

# Inspection report for City View Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	386938
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	

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.

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

The inspectors held meetings with frontline staff, representatives from the local authority, and partner organisations. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of documentation. They visited groups run at the centre and other local children's centres which families from the reach area attend. They spoke to families formally and informally around the centre.

## Information about the centre

City View Children's Centre is a phase 2 centre which was designated in 2008 and is run directly by the local authority. It is located on the site of Brighton General Hospital on the outskirts of the city. The centre is run from the old doctor's house; services are offered on the ground floor, with centre staff office space on the first floor. It is open weekdays from 9.00am to 5.00pm and provides a full range of services. Early years provision is offered at Tarnerland Nursery School.

The centre serves an area that is ethnically, socially and economically diverse. There are several pockets of significant deprivation with the centre's reach area, of which one is in the lowest 10%, three are in the lowest 20% and one is in the lowest 30% found nationally. There are 1,448 children under five years in the reach area with around 17% living in households dependent on workless benefits. Around 22% of children are living in families where adults are on low income and in receipt of working families tax credit. The majority of families in the reach area are of White British heritage, with other families from ethnic groups including increasing numbers of Eastern European background. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are at expected levels for their age.

The centre offers an integrated approach to providing services for families and children under five years. Health services are integrated in the local authority through a section 75 agreement. The local authority manages and delivers centre services through this agreement, including overseeing the governance arrangements, and delegates responsibility to the centre advisory board.

## 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

City View Children’s Centre makes a good overall contribution to improving outcomes for families living in the local area. All families undergo an initial assessment and, consequently, those most in need of intervention and additional support are effectively targeted. Case studies indicate that targeted services have a positive impact on improving outcomes for families.

Effective safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and centre staff follow their own organisation’s reporting procedures and families report feeling safe at the centre. There are effective safer recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers; however, management does not have an overview of the process for volunteers.

Centre leaders are relatively new in post, having previously managed other centres within the local authority. They have been quick to identify areas where the centre needs to develop and implement strategies to drive improvements. The centre’s improvement plan focuses on priority areas for the centre; however, targets are sometimes too broad. The local authority provides a range of data on a quarterly basis which the centre uses to assess their effectiveness. Recent changes in local authority staffing have meant that a full range of data is not available and this restricts the centre’s ability to accurately assess their work and set targets in all areas. However, where the centre does have access to data, it uses it effectively to assess the impact of its work and set targets to improve outcomes.

The centre provides an inclusive environment and treats families with respect, which makes all families welcome. Staff are proud of the diversity of their community and effectively promote this through celebrations, resources and special events. The centre effectively analyses data to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the wider community. One comment from a parent, which captured the views of many, 'Staff are supportive in a non-judgemental way.'

Parents contribute in a variety of ways to the centre and are involved in decision making. Some parents sit on the advisory board, although numbers are relatively small. Parents complete evaluations of groups and activities; however, they are not always given feedback on how their evaluations contribute to changes to the centre.

Centre staff work well as a team and have clarity about their respective roles. They understand the importance and are highly committed to working together to improve outcomes for parents, and the impact of this is most evident with improvements to health outcomes. For example, breastfeeding rates are much higher than the national average. Management arrangements have a varying range of clarity. The centre has identified that the line management structure needs improving so that all staff consistently benefit from the effective systems of quality assurance and monitoring that are in place. Managers have a good overview of the centre and have successfully prioritised where the centre needs to improve. They also have a clear understanding of how the centre needs to develop further and therefore the centre's capacity to improve further is good.

## **What does the centre need to do to improve further?**

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- For the local authority to provide a full range of up-to-date, robust and informative data which the centre can use to assess the effectiveness of their work, set targets and demonstrate the impact of their work on improving outcomes.
- Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning by involving parents, partners and staff effectively in the process.
- Review management arrangements to ensure there are clear lines of accountability, robust quality assurance and monitoring for all staff.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

2
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Health outcomes for families are outstanding. The centre promotes healthy lifestyles, giving a high priority to supporting parents' emotional well-being. The centre undertakes an initial assessment of every family with a new baby or which is new to the area; this effectively identifies those families most in need of intervention and, as a result, the centre puts in place targeted services. Groups, such as Jump for Joy which encourages physical exercise along with provision of the outdoor area and

promotion of healthy snacks, promote healthy lifestyles. As a result, child obesity levels are below the city average and well below the national average. Targeted breastfeeding support has seen an increase to 82% of parents breastfeeding at six to eight weeks. Activities such as baby massage improve the emotional attachment between parents and their babies, as well as improving sleep and digestion.

All services within the centre ensure children stay safe. The security of the building is good. Risk assessments reduce any potential risks to families using the centre. Outreach work for those most in need of intervention supports families to develop strategies to work effectively with their children. During visits, centre staff discuss safety in the home; there is also more general safety information and advice available at the centre. Effective use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process by staff means that children and families receive an effective package of support through good inter-agency working.

The centre has worked hard to establish itself as part of the community and there are excellent links with other children’s centres and early years provision locally. The centre is committed to involving parents more, for example some parents were actively involved in the recruitment of a new staff member. Parents are encouraged to participate in the governance of the centre through the advisory board and a concerted effort from staff means that parents are now represented. The centre has developed informal ways to obtain ongoing feedback from parents. However, the centre does not always effectively capture this and does not always give feedback to parents on their ideas and suggestions.

Children learn new skills and develop as a result of the range of groups and activities run by the centre as they follow the Early Years Foundation Stage principles. The centre gives parents information and advice about how they can continue their children’s learning at home. As a result, children’s levels of skill, knowledge and abilities are increasing; most recent data show that 69% of children are achieving 78 points at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Some parents volunteer at the centre and receive a good package of support. Opportunities for parents to access training and develop skills to obtain paid employment are satisfactory and the centre is working to improve this by building stronger links with providers such as City College.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

<b>2</b>
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The centre reaches all of the families within its reach area as a result of the universal health services. Services provided at the centre engage many families and these are complemented by home visits and outreach. Many families visit other local centres which provide more space, or are more accessible as they are located in the city centre, and the centre is using tracking data to ensure that families receive the correct level of service. The centre is keen to develop the range of services it offers especially as it can offer a more intimate, smaller environment which is beneficial for some groups. For example, the Early Parenting Assessment Programme now runs weekly at the centre; families attending it benefit from the small group and feel confident to engage with staff and discuss issues.

All staff effectively assess the individual needs of families and identify those who are most vulnerable and require additional support. A tiered approach to intervention ensures the level of support is matched to the level of need. The centre uses CAF procedures well to record concerns and target specific support to individual families, including those identified as in need and those on child protection plans. As a result, the number of children subject to child protection plans is low. Staff have a good understanding of the families and deal sensitively with them. Parents who find it difficult to access the centre independently receive support from home visits and individual support to access the centre when they feel able to do so.

Groups run at the centre are of good quality and all target groups are actively engaged. Groups such as Chatterbox are well attended. Children enjoy the range of activities as they explore and learn in an attractive environment. Resources are high quality, accessible and encourage children to become independent. The centre links activities to the Early Years Foundation Stage and this supports children's transition to early years provision and/or school. Young children identified as most in need receive two-year-old funded places and attend provision which has been judged as good or outstanding. Adults enjoy attending groups and the centre provides them with practical information about activities to do at home with their children to support their learning and development. Groups such as Choices are effective in engaging teenage parents at the centre and provide them with a good range of relevant information and advice, for example on returning to school or college.

The volunteer programme is developing and parents receive a thorough induction and comprehensive package of ongoing support and access to training.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

### **How effective are the leadership and management?**

<b>2</b>
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Governance arrangements are in place and are strengthening. Parents are represented at advisory board meetings and the centre is keen to develop this further, for example by appointing a parent as chairperson of the group. Professional supervision is in place for all staff. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the work of the centre and decision making through parent voice/parent focus meetings; however, their views are not effectively captured at other times. The centre sometimes misses opportunities to feed back to families.

Safeguarding procedures are good. Procedures for checking the suitability of staff and volunteers are robust and ongoing safeguarding training ensures that child protection concerns are dealt with appropriately. Effective communication and clear procedures ensure that services are highly responsive when required to protect children. However, differing line management arrangements for staff not directly managed by City View Children's Centre mean that quality assurance and monitoring are not robust and lines of accountability are not always clear.

The centre's self-evaluation and business plan are linked and accurately identify areas where the centre needs to develop. Local authority data are currently limited in some areas. The centre is able to obtain some data independently; the lack of comprehensive, up-to-date local authority data impacts on the centre's ability to accurately assess its work in all areas and effectively set challenging targets to drive improvements. However, past data and the current available data show that the centre is improving outcomes for families in the area. Targets to improve outcomes are making a difference and the centre is responsive to the changing needs of the community, for example by reviewing the services it offers to ensure they continue to meet the needs of families. Therefore, the centre provides good value for money.

The centre knows the community it serves well and is able to track families to ensure that they are receiving appropriate children's centre services. The centre encourages children with disabilities to attend and there is also a specific group for children with disabilities at a local children's centre. The MOSAIC group (for Black and mixed parentage families) runs weekly from the centre. The centre is reducing the achievement gap for the lowest 20% of children and has identified specific groups of children and targeted support to improve their level of skills, knowledge and abilities.



The dads/male carers group is promoted by the centre, but attendance is low.

Parents have satisfactory opportunities to contribute to the work of the centre. Some are beginning to contribute through their representation on the advisory board. Opportunities to obtain informal feedback are not always taken. Procedures for informing families of changes, as a result of their comments and suggestions, are not robust and, as a result, they are often missed. Some parents are actively involved in the recruitment of new centre staff.

Good partnership arrangements between centre staff ensure an integrated delivery of a range of services for families. The seamless working means that families receive a responsive service, especially when they need it most. The centre has built effective links with a wide range of partner agencies, many at a city level. They value the support they receive and partner agencies speak very highly of the work of the centre. Excellent links with Goucher Court, which provides supported housing for teenage parents, mean that parents are effectively signposted to the children's centre and receive good support. Links with adult education and Jobcentre Plus are not as well developed and the centre is looking to extend its good work to these providers to improve economic and social well-being for families.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected City View Children's Centre on 4 and 5 October 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you for welcoming inspectors to your centre when we visited recently, and for speaking to inspectors and allowing us to visit some of the groups you attend.

Your children's centre provides you and your children with a good range of high quality services. During the inspection we saw the positive relationships that staff build with you and your children. Health visitors and early years workers treat every family with respect and understand the many issues that you may face. We saw from case studies and from talking to you that the centre is making a significant difference to your lives. Health outcomes for you and your families are excellent and we were impressed with the numbers of mothers breastfeeding their babies at six to eight weeks. Centre staff are also working closely with you to promote healthy lifestyles and encourage you and your children to engage in physical activities, such as the Jump for Joy group. We saw that your children enjoy attending the sessions and activities such as baby massage improve the bond between you and your babies.

Some of you volunteer at the centre and receive a good package of support, including induction and ongoing supervision. This encourages you to develop skills which will help you to access training and employment opportunities. Some of you sit on the advisory board and many of you have contributed to the work of the centre through completing evaluations and by giving your opinion. Recently some of you were involved in interviewing for new centre staff. We have asked the centre to look at how you can become more involved in its work. The centre is also keen to build links with adult education providers so that you can access training opportunities to improve your economic stability and independence.

Centre staff are highly committed to supporting you and improving outcomes for you and your families. The self-evaluation and improvement plan they produce identifies priority areas where they can develop to improve outcomes for families. The local authority provides a range of data which shows how well the centre is doing in specific areas. The data currently do not cover all the areas that will assist the centre to assess how it is doing or to identify how to improve services even more, and we have asked the local authority to provide robust, up-to-date, informative data to help the centre achieve this.

Centre staff receive good training, support and supervision arrangements. Some staff are not directly managed by centre staff and this means that managers cannot

always effectively monitor their work. The centre is aware of this and agrees with inspectors that they need to improve these management arrangements.

Safety is a priority at the centre and, as a result, you and your children feel safe and relaxed at the centre and enjoy attending. The home visit when you have a new baby or move into the area means that your needs are assessed and those of you who need additional support benefit from the outreach service which is tailored to your individual needs.

Groups, such as Choices specifically for teenage parents, are well attended and make a difference to those families who attend. Those of you who live at Goucher Court benefit from the joint working and support you receive.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) .