

Inspection report for Community Vision Children and Family Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Bromley
Inspection number	367785
Inspection dates	10–11 August 2011
Reporting inspector	Rosy Belton HMI

Centre governance	Local Authority
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Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Community Vision Nursery

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

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Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

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

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

An inspection of the registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, representatives from the parents' forum, co-located partners including health professionals, and local authority managers including the data manager and performance information analyst. They spoke to parents formally and informally around the centre.

They observed the centre's work, including messy play for babies, the crèche for the parent forum, story time including singing and baby play. They looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's self-evaluation, business plan, user evaluations and case study information.

Information about the centre

Community Vision Children and Family Centre is a phase one children's centre funded by local authority and children's centre monies. The centre is located in the Penge and Cator ward within the London Borough of Bromley.

The centre's catchment area contains large areas of deprivation with high-density and poor-quality housing. It encompasses six super output areas of higher deprivation and four of lower deprivation. Of its current users, 87% are from the higher deprivation areas. This also includes the highest rates of children under the age of five in families relying on benefits. While the local population is mostly White British, with 27% from Black and other minority ethnic groups, the centre attracts 53% from these groups. Ten per cent of the reach area families have lone parents.

Close links exist between this centre and three others locally. A number of programmes and activities are delivered at the centre through commissioned services. The centre’s day-to-day management is by a senior family support and parenting practitioner and a centre coordinator who work very closely with the Bromley Children Project manager. Governance is provided through the local authority’s project board which oversees all 18 children’s centres in Bromley. This consists of representatives from the voluntary and statutory sectors. Services such as health clinics and groups are run within the centre and family support and parenting practitioners are based at the centre and provide outreach services within the community. It is also the base for the borough’s crèche worker coordinator.

The centre’s facilities include a reception area, a number of offices, including those used by other agencies, a kitchen/staff room, three consulting/interview rooms, two large training rooms that can be used for health services and other users, a crèche room and a community training kitchen. The training rooms and crèche have access to an outdoor area. The building is fully wheelchair accessible. The centre opens from 9.00am to 5.00pm each weekday and occasionally on Saturdays for 48 weeks a year. Most children enter early years provision with a much narrower range of skills and abilities than those typically expected for their age.

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

The overall effectiveness of the centre is good with outstanding features. The extent to which children are safe and protected is outstanding, and health professionals as well others involved with users are able to identify any potential concerns early. The development of employability skills supporting users’ economic well-being is also outstanding. Parents benefit from a wide range of excellent courses, including money management, with the result that many complete vocational qualifications and improve their employment prospects.

Overall outcomes for users are good. Parents and children are encouraged to stay healthy, enjoy and achieve in all their activities and courses. Adults contribute effectively to the centre and wider community through volunteering in school and

work roles, for example as crèche workers. Health outcomes are good. However, data on improvements to families' well-being are not routinely shared and, for example, information on breastfeeding rates is insufficiently clear to measure accurately the centre's impact on these services.

Assessment of users' need is good and the centre staff know their community well. However, assessment of children's starting points in their learning and development are insufficiently clear making it hard to measure their progress, including for those children from different ethnic backgrounds and targeted groups. Learning and development opportunities are good as the centre provides a wide range of activities to meet the needs of users.

The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community is outstanding. The outreach work by the family support and parenting practitioners is highly effective in identifying need and arranging the most appropriate interventions to best support families. The Common Assessment Framework is used particularly well to ensure an integrated approach is taken to support families and prevent further concerns. Parents highly value the support the centre provides.

Leadership and management are good. Resources at the centre are outstanding, not only the range, number and quality of materials and toys available for use by the parents and children, but also the staffing and commissioning arrangements which enable a wider range of events and activities to take place as they are shared with other centres across the borough.

Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding and staff are knowledgeable and well trained, ensuring families are well supported and protected. The promotion of equality and diversity is good and well embedded in to the content of activities, enabling users to have good opportunities to learn about each others' cultures and customs. However, information leaflets and posters rely on text to convey messages which makes it difficult for users who are non-readers and those users for whom English is an additional language to understand.

The restructuring of centre staffing has resulted in effective management arrangements, enabling changes to be easily introduced and supported. The staff team is strong. Partnerships are outstanding and lead to wider opportunities and good outcomes for users. The current approach to governance offers a good model of delivery with particularly good support from local authority senior management.

Activities and courses are well used and attended and are valued by users, with many courses and activities being in demand. The centre's action planning and vision are sound and securely based on self-evaluation which is broadly accurate. The strong ethos of continuous improvement with a view to supporting sustainable groups and activities is good. The centre has a good track record of building links with the local community and to respond to need demonstrated by the growing number of users. As a result, the centre's capacity to improve further is good.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Obtain data on health outcomes to reflect immunisation rates, the reduction in obesity in children and breastfeeding uptake and continuation rates, to accurately measure the impact of these services.
- Improve records of children's starting points to more accurately measure progress, including for those from different ethnic backgrounds and targeted groups.
- Provide information leaflets and posters in pictorial form to meet the needs of non-readers and those users for whom English is an additional language

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Health visitors provide a good service and are valued by parents and carers. A good range of activities promote healthy lifestyles including healthy eating and emotional well-being, with the result that parents are now more readily cooking healthy meals and producing healthy lunch boxes for their school-aged children. Breastfeeding buddies are effectively encouraging the uptake of breastfeeding and are supported well by the breastfeeding coordinator and across the borough. Fifty-three per cent of mothers are now breastfeeding their babies at six to eight weeks after birth. Provision of speech and language therapy is good and leading to improvements in the communication skills of children and the interaction between parents and children. There is good uptake of services by families and attendance is high.

The focus on safeguarding is excellent and health professionals identify vulnerable mothers during pregnancy and during postnatal monitoring. Safeguarding information is displayed and promoted well, although relies heavily on text to convey messages. The site offers high levels of security. Children who have a child protection plan are supported very effectively and are given priority places at the nursery. Parents say they feel safe at the centre because the staff are concerned about them and their children. Staff and families are health and safety aware and ensure materials and equipment are used safely. They complete first-aid training which they say helps them deal with minor injuries and that they are better prepared for emergencies. Courses clearly set out ground rules for behaviour and both adults and children show respect for each other. Crèche activities are varied and children enjoy their time using many good resources available at the centre. Parents really value the crèche. 'It's helped me devote some time to the other child, not having a garden I value the outside play space.' Children particularly enjoy messy play activities. Parents and carers say that they feel more confident and their parenting skills are developed well through a wide range of courses. Users have been successful in completing a wide range of training courses helping them develop personal and social skills. Parents and carers enjoy the course content, the social contact with other parents and the chance to have fun. One parent stated, 'Accessing the centre has been a Godsend, it's fantastic because of his (son's) very specific

special needs, it's made a real difference. He's really coming on.' Highly skilled staff, offering story-time sessions for mums and toddlers, promote language and communication development particularly well. The mums and baby singing session was very welcoming and inclusive, promoting the parents' and children's cultures and customs very well. Activities are very much enjoyed by children and families and the children are developing the important social and language skills to support their future learning and development.

The parent forum has a strong voice in influencing the development and shaping of activities held at the centre. Crèche workers, as parents of the centre, set a good example to users and act as role models for other parents. Relationships between parents and their children are good. Parents report making good and strong friendships that endure beyond the centre's activities. They engage in fundraising activities and events that support wider community activities. Many become volunteers at local schools, with some gaining work as classroom assistants and early years workers after completing the children's care learning and development award. Parents participate in social action locally and gain in confidence. They often become active in the local community and refer other parents in need of support to the services at the centre.

Activities to improve the economic well-being of families are outstanding. They are wide ranging and well received. Parents achieve in vocational training particularly well. They gain vocational qualifications and develop other employability skills. Many parents become paid crèche workers. Initiatives to reduce poverty are excellent. A 'swap-shop' enables parents to bring in unwanted clothes and swap them for those that meet the changing needs of their families. Parents have good access to, and support from, the Bromley Early Intervention and Prevention Service funds, which are often used to improve families' housing circumstances, providing beds, wardrobes, other basic furniture and appliances to those in need. Money and financial advice courses are valued by users and help them with budgeting and money management at home. 'Cooking on a budget' activities promote sensible shopping as well as healthy eating. Centre staff also continue to support the children who attend the on-site nursery, ensuring that children are well prepared for school.

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	1
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	1
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How good is the provision?	2
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The centre staff understand their community well. The community profile is effectively researched and a clear picture of the needs of families within the reach area is drawn. The use of this data is good and enables those most in need to access services through good targeted outreach work. The use of the Common Assessment Framework is well established and effective in highlighting users at risk and in need of support. Through these interventions families gain access to a range of well-focused services. Monitoring and support are well coordinated by the Common Assessment Framework coordinator, and other lead professionals who provide suitable interventions that prevent issues from escalating in to child protection concerns. The monitoring of the involvement of vulnerable families is very good.

Purposeful learning, development and enjoyment are promoted particularly well. Good partnerships with the adult education service and training organisations enable a range of learning opportunities to be held and accessed at the centre. Very effective signposting to other learning and development opportunities, including those provided at other centres, schools and community venues, are made to support all families including those experiencing domestic violence. Highly-valued parenting courses support the development of positive parenting and a wide variety of skills enabling parents to rise to challenges in maintaining positive family relationships.

Courses to meet the needs of babies and young children and their parents and carers are provided, enabling users to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills including an understanding of the value of play in communicating and bonding with your child. Excellent links with health services provide other activities, such as baby massage courses, healthy eating and 'Time for Me', giving parents an opportunity to network, make friends and reduce stress. The value and quality of courses are monitored by the centre particularly well, enabling effective planning of future courses based on the take-up and attendance rates.

Family support and parenting practitioners provide excellent support to vulnerable families in their homes on a one-to-one basis or at the centre. One parent said, 'I would really be lost without Community Vision. I've gained confidence in being a parent.' The monitoring of family support is good and interventions with families are well recorded, ensuring information is shared and used by other professionals. Contact histories are detailed and useful in enabling staff to monitor the needs of users, the impact of the support given and to provide access to services, such as social care, the day nursery, family workers and schools. The fortnightly housing support drop in is particularly supportive of families coping with poor housing, overcrowding and badly maintained homes. The provision of food parcels and the

rapid response fund for aids and adaptations, or appliances and furniture, offer essential support for some families. Good access to information, advice and guidance is available including information on sexual health, drug and alcohol misuse and specialist support services provided through both voluntary and statutory services. Individual counselling sessions that focus on individual families' needs are held twice a week. Families are referred by any of the range of professionals based at the centre or users can self-refer. Well organised crèche workers recruited from the local community are available to support a range of activities so adults can attend and be focused on the task at hand. A specialist disability family support worker, senior parenting practitioner is also based at the centre and is working with over 50 children and adults with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Families receive good support in completing forms, for example free school meals application forms and disability living allowance, child tax credits and housing forms.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	2
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Governance and senior leadership of the centre are good. Senior managers' work together closely to ensure systems are appropriately applied and effective. The centre coordinator is very effective and carefully manages the integration of activities and events. Appraisal, supervision and staff development and training activities are well established and effective in equipping staff to carry out their job roles well.

The governance structure ensures that the children and family centres are high on the local agenda as it reports into the Children and Young Peoples' Partnership (formally The Children's Trust). A good information flow, coupled with the co-location of services such as health services, enables good communication between professionals. The centre management is responsive to the local community. The parent forum is used well to encourage parents to take an active role in the running of the centre and changes are made to provision as a result of their input. The local authority sets the centre challenging targets for the development of activities and in response to users' views and needs. Continuous improvement underpins the centre's work and the self-evaluation process is well established and broadly accurate. The integration of the services are effective in creating a holistic approach to meeting need. Where services are oversubscribed targeted families are prioritised.

Effective sharing of resources across the centres in the borough enables a wider range to be available. Staff resources are managed well and a creative use of a team of crèche workers supports a wide range of activities borough-wide. Crèche workers are also trained to cover for centre coordinators when necessary so reducing costs. Outside funding is also accessed to support some courses. Partnership working minimises the duplication of services. The Bromley Children Project family support and parenting practitioners, for example, deliver parenting courses to prevent the need to employ external providers. Borough-wide commissioning of facilities services, for example caretaking, ensures economies of scale across centres. Good use is made of attendance data to monitor the take up of activities and to adapt services to better meet need.

Equality and diversity are reflected particularly well in the range and content of activities in the centre, for example the singing group where cultural rhymes and songs are shared between users. The take up of activities by Black and minority ethnic groups is high and well above the local profile in the reach area. Local parents employed as crèche workers reflect the local community profile and are recruited from diverse cultural backgrounds, giving the centre direct access to those families through their connections. This has encouraged community cohesion and fostered positive relationships between these groups within the community. A hearing impaired crèche worker and one who uses British Sign Language are able to support hearing impaired families to express their views. A male centre coordinator and male staff recruited as crèche workers offer positive role models for fathers and encourage participation. Efforts to narrow the achievement gap for different groups of users are evident through interaction between staff, parents and children, but formally measuring the outcomes of users and the progress they have made at the centre is proving difficult as the position of children's starting points are not recorded.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive and clear. The strong emphasis on safe recruitment practices for all staff including crèche workers recruited from the parent pool reassures parents. The training and safeguarding knowledge of staff is very good. Safeguarding information is promoted and displayed and parents and carers are aware of their responsibilities. The centre monitors the participation of the most vulnerable families. Case notes on the management information system are available to other professionals working with the families to ensure good communication between them. Good use is made of the centre to facilitate child/parent contact sessions and professionals involved with the families hold 'team around the child' and core case meetings at the centre.

Users' views are obtained and acted upon. A 'you said – we did' board is visually attractive and clearly sets out actions to improve provision. Evaluations are gathered from users after every activity or course. The findings demonstrate a very positive view of services and activities. A new evaluation arrangement is being developed via the management information system to enable reports and monitoring of services by users and children to be produced.

Partnerships are strong and productive. Creative commissioning arrangements

ensure need is met well. Excellent links with social workers, health visitors and midwives and the counselling service further improve the outcomes for parents and children. An excellent partnership arrangement with the GFS Platform, which is co-located, is very effective in supporting young mothers. Close work with the Bromley Refugee Day Centre, including the provision of crèche workers for the it's weekly English for speakers of other languages classes, has enabled opportunities to be extended to families seeking refuge in this country.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	2
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	1
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	1
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	1
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	2

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Community Vision Children and Family Centre on 10 and 11 August 2011. We judged the centre as good overall with outstanding features.

The centre provides you with a very safe environment where you feel welcomed. You told us that you particularly value the wide range of resources, activities and events on offer. You said that you found the opportunity to develop budgeting skills helpful

and that the chance to gain skills leading to employment was particularly good and many of you have become crèche workers or volunteers in local primary schools.

You find the provision of health services at the centre very helpful and many of you take advantage of the healthy lifestyle activities available. Much good work takes place, but the health service is unable to produce information about the improvements these services have made to users of the centre and it is difficult to measure the benefits of the services. We have asked the centre to obtain this information to better measure outcomes.

You said that your children do very well at the centre and at the nursery attached to the centre. This gives you the opportunity to concentrate on supporting and developing other members of your family and yourselves. While the children are developing new skills at the centre, it is difficult to show the progress they have made, as assessment of their starting points are not clearly identified. We have asked the centre to do this.

The family support and parenting practitioners at the centre offer you particularly good support and build positive relationships with you and your families. This service is very effective in offering you additional support when you need it. The staff have good links with other professionals and organisations that use the centre or are based in the community and are able to direct you to other areas of support when you need it.

Some of you are part of the parents' forum and you are confident about expressing your views and identifying activities and events that you would like to see developed. The centre is good at gathering a lot of information about the centre's use and those activities that are popular.

The centre's managers and the local authority work closely together with other organisations to ensure you have wider opportunities to help you and your children learn and develop. They are particularly good at making partnerships to extend these opportunities. The arrangements to safeguard you and your children are outstanding and the staff at the centre take every step they can to keep you and your children safe whilst attending the centre and help you protect your children when outside of the centre.

A lot of information about services and the policies and procedures that centre users should know about are displayed, but much of this information is in writing and is difficult for users who speak English as an additional language or those who have difficulty reading to understand. The centre is very socially inclusive and celebrates all cultures and customs, so it is particularly important that everyone is able to understand what is on offer and what is important to know about the centre. We have asked the centre to produce more information in pictorial form, providing prompts and clues to the text to make it easier for every one to understand.

Thank you to those of you who took the time to come and talk to us. We wish you and your children all the best for the future.

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