

Inspection report for Farnham Rd Children's Centre

Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	404141
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Date of previous inspection	7-8 December 2011
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	Horton Grange Primary School 107205
	Hollingwood Primary School 107435
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Margaret McMillan Children's Centre 301968
	Dracup Lodge Nursery EY290205

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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.

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

The inspectors held meetings with the centre leader and the senior family support worker, centre staff, headteachers and an Early Years Foundation Stage manager. They met with parents, school governors and managers of other local children centres. They also held meetings with representatives from the local authority, advisory board and a range of partner agency members.

They observed the centre's work, the linked childcare settings and the delivery of training at the centre. They looked at activity sessions taking place at the centre and at the satellite sites. They also looked at a range of relevant documentation including the centre's action plans, data, evaluations and key policies.

Information about the centre

Farnham Road Children's Centre is a phase two centre which was designated in 2008 and became operational in January 2009. The centre is co-located with two primary schools, Farnham Primary School and Horton Grange Primary School. Also on site is the Margaret McMillan Children's Centre childcare provision and nearby is the Khidmat Community Centre with sports facilities. The centre provides crèche facilities and part of the building is used by the two schools to provide school meals. The centre works with partner agencies to meet its core purpose by offering services from its base and satellite sites.

The majority of the population are of South Asian heritage. There is a transient population in the local area, with a number of families emigrating from Eastern Europe. A few families are refugees seeking asylum. There is a large population for whom English is not their first language. There are approximately 817 children under five years of age living in the reach area, which includes the wards of Bradford City and Great Horton. A large majority of the population in the children's centre reach area live within the top 20% of the most deprived

areas in England with one Super Output Area ranking within the top 5% of the most deprived areas nationally.

Social issues affecting families living in the area include worklessness and 35% of families are dependent on benefits. Approximately 38% of adults leave school with no qualifications or skills to enable them to enter the workforce. A rising number of families in the area live in overcrowded households. Health issues affecting families in the area include women suffering isolation and depression. The number of parents requesting support for domestic abuse is rising. The proportion of disabled children and disabled people are low, 8% of children have special educational needs.

The majority of children enter childcare provision and education with skills and knowledge generally well below those expected nationally for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage is delivered through the link childcare provisions, Margaret McMillan Children's Centre and Dracup Lodge Nursery. The inspection reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. Early years activity is also provided by private and voluntary organisations in the local area and the crèche and group activities which the centre provides.

Governance of the centre is provided for the local authority by Farnham Primary School governing body. A new advisory board is also in place. The centre is open 50 weeks of the year.

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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

Good leadership and management of Farnham Road Children's Centre have been influential in ensuring that all issues raised at the last inspection have been swiftly tackled. The centre has made rapid progress and as a result, it demonstrates good capacity to improve. The quality of provision is good and overall the centre promotes satisfactory outcomes for children and families. Outcomes judged good represent significant progress for most children and families from low starting points.

The new staff structure provides the centre with the resource it needs to successfully fulfil its core purpose. The highly skilled centre staff and their partners are proactive at meeting the needs of the established majority Muslim community and are developing their impact on other growing ethnic minorities living in the area. Some families facing significant challenges frequently arrive within or move out of the reach area, requiring the centre to adapt its provision quickly to whatever families need most. Good knowledge of the local communities aids understanding of where families live and the issues some families face.

The numbers of families using the centre services have dramatically increased. However, the centre is not complacent and realises that more families, particularly fathers, can benefit from their good services. The centre leader uses improved data well to analyse the attendance of specific groups and to set ambitious targets to secure future improvement. Most aims are broken down into achievable steps but it was recognised that a few targets were overzealous.

Attention to safeguarding children and their families is high priority. Families approach staff with confidence and recognise the centre as a place of safety. As a result, all users of the centre said they feel safe. Typical comments were, 'staff are doing a brilliant job'.

Children and their parents enjoy a good range of high quality, purposeful learning and development opportunities which encourage positive behaviour. Consequently, they make good progress in their educational achievements and in their personal and social development from low starting points. Non-accredited adult learning attracts much interest and successfully raises adults' self-esteem and confidence. Although there are some opportunities to access accredited learning, few parents follow progression routes which can lead to more aspirational roles in employment.

Health outcomes are variable and satisfactory overall. Although a large majority of mothers initiate breastfeeding, only a minority manage to sustain this. Families are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles but the percentage of children in the Reception Year who are obese is slightly above the national average.

Several new methods are used to increase parents' opportunities to share their views and ideas. A few mothers have been empowered to form a parents' forum and they are more actively involved in decision-making at the centre. These parents are also members of the new advisory board which has representation from all of the centre's key partners. Whilst a few students and parents have gained useful experience working at the centre as volunteers and this led to employment, these opportunities are limited.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve economic well-being by increasing the opportunities for adults to progress onto accredited training courses which can lead to employment.

- Increase users' involvement further by:
 - identifying and engaging with families in the community who are not accessing the centre's services, particularly fathers
 - strengthening opportunities for parents to work as volunteers.

- Improve planning and monitoring of progress by breaking down targets to achievable milestones to clearly evidence impact on improving outcomes for families.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

Good early intervention work helps protect children and prevent some complex situations escalating. Parents described the impact of individual support as being like a 'lifeline' saying, 'Your child and you matter here.' Parents were able to confidently describe how they have taught their child to say 'no' and how to protect their children from physical abuse. Work with the police and fire services to provide advice and safety equipment helps to ensure that families have a better understanding of how to keep their children safe in the community and limits hazards to children in their homes. Typical comments from parents following safety advice were, 'I hold my young child's hand now when we cross the road' and, 'the carbon monoxide detector alerted them to the fact their fire was dangerous and needed replacing.'

Although a large majority of mothers choose to breastfeed, the numbers sustaining breastfeeding are below the national average at 46%. The centre has clear plans in place to provide additional support for mothers who choose to breastfeed. The centre has achieved the 'First Steps to Healthy Teeth' gold award for their drive to improve poor oral health and dental decay. Parents describe how they have decorated timers and use them to encourage young children to brush their teeth for longer periods of time. The uptake of immunisation is high and strategies are in place to discourage smoking during pregnancy.

A strong drive is in place to promote healthier lifestyles and increased physical activity. Adults enjoy the 'Keep Fit' classes. Children have fun developing ball skills and improving their fitness at the 'Little Strikers' sessions. At the 'Art and Health' sessions, parents are given clear messages about the importance of a nutritional, well-balanced diet and portion sizes. Parents observed shocking visual images of the sugar content of everyday drinks and foods which strongly encouraged them to make healthier choices. However, this promotion has yet to have a greater impact on reducing obesity levels. The percentage of children in the Reception Year who are obese remains stubbornly above the national average at 9.6%.

Children living in a deprived area with low starting points achieved good results in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile scores. Year on year, the achievement gap is slowly closing. Children are learning to engage in positive behaviour and develop constructive relationships. The centre has well-established links with the local schools and a galvanised purpose to promote children's development, such as communication skills. Local headteachers report a marked difference in children's personal, social and emotional development when they have

attended centre services. This is supported by the school's own data which suggest children entering school who have used the centre services are much more ready to engage in the learning environment.

Some parents are beginning to contribute to decision-making through the parents' forum and advisory board. They described enjoying attending a wide range of learning opportunities. Adults often move from one course to another and all achievements are well celebrated. Although satisfactory progression routes are in place to access further education, few take up learning which can lead to more ambitious economic independence and employment.

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	3
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
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	3
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.	3

How good is the provision?

2

The centre provides a welcoming environment. The vibrant café acts as a 'hub' for the community. Flexible multi-use rooms are used well by a wide range of partners. Resources throughout the centre are of good quality. The centre is well-known in the area and it is accessed by families who bring their children to schools on site or who live nearby. The centre gives priority to families living in their reach area but they do not turn anyone away. Close work with other local children's centres on reciprocal data collection, effectively enables the centre to capture families' mobility. Engagement of families at the centre has significantly increased from 33% to 68.4%. Consequently, outreach work and opportunities to assess the individual needs and circumstances of families in the reach have doubled.

Following a few initial changes to staff roles, the new staff structure is embedded. New sessions at satellite sites across the reach area make access to services easier for those who are not able to travel. A translator has helped the centre begin to engage with Eastern European families and the centre is beginning to run groups which some are willing to

attend. Firm plans are in place to consult with fathers to find out what services might further increase their engagement.

Throughout the centre, information is available in relevant languages alongside English. The centre knows that domestic violence is a significant issue and, therefore, useful contact information is discreetly placed where it can be easily accessed. Adults turn to the centre for support in times of crisis. The centre staff team are trained to deal sensitively with issues such as domestic violence and poverty and they empower parents to deal with difficult situations. The quality of care, guidance and support is good.

The take up of early years funded places is high and children are signposted to outstanding quality childcare. Parents value the popular 'Stay and Play' and heuristic play sessions, where they play and learn alongside their children. During these sessions, parents are able to see good practice in action across all the prime areas of learning.

Adult training and courses are regularly delivered and the uptake of these opportunities is increasing. Adults can learn for example, to sew, the importance of play, use information technology, how to make story sacks and become more familiar with numbers. Access to 'English for Speakers of other Languages' is differentiated to ensure it meets individual needs well. The centre runs its own high quality crèche which enables parents to attend training, reassured their children are safe nearby. Partner services provide housing and financial management advice. Jobcentre Plus has established a 'Job Point' at the centre where users can regularly access local job vacancies, advice and support.

Close work with the local Khidmat Community Centre increases the centre's wider role within the community and increases adults' opportunities to access sport.

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.	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Governance and accountability arrangements are good. Rapid improvements have been implemented due to the effective challenge the centre has received on a regular basis from the school governing body, the new advisory board and the local authority. The centre leader has been provided with a new senior family support worker and a strengthened staff structure. Increased staff resources have ensured robust arrangements are in place for professional supervision and daily management. The centre staff have worked well together

to tenaciously improve all areas of their work. The centre leader is able to effectively demonstrate how well the centre is driving continual improvement.

Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and used to set ambitious targets to secure improvements in outcomes, especially for those families in target groups and most in need of intervention and support. The centre acknowledges that where targets are realistic, they are more able to evidence progress on their impact on outcomes.

Some partnerships work well with effective collaboration with the centre whilst others are still developing. Partnerships are emerging with parents who are seen as important partners. However, all the members of the parents' forum are female. The centre recognises the important role fathers play in their child's development and they are keen to encourage more males to attend the centre services and become involved in the governance.

Local health teams' work at the centre and increasing numbers of families are accessing these services. Data sharing on health outcomes is developing. All partners are now sharing some evidence of the impact of their work with the centre. The sharing of resources, provision and training with partners helps to secure satisfactory value for money.

Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily. Disabled children and those with special educational needs are provided with specific additional support to meet any identified need. The centre has good knowledge of the diverse nature of its reach area and staff have a sensitive approach to the ethnic and cultural differences between the different groups of families living within their community. They are closely monitoring the transient population to target support where it is most needed, and are eager to break down barriers between families of different backgrounds.

Good safeguarding practice is adopted across all areas of the centre's work. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and the centre is secure. The Common Assessment Framework is used effectively to target specific, tailored support for families with circumstances that make them vulnerable. Robust record keeping is in place which evidences the positive impact of good early intervention work.

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 secures 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	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3

The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
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	3
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 Ofsted reports relating to the linked childcare settings were used to inform judgements.

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Summary for centre users

We re-inspected Farnham Road Children's Centre on 3 and 4 October 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

This centre has greatly improved since the last inspection. Leadership and management of the centre are good and the centre's provision is also good. The centre staff are working hard to improve outcomes for you and your families. We have asked the centre to ensure that all the targets they set are realistic to continually improve the centre's work.

The centre provides a safe place for you where you can be sure of a warm welcome. Safeguarding families is high priority. You are provided with good quality care, support and guidance from the centre staff and their partners. We have asked the centre to continue to identify families who would benefit from using the centre's good services but are not yet accessing them.

Those of you we spoke to told us how much you enjoy attending the 'Stay and Play' and how you have developed your understanding of the importance of play. You said you trust the centre workers and find them very helpful.

You told us about the range of different training courses you have attended and the changes that you have made to your lives. Several of you were positive about the impact of 'Art and Health' which helps you learn about more healthy lifestyles. You were also confident about the 'Nurturing' programme which helps you understand your child's emotions and behaviour. Some of you told us how much you enjoy socialising with one another and how

you have learnt practical ways to support your child. For example, decorating a timer and using it to encourage your child to spend longer periods of time brushing their teeth.

Some of you told us how you have taught your child to say 'no' to protect them from physical abuse. We know many of you have attended 'English for Speakers of other Languages' which has increased your confidence and use of English. Some of you have also attended sewing classes or you have learnt to make story sacks to engage your children more in story time sessions. We have asked the centre to consider ways they can further increase your educational opportunities by accessing training courses which can lead to employment and more economic independence.

We were impressed with the enthusiasm of the new parents' forum members and the fact you are now key members of the advisory board. A few parents have also had important roles as volunteers. We have asked the centre to look at ways to enable more of you to act as volunteers if you want to do this.

The centre recognises the important role fathers play in their children's lives and they intend to consult with fathers to find out how they can encourage more of you to benefit from the centre services.

We would like to thank everyone who was willing to speak to us. We are very grateful for your help and wish you every success in the future.

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