

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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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre staff, the manager of the children's centre who is also the headteacher of Broomhill Infant School, the lead teacher for the Early Years provision who is also the deputy headteacher at the infant school, members of the advisory board, groups of parents and carers, a representative of the local authority, the chair of Broomhill Infant School governing body and staff of Mama Bear's Day Nursery.

They observed the centre's work, including a brief visit to Mama Bear's Day Nursery and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

An inspection of the maintained nursery which is part of Broomhill Infant School was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## Information about the centre

Broomhill is a purpose-built phase 2 children's centre designated in December 2007. The centre is situated on the same site as Broomhill Infant School and is managed by the governing body through an advisory board. The centre provides a variety of family services as part of its core offer and supported day-care provision is provided by the privately-run Mama Bear's Day Nursery situated about 200 metres away. The centre is managed by the infant school headteacher. The deputy headteacher is the lead teacher for both the children's centre and the nursery and focuses particularly on those children who are in receipt of the Bristol City arranged enhanced provision.

The local area is within the 30% most deprived areas. Data show that at least 6.7% of households are in receipt of workless benefits. Traditionally, the local population is predominantly of White British backgrounds but the proportion of families from

minority ethnic groups is increasing. Of families in the centre, 16.9% are from minority ethnic groups predominantly from Eastern Europe or from the Indian sub-continent. The number of young families is considered above the national average and there are low levels of adults who have pursued further education in the area. The data show that there are 20.9% lone parent families in the reach area. There is an increasing incidence of domestic violence, which is higher than that found in Bristol as a whole. The percentage of obese children in the Reception years has grown steadily since 2007, and in 2009/10 stood at 17.4% compared to national data which are currently 9.8%. Immunisation data however show a higher proportion than in Bristol and nationally, but the number of reported accidents and referrals to hospitals of children in the reach area is higher than Bristol generally. Currently, 70% families with children under five years of age in the reach area are registered with the centre. Children enter both Mama Bear's and Broomhill Nursery with a range of skills and knowledge that is well below that expected for their age, especially in language and communication.

## 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

Broomhill Children Centre is making a positive impact on the lives of families and their children in their area. A welcoming, attractive environment, friendly and supportive staff and a good range of activities have increased the number of users who are benefiting from what the centre has to offer. A particular strength is in the way staff in the centre, in the linked nursery provision and the school work with vulnerable families in the area. They are part of a local authority initiative which enables those families who are identified as facing particularly challenging circumstances to receive extended early years provision. Strong inter-agency working and cohesive systems enable these families to be identified quickly and given high levels of support. Their needs and progress are carefully monitored. Activities that involve parents as well as children are focused on promoting the children's early learning skills. This strategy also puts a responsibility on the parent and/or carer to participate in some form of training. One mother told the inspectors with great pride of the range of adult education courses she had attended and how this has led to

ambitions for the future because she was determined that her boy would do well. There are many success stories, but the centre is aware of some very hard to reach families who are not yet responding to their many offers of encouragement and support.

Users are rightly proud of their children's centre. One parent said, 'It's a lovely place to meet up and the friendly staff are great with the children.' They unanimously say that the centre understands and meets their diverse needs well, listens to their views and ensures everyone has equal opportunities to participate. For example, crèche facilities are provided during adult learning courses. The dads' and children's Saturday Breakfast club is growing in popularity. Those parents and carers with specific needs, in families of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well supported by staff in the centre. The carefully planned provision by staff in the centre, and their ability to signpost families to other services nearby, make a significant contribution to improving the skills, knowledge and enjoyment of children and their families.

Outcomes for children are good because of the cohesive provision and consistent approaches of the centre and its early years partners. Strong, integrated team work and common procedures between the children's centre linked nursery, Mama Bear's, and the infant school ensure a strong and continuous thread of support for families and a smooth transition for parents, carers and children. This has led to a rising trend in children's abilities and good achievement often from low starting points so the gap in children's attainment is closing. A high priority is given to ensuring the centre's users are well cared for and understand how to keep themselves and their families safe. Robust procedures to safeguard them are implemented effectively by well-trained staff. Good multi-agency working and strong partnerships, for example with health professionals, provide a cohesive service that is helping to protect parents, carers and children, including those at risk of harm. Developing parents' understanding of how to promote the healthy lifestyles for their families is good. This has been a recent target for staff, based on the high levels of obesity in the reach area, and a good number and variety of activities have been introduced. This is a continuing focus for the centre. There is a lack of opportunities for adults to improve their own fitness. Staff are keen to broaden their services to the wider community but recognise that their advertising of what the centre can offer sometimes lacks impact.

The leadership of the centre is good. Staff are very evaluative of the services provided. They have a good understanding of the needs of the local community and regularly discuss how activities are meeting the families' needs. Parents and carers are encouraged to add their thoughts and ideas with the result that activities remain fresh and relevant. Data from the local authority are growing in sophistication and provide information that is well focused on the families in the reach area. From this data, challenging targets for the centre's improvement, focusing on the target users, are identified. Self-assessment is accurate and the senior leadership team has a secure understanding of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. Systems and procedures to identify the impact on users' lives are being developed, but are not yet

as robust as they could be.

The advisory board is an active group of stake holders including partners, parents and staff who monitor and evaluate the centre with growing effectiveness. A lot has been achieved since the centre opened three years ago. The initial strong resistance to a centre from the local community has been overcome. The percentage of registered users has gone up year on year and is now 70% of families with young children in the reach area. Staff are well motivated, well trained and build strong relationships with children and their families. They are led well by the headteacher and there are clear ambitions for the future. The capacity for further improvement is good.

## **What does the centre need to do to improve further?**

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Develop strategies and procedures for measuring the impact of services on the outcomes for families, particularly of adults and therefore on their children.
- Put into action the strategies identified for engaging with the small group of families who are particularly hard to reach, so enabling them to have a better idea of what is on offer and to benefit from the services and good support available.
- Providing more opportunities for adults to develop their own fitness and good health, so building on the already good outcomes of the children.

## **How good are outcomes for users?**

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Parents' understanding of how to promote their families' healthy lifestyles is good. The parents have enjoyed learning about how to provide healthy meals on a budget. They appreciate that the centre staff and those at Mama Bear's encourage the children to eat and enjoy healthy snacks, with the result that children are developing a positive attitude to eating fruit. Children enjoy the opportunities to be active, to run and jump and climb. Health visitors to the well-being clinic have supported families in many areas of child development and helped them to recognise the importance, for example, of oral health. There is good support for mothers who wish to breast feed and regular advice on weaning and immunisation which are supporting parents' ability to ensure their child's health. Parents who wish to give up smoking are well supported and there is much written advice about a range of other health issues such as alcohol abuse. Staff provide good levels of advice and are quick to signpost parents and carers to further support at a nearby children's centre where programmes are already in place.

Keeping families safe is a high focus for all staff and they model safe procedures such as monitoring children's play and being vigilant whilst they are in the centre. Children are also encouraged to be aware of their own and others' safety when they play. Safety Week was a big success, with many opportunities for families to learn about how to keep their children safe and have the opportunity to buy inexpensive

equipment for the home. Many parents commented in their evaluations of the activities about the importance of learning about cupboard locks. They gain a lot from sharing good practice with other families and learning from each other as well as from the visitors. Opportunities to learn about first aid have been very popular and parents commented how surprised they were about how easily a child could choke on something really small. Some said they had not recognised the need to cut grapes in half, for example, and were very pleased to be shown a simple device that could help them measure whether small toys were a potential danger. The outreach work by the early years practitioners has also had a big impact on families in their own homes. They not only help parents and carers to identify any unsafe practices, but also model good practice and donate safe equipment. Staff are also quick to recognise the signs of domestic violence and alert those who initiate the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) so that appropriate levels of support can be put into place with the result that children are well protected.

Parents and children get a great deal of pleasure from the activities held at the centre and parents frequently commented on how much they have learnt from the PEEP programmes (Peers Early Educational Partnership). They could be seen gaining great enjoyment from playing with their children and learning how they learn so they can support them, gaining confidence in their own abilities in the process. Children develop their speech and communication skills well from the skilfully led activities and grow in confidence as they enjoy activities provided in the Boogie Woogie Club focusing on music and movement and enjoying stories and rhymes. The parents commented on how much their children are developing and growing. One parent's comment was typical of many, 'They have done wonders for her confidence and she goes off happily.' Children achieve well and enjoy their learning. The consistent and continuous approaches in learning used in the centre's activities, at Mama Bear's and in the infant school have led to an upward trend in children's achievement.

Children behave well and respond positively to each other and a variety of adults. Parents' and carers' views are welcomed and parents and carers are encouraged to evaluate the courses and activities they attend. The Parents Group is well established and meets regularly to suggest new activities and ways to extend the opportunities for families and children, such as the summer events. A parent from the group sits on the advisory board, providing them with reports and sharing their suggestions.

Adult education courses are a regular event with many opportunities for parents and carers to extend their own knowledge and skills. Many have attended both the English and mathematics courses with the aim of developing their own skills, partly to support their children's learning but, after this initial aim, for their own sense of achievement. Several have gone on to follow National Vocational Qualification courses and one is now employed by the school. The achievements of parents are celebrated by the staff, but there is only limited tracking of their progress to give a clear view of the overall impact. Good partnerships with childminders are also a strength and staff at the centre work with them, not only to provide stimulating activities and support but also in developing their own knowledge and skills so they too can gain the Bristol Standards for Childcare.

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| <b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>       | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>                            | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>     | <b>2</b> |

## **How good is the provision?**

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Assessment of users' needs is efficient and effective and this informs the centre's planning. The health visitors pass on information about all births in the reach area to the children's centre who then makes contact with the family inviting them to the centre. Early assessments of the families' particular needs are made, which may lead to a CAF and possibly referral for enhanced early years provision. Effective and regular inter-agency meetings then monitor the progress of the family, both the adults' needs and those of the children. There are good procedures for developing the team around the child and child protection plans. This good inter-agency working provides continuous and effective support which results in some children being removed from the child protection plans. All families are given the different levels of assistance needed, whether by social services or by the centre's early years practitioners who act as outreach workers with families needing less urgent help. A good proportion of vulnerable families are successfully supported and involved, but the centre continues to focus on those who are hard to engage. The fairly high proportion of teenage parents in the reach area are well supported by a local college and so rarely attend the centre, but staff recognise that they need to ensure that all of these families are being supported.

Information about the needs of particular families and data provided by the local authority are used by the centre staff to plan their activities. A strong focus is placed on vulnerable children and their families who have been identified for enhanced provision. Weekly activities are planned for children and their parents or carers to work together developing the child's early learning skills, especially those of speech and language, so they are more prepared for learning when they move into the Reception class. This good work is carried out in the centre and includes children who attend Mama Bear's and those who are at the school nursery. Other programmes, such as the PEEP sessions, are helping parents and carers to appreciate the value of different activities, and give suggestions for what to do at



home and strategies for managing difficult behaviour. The stay and play sessions are particularly popular and becoming over subscribed. The staff are effective in sharing good parenting skills and regular visitors give an additional input. Advisers on benefits and debt management, for example, come in to discuss issues that are important to the families attending.

The resources at the centre are well used so that even when the staff are making outreach visits, drop-in sessions enable families to meet together and use the toys and safe outside spaces that are not available at home. The centre employs a fathers' worker who supports those dads who are lone parents, as well as arranging regular Saturday Dads and their children sessions where grandfathers are welcome too. The uptake is not large, but growing. The courses for adults, as well as focusing on academic skills also offer support in passing the written part of a driving test which several parents have attended successfully, enabling them to become more independent and confident.

All staff provide high levels of support, advice and guidance for whoever comes into the centre. One parent's comment typifies this care, 'You can just drop in - they always find time for you,' which results in families feeling confident in the support they will receive. There are striking examples of the outstanding support given to families and individuals in times of crisis. This ongoing support, engagement of outside agencies where appropriate, and advice have ensured children are safeguarded and the family enabled to get the support it needs. This includes personal support for those in violent relationships. Many aspects of care, support and guidance are provided by the well trained staff, but some activities are not available at the centre and adults are signposted towards Jobcentre Plus for help in gaining employment, for example. Staff are trained to support adults to quit smoking and have had a small measure of success, but other aspects of promoting parents' and carers' own health are less actively promoted such as fitness programmes for adults and advice on alcohol abuse. In contrast, the mental health, confidence and self-esteem of adults are well promoted. High levels of support are given to adults with mental health problems.

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| <b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>                                   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>                    | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>                    | <b>2</b> |

## How effective are the leadership and management?

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Leadership at all levels is good and staff are highly committed to the successful support of all their families and children. Good procedures for staff development and supervision are in place and have resulted in regular professional training to meet the needs of the users and to support staff in developing their interests and strengths. The governing body is well informed about the centre's provision. The advisory board is developing effective systems to monitor the work of the centre and support staff in its development. The recent annual 'Development Day' was well attended by members of the board and other stakeholders to brainstorm how to meet the challenging targets set by the headteacher and deputy headteacher for the centre's further improvement.

The advisory board monitors finances effectively, scrutinising activities so they provide good value for money. The lead teacher from the infant school is an excellent resource and the centre staff are utilised well. The centre building is used well to offer services to the community and is often booked by outside groups so providing additional funds. The centre does not as yet look for possible additional funding from charitable organisations to support its services, but is beginning to develop a group of users as volunteers and mentors to work with other parents and carers.

Safeguarding is at the heart of all of the centre's work. There are good policies and procedures that are well understood by staff and parents alike. Appropriate training in safeguarding and child protection ensures that procedures are carried out rigorously. The centre is very safe and parents and carers respond well to the clearly stated expectations for their behaviour and their responsibilities for the care and safety of others in the centre. There are good links to other centres that run Freedom courses for those who are in violent relationships and strong inter-agency working ensures children and families with protection plans are well monitored.

The centre welcomes all families that 'come to their door' and actively seek the views of all sections of their community. The families from minority ethnic groups, for example, have had their views sought about whether they would welcome specific courses and group sessions. However, this was not wanted as the families said they did not want to be seen as different and would rather be part of the centre's general provision. The purpose-built centre is easily accessible to those with physical disabilities and although very few adults with disabilities use the centre at present they are made welcome and given any support that is required. The Butterfly Club, initiated by staff in the infant school, is a great support to parents and the sensory room is a favourite with several of the children who come in to use it.

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| <b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood</b> |
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| <b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>           | 2 |
| <b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>                            | 2 |
| <b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b> | 2 |
| <b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>            | 2 |
| <b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>  | 2 |
| <b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide</b>     | 2 |
| <b>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</b>    | 2 |

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

Mama Bear's Day Nursery was inspected in June 2009 and judged outstanding. Information from that report was used to support judgements in this report.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Broomhill Children's Centre on 13 and 14 July 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

During the inspection, we talked with parents, staff, partners and members of the local authority linked to the centre. We would like to thank those of you who spared the time to speak to us to share your thoughts about the centre.

All of you we spoke to told us how much you enjoyed using the centre. It has made a big difference in the lives of many children and families, particularly those who face challenges that make life difficult. We could see how much you enjoyed activities

where you could play with your children and to help them learn, such as the Caterpillars group and the PEEP sessions. Many of you wrote about the important things you had learnt about keeping your children safe in the first-aid courses and we heard that the cooking sessions were greatly enjoyed as well, because you were introduced to some tasty meals that did not cost too much to prepare.

We could see there were many ways in which the staff at the centre helped you to understand how to make your families' lives healthier and how to keep them safe. That little gadget to help you see how dangerous small toys can be appeared to be a big help in preventing babies choking. We know many of you enjoy coming to the centre to use the big outside area, to meet with other mums and to let your children use the good range of toys and resources. Many of you told us that your children are making good progress in their learning and parents are too. The English and mathematics courses appear to be very successful. Some of you have learnt about using computers and even how to be successful in the written part of the driving test. These good outcomes for you and your families are because the staff at the centre want to do the best for you. They find out what your children need and what you think is important too and plan a good range of activities to support you. Staff work extremely well with the staff at Mama Bear's and those in the infant school so that your children are helped in a similar way. As a result, they find moving on to new activities fun and they are well prepared for learning. The centre also works extremely well with the health visitor, the midwives and child minders so that your children have the best start they can and you feel well supported. The centre works with a large number of families now, but there are still some who are hard to reach. We have asked the staff to continue developing ways to get them interested so they come too and get the support they need for their families.

We could see that the centre is well led by the headteacher of the infant school, and that the lead teacher, is a great support to all those who work with your children so they do well. We know the centre helps all you to improve the life of your families, but we feel they could be helping you to get a bit fitter as well, and to tell more people in the wider community about the great activities that are on offer.

Thank you again for helping us with our inspection and don't forget the centre staff really want to know what you think about the activities the centre provides and how they can be improved. We wish all the very best to you and your families.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).