

Inspection report for Bedfont Children's Centre

Local authority	Hounslow
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Reporting inspector	Priscilla McGuire

Centre leader	Gary Conisbee
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	c/o Fairholme School Peacock Avenue Bedfont TW14 8ET
Telephone number	Tel: 0208 583 5581
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	bedfontcc@hounslow.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Fairholme Primary School URN: 132264
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Peacock Club Afterschool Care Scheme URN: 116250

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, managers, centre staff and representatives of partner agencies. They met members of the advisory board and parents.

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

Information about the centre

Bedfont Children's Centre is a phase 2 centre in the borough of Hounslow which shares its site with Fairholme Primary School. The centre was established in 2010 and is part of the west locality of centres. Governance is provided by the local authority. The majority of families live in areas that fall within the top 30% of the most deprived. The most recent data indicate that around 26% of all children under 16 live in households where Jobseekers allowance or income support is claimed.

The most recent data also show that around 36% of children under five in the reach area live in poverty, compared to 30% for Hounslow. Around 11% of low income families use formal childcare, compared with 14% for Hounslow and 17% nationally. Around 75% of the population are of White British heritage. However, an increasing number of families are from a range of minority ethnic heritages.

The need for housing accommodation in the area is greater than the stock available. Around 38% of the community live in social housing.

The centre meets its core purpose and services are offered directly at the centre or in conjunction with other centres within the west locality. Services offered include outreach services, early education, information and guidance, family support and adult learning. Children's levels on entry to early years education are below expected levels.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children’s centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for families

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

The overall effectiveness of the centre is good. ‘You have changed our lives for the better and given me real hope for the future.’ This testimony about the centre from a parent reflects the positive impact it has on the lives of families. Bedfont Children’s Centre is effective in fulfilling its mission to improve outcomes and life chances for families. Local and individual needs of families are effectively assessed and provision well matched to these needs and to local priorities.

Staff make a concerted effort to improve the lives of families. One of the key strengths of the centre is the outstanding support, care and guidance given to families. Staff are successful in their attempts to try and break the cycle of disadvantage experienced by families, particularly those living in the most vulnerable circumstances. As a result of the excellent support they receive, families’ aspirations are raised and their life chances improved.

Evidence shows that domestic violence is a significant issue in the reach area. In response, the centre works effectively with a range of agencies, for example the police and social care staff, to provide emotional and practical support to ensure families are safe. For example, through effective partnership work, the centre offers therapeutic sessions to children who have been affected by domestic violence. Safeguarding is a priority at the centre and emotional and physical safety is actively promoted.

Overall outcomes for families are good but health is only satisfactory. This is because health provision at the centre has been affected by limitations on health partners’ resources. This has affected their ability to be involved in both planning and review of health activities. However, plans have been made to increase the range of health provision offered at the centre.

Activities, such as ‘Stay and Play’, are well planned and used very effectively to

promote children’s learning, enjoyment and development. Other activities, such as ‘Singing Hands’, successfully merge opportunities for parents and children to have fun while they learn. Adults have good opportunities to learn and develop skills but programmes that offer accredited qualifications are few.

The centre is welcoming to families from all backgrounds and promotes an inclusive culture. Equality is well promoted and diversity celebrated. Data show that the achievement gap for children in the bottom 20% of those who achieve the 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest is narrowing.

Bedfont Centre is well managed and governed. Leaders and managers have a good understanding about the needs of families in the reach area. They have a good understanding of how the provision at the centre links to borough-wide strategic priorities. Staff are very well managed and their personal and professional development is supported well by managers. The process of self-evaluation and delivery planning is rigorous and systematically involves partners. Overall leadership and management are good. As a result, the centre’s capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve health outcomes by delete this gap
 increasing and securing the regular involvement of health partners in planning and reviewing health provision.
- Further develop adult learning provision to ensure parents have increased opportunities to gain accredited qualifications.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Overall outcomes for families who use the centre are good. Data and other evidence demonstrate the centre’s success in helping children make good progress in their education and development. Since 2010, there has been an increase in the percentage of children who achieve 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Through specially designed programmes for parents, the centre has been able to develop their knowledge and skills so that they can actively contribute to their children’s educational achievement. In addition, programmes, such as ‘Let’s Get Ready’, are successful in enabling children to become well prepared for the transition to school.

Through participating in a range of formal and informal adult learning activities, parents make good progress in their educational and personal development. Some parents have completed courses, for example, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Others have developed good social and employability skills through volunteering.

Children develop good skills for the future. One parent explains, 'My child couldn't sit in a group before, but now he can sit with other children in a circle.' This comment is typical of the views of many others and demonstrates the positive impact of the centre on children's development. Through participation in programmes, such as 'Kids Talk', children develop good communication skills and effective social skills such as 'turn taking'. As a result of the centre's effective partnership with Jobcentre Plus, parents, particularly those from the centre's lone parents target group, receive good quality information and guidance from specialist lone parent Jobcentre Plus advisers. As a result, they progress onto appropriate training courses or are given support to reduce specific barriers that inhibit their employability.

Although reach area health data are not available, the centre uses local intelligence and borough-wide data to assess health needs. For example, in response to higher than average obesity rates, activities, such as 'Kids Kitchen' and 'Amanda's Action Club', enable parents to gain a better understanding of how to improve their families' health. Across the borough, obesity rates are slowly reducing and have reduced from 13.9% in 2007/08 to 12.7% in 2010/11. Breastfeeding rates at six to eight weeks are improving. Cuts in funding within the health services have had a negative impact on health provision at the centre. However, plans have been made to increase the range of health provision at the centre.

Parents feel safe at the centre. Through posters, leaflets and good quality guidance, the centre effectively enables parents, particularly those living in the most vulnerable circumstances, to gain a good understanding of how they can keep their children safe. Staff are very skilled in using the Common Assessment Framework to identify issues that could affect the safety of children. This in conjunction with 'Team Around the Child' meetings, secures the appropriate involvement of a wide range of external agencies to protect children. As a result, intervention is early and effective. Support for children on child protection plans is good. Through good partnership work with professionals, such as social workers, there is good support for children who are being 'stepped down' from social care.

Parents are actively involved in decision making at the centre. They are well represented on the advisory board and the Parents' Forum. They readily participate in consultations about services. They played a significant role during the consultation carried out by the local authority on the future of children's centres in the area. As a result of their confident challenge to the decision to merge their centre with another, the local authority decided against a merger. Parents actively contribute to decision making about provision and, for example, in response to their suggestions, start times for courses were altered and activities, such as seaside trips have been organised. Overall behaviour of children is good and has improved as a direct result

of their attendance at 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	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	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre offers good provision which is responsive to local priorities and to the needs and interests of parents. The centre has made personal contact with most families in the reach area. The balance between universal and targeted provision has become more appropriately focused on the needs of key target groups, such as fathers, lone parents and disabled children. Data show increasing participation rates of families from these groups and activities are planned to reflect their needs. As a result of productive partnerships, the provision offered by the centre is diverse and reflects key priorities, such as improving the educational achievement of children. Outreach work is very effective in ensuring families from hard to reach groups participate in activities.

Learning for children is purposeful and clearly linked to Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes. In response to local priorities around communication and language, the centre works well with speech and language therapists to provide activities to develop these skills. Strategies, such as giving parents weekly 'talking tips' to use with their children, ensure that their learning is reinforced and extended at home. Learning is purposeful for parents from other key target groups who participate in activities. For example, sessions arranged for fathers are planned to help them learn how they can use play and storytelling techniques to promote their children's learning. Participation for parents who do not speak English as a first language is also encouraged. For example, they are signposted to English for Speakers for Other Language (ESOL) courses. Although there is a range of opportunities for adult learning, programmes for parents to gain accredited qualifications are limited.

'Without the centre, I would have completely lost the plot. Staff are very supportive

and without them, I would have gone down a different path.’ This comment from a parent, which is typical of many, demonstrates the impact of the outstanding care, support and guidance offered to families. Centre staff are passionate about improving the lives of families. As a result of their tenacious efforts, the lives of families from target groups, such as those living in the most vulnerable circumstances, are significantly improved. For example, families whose lives have been affected by domestic violence have been rehoused in safer houses. Through partnership arrangements with charities, other families who have very limited finances have been given domestic appliances to ensure their needs are met. As a result of the excellent support, guidance and care they receive, parents have improved life chances and gain the confidence to make positive changes in their lives.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Leadership and management arrangements are effective. Communication at all levels is good and lines of accountability are clear and well understood. Staff are well matched to their roles and have a good understanding of local priorities and how their roles contribute towards these. Governance through the advisory board is effective and constantly reviewed. Evaluation of activities is thorough and drives improvement. Through the Multi-disciplinary Observational Needs Analysis (MONA) process, partners are involved in quarterly evaluations and contribute to self-evaluation through their roles on the advisory board. Targets are regularly set for improvement, but not all are measurable.

Resources are well used and shared effectively across the west locality. The centre works effectively with other centres to share resources and makes good use of its partnership links to develop provision. Value for money is good and is demonstrated in high satisfaction levels and overall good outcomes. The centre has a very inclusive culture and disabled children and their families are well supported. Case study evidence demonstrates the key role the centre has played in facilitating intervention and support for disabled children. Equality is well promoted and statutory requirements well met. Programmes, such as ‘Men Behaving Dadly’, have increased the participation of fathers. Data show that the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest is

narrowing.

In response to the high incidence of domestic violence in the area, staff use a range of strategies to ensure families are physically and emotionally safe. For example, when appropriate, families are provided with a 'safety plan' of tips on how to deal with emergency situations. Through effective work with partners, for example the police, the local authority's domestic violence outreach service and other agencies, safeguarding of families is effective. Criminal Record Bureau and other recruitment checks are carried out as appropriate and multi-agency work is good. Staff are well trained in a wide range of safeguarding topics.

Centre staff work with a wide range of partners from the voluntary, private and statutory sectors. They are well represented on the advisory board and actively involved in both the planning and review of provision. Partnership work with childminders is effective. Parents are recognised as key partners and their views highly valued. Through consultations, focus groups, surveys and good communication with staff, parents contribute to the development of services. User engagement is therefore good. Outreach work has also been effective in raising participation levels.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	2
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	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	2
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

Inspection findings from Fairholme Primary School.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Bedfont Centre on 19–20 September 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Many thanks to those of you who gave up your time to talk to us during the inspection. You really helped us to see how your centre makes a difference to the lives of families. Like you, we felt very welcomed at the centre. Centre staff work hard to ensure no families, whatever their circumstances or backgrounds, feel excluded from the centre. They take safeguarding and child protection very seriously. They do all they can to make sure you and your children are kept safe and know what to do if you need help to stay safe.

Many of you told us how much staff at the centre have supported you through some very difficult times in your lives. We found that this is one of the real strengths of your centre – the excellent support and care that is provided to families. Staff work very well with a wide range of other organisations and this contributes to the good quality services offered.

During our visit, we were able to observe some of the sessions you and your children enjoy, such as 'Singing Hands' and 'Stay and Play'. You told us how much families benefit from these and other sessions. Many of you enjoyed being able to spend time with your children during activities organised by the centre, such as seaside trips.

We know from looking at statistics and other evidence that your centre contributes well to the improving educational achievement of children.

Many of you make good progress in your own learning and have attended courses that have been specially designed for parents. We know these have helped you gain a better understanding of how to become involved in your children's learning. However, we have asked staff to look at ways to make sure more of you have opportunities to gain qualifications.

We know that because of economic constraints faced by local health services, the number of health activities at the centre have been limited over the past year. However, we have asked staff to strengthen links with health partners so that they can become more involved in planning and reviewing activities that promote health.

We were very pleased to hear about your involvement in the decision about the future of your centre. Your positive contribution to the consultation process and to other aspects of the centre's operation is very valued.

Once again, many thanks for spending time to talk to us during the inspection. We wish you and your children all the best for the future.

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