

# Inspection report for Bradford on Avon Community Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	404549
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 January 2013
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Field

<b>Centre leader</b>	Kerry Morgan
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Centre address</b>	Frome Road, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 1LE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 867184
<b>Email address</b>	kerry.morgan@4children.org.uk

<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Fitzmaurice Primary: URN 126177
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Tiddlywinks Nursery: EYR 408412

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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre coordinator, the senior management team, front-line staff, a range of partners, the charitable organisation 4Children, advisory board and local authority representatives, and parents. They also observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the self-evaluation form and development plan.

## Information about the centre

Bradford on Avon Community Children's Centre was designated as a phase two centre in 2006, has purpose-built accommodation, and opened in 2008. The centre delivers a range of services, the majority of which are targeted interventions, in order to meet its core purpose. The centre shares the same site as Fitzmaurice Primary School and Tiddlywinks Nursery, both of which are subject to separate inspections.

There are 825 children under five years old living in the reach area. The centre serves a relatively affluent, predominantly commuter area with pockets of deprivation both in the town and in the rural areas within the centre's reach. An average of 8% of children live in workless households but this rises to 17% in one of the Super Output Areas. A community of boat dwellers is resident in the area and they access centre services from time to time. The vast majority of families living within the reach area are from White British backgrounds. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities when they enter early years provision are typically in line with the levels expected for their age.

In April 2011, the management of the centre and 15 others in the county was contracted out to 4Children, a charitable organisation. The centre coordinator oversees the work of this centre and another, Bellefield, which was inspected in

2012. The Bradford on Avon centre forms part of a large cluster of six located in West Wiltshire known as the West Cluster. Service delivery is shared across the cluster but staff are attached to specific centres. Two part-time outreach and two part-time support workers comprise the staffing attached to the Bradford on Avon centre. The centre's governance is overseen by an advisory board made up of partners and a recently appointed parent representative.

## 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**

**1**

## Main findings

Outstanding leadership, management and governance are the driving forces behind the centre's good level of effectiveness in meeting the needs of local families. Rigorous quality assurance systems and strong links between strategic planning, development plans and service delivery underpin the good and rapidly improving outcomes. Leaders have a crystal clear view about strengths and weaknesses and are targeting a sensible number of actions to move things forward quickly. Challenging targets have been set to ensure the centre aims high, and its capacity to sustain improvement is outstanding.

Outcomes are currently good overall rather than outstanding as the centre's work in helping parents to maximise their educational achievement, economic well-being and contributions to the development of the centre have not been as strong as all other aspects. Top priority is given to all safeguarding matters and highly effective multi-agency work ensures that families, particularly those most at risk, are very well protected. The excellent partnership with health services and well-targeted outreach work result in exceptionally high levels of care, guidance and support and in consequence the outstanding health and safety of families. The strong network with local schools has led to a substantial rise in young children's achievements. Very good transition arrangements prepare them well for school. The attention paid to equality of opportunity is a significant strength, as reflected in the rapidly closing achievement gap which, at 20%, is much narrower than seen nationally.

Provision is good and responds to the needs of the large majority of local families

including around four fifths of all of those living in its most disadvantaged pockets. The centre is engaging well with all target groups but currently fewer lone parents and families from workless homes access services than other groups. Some families improve their financial stability, for example through debt counselling, and over a third are engaged in adult learning, including parenting courses. The centre tracks closely how well young children achieve but has not yet established a systematic way to take stock of adults' educational achievements when they access further learning opportunities.

The centre has established its role as a focal point for the community. Parents identify the centre as 'warm, friendly and inviting'. Creative ways have been identified to run services from different locations to ease access, and transport is provided for families to travel to the cluster centre to attend specifically targeted programmes. Those using the centre regularly have good opportunities to be involved in shaping services and evaluating how well activities meet their needs. The recent appointment of a parent volunteer to the advisory board is a positive step. However, there is currently no forum specifically for more parents to play a pivotal role in strategic decision-making.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Extend the centre's reach and targeted services to more lone parents and families from workless homes.
- Strengthen parents' involvement in decision-making and governance.
- Establish a robust system to track how well adults progress when they access courses, and use the data gathered to inform future provision.

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

<b>2</b>
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The centre's very positive relationship with health visitors and the co-location of some of their services such as baby clinics and developmental checks have enabled it to reach a very large majority of families and achieve outstanding health and well-being outcomes. Families in target groups, including those identified as most in need of support, have immediate access to wider health services and take-up rates are excellent. This is reflected in the 98% immunisation rates in young children. There is a range of groups for mothers and babies which are viewed very positively by participants who say they add value to their lives. For example, 'baby massage' helps strengthen family bonds and eases colic in newly born babies. The centre champions breastfeeding at weekly 'drop ins' and some mothers have trained as 'breastfeeding supporters'. At 57% the proportion of mothers sustaining breastfeeding is much higher than seen nationally. Obesity levels in young children are reducing and at 6% are well below local and national averages.

Children using the centre are extremely well protected because of the very strong safety net of support provided by the integrated partnership working of a range of agencies including social care, health professionals and schools. Families are unanimous in their views that they feel safe when attending activities. For example, when making a Christmas cake, children learn about the danger of touching when a dish is hot. Lone parents shared their experiences with inspectors of how the centre had helped get their lives back on track during emotionally challenging times. Case studies and inspectors' discussions with those whose circumstances make them vulnerable show very clearly that outreach support in particular has a significant impact on families' emotional and physical well-being. A comment from a domestic abuse sufferer reflects this: 'I am now ready to take control of my life and am no longer looking inwards and feeling everything is too much.'

Over a third of centre users are engaged in further learning. Parenting skills, confidence and self-esteem are enhanced significantly, as demonstrated by the Soft Outcomes Universal Learning (SOUL) evaluations which provide compelling evidence of the immense success of parenting courses. Some adults access educational courses, including basic skills, but numbers are relatively low. The centre is not keeping sufficient hard data about the extent to which parents from different target groups achieve their learning goals, including qualifications, as planned.

Children attending the centre show very positive changes in their behaviour and success in their ability to interact. Their very strong development is charted in 'learning journeys' with parents and their own comments pinpointing personal successes alongside photographs which capture their enthusiasm and sheer enjoyment in learning. At 72% the proportion of children living in the reach area who achieve a good level of development is well above the 64% national average. Feedback from partner schools has identified pencil control and mark-making as two prime areas for more development. The centre, in cooperation with other early years education providers, has produced a very comprehensive guide for parents to use to support these important areas of learning. Very good transition arrangements prepare children well for their next stage in education.

Through volunteering, families have been encouraged to build workplace skills. Currently two volunteers support centre activities and two more are in the pipeline. A handful of families have received support from Hope Debt, a local charity, and have been helped to overcome debts and manage their finances more efficiently. Most families using the centre express their views readily and the centre coordinator ensures these are shared at advisory board meetings. A parent has recently joined the advisory board but parents' voice in governance is currently not yet strong enough.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families.

<p><b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p>
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<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>1</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>2</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>2</b>

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

<b>2</b>
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The centre uses a good range of data to help it plan services that respond well to local needs. Additionally, staff draw well on partners' data, for example about new births, and local knowledge to identify ways of reaching families. Some services are run from different locations so that they are accessible, for example the summer events held in the park, and transport is provided for parents to travel further afield if necessary, for example to the 'Freedom Programme' held at Bellefield. The centre is increasing the participation of all target groups although lone parents and those from workless homes are not yet engaging at the same high level as other groups. The centre currently reaches 80% of families living in the most disadvantaged communities. The planning and design of services have involved parents' evaluations and the review of services is ongoing. The centre recognises that gathering more information about adults' learning achievements and back to work training outcomes are next step targets to further improve families' economic well-being. Parents who use services express high levels of satisfaction.

Provision to help children learn and develop is good. Planning of the 'Stay and Play' sessions such as 'Tweeny's and 'Friday group' usefully draws on the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance to promote all areas of children's learning. A feature of particularly good practice is the labelling of activities, such as jelly and gloop play trays, with specific questions that parents can use to support their children's learning. Parents are informed of the aims of the activities in order that they recognise and can celebrate their child's developmental achievements. Staff use these sessions very effectively to catch up with parents they particularly want to see, such as those who have been receiving outreach support.

The excellent partnership with health services and well-targeted outreach work result in exceptionally high levels of care, guidance and support and in consequence the outstanding health and safety of families. Hosting ante-natal and health visiting clinics in the centre opens up the opportunities for families to connect and engage at the earliest stage of parenthood. The centre staff are excellent at developing a positive relationship with families. They personalise their approach to meet individual needs. In times of crisis, families including those in target groups, identify that they

feel incredibly well supported by the centre. The words of one mother sum this up: 'The staff are amazing. One of the most important things I have learned is how to talk with respect to my child and to handle any problems that arise calmly.'

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>1</b>

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

<b>1</b>
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Following the change of centre management in 2011, new leaders rightly spent time in recruiting and building a strong staff team and forging highly effective partnerships. For the past 12 months improvement has been rapid and sustained in assessing and responding to local needs and revising the programme of services accordingly. Currently 25% of centre-led services are universal and 75% is targeted support for the most vulnerable families. Best use is made of staffing and other resources to achieve this. Provision is very well used and engages the very large majority of families in target groups. As a result value for money is outstanding.

The leadership of the centre is outstanding. High aspirations, the pursuit of excellence and a shared vision that the centre will meet the needs of everyone are key reasons why the centre is not far off achieving an outstanding level of effectiveness. Quality assurance systems including self-evaluation are robust. They involve strong links between work plans, service delivery and thorough reviews in order that leaders can measure the impact that the centre's provision is having on improving outcomes. Challenging targets are set to guide improvements in the short and longer term. The centre is also making a strong contribution to the wider community, for example through its work to help clean up air pollution and reduce the number of hospital admissions due to asthma.

Governance and accountability are outstanding. A variety of partners sit on the advisory board and between them they represent a good cross-section of the reach area. There is a strong sense of purpose in the board's work and members both support and challenge the centre. High-quality professional supervision is provided for staff who say they feel valued and supported in their roles as a result. The advisory board regularly receives parents' evaluations and survey responses which are taken into account in shaping future services. Families contribute well to key matters affecting the centre and readily give their time, for example in developing the community garden at the centre. However, too few parents are directly involved in governance.



The centre's work to promote equality and diversity enshrines best practice. There is a robust equalities and diversity policy, and staff are acutely aware of the importance of ensuring that anti-discriminatory practice underpins all work undertaken. There is zero tolerance of any form of prejudice. The centre has been successful in building the trust of the community so that families with children with special needs feel fully included. Their 100% engagement is testament to the success of the centre's approach. Travelling families from the boating community are welcomed warmly when they attend 'Tweenys', the weekly drop-in session held in the community youth building.

Safeguarding arrangements, including rigorous recruitment checks and comprehensive risk assessments, result in high-quality practices which enhance children's safety and well-being substantially. All staff and volunteers at the centre, including members of the advisory board, undertake safeguarding training. The multi-agency forum approach focuses on supporting children in need and this has resulted in clearer knowledge about everyone in the area who is involved with social care services. Regular reviews of case studies by partners involved in children's welfare enable a shared approach to future planning.

Partnerships are exceptionally strong with health services and schools, and are building well with agencies involved in supporting adults' further education and economic well-being. Service delivery in supporting the health, safety and general well-being of families at risk is well integrated. Relationships between partners are clear, understood and effectively managed. Information sharing protocols, especially with health services, are a very positive feature in assessing needs and supporting the very positive health and safety outcomes.

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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>1</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>1</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>1</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>1</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>

<p><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></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>
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## **Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection**

The judgements from the inspection of Fitzmaurice Primary School (URN 126177) and Tiddlywinks Nursery (EYR 408412) were taken into account to inform the judgements made during this inspection.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected Bradford on Avon Community Children’s Centre on 30 and 31 January 2013. We judged the centre as good overall with some outstanding features that are helping many of you live healthier and safer lives.

We very much enjoyed meeting so many of you during our inspection and hearing your views. Thank you for giving so generously of your time. It was lovely popping into such a busy ‘Tweeny’s’ session and seeing you and your babies and toddlers enjoying the exciting range of activities on offer. The gloop and jelly were very popular messy play choices!

Outstanding leadership, management and governance are the driving forces behind the centre’s good work with local families. Leaders and managers have a crystal clear view about what works best and why, and are building securely for still greater success in going forward.

Outcomes are currently good overall rather than outstanding as the centre’s work in helping you to access relevant courses, be prepared for work and contribute to the governance of the centre is not yet as strong as all other aspects. Top priority is given to all safeguarding matters and you said you feel totally safe when you use the centre. Very effective support ensures that those of you in personally challenging situations, for example those suffering domestic abuse, are very well protected by the centre’s timely actions. The excellent partnership with health services, together with well-targeted outreach work, results in exceptionally high levels of care, guidance and support for you and your children.

The strong network with local schools has led to a substantial rise in your children’s achievements. Very good arrangements with nurseries and schools help prepare them well for their next steps in education. It was great to hear how much you value

the pamphlets the centre has co-authored concerning ways you can support your child's learning and school readiness. Some of you are accessing adult learning courses, including basic skills training, and many of you say how much your confidence improves as a result of participating in parenting courses. The centre tracks closely how well young children achieve but has not yet established a systematic way to take stock of adults' educational achievements and we have recommended this as an area for improvement.

The centre has established its role as a focal point for the community. You told us that the centre is 'warm, friendly and inviting'. The centre works hard to include everyone and is in regular contact with the large majority of local families. Interestingly, fewer lone parents and families from workless homes access services than other groups and so we have asked the centre to look at this. Those of you using the centre have good opportunities to be involved in evaluating how well activities meet your needs. The recent appointment of a parent volunteer to the advisory board is a positive step. However, there is currently no forum specifically for you to have your say or to play a stronger role in governance. The centre will be looking at this as a priority.

Thank you once again to everyone who took the time to come and speak with us and to let us know what you thought about the centre. We 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).