

Inspection report for St Paul's Nursery School and Children's Centre

Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	383330
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Date of previous inspection	21 January 2009
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Linked school if applicable	St Paul's Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Not applicable

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 maintained nursery 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 the headteacher of St Paul's Nursery and Children's Centre, the deputy headteacher for Family Support, staff, parents, representatives of other professional agencies working with the centre, chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

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

Information about the centre

St Paul's Nursery School and Children's Centre opened in 2008 following an amalgamation of a local nursery school and a social services nursery. It is a phase two children's centre providing the full core offer of services since 2009.

The centre is situated in an inner area of Bristol that is ranked the highest part of the city for overall deprivation. Statistics show that the centre serves an area where income is amongst the lowest 10% nationally and where nearly 50% of children live in out-of-work households. The number of families receiving benefits is well above the national average. The centre serves a very diverse social and cultural community with many families from Somalian, Asian or Black African Caribbean backgrounds. The governing body with responsibility for the centre also manages the linked nursery school. Children enter early years provision with skills and abilities well below those 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 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 Paul’s Nursery and Children’s Centre is outstanding because of its exceptional provision and targeting of services that consistently meet the needs of families from very diverse backgrounds. Provision is based on accurate analysis by leaders using a wide of range data, and on the constant feedback from families who use the centre. This is fully embedded in the work of the centre and consequently both leaders and staff know the community they serve exceptionally well and make significant differences to lives of families in both the local area and beyond. The centre is highly effective in reaching its identified groups, especially families from minority ethnic backgrounds, children and families who may be vulnerable, lone parents and fathers. Consequently, the centre has engaged with approximately 88 per cent of families with children under five-years-old in its wider catchment areas.

Parents, sometimes speaking through an interpreter, consistently told inspectors how the work and support provided by the centre has impacted on their lives and their children’s achievement. For example, several fathers from very different cultural backgrounds expressed quite clearly that through attending activities provided by the centre they had significantly changed the way they interact with their children and had raised their expectations of what their children could achieve. Data show the centre is having a significant impact on narrowing the achievement gap on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage for all groups of children, including those who may be vulnerable.

As a result of excellent targeted provision, outcomes for families, particularly those who may be vulnerable, are outstanding. Most families in the area are engaged with health services because the centre works very effectively in partnership with health professionals. For example, statistics show that over 94% of infants aged six to eight weeks are being breastfed.

The centre is particularly successful at ensuring that families feel safe when engaging in activities or using the services provided. Relationships with families, especially those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who may be vulnerable, are very

strong. Parents expressed their total confidence and trust in staff to support them in their parenting role, especially in time of crisis.

The headteacher and centre manager provide outstanding leadership. Self-evaluation is rigorous and based on the analysis of a wide range of data as well as evaluations and feedback from families and other agencies. Findings are effectively linked to an ambitious, realistic action plan that clearly identifies priorities for continued improvement. Rigorous self-evaluation and the continuing excellent outcomes for families due to highly-targeted provision demonstrate that the centre has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

There are effective governance systems in place to hold the centre to account. The governing body successfully challenges and supports the centre and there are clear roles for the advisory board and the parents' forum. However, opportunities are missed to link these aspects of governance to inform and provide more effective overall guidance and accountability.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Strengthen the overall guidance and accountability of the centre further through more effective liaison and communication between the governing body, the advisory board and the parents' forum.

How good are outcomes for families?

1

The centre very effectively engages families in activities that develop their awareness of healthy lifestyles. Participation rates are high and one of the outcomes is that the percentage of children who are obese on entering reception classes has consistently fallen over time. This is a consequence of targeted activities, such as the Cook for Life programme where parents learn to plan and cook healthy meals. A netball group for parents is successful in both educating mothers from diverse backgrounds about the importance of physical exercise and in bringing members of different communities together. This is a significant achievement given the very high levels of obesity overall in the centre's reach area.

A real strength of the centre is the tailored support given to families in cases of domestic violence or where children are subject to child protection plans. There are numerous case studies where staff use the Common Assessment Framework process to work very effectively with other professional agencies to monitor the well-being and safety of families and children who may be vulnerable and address issues causing concern. Very sensitive individual support given to women from minority ethnic backgrounds results in very positive outcomes for the emotional well-being of both individuals and families. The success can be seen in the constant reduction in the number of children needing to be made subject to child protection plans.

An exceptional outcome for children who use the centre is their rapid and significant improvement in their communication, language and literacy skills and personal, social and emotional development. Analysis of data in the early years provision shows that the centre is highly effective at narrowing the gap with children nationally, not only for those in the lowest 20% but also for children from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and those with special educational needs. Through very thorough tracking of data, the centre has strong evidence to show that by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children who attended the centre are working at broadly age-related expectations.

Outcomes for parents to improve their economic well-being through being skilled for the world of work are exceptional. Not only is the work of the centre highly effective in developing the confidence of the most vulnerable adults but there are also numerous examples of parents gaining formal qualifications and jobs. For example, the centre employs several previous parents with others being qualified as child minders or crèche workers. Others work as volunteer 'communication ambassadors' to promote the services provided by the centre and there is an example of the centre working with a Somalian carer to become a qualified teacher.

While there are good procedures for parents and carers to feedback on the work of the centre, the impact of the parents' forum is less effective in being fully involved in the governance of the centre.

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	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	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	1

How good is the provision?

1

The excellent outcomes for families using the centre are due to the outstanding services, activities and opportunities that are constantly provided. Leaders and managers are highly effective in assessing the needs of the different groups, within and beyond, its reach area. This is due to excellent partnerships with other

professional agencies, such as social care and health services and other local voluntary groups in the area. This ensures that the expertise of other professionals and local knowledge of the community are used to gain a real understanding of the needs of different groups in a very diverse community. Consequently, services and activities are extremely well targeted, focused and adapted to meet the needs of families from different cultures and those who may be vulnerable, especially those who may be subject to domestic violence. For example, the very effective family support team visits homes to assist families in gaining financial support, access to housing, help with immigration issues and support with applying to schools for their children. The centre has numerous case studies where this kind of service has had a significant impact on the well-being of the most vulnerable families.

Staff are highly skilled at supporting disabled children and those with special educational needs, particularly through assessing and implementing individual education plans. The outcome is that this group of children make exceptional progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Services have a significant impact on the learning of parents, especially in preparing them for work or engagement in the local community. The examples are numerous. English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), information and communication technology (ICT), family finance, Asian women’s group and learning through song are all tailored to meet the different needs of parents and are consistently well attended.

The quality of care, guidance and support, especially in times of crisis, is exceptional. This is because staff are highly effective in gaining the trust of families from different minority ethnic backgrounds, work seamlessly with other professional agencies and are extremely sensitive to the cultural needs of parents. The impact of this approach on the well-being of individual families is very effective when dealing with cases of domestic violence. Individualised support programmes that meet the needs of families who may be vulnerable are extremely effective in ensuring the safety and well-being of families, including those who may have looked after children.

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

Leaders and managers are highly effective in constantly challenging the impact of the centre’s work. Consequently, there is a very strong commitment from all staff to significantly improve the lives of families in the area. Staff morale is high and all

agencies work especially well together to meet the very diverse needs of families and children. Staff are managed exceptionally well and there is a strong focus on constant professional development to improve their knowledge and skills further. Senior leaders have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the centre. The centre’s action plan identifies clearly the areas for further improvement. The success in developing a highly-motivated and skilled staff and significantly improving outcomes for children through exceptionally well-targeted provision show that the centre has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

Working in partnership with other agencies is another exceptional aspect of the centre. Services are very well integrated with the needs of families being consistently met. Different partners from a variety of agencies commented on the effectiveness of well-established arrangements to deliver services and they gave examples of where social care, health professionals, including occupational therapists, educational psychologists, bi-lingual centre staff and senior leaders all worked together to support families and children.

Governance and accountability arrangements are good. There are clear lines of accountability; however, opportunities are missed to fully coordinate and utilise the feedback and challenge provided by the different aspects of governance. Given the very varied cultural and social backgrounds of families in the local community, the centre is exceptional in promoting equality and diversity. Families and children from all cultural and social backgrounds are fully included and valued in all aspects of the centre’s work, including families or children who may be disabled or have special educational needs. This is a key strength of the settings ethos.

Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. The highest priority is given to the safeguarding of children and parents, especially those who may be vulnerable. All staff are very well trained in safeguarding procedures, with excellent partnerships with professional agencies to provide prompt intervention when necessary. All staff are fully vetted through the Criminal Records Bureau and robust recruitment procedures before working at the centre. The centre has numerous examples where safeguarding procedures have been rigorously applied and extremely effective in dealing with identified risks, including domestic violence, to ensure the well-being of children and families.

Given the high level of families from all groups engaging with the centre and the exceptional outcomes for children and parents, value for money is outstanding.

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	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

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Summary for centre users

We inspected St Paul's Nursery School and Children's Centre on 1 and 2 May 2012. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

We would like to thank all of you who took the time to speak to us and give your opinion about the service you and your children receive from the centre.

The centre has many exceptional qualities. It is very well led and managed by senior staff and there is a very strong commitment from all staff and others who work with the centre to provide the best possible service to every family in the local community. There are very good links with other agencies, such as social care, health visitors, child minders and educational professionals who work very effectively with centre staff to provide a service that meets the individual needs of families and children. Centre leaders and staff are constantly looking for ways to further improve and adapt the services provided and are very effective in responding to the feedback from parents.

Parents who spoke to us said that the centre is a very pleasant and welcoming place where everyone from all different backgrounds is valued. Staff are trusted by parents to give very good advice, support and guidance, especially when times are difficult. Parents said that their children are safe in the centre. This is because all staff are very well trained in child protection and safeguarding procedures and everyone has been fully vetted before working in the centre. Supporting families to improve the

health of their children is an area where the centre has been exceptionally effective. Courses, such as Cooking for Life, have led to the number of children being very overweight by the age of five years falling consistently over the past three years.

The centre is exceptionally effective in helping children get off to an excellent start in their education. Assessments measuring children's progress clearly show that the centre is significantly helping them to catch up with other children nationally, especially in developing their language and communication skills and in their overall personal development.

Courses to help parents gain qualifications and get ready for work are very well planned and delivered. Good examples are the computer and literacy courses.

The governing body that is responsible for the centre provides good support and constantly checks on the work of the centre. There is a board of professionals made up of different partners who provide advice to the centre and a parents' committee that gives feedback on services. While these different groups work effectively, chances are missed to link all the advice and guidance together so that they are more effective in helping the centre to improve. We have asked the centre to improve the arrangements to allow these different groups to work more closely together.

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