

Butterfly Meadows Children's Centre

Tadmarton Road, Bloxham, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 4HP

Inspection date

22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
		Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	3
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- A rising number of families are participating regularly in centre activities, including those from the most disadvantaged communities, but they are not yet the majority. Staff are not using the full range of information to find out why this is but realise that some opportunities are being missed to register everyone who attends sessions.
- Not enough parents, especially from workless homes, enhance their education, engage in training, volunteering or extend their workplace skills. Additionally there is patchy follow-up of those that do, to see how they get on in achieving their personal goals. Links with Jobcentre Plus are not as strong as with other partners.
- The revitalised advisory group has yet to agree its role and responsibilities or involve parents in decision-making and keeping a close eye on the centre's performance.

This children's centre has the following strengths:

- The centre is working successfully with its prime target groups of young parents, families who are isolated and Traveller families. Services are taken out into the community to meet particular needs. For example, the 'Playbus' enables young children living in outlying villages to experience creative learning experiences while their parents receive advice on a range of topics about children's safety and well-being.
- Parents benefit from attending groups such as 'Caterpillars' that help build to their confidence and parenting skills and to manage their children's behaviour positively. Information shows that children who take up the free entitlement to early years education are well prepared to start school.
- The partnerships with the co-located school and health and social care professionals are particularly strong. Safeguarding is given top priority. Joined-up early help ensures that families whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable are well protected.
- Clear priorities are helping the centre move forward. The small staff team work with commitment and drive. Their inclusive approach makes everyone feel valued and welcomed. Parents say that staff are 'wonderful', 'make such a difference' and 'are always there when you need them'.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre coordinator, support workers, officers from the local authority, early intervention, inclusion and Traveller support. They also met health, education and early years partners, community bus workers, parents, volunteers and representatives of the advisory group. They looked at the centre's self-evaluation, action planning, a sample of case studies, safeguarding procedures and a range of other relevant documentation. Visits to activities were undertaken jointly with the centre coordinator, who also attended all team meetings.

Inspection team

Christine Field, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Marinette Bazin	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

The centre became operational in 2009 as a Phase 3 stand alone centre and delivers a range of services to meet its core purpose. It is open Monday to Thursday 9.00am to 5.00pm and on Fridays 9.00am to 4.30pm. The centre runs a monthly Saturday 'drop in' for fathers and their children. The centre shares a site with Bloxham Primary School, which is subject to a separate inspection. It is managed by the local authority, with the advisory group, comprising key partners, assisting its governance. The centre coordinator shares her full-time role between this centre and another centre subject to a separate inspection. The local authority is about to embark on a review of children's centres across the county.

There are 865 children under five years of age living in the centre's mainly rural area which comprises 31 separate villages. The area is relatively affluent with pockets of deprivation, predominantly around Bloxham and Bodicote. Data show that overall 5% of children live in workless households but this rises to 15% in the most disadvantaged communities. Some 8% of families are eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Most families living within the reach area are of White British heritage. A significant number of families from Traveller backgrounds live on a dedicated site in Bloxham.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the centre's reach by using the range of data available to pinpoint why families are not yet accessing services, ensuring that everyone using the centre is registered, marketing what is on offer and setting out all actions to be taken in a clear plan that all staff can work from.
- Extend the opportunities for more adults, particularly those from workless homes, to enhance their economic well-being by:
 - building stronger links with training providers and Jobcentre Plus advisers
 - carrying out regular checks on individual education and training needs
 - actively promoting volunteering so that more parents sign up
 - establishing a system to track how well adults make progress when they access courses or programmes, and use the data gathered to help plan future services.
- Strengthen the role of the advisory group by moving quickly to approve its terms of reference, placing the emphasis in meetings on core priorities, injecting challenge into decision-making and enabling parents to have a full involvement in its work.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The centre is not making enough use of all available information to pinpoint why some target groups are in more regular contact than others. Staff look at participation rates and are aware of the need to extend the centre's reach but are not clear how best to go about doing this. They recognise that a higher number of families are being helped than is recorded on the system being used to show access levels. For example, the attendance of parents bringing babies and children for development reviews held at the centre is not being systematically recorded.
- Parents in touch with the centre have benefitted from accessing family literacy or further education courses but numbers are low. Lots of useful information is available in the new 'AEW' (Achieve Economic Well-being) room, but it is not clear what support is on offer to those seeking to improve their workplace skills, especially unemployed adults. The centre is not active enough in promoting volunteering and there is currently no direct link with Jobcentre Plus advisers.
- Services such as the 'Playbus' are taken to different villages, to help overcome the barriers of isolation faced by some families. Transport costs are provided for others who do not have the means to attend the groups such as 'Caterpillars' which meet weekly at the centre. Young parents and families from the Traveller community are encouraged to keep in contact and attend activities regularly.
- The centre helps local families who are eligible to take up their free entitlement to high-quality early years places. The 'Bloxham Links' group brings people working in early years together to share ideas and plans for future improvement. The centre's information shows that children are prepared well for starting school.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The quality, range and relevance of services offered by the centre is typically good but the take-up by some target groups is not high enough. For example, through volunteering, a parent has been encouraged to build workplace skills when supporting cooking activities, but no more volunteers are currently in the pipeline.
- Adults who come forward are signposted to relevant courses and some are successful in gaining qualifications, for example in literacy and numeracy. The centre asks for feedback about learners' experiences but there is limited follow-up to check what further help they require to realise their personal goals. The range of specialist support for improving adults' employability is too narrow.
- Services improve families' health and well-being, as reflected in breastfeeding and immunisation rates, which are increasing, and childhood obesity levels, which are falling. Joint planning and delivery of specific programmes with health partners, such as those to promote a balanced diet and physical exercise, result in families using what they learn in the home. Parents told inspectors that they know what to look out for in food labelling and have stopped buying sugary drinks and cereals and now buy fruit instead.
- Staff are positive role models and provide good quality care, guidance and support that help parents to overcome complex problems. Close links with the school next door enables a shared approach to helping young children keep safe whilst making sure their learning goes forward. The well-forged partnership with 'Homestart' is a key feature in helping families most in need of support who benefit from home visits and tailor-made packages which last until they are back on track.
- The centre is working successfully with young parents to enhance their confidence and parenting skills and with Traveller families to develop their children's early language and literacy skills through storytelling, rhyme time and opportunities for book borrowing. The early years team works closely with centre staff to promote high-quality learning experiences for young children, for example at 'Stay n Plays', 'Messy Plays' and 'Drop-Ins'.

- In 2012, 72% of children living in the reach area achieved a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is above county and national levels. The centre's work to promote equalities is successful, as reflected in the gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and the rest which, at 22%, is closing more rapidly than seen nationally.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The advisory group has lost its way in recent years but has now been re-formed. The partners on board are experts in their field and in going forward are keen to both support and challenge the centre to do even better. The group is clear about its roles and responsibilities in holding the centre to account but has yet to formally agree them.
- Parents' views are gathered informally and used to help shape services. Parents are not represented on the advisory group and this is a missed opportunity to ensure their 'voice' contributes to governance and decision-making.
- The leadership team knows the centre's strengths and where improvement is required. They are highly motivated and work with children's and their families' best interests at heart. However, their written evaluations do not always draw well enough on data to show the full effect that services have on improving the lives of families.
- The local authority undertakes regular visits and has a very accurate picture of the centre's performance. It provides constructive challenge as well as support to assist its ongoing development. Clear targets have been set to ensure the centre aims high.
- Safeguarding is given high status and the centre works closely with health and social care professionals to maintain a strong focus on reducing the risk of harm to children, including those subject to a child protection plan, in foster care or identified as in need. Closely dovetailed services, including outreach work results in families' enhanced well-being, including those whose problems have been assessed using the Common Assessment Framework.
- Resources, including staff deployment, are used efficiently to meet an increasing number of young children's and families' needs. An appropriate balance between bespoke and universal services has been achieved. The part-time nature of centre coordination results in frustrations from time to time but all staff work creatively together to overcome them.
- The centre is seen as the hub of its community. The staff team has worked hard to build the trust of families from diverse social backgrounds who enjoy attending because of the welcome they are given. There is zero tolerance of any kind of prejudice or discrimination. The annual survey responses and post-activity evaluations demonstrate the high level of centre user satisfaction.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for children and their families and as a result inequalities are reducing rapidly and gaps are closing.
Grade 2	Good	Practice enables most children and their families to access good quality services that improve children's wellbeing and achieve the stated outcomes for families.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	Performance is not as good as it might reasonably be expected to be in one or more key areas.
Grade 4	Inadequate	The needs of children and families in its area are not being met and/or the leaders and managers are not providing sufficient challenge to bring about improvement to the quality of services.

Children's Centre details

Unique reference number	20345
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	421444
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	865
Centre leader	Teresa Brooke
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01295 722240
Email address	teresa.brooke@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

(Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

