

Inspection report for Roundabout Children's Centre

Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	383539
Inspection dates	12 and 13 December 2012
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Centre leader	Celia Lamden
Date of previous inspection	This is the centre's first inspection
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Linked school if applicable	
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Roundabout Nursery EY334821

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 registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

The inspectors held meetings with centre users, leaders and managers, health and local authority representatives, front line workers and partners.

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

Information about the centre

Roundabout Children's Centre was designated in 2006 as a phase one children's centre because of the high levels of deprivation in the area. The majority of families in the reach area live in one of the 30% most deprived wards in England with a number of Lower Super Output Areas in the 10% and 20% most deprived areas in England. Overall 37% of families in the reach area are in receipt of workless benefits, which is significantly above national and local authority averages. The reach area is mainly made up of social housing with some privately owned.

The centre is a stand-alone centre that also makes use of community venues to deliver some of its activities. The centre is a co-located centre with health and education teams and has shared access with two local GP surgeries. The majority of families living in the centre's reach area are from a White British background with an increasing Black and Minority Ethnic population, specifically Eastern European families. The centre is governed by an integrated structure made up of the local authority, NHS Brighton and Sussex Community NHS trust. Health services deliver anti- and post-natal support from the centre and the children's centre team provides a family support service. The centre is managed by the local authority with the

centre manager also being responsible for another hub centre, three outreach centres and two gateway centres.

The children’s centre team includes health visitors seconded to the local authority under a section 75 agreement. These staff are managed by the children’s centre team manager who is also from health. The health visitors supervise the early years visitors whose focus is outreach family support. There is also a parent involvement worker who focuses on supporting parents in volunteering, training and employment,

Data indicate children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a narrower range of skills and abilities than those typically expected for their age. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, 67% children in Brighton and Hove reach a good level of development across the six areas of learning, including communication, language and literacy. Levels of development in the reach area are lower than local authority and national levels with 53% of pupils achieving 78 or more points across all the scales.

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

This outstanding and highly effective centre has the needs of families at the heart of all that it does. There is excellent leadership and outstanding professional support from a dedicated and enthusiastic leadership team. As a result most outcomes are outstanding. ‘We never feel judged at this centre’, say parents, ‘we are accepted and supported’. The exceptionally strong partnerships between the centre and professionals ensures children and families have their needs met. The governance and management arrangements ensure that 100% of families are engaged with health services and this is having a very positive impact on health targets.

There is an air of calm in the centre that runs alongside the buzz of children and parents enjoying activities. A strength of the centre is the strong involvement of parents in providing feedback to the centre through surveys, evaluations and parental representation on the advisory board. Parents have gained in confidence from attendance at the centre and are quick to let staff know if something has not

worked or where they feel some changes would make things better. For example the centre has changed the timing of the crawlers and toddlers group following feedback from parents about having to miss the end of the session so that they could pick up children from school.

Children are making outstanding progress in developing skills that will prepare them for the future. Children leave the Nursery at or above expected levels of development from often very low starting points. However this progress is not reflected in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results. The centre has made several attempts to contact local schools to track children who have accessed centre services and identify why development levels decline. They are also keen to identify whether children continue to make good progress when in school if they have accessed centre services. However schools' responses have been sporadic and unhelpful. Parents are involved in training and some have gained qualifications. The centre tracks the achievements of individuals well and has clear records of all training attended at the centre. However, the centre currently has no system in place to identify the number of adults who have accessed training at the Whitehawk Inn following guidance or information from the centre's parent involvement worker.

Safeguarding is given the highest priority at the centre. Systems, policies and procedures underpin the excellent practice of all staff and guarantee the well-being and safety of users. Excellent assessment of individual needs results in individually bespoke services and support. The centre provides practical help as well as emotional support. 'I know if I have a problem I just have to walk to the children's centre and there will be someone there to help' was one comment from a parent that is typical of how parents feel about their centre. The centre's excellent local knowledge of parents from ethnic minority groups ensures these families are identified and encouraged to access centre services and activities.

The outstanding outcomes, excellent provision, strong leadership and robust analysis of need show the centre has outstanding capacity to improve.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- The local authority and children's centre to develop information sharing protocols with schools and local stakeholders to enable the centre to:
 - track children's progress once they have started school to help identify why profile scores do not reflect the good levels of development children reach when they leave the Nursery
 - obtain clear evidence of the referral and take-up rates of adult learning by families in the reach area when sessions are not held in the centre.

How good are outcomes for families?

1

Health outcomes in Roundabout's reach area are improving with the centre making an outstanding contribution to supporting this. Both midwifery and health visitor appointments are held in the centre ensuring 100% participation of families. Information and training are available to parents to help them understand about healthy eating, with a wholesome and healthy snack provided to children at play sessions. The high-quality targeted support from the children's centre team and the evidence-based activities such as the nurture group are helping families understand and support the emotional needs of their children. Breastfeeding rates are high but the centre is not complacent and keeps a close watch on variations over time to identify trends. Families make the most of the outdoor environment and the doors from the playroom to the garden are always open allowing children to run and play freely and develop their physical skills.

Children's behaviour in the centre shows that both they and their parents are increasing in confidence, developing an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Parents calmly and gently deal with any unwanted behaviour from their children and the early years visitors act as excellent role models, supporting parents where needed. The centre's involvement with children who have a child protection plan, in conjunction with its use of the Common Assessment Framework, ensures that families most in need of support are developing skills to help them deal with the difficulties of everyday life. 'This centre has helped me to change my life around', said one dad. This is also seen in case studies that show parents making changes to their lives to benefit both themselves and their children.

Children are making excellent progress from very low starting points. Funded places are provided in the nursery for those most in need of support with their children's development. As a result children leave the nursery at or above expected levels of development. 'Spidergrams' clearly show both individual and cohort progress and help the nursery and centre to focus on what needs to happen next for individual children. The link between the centre and nursery is exceptionally strong. Planning is shared enabling the centre to offer a holistic learning experience to children. Early years visitors work with families in their homes to improve their understanding of the value of children's play. They also support the universal play sessions at the centre, modelling excellent practice to parents. There are many interesting opportunities for parents to play and learn with their children through courses that promote family learning. This gives them confidence and encouragement to support and value their children's learning at home.

Families using the children's centre are fully engaged in its governance. The chair and vice chair of the advisory board are both parents. Parents also contribute to governance of the centre through a parents' forum and feedback their views through evaluations and surveys. This has provided a strong platform for the centre to gain the views of parents and evidence clearly shows where parents' views have been acted on. The extent of volunteering in the centre fluctuates. However the centre understands that many parents in the reach area have never worked and lack confidence to try volunteering and so has a training and support package for

volunteers in place.

Unemployment in the area is high. However, the centre offers a variety of information, advice and support to help parents to prepare for the world of work, for example through work programmes such as 'The Progress! Programme' and courses to build parents' confidence such as 'Moving on'. The Family Information Service works closely with the centre and has recently focused more of its work on areas of need, supporting the children's centre by providing outreach and support to families with questions about benefits and work.

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	1
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?

1

Participation in centre activities is high. The well-established and highly successful partnerships between the centre and other professionals ensure that the assessment of need is robust and extremely well informed. The excellent local knowledge of staff and the involvement of parents ensure that those who are hardest to reach, and need support the most, receive it. Liaison with statutory services to ensure the appropriate support is in place is excellent. Evidence shows that families often turn to the centre in times of crisis as they are confident that they will be well supported and their well-being is of the highest priority. The structure and dedication of the children's centre team leads to high-quality, flexible outreach services that meet individual families' needs.

Both the nursery and children's centre provide outstanding activities of high quality to help children learn and develop. The centre works with Whitehawk Inn to ensure that the learning programmes that are developed for adults meet their needs. For example, they developed a session on common worries about children's health to help reduce the number of accidents and emergency attendances. This was in response to parents having a tendency to take their children to A&E rather than their

doctor as it is so close to the estate.

Families are provided with excellent care and support. The centre is full of informative literature about universal and targeted services available to families, from breastfeeding support to help if suffering from domestic abuse. The coordination and range of guidance provided by centre staff on a personal level empower parents to make changes in their lives. The forward thinking of the centre will help to ensure families are aware of the impact of changes in welfare payments from next year and do not build up even bigger debts than they may already have.

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

Data provided by the local authority are used exceptionally well by the centre as a starting point for considering need and planning future services. Leaders carry out searching and rigorous analyses which provide the basis of their improvement plan and clearly identify priorities for the reach area. Planning clearly shows where parents have influenced decisions about services and activities and, as a result, outcomes are improving. The high expectations of centre managers, and rigorous self-challenge to improve all aspects of what they do, ensure outcomes are continually improving.

Professional supervision arrangements are exemplary with incisive checking of practice by centre leaders. The structure of support in the centre ensures that all staff have someone to turn to for guidance and support when needed. The advisory board has representation from parents and partners who understand their roles in holding the centre to account for their performance. There are excellent links between improvement plans and service provision that ensure the centre is responsive to changing local needs.

The exceptional safeguarding arrangements result in the centre having very well-thought-out strategies for supporting families with children on child protection plans, or children in need plans. Parents told inspectors about how the centre had helped them to move out of relationships to enable them to support their children and improve their own welfare. The highly adaptable and flexible provision for families is based on robust assessment of individual needs.

Responses from users and professionals are expertly combined to shape services. This guarantees outstanding value for money because services and resources are so accurately targeted to users' needs. The centre makes the most of all its resources to support the engagement of children and families. The beautiful, bright and interesting centre shows that families in the reach area are valued. Links with the other centres in the East ensure that centre users are able to access the services and activities that are most suited to their needs.

The centre is very successful at promoting equality and diversity. All key target groups are engaged in the centre resulting in significantly improved outcomes. Crèches are provided for all learning activities to ensure families who wish to engage in training are able to do so. Monitoring and evaluation of individual activities and services along with overall monitoring of the centre's performance are ensuring that provision is very well matched to the needs of families in the area.

The partnership between agencies both within the centre structure and with external stakeholders results in fully integrated provision. Partners sit on the advisory board and meet with the appropriate manager to further enhance and extend the work they do for families. Professionals say how lovely a centre it is to work in and their colleagues all want to stand in for them at the centre when they are on leave. The early years teacher and the nursery manager provide training sessions city-wide to support other childcare providers.

Families who use the centre are fully engaged. Satisfaction surveys show that over 92% of parents who use the centre are very satisfied with the services they receive. Evaluations of services show that the centre values parents' views and listens to what they have to say. Evidence shows where parents have influenced and contributed to decision making about key matters that affect the centre.

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	1
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	1

integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	
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

Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The information from the Roundabout Nursery inspection was used to inform the judgements made in this inspection.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Roundabout Children’s Centre on 12 and 13 December 2012. We judged the centre as outstanding overall. During our visit we spoke to a number of you, observed activities and met with staff and professionals who work with the centre.

The very strong centre leadership, alongside the work of the dedicated staff, has provided you and your children with a wide range of excellent services that are carefully tailored to meet your particular needs. Many of you went out of your way to tell us how much you enjoy the activities, and have benefited from the services provided through the centre. Those of you who spoke to us said that your children’s centre is a friendly and welcoming place that is non-judgemental. Thank you to those of you who willingly shared your life stories and explained how without the help of the centre you would not be where you are now.

We were impressed by how well you are supporting your children’s learning at home by attending workshops and activities at the centre. However the centre does not currently receive information from Whitehawk Inn about families in the reach area who access training following information and guidance on the range of training possibilities from the parent involvement worker. Children who use the centre nursery and activities are making outstanding progress in their learning. However this high standard is not reflected in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores. The nursery and early years teachers have made attempts to track children when they reach school to help them obtain evidence of the ongoing impact of the excellent quality early years provision. However responses have been sporadic. Therefore we have asked the centre and local authority to develop information sharing protocols with schools and external stakeholders. This will help the centre to obtain evidence of its referrals and track the take-up of training by families in the reach area. It will also allow the centre to track children’s progress once they have

started school to help identify why profile scores do not reflect the good levels of development children reach when they leave the nursery.

The centre has developed excellent partnerships with professionals, which ensures you get the help you need when you need it. Many of you told us about how much you enjoy attending courses and activities at the centre and we can see that many of you have attended family learning sessions in order to support your children's learning at home. You are rightly proud of your successes.

We were very impressed with the centre's dedication to keeping children and families safe. Safeguarding is given the highest priority in the centre and staff have excellent relationships with other agencies that ensure you get the help and support you need when you need it. Those of you we spoke to said how much they appreciated that there is always someone to help when you need advice. Many of you who have felt isolated and alone with your problems say you have made friends as a result of the centre's work.

Thank you to everybody who took the time to come and speak with us and to let us know what you thought about the centre. We are very grateful to you all and wish you and your families every success for the future.

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