

Inspection report for Baines Children's Centre

Local authority	Blackpool
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Reporting inspector	Kathryn Gethin HMI

Centre leader	Joanne Snape
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Baines Children's Centre Penrose Avenue Blackpool Lancashire FY4 4DJ
Telephone number	01253 699085
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	admin@baines-endowed.blackpool.sch.uk

Linked school if applicable	Blackpool Baines Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School 119593
Linked Early Years and childcare, if applicable	Baines Children's Centre EY307733

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Early Years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with parents and volunteers, the chair of the governing body, the headteacher, senior managers, centre staff, local authority officers and representatives from a wide range of partner agencies. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Baines Children's Centre is a Phase Two centre based on the site of Blackpool Baines Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School in Blackpool, Lancashire. The headteacher of the school is the overall centre manager under the overarching governance of the school. The extended service co-ordinator manages the centre day to day. There is an established Operational Management Group, which is made up of representatives from the governing body, parents, childcare partners and other agencies.

Blackpool is the sixth most deprived local authority in the United Kingdom. The centre is situated in the Hawes Side ward. There are currently 750 children aged under five years in the reach area. Of these, 68% live within the top 30% deprived areas. There is a high number of workless families dependent on state benefits and a high number of transient families and teenage parents. Blackpool residents earn the lowest average wage in the United Kingdom. The vast majority of children is of White British heritage. There is an increasing number of Eastern European families.

The centre offers family support, health services and a range of parent- and young child-focused activities. Full-time childcare is provided and is subject to separate inspection arrangements. Children's skills on entry to Early Years provision are generally below age-related expectations. The school was last inspected in 2010 and the childcare was last

inspected in 2010. The reports of these inspections are available on our website:
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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

Baines Children's Centre is a good centre overall with some outstanding features. The senior leadership team and centre staff are passionate about the centre's work and morale is high. The centre leader and staff have successfully established good partnership working arrangements with a wide range of professionals, ensuring that services are extremely well integrated and cohesive. Links with the health visitor are particularly strong and a strength of the setting. This close working has helped to increase the number of mothers sustaining breastfeeding significantly. Centre managers, governors and staff are fully committed to continuous improvement. The centre is engaging directly with the majority of children under the age of five in the area. Overall, provision is accurately matched to the needs of families and enables them to achieve good outcomes. The centre plans and delivers services well to meet the needs of families with circumstances that make them most vulnerable.

Families using the centre receive outstanding care, guidance and support, particularly in times of crisis from caring, approachable and dedicated staff. Users say that staff are 'brilliant'. All staff and partners give the highest priority to safeguarding all children and families, are pro-active and collaborate effectively with other agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children. In addition the safety and well-being of families is significantly enhanced by the robust and consistent implementation of effective policies, procedures and practice. The centre places a high priority on encouraging adults to develop their confidence and engage in learning. Children and adults make good progress in developing their skills and enjoy their time at the centre. As a result participation rates for most groups, including those identified by the centre as most in need of intervention and support, are good and reflect the diverse community the centre serves.

The centre's leadership and management team evaluates the centre's effectiveness and has demonstrated good capacity to improve and resilience when faced with a reduction in

services. Currently the centre lacks robust evidence to demonstrate the long-term impact of services on outcomes for children and families and ensure that services remain well-matched to need. Leaders use resources well and avoid any duplication of services. Parents have access to weekend provision, evening activities and a crèche facility. Some parents are engaged well in the work of the centre. However, the centre recognises that more could be done to encourage parents to contribute to decision-making and help to shape services.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Develop systems to monitor and demonstrate the long-term impact of provision and services on parents' progress and achievements from their starting points, both personally and educationally and use this information to shape services.
- Increase the extent to which families using the centre have more opportunities to be involved in shaping services.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

A large majority of families in the area engages well with a wide range of appropriate health services. The number of mothers who remain breastfeeding at six to eight weeks has increased significantly over the last year. The success of this can be attributed to the health visitor who attends the centre on a regular basis to offer advice and support. In addition the centre has a volunteer parent who attends on a weekly basis to support mothers. The centre is a breastfeeding champion and all staff are trained to support this initiative. The centre has also achieved Level 2 of the Baby-Friendly accreditation. Healthy eating is promoted throughout the centre and obesity rates are in line with the national average. The centre offers the only two-year-old weighing session in Blackpool, because malnutrition is more of a concern than obesity. The baby weigh-in clinic has high participation rates and parents are able to seek advice on a range of health issues, including the appropriate age to introduce weaning. Immunisation rates are good and initiatives to promote dental health, smoking cessation, healthy eating, the importance of vitamins and physical activities have been implemented. However, the outcomes from these are yet to be seen. Specialist speech and language support is a high priority within the centre. The uptake of courses is closely monitored and the centre holds the 'I Can' accreditation for communication and language.

Families feel extremely safe at the centre and learn to keep themselves safe as they develop an understanding of dangers within the home and take advantage of the home safety equipment offered. The number of emergency hospital admissions is low. The police community support officer is a regular visitor and families share any concerns in regard to their safety within the community. Staff use the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process effectively and the highly-effective multi-agency team ensures that referrals are assessed speedily and the appropriate service identified. This early intervention has led to a

positive impact on children and there has been a significant reduction in the number of children subject to a child protection plan.

Children make good progress from their starting points and are achieving well. The number of children achieving at least 78+ points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scales with six points in all areas of communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development rose from 74% to 84% over a three-year period. In addition, the percentage gap between the lowest-achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest has reduced from 22% to 18% over the same period. This demonstrates how the attainment gap is narrowing for children in this area. The vast majority of three-year-old children and the most vulnerable two-year-olds in the area access the free nursery education entitlement across a range of provision. Excellent links between the school, nursery school and day care ensure that children are well-prepared for the transition to school.

Parents make a very positive contribution to the centre through their behaviour and respect for one another. They feel valued and regularly complete feedback sheets after sessions that demonstrate a high level of satisfaction. The majority of families express their views and a few contribute to decision-making. The centre actively seeks ways to consult more widely with parents. Two volunteers work within the centre and support the delivery of services. Economic stability and independence are actively encouraged. Parenting courses are well-attended and parents comment on how they have grown in confidence and established routines within the home as a result of the support given. Some teenage parents have been able to return to education successfully.

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	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

Families feel well-supported and say that the centre 'couldn't do any more' and their lives 'couldn't function without them'. Early intervention is fundamental to the success of the centre and excellent links with the health service provide an immediate opportunity to make contact with new parents. The majority of children in the area is registered and the centre has been particularly successful in engaging with and improving outcomes for families from the most deprived areas. A good number of teenage parents, disabled children, fathers and children from minority ethnic groups participates in the services and activities provided by the centre and other agencies. The centre offers continued support and goes 'the extra mile' by accompanying users to services and providing invaluable support when completing lengthy and complex forms.

The importance of books and reading together is widely promoted throughout the centre. Parents value the opportunity to access groups which help them stimulate their child's play and offers respite for the two- and three-year-old children. As part of the payment by results trial, the centre immediately follows up any absent children. This has been successful in increasing the regular attendance of children in nursery. The quality of activities to promote purposeful learning across the centre is variable. The majority of parents gain in confidence as a result of a progression through courses offered. The centre has evidence to demonstrate how it has helped to raise the aspirations for some parents and enabled them to improve their personal and educational development. Achievement is celebrated through certificates and on display boards within the centre.

The centre provides outstanding care, guidance and support for families because staff recognise the need within the local community and gain an in-depth knowledge of the families. Families frequently face a raft of complex issues including housing, debt and isolation and refer to the centre as their 'support network'. Through outreach work and family support, staff are highly effective in supporting families through these times of crisis, including those newly arrived to the area. Information and advice is prominently displayed throughout the centre. However, families feel safe to share their problems with the centre staff. As a result, the most successful outcomes for families are demonstrated by the excellent personalised support from centre staff.

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

The leadership team is forward thinking and committed. Centre leaders and governors have high aspirations for the centre and a shared vision on how goals will be achieved. Clear lines of accountability are in place to ensure that leaders and managers at all levels are fully informed and hold the centre to account. Staff work very well together, support each other and feel valued. Centre leaders and staff continuously reflect on their practice and provision to consider how they can achieve even better outcomes for children.

The de-commissioning of some services has presented some challenging times for the centre. By managing resources stringently the centre has continued to provide good value for money through highly effective signposting to services, use of the centre for community groups, adapting the timing of activities to meet need and using resources flexibly across the centre, nursery and school. This greatly increases the centre's commitment to sustainability. The centre plays a significant role in the life of the community. The inclusion of all families is promoted effectively as the centre has a good understanding of the needs of the families it supports and knows who its most vulnerable groups are. Crèche facilities enable families to attend training and the centre responded swiftly to a request from fathers by arranging a 'Dads' group at the weekend to meet their need. The centre promotes the inclusion of disabled children and children with special educational needs well.

Safeguarding arrangements are given the utmost priority at the centre. Staff are extremely confident in their knowledge and ability to safeguard children. Safer recruitment procedures are stringently followed and all relevant checks are made to ensure that all staff receive high-quality child protection training and are suitable and safe to work with children. Child protection referrals are carried out swiftly and effectively, as ably demonstrated during the inspection. Parents are confident to share concerns with staff and the use of picture cards offers an alternative means for those who find difficulty in communicating. Comprehensive risk assessments, policies and procedures are in place across the centre and form part of the induction procedure.

Services are well integrated and good partnership working enables information to be shared at an early stage. The centre works with a range of partners to ensure that services are not duplicated. The holistic approach used to assess the needs of all members within the family group has been a great success for the centre when supporting families, in particular when dealing with the emotional needs of individuals. However, systems for monitoring the impact of services and activities for families over time are not yet fully developed. The views of users and their evaluations of services are regularly sought and the majority of families is satisfied with the service provided by the centre and refer to the centre as their 'support network'. Despite the opportunities for families to become more involved in decision-making and shaping services, relatively few take up this option.

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	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	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	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

Inspectors considered previous inspection reports for Blackpool Baines Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, which is located on the same site as the centre and works closely with the centre and Early Years provider. The previous report for Baines Endowed Children's Centre nursery was also considered.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Baines Children's Centre on 19 - 20 September 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank those of you who helped us with our work through your enthusiastic involvement in the inspection. We particularly want to thank those of you who welcomed us into your home.

Like you, we found your children's centre to be welcoming and friendly. We think the quality of care, guidance and support that you receive from the centre is outstanding. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to improving the outcomes for you and your families. Your centre has successfully established extremely strong partnerships with a wide range of professionals and services which have had a significant impact on the well-being and outcomes for your families.

Staff regularly share information and make sure they work very well together to provide your families with all the support they need as quickly as possible. We have asked the centre to consider how they can access information after you have completed training and activities to ensure that they know that it has been worthwhile experience for you and continues to make a difference to your lives. You may be able to help with this.

You are accessing a good range of health services and the good health of your families is improving as a result. Your centre provides a safe environment and staff are swift to intervene early when there are any safeguarding concerns to ensure that children are safe and families are fully supported. Your centre has made your homes safer through providing safety equipment and you feel safer in the community.

The centre provides you with a wide range of activities which you told us you enjoy. You are developing your confidence and parenting skills and, as a result, are enabling your children to make the best progress they can. We were pleased to see how the centre encourages you to become involved in volunteering and how you said you enjoyed 'giving something back'.

Your centre has become well-established in the community and families feel confident to ask for help and advice. Your centre has been successful in engaging the majority of families from your community, particularly those identified as the most vulnerable or in most need of support. We know the centre has taken your views into account and acted on this information; for example, by providing activities on a Saturday morning. We would like more of you to become involved with the work of the centre to help staff develop the best activities for you.

Your centre strives to be better and is always looking for ways to improve. It is apparent that the centre is important to all of you who use it.

Thank you once again for your time, we wish you all the very best for the future.

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