

Inspection report for Hollingbury and Patcham Children's Centre

Local authority	Brighton and Hove City Council
Inspection number	383512
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Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Carden Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Not applicable

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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 co-located primary 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.

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, the centre's management and other staff including early years and health visitors, a representative of the local authority, special educational needs coordinator of the co-located primary school, and a representative of the voluntary sector.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Hollingbury and Patcham is a phase two children’s centre. The centre, which opened in 2007, is located in an annexe of Carden Primary School. It operates a health-led model, which provides services from health professionals including midwives, speech and language therapists, and health visitors, supported by early years visitors. There is a newly built GP surgery and pharmacy close to the children’s centre. There are 902 children under five years of age living in its reach area.

The centre serves an area that includes one of the top 30% most deprived super output areas in England. In this area of deprivation, levels of worklessness and the number of families in receipt of benefits are high. Twelve per cent of children in the reach area live in poverty. Children’s levels on entry to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well below national expectations for their age. The area is less ethnically diverse than other areas of the city with the majority of families of White British heritage.

The local authority and Primary Care Trust provide governance to the centre through a Section 75 agreement. The centre has very recently amalgamated its advisory board with another children’s centre. A Sure Start neighbourhood service manager oversees the day-to-day running of the centre.

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 families

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

Hollingbury and Patcham children's centre provides exceptionally high-quality care, guidance and support to children, parents and carers, including those who have additional needs. Almost all parents speak positively about the impact of the centre. As one said, 'The centre is lovely, supportive and friendly.' Leaders and managers have brought about significant improvements in outcomes since the centre opened in 2007 and they correctly identify the centre's strengths and weaknesses. The centre's capacity for sustained improvement is therefore good.

Health visitors make contact with all children living in the centre's reach area and, through their excellent assessment processes, including the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), they identify any additional needs early. This enables children's centre workers to intervene quickly and provide highly effective enhanced or intensive support to families through their 'Team Around the Family' (TAF) approach.

Highly coordinated and effective health services ensure that health outcomes for children living in the local area are outstanding. Universal and highly targeted health services ensure that children and their parents receive excellent support to improve their emotional health. The centre's work to promote healthy living has had a positive impact so that, for example, the percentage of children who are obese when they start Reception class is well below average. Strong relationships between midwives and health visitors have successfully increased the percentage of mothers' breastfeeding at six to eight weeks, so that this is well above average.

The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who attend the co-located primary school was judged satisfactory in the coordinated inspection and the gap between the lowest achieving 20% and their peers has not narrowed over the last three years. However, the achievement of children in the reach area at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good overall.

The centre evaluates the services that it delivers and parents' views shape provision. However, the centre's advisory board, which has recently amalgamated with another centre, is not fully effective and too few parents are regularly engaged in service design or evaluation. Leaders and managers do not fully analyse all of the locality data that is available to them so that they can plan and target their interventions more effectively, for example to improve achievement. However, when managers use data well they have brought about significant improvements, for example in improving breastfeeding rates.

Partnership working, particularly between health and social care, is extremely strong and ensures that families receive a highly coordinated response when they need it. The families of children whose parents are addicted to drugs and alcohol are supported as they go through rehabilitation, and the centre can cite examples of striking success in this area. Case studies of parents who have been selected to undertake parenting programmes clearly show that these have had a positive impact

on reducing depression, anxiety and stress, as well as improving their parenting skills.

Highly effective partnerships ensure that families are exceptionally well safeguarded, including those where children are subject to child-protection plans, looked after, or are refugees. The centre knows each family well and they share information in appropriate and timely ways with a range of services including the police. A wide range of specialist workers, including the health visitor with responsibility for refugees, ensures that the most vulnerable children and families receive enhanced support to be safe. For example, those who have experienced domestic violence have been provided with help to access housing and counselling so that they could improve their lives and living conditions in the local community.

The centre effectively promotes equality and diversity, as evidenced by its impressive track record of support for children from Sudan, Uganda, Portugal and Ethiopia. The centre's work helps to strengthen the local community and bring people together from a wide range of backgrounds and faiths. Strong links with the Traveller education service ensure that Traveller families are well supported.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Work with the local authority to improve the processes of data collection, analysis and service evaluation to ensure that the centre is able to target resources and services effectively to improve outcomes for all groups.
- Work with the co-located primary school to:
 - increase the percentage of children achieving 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scales with at least six points in each of the scales for personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy
 - decrease the percentage gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest.
- Improve the involvement families in the management of the centre. Specifically, ensuring that:
 - parents are actively represented on the new advisory board
 - parents are routinely involved in the design and evaluation of services

How good are outcomes for families?

2

In a recent survey carried out by the local authority, to which 34 parents responded, all of them said that they felt safe at the centre. Workers proactively share information with other professionals and make appropriate referrals to a wide range of agencies so that children, including those who are subject to child-protection plans, are very effectively safeguarded. The centre has intervened successfully and early enough to prevent children, who were subject to chronic neglect, from being taken into care. Case files show that the centre has effectively supported parents so that their children are no longer subject to child protection plans.

All workers at the centre have taken part in training about domestic violence and provide excellent advice and guidance to parents who have been subject to abuse. The centre works seamlessly with the local women's refuge to ensure that the most vulnerable families receive the specific support that they need. Through a partnership with 'Safety Net', families are given free access to safety equipment for their homes, including fireguards and child-safety gates. The number of children to hospital with accidental or deliberate injuries shows that the number admitted has fallen in 2011. Parents are appropriately supported to improve their economic well-being, for example with help to access disability allowances or through signposting to the Citizen's Advice Bureau for advice on managing debt.

Highly targeted parenting support, and universal activities, including 'Stay and Play', ensures that children engage in positive behaviour and develop social skills. Most parents report that the centre has helped to increase their confidence as parents; for example, one parent said, 'After a check up with my daughter I left feeling like I was a great mum.'

A large majority of parents surveyed said that they had learned about health issues at the centre and in a meeting with parents they stated to inspectors that health issues are strongly promoted by the centre. They speak highly about the range of support that is available to them; for example one parent described the help she received from a physiotherapist to support her child's physical development through walking and swimming. Parents who have experienced drug and alcohol addiction are effectively supported through rehabilitation. The Health Child Programme, which reaches every child in the area, ensures that health outcomes are outstanding. Dedicated 'Looked After Children' nurses ensure that children in care receive the targeted supported they require.

Parents are encouraged to take part in a range of learning activities, including first aid for dads, which they enjoy. Family learning activities use the 'Recognising and Recording of Progress and Achievement' process and the centre can therefore demonstrate positive impact in this area of its work. The majority of those taking part in adult-learning activities continue with further training or gain employment. Some parents also volunteer at the centre. The centre funds nursery places for some of the most disadvantaged children in the reach area with the result that they

access opportunities to learn and develop social skills early. However, it does not adequately track the impact of this targeted support on their early learning.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, 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 parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	2

How good is the provision?

2

The care, guidance and support that families receive from the centre is exceptional and leads to very positive health and social well-being outcomes for a wide range of families, including those who live in the local women's refuge. As one parent said: 'It has absolutely helped in developing relationships with my children and introduced me to working in childcare.' The centre operates a robust three-tier system of assessment and support to families: universal, targeted and intensive. This needs based approach is replicated across a range of services, including speech and language, so that all children, including those children who require one to one support, receive this in a timely manner. Parents speak very highly of the support they have received, for example a mother speaking about her son's behaviour said: 'It was unmanageable before the centre helped and now I can cope.'

Parents speak very highly of the centre's workers; for example, a parent said, 'The staff are lovely, supportive and friendly.' Health visitors, supported by early years visitors, provide an effective, high quality, outreach service that reaches all new mothers within two weeks. Families are appropriately assessed and those who require additional support therefore receive this in a highly targeted, coordinated and effective manner. Health visitors screen mothers for postnatal depression and undertake regular development reviews of children. This continuous approach to assessment ensures that parents receive the support they need as their children grow and develop.

A wide range of children and families are very effectively engaged with the centre,

including teenage mothers, children in minority ethnic groups and fathers. A dedicated fathers' worker has improved the involvement of dads through targeted activities such as 'Touchline Dads'. Fathers only 'Stay and Play' sessions, which are delivered during term time, are well attended and have clearly defined aims and objectives. Health visitors employ a number of strategies to encourage further engagement, for example providing vouchers for families to attend 'Carden Tots', a local voluntary sector parent and toddler group. Participation rates at these activities are good and the centre is working effectively to support the voluntary sector to develop provision further.

A range of high-quality activities promotes early learning and personal development at the centre for children and their parents. However, the centre is unable to fully evidence the wider impact of early learning activities on the achievement of children and has correctly identified this an area for development. The centre works closely with the local authority to recruit and train child-minders in the local area so that they receive excellent support.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Leaders and managers at all levels are highly ambitious for the children and families they serve. Staff morale is high. Inclusive practice is at the heart of what they do and they promote this well, through the use of interpreters or specialist workers, such as the Black Minority Ethnic health visitor for example.

Leaders and managers have developed excellent working relationships with a wide range of partner organisations, particularly across a range of health services, including GP's. These partnerships lead to good outcomes overall, especially for the most vulnerable children and families. The universal health visiting service, delivered by the centre, effectively reaches every child in the reach area. Leaders and managers prioritise resources into targeted and intensive support for the most vulnerable children and families and this support is highly effective. Health outcomes and the safeguarding of the most vulnerable families are exceptional. Overall value for money is therefore good.

Governance arrangements are clear and understood, and enable workers to share information appropriately. Day-to-day management and supervision arrangements of staff and volunteers are effective and any underperformance of staff is dealt with

effectively.

All leaders, managers and centre staff champion the safeguarding of children and families. Leaders and managers regularly undertake comprehensive and high quality advanced safeguarding training. Excellent partnerships with social services and the police for example, ensure that families receive timely and appropriate support. New staff are appropriately recruited and vetted, and Criminal Records Bureau checks are undertaken on all staff and volunteers. Inter-agency cooperation, through arrangements such as Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, for families who have experienced domestic violence, is highly effective in supporting vulnerable people.

Leaders and managers have a sound understanding of health data. However, they do not routinely collect information on how well individual children achieve, or adequately analyse the data they do hold to enable them to target interventions further. They have made good progress in engaging families and targeting services since the centre opened. However, their development plans do not always include specific outcome focused measures or targets to drive improvements further. Their capacity to improve is therefore good.

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 effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	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	1
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	1
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area 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

The inspection of Carden Primary School which took place at the same time as this inspection.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Hollingbury and Patcham Children's Centre on 5–6 October 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

We observed a range of activities including 'Stay and Play' and the healthy child clinic and met many of the children's centre staff who support you, including specialist health visitors and early years workers. We also spoke to parents during the inspection, including many of you who had very positive stories to tell us about the help and support you have received from the centre. I would like to pass on my thanks to those of you who took the time to meet with us. As one of you told us, 'It's amazing – I can't fault any of the staff.'

We were very impressed with the care, guidance and support that you receive and the way in which the health visitors see all new mothers within two weeks of giving birth. These outreach or home visits enable the centre to effectively assess your needs and offer additional support to those of you who require extra help. We also recognised the effective support that the early years workers give to parents, around behaviour management, toilet training or healthy cooking for example.

One of you told us that the centre had 'a very positive impact'. Overall, we judged the centre to be excellent at supporting you and your children to develop healthy lifestyles. Children of Reception class age living in the centre's reach area have a lower rate of obesity than average and new mothers are more likely to be breastfeeding after six to eight weeks than average. These are good indicators of future health.

In a recent survey undertaken by the centre, 100% of parents who responded said that they felt safe at the centre, and those of you with whom we spoke agreed. We found that the centre had very good policies and procedures in place to keep you and your children safe. The centre's staff work very well with a range of other organisations, including the police and social services, to ensure that all children are well supported, including those who are looked after or on child-protection plans.

We heard about the successes that some of you have had as volunteers at the centre or through taking part in adult-learning courses such as first aid for dads. However, we thought that the centre could do more to help your children learn and achieve at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and we have asked the centre to improve this.

We have therefore made the following recommendations to ensure that the centre is even more effective:

- We have asked Brighton and Hove Council to improve the systems the centre has to track how effective services are so that the centre can better target its resources.
- We have asked the centre to work with the co-located primary school to:
 - increase the percentage of children achieving 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scales with at least six points in each of the scales for personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy.
 - decrease the percentage gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest.
- We have asked the centre to work more closely with you to ensure that:
 - parents are actively represented on the new advisory board
 - parents are routinely involved in the design and evaluation of services

Many thanks for making us feel so welcome during our time at Hollingbury and Patcham Children's Centre.

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