

Inspection report for Greet's Green Sure Start Children's Centre

Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	383683
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Georgina Beasley

Centre leader	Adam Cooper
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Wattle Road West Bromwich B70 9EZ
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Linked school if applicable	Ryders Green Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	YMCA Day 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.

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 staff, community, health, education and social partners, groups of parents and carers, and representatives from the local authority.

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

Information about the centre

Greets Green is a phase one children's centre. It was designated in January 2007 and provides the full core offer. An estimated 852 children aged four and under live in the reach area. Thirty seven per cent of families are from White British backgrounds and the remainder come from an extremely diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. There is an increasing number of asylum seekers and Eastern European families living in the reach area. About 20% of families stay in the reach area for less than a year. The social and economic position of families is low. The centre serves an urban community which is in one of the 20% most deprived wards in the country. About 29% of children live in families that are dependent on workless benefits and 50% in families that receive benefits of some kind. The proportion of lone parents is around 20% and increasing year on year. The proportion of teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers living in Sandwell is above average and 76% are in employment, education and training. An average number of children have, or have parents and carers, with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The linked YMCA day nursery provides 51 full-time places for 51 weeks of the year. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are well below age-related expectations.

The centre provides a base for a wide range of health, educational and social services that take place on site, in eight other local venues and in the home. The local authority manages the centre. The centre manager has been in post two and half years and manages another 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

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

1

Main findings

Greets Green is an outstanding children's centre. It works highly effectively with its partners to provide extremely well coordinated support for the children and families who live in the reach area. The centre staff visit almost all families, including those who stay for short periods of time, to assess and put into place a personalised plan that meets the needs of individual children and families extremely well. The centre's staff and partners give high-quality care, support and guidance to all families, but especially to the very large number of families experiencing change, challenge or difficulties in their lives. This is despite a significant staffing reduction last year.

The centre has excellent capacity to improve. There has been significant and rapid improvement in all outcomes and especially in helping children and adults to bridge any gaps in learning and skills to help prepare them for higher education, school and/or employment. Outcomes are outstanding. Leadership and management are exemplary. On his appointment, the centre manager carried out a detailed and accurate analysis of users' engagement and the centre's performance. Action plans are extremely well focused and include challenging targets against which the centre can measure improvement. The whole staff team is focused on driving through further improvements and embedding the successes achieved so far.

Comprehensive safeguarding procedures and highly effective guidance ensure users' safety and wellbeing when attending activities, when at home and at other times. Those who attend activities at the centre or one of its satellite venues say that the very positive relationships and ethos created by staff and other users encourage them to return. As a result, most groups and activities, including adult education and training courses, are oversubscribed. In response, the centre has increased the frequency and number of events over the last two years. The centre's accommodation is in constant use and it has extended its use of other community venues.

Parents play a positive and active part in the centre's evaluation and decision-making processes through the parents' forum and being members of the partnership board. A large number act as volunteers at the centre and local schools. The partnership board is extremely effective in ensuring the needs of the reach area are met because of the regular and active involvement of multi-agency partners and representatives from community groups and the voluntary sector. Equality of opportunity is promoted extremely well and all minority groups are fully represented in events and groups. A varied range of activities brings together people from the reach area's diverse ethnic communities and results in well-attended cultural celebrations.

The centre receives and uses up-to-date information from local schools about the progress of children who have accessed the centre's services to help staff evaluate and plan excellent learning and development activities. It does not receive from the local authority a detailed analysis of children's progress and learning in speech and language development to facilitate evaluation of this aspect. A considerable number of activities and groups focus on improving family health which has resulted in good outcomes for those who attend. Due to effective support, the number of mothers initiating and sustaining breastfeeding has doubled; it is above the Sandwell average but below the national average. The centre does not receive secure and timely data about family health to help it evaluate its group and services objectively.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Work closely with health partners to:
 - implement effective processes for increasing the number of mothers who initiate and sustain breastfeeding;
 - collect and collate reach-specific data to aid an objective and rigorous analysis of the impact of the centre's work against improvements in family health.

- The local authority should provide a detailed and accurate analysis of children's attainment in speech and language development to support the centre in identifying further focused groups and services.

How good are outcomes for families?

1

Family health outcomes are good. Parents and carers confirm that they cook more nutritious meals than previously for their families as a result of attending groups such as 'Cook Well' courses. Centre staff give good advice to those families with which the centre has contact about a range of health issues including weaning, feeding, dental care and immunisations. As a result, outcomes in these areas have improved significantly. Many mothers and toddlers, including families from minority ethnic groups, take part in a swimming group to promote family health and fitness. Fathers' group every Saturday is well attended and regularly involves some kind of sport or

other physical activity. Despite a significant increase in the last two years in the number of new mothers who breastfeed their babies, the figure is still below the national average. The good number of parents and carers who have attended parenting programmes say that they are confident to understand and manage their children's behaviour and that relationships have improved at home as a result.

Users say that they and their children feel safe when attending the centre's activities. A large number of families have had safety equipment installed in their homes. Many users have successfully gained a first-aid qualification so that they know how to deal with emergencies at home. Individuals who have experienced domestic violence have been given effective support to start afresh. Very few children are subject to a child protection plan as a result of highly effective family support put into place under the centre's initial assessment process and the Common Assessment Framework.

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development from their starting points. The proportion of children gaining six points in personal, social and emotional development at the end of the Reception Year meets the national average. Constant movement into the area of families who are new to the country and who speak English as an additional language result in many children starting nursery with English speaking skills that are well below those expected for their age. Excellent support from the centre teacher in the last two years has resulted in a significant and rapid increase in the number of children who gain six points at the end of Reception Year in communication, language and literacy. The gap between the lowest 20% and the rest is closing faster than the national and local authority rates. Nevertheless, attainment in this area of learning remains below average across the reach area.

Positive relationships quickly ensure that, once parents and carers attend one of the groups, the great majority continue to do so. Everyone gets along extremely well and first time visitors are welcomed into the group. Children play well together and quickly learn to share and take turns with toys and equipment. Parents and carers learn to play and have fun with their own children and with others who join in with their play. Parents and carers play a full and active role in deciding what activities to run and when. They feel listened to and so feel able to give their views to staff about what they do and do not like. As a result of consultation, some groups have been extended or changed and parenting and adult education courses extended. The active parents' forum plans and organises visits and special events to celebrate the diversity of the different communities that live within the area. Fathers take full responsibility for organising the activities they enjoy with their children on Saturdays, ensuring they have enough left in the budget to do what they have planned.

A large number of teenage mothers and adults complete accredited courses that support their return to education, work or volunteering activities. Users enjoy a range of courses that correspond extremely well to their diverse interests, including chicken keeping, batik, sewing and flower arranging. Excellent advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau has resulted in a significant decrease in debt and an increase in successful applications for grants and benefits, including working tax credits. English as a second language classes are well attended. Many adults act as volunteers and

have successfully gained level 1 and 2 literacy and numeracy qualifications.

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	2
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	1
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	1
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	1

How good is the provision?

1

The centre's varied range of groups and activities meets the needs of its reach area extremely well. Many groups are oversubscribed and therefore many are held on different days, at different times and in different venues across the reach area. A good number of new groups and activities have been introduced over the last two years to meet increasing demand and to meet the needs of families who live in different parts of the reach area. 'Stay and Play' sessions are held at the centre and in eight different venues so that families can attend the one nearest to their home. Excellent guidance is given to parents and carers about their children's learning and development. 'Cook Well' and 'Busy Feet' sessions have improved children's diets and fitness levels.

The centre works in close partnership with childminders and, in particular, with YMCA day nursery to provide outstanding learning and development opportunities for children. Childminders meet regularly at the centre to talk about their work and to share experiences. Local groups have been used effectively to promote the centre's work. A 'Play and Stay' has opened in the Confederate of Bangladeshi Organisations building to encourage more Bangladeshi families to attend the centre's activities. A large number of fathers participate in the group which runs every Saturday. The centre provides crèche facilities to enable parents to attend numerous meetings, courses and training programs held at the centre. Parenting courses and volunteer training are tailored to attendees' individual abilities. All are oversubscribed.

Citizens Advice Bureau gives workless families excellent advice about available grants, benefits and debt management to improve the economic wellbeing of their

families. Its surgeries are always fully booked. The centre visits nearly every new family within two months to carry out an assessment of need and to put into place a personalised plan. This has resulted in families being given support for a range of issues and reduced the number of families subject to an assessment under the Common Assessment Framework. Families experiencing change, challenges and difficulties in their lives receive personalised care, support and guidance to help them get back on their feet. Family support workers accompany them to meetings if necessary to help them get their point of view across. Centre staff also accompany school staff on home visits before children start school which helps children's transition to school extremely well. Family support workers give valuable support to those families that have experienced domestic violence. Families in times of crisis are supported extremely well in partnership with local charities to help them get back on their feet quickly.

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

The centre manager's leadership is exemplary. He has exceptionally high expectations of himself and others and has built an extremely cohesive and effective staff team. Groups and activities are constantly adjusted in response to users' views and to meet the needs of the area's changing characteristics. Excellent partnerships with multi-agency staff and voluntary partners ensure fully integrated working practices. As a result, all families, including those who are experiencing change, challenges and difficulties in their lives, receive timely and personalised support.

The centre gives excellent value for money. The whole staff and partners meet every two weeks to review the quality of services and groups against all outcomes, including children's centres' key performance indicators. Services, groups and support are closely matched to the needs of all groups who live in the area and make a significant contribution to the outstanding outcomes

Constant review results in a clear and accurate evaluation of the centre's work and subsequent adjustments to activities and events. In order to increase the attendance of Bangladeshi families, the centre organised a 'Stay and Play' group at a venue closer to where these families live. Attendance at this group is good. Action plans are focused and include relevant, measurable and challenging improvement targets. The

centre does not receive timely and accurate data about family health, including breastfeeding and obesity rates in young children, to help it measure the full impact of its work to promote healthy outcomes. While children make excellent progress overall, the centre recognises many children still start school with speaking skills which are well below the expected level. It does not yet receive an analysis of children's progress in speech and language development from the local authority to help it target its work more precisely.

Governance of the centre is excellent. High attendance from parents, partners and community groups at partnership board meetings ensures that all target groups are represented and that activities and services meet the needs of the wider reach area. Safeguarding is central to the centre's work to ensure children's and users' safety at the centre's activities and at other times. All staff implement procedures and practice that are individual to the setting extremely consistently. Protocols and practice for making referrals and sharing information between the relevant agencies working within and outside the centre are exemplary. Every adult attending a group is required to sign on the first visit to say that they have read and understood the risk assessments completed for that activity.

The centre has sustained high attendance for the last two years and attendance is higher again this year. Equality is promoted and diversity is celebrated extremely well. Parents and carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities value the support they receive. 'Sparkles', a new group that focuses on sensory learning, gives first priority to these families but is open to all families so that provision is fully inclusive. Parenting programmes are delivered in South Asian languages. Information about services and groups is shared in most languages spoken in homes within 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	1
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
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

<p>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</p>	<p>1</p>
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Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The inspection of YMCA day nursery, which was judged outstanding, contributed to the children’s centre’s inspection and report.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Complaining about inspections*, which is available from our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected the Greets Green Sure Start Children's Centre on 18 and 19 October 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Thank you for telling us about your own and your children’s experiences at the centre. It is clear that relationships are extremely positive and that you have fun with your children and enjoy learning and playing with them. For many of you, the centre has become like a ‘home from home’.

The centre has improved its services significantly over the last two years as a result of the exemplary leadership and management of the centre manager and the passionate drive for improvement from all members of staff, multi-agency partners and community groups. The great majority of people who live in the area attend the centre’s activities and so benefit from its services. Based on a detailed analysis of your needs, the centre continues to expand what it offers to you and your children. Highly effective partnerships between the voluntary sector, health, education and centre staff ensure you and your children receive the support you need. Families who have challenges in their lives value the excellent support they receive. You particularly value that when centre staff make an appointment, they always keep it. You also value the parenting courses which help you understand your children’s behaviour and give you confidence to help them behave well at home.

You and your families are improving your health and welfare outcomes well as a result of programmes such as ‘Cook Well’ and ‘Fab Tots’. Despite a significant increase, fewer mothers breastfeed than in many other parts of the country. We have asked the centre to work with its health partners to collect and use a range of data to help you and the centre be sure that the services provided promote your health and that of your families as well as they can. You and the centre make sure that your children are safe when you attend groups and activities. You make an extremely positive contribution to the centre’s work through the parents’ forum and

the partnership board or by talking to staff about what you like and what could be better. This includes the large number of fathers and groups from all minority ethnic communities who attend the centre's activities. Volunteer training has helped many of you to volunteer and to gain literacy and numeracy qualifications. Some of you have gone on to study at college. You receive excellent advice about managing debt, and many of you now receive the benefits to which you are entitled to give you a little more money to support your families.

Your children are making outstanding progress in their learning and development due to the excellent range of activities and groups. You told us how well staff help you support your children's learning at home. We have asked the local authority to give the centre detailed information about your children's progress in developing speech and language skills to help staff plan focused support so that your children have even better speaking skills when they start school.

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