Inspection report for St Edmunds Nursery School & Children's Centre

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Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY336626 St Edmunds Nursery School and Children's Centre

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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 maintained nursery St Edmund's Nursery School and Children's Centre 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 one additional inspector and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with staff and senior managers from the centre and the co-located nursery school. Inspectors also met with parents and carers, members of the governing body and representatives from Bradford local authority as well as a number of partners including those from health, the voluntary and community sector and education. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

St Edmund's Children's Centre is a Phase 1 children's centre, designated in 2007, providing the full core offer of services. The centre is located on the site of St Edmund's Nursery School. This school was inspected in the same week as the children's centre. The headteacher of the nursery school is also head of the children's centre and shares responsibility for the centre with the Family and Community Services Coordinator. Fully integrated day care is provided in the nursery and a crèche is provided during some adult learning activities.

The school's governing body is contracted by the local authority to manage the centre. A sub-committee of the governing body oversees the work of the children's centre.

The centre serves a community which experiences high levels of social and economic disadvantage in a densely populated area approximately two miles from the city centre; the area has mostly older terraced housing. The proportion of children who live in workless households or with low incomes is high, as is the number of families in receipt of benefits.

Most children enter early years education with knowledge and skills that are below expectations for their age.

The vast majority of families are of Pakistani heritage, with a small minority from White British heritage backgrounds. A growing number of families from other minority ethnic groups, particularly of Eastern European heritage, are moving into the centre's reach area.

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

St Edmund's Children's Centre is at the heart of its community and is extremely successful, providing an outstanding quality of service for all its children and families. The centre is exceptionally well led, with outstanding teamwork leading to excellent provision for families. Responsibilities are distributed across the staff team, which ensures that each member of staff plays an important part in the children's centre and its delivery of a range of excellent services. Many of the staff are former centre users, volunteers or students and they provide excellent role models for their community. Their enthusiasm, professionalism, commitment and dedication to raising standards are exemplary.

Parents and carers overwhelmingly praise the commitment made by the children's centre staff and their partners, who also provide an excellent service. During the inspection users made exceedingly positive comments. Examples include, 'I would not be who I am today without this centre. They have given me the confidence to succeed.' 'Staff here are miracle workers. My child did not speak one word before we came and now he uses full sentences'. 'I love this centre. They see me as a person and not just the mother of a child with additional needs. Coming here has given me so much confidence- I'm a different person now. They encouraged me to learn and go on to training. I now deliver courses to parents and professionals and am the parent governor at my child's school.'

Inclusion of all families and children is outstanding and fully promoted in all aspects of the centre's provision to ensure that their diverse needs are particularly well supported. The centre has an excellent understanding of its key target groups and, as a result, outcomes for

those in most need of intervention or support are outstanding. Year on year, outcomes for children are improving as evidenced in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile which demonstrates a clear narrowing of the gap between different groups. The range, coordination and provision of services for children and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are excellent and, as a result, their progress is outstanding.

The lively, attractive and well-maintained centre provides a welcoming oasis of stimulating learning in the densely populated, built-up city area. Users receive a very warm and personal welcome from reception staff when they arrive. The reception area also provides a valued space for volunteers to sell fresh fruit and vegetables at affordable prices.

The enjoyment of children in the on-site nursery school and day-care provision is evident from their laughter and eagerness to enter the building. The seamless provision and support for families between the outstanding, fully integrated nursery school and the children's centre results in outstanding progress for children. Adults and children thoroughly enjoy the high-quality learning and development sessions and, as a result, their personal development is outstanding.

In this area of high unemployment excellent attention is placed on training and the personal development of adults. The majority of users access the wide range of courses available, including literacy and numeracy, information and communication technology, first aid and parenting programmes. A good number of adults progress to volunteering, further or higher education, paid or self-employment. Excellent, on-site crèche facilities ensure equality of access to learning and encourage parents and carers to learn while their children are safe and have fun. As a result, families that are engaging with the centre improve their economic well-being. The centre successfully engages with the majority of its key target groups and attendance at sessions is exceptionally high. However, the centre recognises that some families are not engaged with them and therefore not benefiting from the excellent services they provide to improve their economic stability and independence.

Safeguarding arrangements within the centre are outstanding. An integrated approach and excellent knowledge of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) ensure that support is exceptionally well targeted. Identified concerns are dealt with effectively and promptly referred to relevant agencies. Strong partnerships and integrated working have a very positive impact on the safeguarding of children and, as a result, their progress and safety is excellent. Safety awareness is very well promoted, with users developing an excellent understanding of how to keep their children safe. The centre runs many successful courses including 'First Aid', 'Nurturing' and the 'Triple P' parenting course, which are all well attended. As a result, the number of children that have accidents within the home is reducing. One user said, 'Since coming to the centre, I have reorganised my home to make it much safer.'

Users are developing healthy lifestyles because of extensive advice and support which promote healthy living. Participation in excellent courses such as 'I can cook' builds parents' and children's knowledge. They enjoy these sessions and are confident that the advice they are given has enabled them to have a much better understanding of healthy eating.

Partnerships with health professionals help ensure that families improve their health and well-being. However, health services do not always share information, in a timely manner, in order for the centre to offer support to all mothers of new babies. Data indicate that, although the number of mothers who breastfeed their babies from birth is increasing, the number who continue to do so for at least six to eight weeks is below the average for Bradford.

The centre demonstrates an excellent capacity for sustained improvement. Outstanding outcomes are achieved because leaders, staff and users constantly monitor the impact of services and identify how they can be improved. Robust self-assessment is based firmly on the analysis of outcomes and leads to the centre setting challenging targets. The 'can do' attitude of the centre team is leading to continuous and rapid improvement. The centre actively seeks and welcomes the views of users and the wider community and uses them to improve services. Children are involved in evaluation and the centre meaningfully involves parents and carers in shaping the services of the future through highly effective mechanisms such as 'Better Together' consultation days. The positive contribution of users and their engagement in developing the centre is outstanding. Excellent parent and community representation means that governance provides excellent support to the centre through the evaluation of its services using a range of management information and providing robust challenge.

Outstanding outcomes and quality of provision and highly effective use of available resources provide excellent value for money.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Further increase the number of families who improve their economic stability and independence by extending strategies to engage with those families not accessing the centre.
- Health partners should ensure the centre has timely information so that it can provide mothers with early support for breastfeeding.

How good are outcomes for families? 1

The children's centre is an extremely safe and secure environment where children's safety and well-being are given the utmost priority. A highly effective multi-agency 'team around the child' approach ensures that those subject to a child protection plan or CAF process are extremely well supported. Children, parents and carers develop an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and reduce risk. Parents and carers talk positively about how the ongoing support, information and equipment from the centre have helped them to think about child safety in and around the home. Family outreach practitioners provide excellent support to those who have been subjected to domestic violence and abuse and

also to those who have other complex needs and, as a result, children's and parents' safety is much improved.

Through an outstanding range of supported play and development opportunities, parents and carers are learning how to support their children's learning. Outcomes for children from the identified key target groups are excellent. Attendance at the high-quality nursery school and day-care provision leads to outstanding outcomes for children. Children make excellent progress from their very low starting points in developing the skills that will help them in the future and their behaviour is excellent. There are no reported incidences of bullying and parents and children treat each other with respect. There is clear evidence that adult learning is improving outcomes for families and is leading to positive progressions in further education, employment or self-employment. 'I never used to come out of the house until I came here. I have gained confidence, qualifications and have been on training courses. I am now a breastfeeding mentor', said one parent. However, the centre recognises that unemployment in the area remains high and that some families are not accessing the outstanding services and support it provides to help improve their economic well-being.

Centre users are actively encouraged to participate in the decision making of the centre. They make a strong contribution through volunteering and governance to both the life and direction of the centre. The centre routinely listens and uses their extensive feedback to shape and develop its services.

The centre ensures all families are registered with a doctor and immunisation rates at 94% are high. Obesity rates for children in Reception Year are reducing, although they are slightly above the average for Bradford. The centre is effectively promoting oral hygiene and registration of families with dentists is high. Effective partnerships with health services are improving health outcomes for families. However, although the centre provides good breastfeeding support, the number of babies in the area that are breastfed beyond six to eight weeks is below the average for Bradford.

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.	**2**

How good is the provision?

1

The centre's excellent knowledge and understanding of the community it serves leads to the delivery of exceptionally high-quality, fully integrated provision. Staff demonstrate an outstanding commitment to improving the life chances of children, parents and carers. Training, courses and progression routes are carefully planned based on the assessment of individual needs. The building is well equipped to provide adult learning courses, activities for users, some health services and a crèche and day care for children. The centre is extremely proactive in its approach to working with community organisations in order to enhance the provision. Excellent relationships within the community mean that services are coordinated effectively with other providers in order to reach more users and to avoid duplication. This ensures there is a very good balance of universal and targeted services to meet the needs of the community.

Staff use information about children's starting points to effectively plan their learning and measure their progress. This is having an excellent impact on improving educational outcomes and narrowing the gap between those who achieve and those who do not. Parents and carers are encouraged to support their children through such activities as 'Stay and Play' sessions and 'Learning Through Play.' Partnership with parents is highly effective and is at the heart of the centre's philosophy. For example, parents of children who receive the offer of a free place for two-year-olds in the nursery are required to enter into a contract ensuring they will attend sessions to improve their knowledge of supporting their child's learning. The centre is providing services to those who are in most need of intervention and support, such as those families where the parents speak little or no English. The centre provides effective, targeted support for parents, carers and children with disabilities. One parent said, 'Staff at the centre are amazing. They helped me understand my child's disability. I didn't know anything about the statement process but they supported me all the way through.' High-quality support ensures that children's transition into school is a smooth process.

The outstanding effectiveness of the centre's approach to care, guidance and support is clearly demonstrated in users' high uptake of its services. Parents and carers comment that the centre has made a big difference to their lives. Typical comments were, 'The support from the centre has changed my life. They have helped me find solutions to my problems' and 'My child's development has improved incredibly; it's because they go to the crèche while I do courses. I now have the confidence to get a job.' Family outreach practitioners are very successfully engaging and working with families through home visits. The centre has an empowering approach to information, advice and guidance which is highly successful. Staff appropriately identify need, provide ongoing support and refer to other services. Strong relationships enable families to approach the centre with confidence, particularly during times of crisis.

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 leader and staff team demonstrate a strong vision of inclusion and an excellent understanding of and commitment to the success of this children's centre. This leads to excellent outcomes for users. Governance, leadership and management are outstanding. Teamwork is highly effective and accountability arrangements are clear and understood. The head of centre communicates high expectations and ambitions to staff, who are inspired to drive forward and improve services. The local authority provides an extensive range of data and information on the centre's priorities and how well it is meeting them. The centre uses data well to plan and evaluate the delivery and impact of its services and to set measurable targets for improvement, often above those set by the local authority. The centre and its partners make excellent use of their critical reflection and evaluation skills in order to target its provision and narrow the gap for the most disadvantaged. The centre seeks and welcomes the views of all users. Users' views play a vital part in developing the provision, particularly through their role on the subcommittee of the governing body which rigorously oversees the work of the centre. This innovative centre plays a key role in the life of the wider community, offering work placements, apprenticeships and a highly successful buddying scheme for students.

The inclusion of all families and children is outstanding and fully promoted in all aspects of the centre's provision to ensure that their diverse needs are supported and barriers to access are removed. Diversity is celebrated exceptionally well and the centre makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion. The centre is highly effective in engaging with its key target groups. Innovative practices and sessions such as 'Hit the Ground Crawling', a course for new fathers, are leading to good engagement with fathers. The inclusion of children and adults with learning difficulties or disabilities is highly successful. One parent said, 'It is the best place for help. I had postnatal depression before I came to the centre- the staff here go the extra mile.' Another commented, 'The staff have given us so much help and information it's unbelievable. They helped with getting some food while they got our benefits sorted out. They organised clothing and shoes for the children and school uniforms so they could go to school.'

Professionals from a range of agencies consider that the children's centre makes an outstanding commitment to partnership working and to improving the life chances of children and families within the area. Senior leaders are highly effective in ensuring children

and families are safe through rigorous attention to child protection, vetting and recruitment procedures. Safeguarding arrangements are exemplary. Resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community. Families using the centre state that provision and support are highly effective and make a significant contribution to their improved outcomes. As a result, services of the centre are very well used and engage the large majority of families in target groups. The centre therefore provides excellent value for money.

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**
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.	**1**

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

Findings from the concurrent inspection of the St Edmund's Nursery School provision contributed to this report.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the St Edmund's Nursery School and Children's Centre on 08 and 09 November 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Thank you very much for talking to us and letting us come into your sessions. The information given and the stories you shared with us enabled us to make our judgements. You told us how the children's centre has supported you to improve your lives and how you now have more confidence. It was clear that you are very proud of your achievements. Many of you talked about your involvement with the centre and how it has helped you and your children. You told us how it has become easier to ask for help and support because of the friendly welcome and good-quality relationships that you develop. You also told us about the friends you have met as a result of your involvement in the centre's activities.

It is clear that you feel welcome at the children's centre because so many of you were in and out of the building with your new babies and toddlers when we were there. Many of you who start by making contact with the centre become more involved than you expect to. We found out that many of you have learned new things and developed new skills, and increasing numbers gain qualifications, go on to further training, volunteering or find work. Many of you said how the involvement with the centre is improving your lives and the lives of your children, and how much you appreciate the support and encouragement staff give you. The centre is very successful at engaging with the majority of local families that really need some support but they still need to find ways of engaging with those families who do not yet access it.

We found that staff have an excellent understanding of child protection procedures and that they are well trained. You said that you feel your children are safe at the centre and that advice from the centre helps you stay safe.

You enjoy the sessions such as 'Stay and Play' with your children. Those parents with children in the nursery really value the care their children receive. We found that children benefit from accessing services at the centre and make outstanding progress from their starting points. The centre works with adult education providers to give you access to courses to help improve your own education and future employment opportunities.

Your children behave well and you learn more about how to stay healthy. However, the health service does not provide timely information to the centre on when a mother has had a new baby so the centre cannot offer support and advice early enough. As a result, not enough babies are breastfed beyond six to eight weeks. We have asked the health service to pass on information more quickly. The centre's staff listen to you and ask you what you think of the services and activities they offer. They change how and when they do some things because of what you say. Some of you are highly involved in making decisions about your centre through being on the governing body and are involved in strategic decisions.

We found that the leaders and staff are exceptionally keen to promote equality and diversity. Many of the families with the greatest needs are enjoying sessions to help them and their children. The centre works well for everyone in the community, irrespective of their background or disability, and in doing so it contributes very strongly to community harmony and cohesion. Families treat each other with respect. The number of local fathers coming into the centre is increasing well and they too are improving their confidence, parenting and English skills.

We recognise the outstanding leadership and staff that make the centre so successful. The staff are very committed to the work of the centre and are supported by the strong leadership of the head of centre and the management team. They provide you with an excellent range of high-quality services that are tailored to meet your individual needs. They use their contacts to call on professionals from health, education, voluntary organisations and social care to make sure you get the best service. The governing body and local authority rigorously check how well the centre is working and supports and challenges them to improve. The centre staff are ambitious to continue to improve the work of the centre and the outcomes for families. Because the centre has been improving rapidly and it knows what it needs to do to improve further, we are very confident that it will continue to do so.

Thank you very much for your welcome and openness with inspectors. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you, sharing your stories and meeting your babies and children. We wish you every success in the future.

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