

# Speedwell Nursery School and Children's Centre

Speedwell Road, Speedwell, Bristol, BS5 7SY

**Inspection date** 23–24 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Inadequate	4
The quality of practice and services		Inadequate	4
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is a centre that is inadequate.

- The centre does not reach enough families living in the local area. Only a minority of children are registered and a small minority regularly access services at the centre or other centres nearby. The centre has identified groups of families who may require additional support. However, the number who access services from these groups, including those living in workless households, disabled children or parents, fathers and minority ethnic families, is low.
- Those responsible for the governance of the centre are not driving improvements fast enough. The local authority does not set clear performance targets for the centre and, as a result, neither the advisory board or the local authority have been able to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the centre. More recently, the local authority has started to improve the level of support it offers to the centre but the impact of this action has been limited.
- Information on the performance of the centre is not always fully analysed by leaders and managers and self-evaluation processes do not include all staff or key partners. As a result, leaders and staff do not have an accurate view of the centre's performance. Plans for development are not sufficiently focused on improving outcomes for families and action plans do not always have specific, measurable objectives to enable the centre to assess the progress it is making.
- Too few adults are supported to access further education, employment or training. As a result, not enough families are supported sufficiently well to improve their economic well-being.
- The tracking of children and adults who attend children's centre activities is not well developed. As a result children's centre staff are not clear about the effectiveness of their services.

### This children's centre has the following strengths:

- For those families who access family support the help they receive makes a real difference to their lives. Strong partnership working with social care, and, in particular, the early help social worker, ensures very vulnerable families receive effective early help.
- The centre is warm and welcoming, activities delivered by the centre are good quality and those families who attend hold positive views about staff and what the centre has to offer.

### 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.

This inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with leaders and managers, family support workers, parents and representatives of partner organisations including a social worker and a health visitor. They also met with officers from the local authority and representatives from the governing body responsible for the centre.

They observed the centre's work and visited all of the activities delivered during the inspection including: 'Branching Out'; 'Rock-A-Bye'; and 'Fun with food', two of which were jointly observed with the centre leader and deputy centre leader. They scrutinised the centre's safe recruitment checks and looked closely at six case files and a range of documentation including the self-evaluation form and action plans.

### Inspection team

Michael Blakey, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Jameel Hassan	Additional Inspector
Pippa Wainwright	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

The centre opened in 2010 as a phase two, stand-alone centre. It is integrated with Speedwell Nursery School and Speedwell Nursery School and Children's Centre Childcare, which are both subject to separate inspections. The reports of these inspections can be viewed at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The centre delivers and supports access to a range of services to meet its core purpose at Speedwell Nursery School, St Aidan's church hall and a community building. The centre works closely with three other children's centres in the local area: Hillfields, Little Hayes and The Limes. These centres work collaboratively and are subject to separate inspections.

The centre serves the St George East and St George West Wards of Bristol. The housing estate immediately surrounding the centre falls into one of the top 30% most deprived areas in England. Eight of the areas that the centre serves are in the top 50% most deprived and two are relatively more affluent. Almost a fifth of all children aged 0–4 live in households dependent on workless benefits and 19% of families benefit from the Child Tax Credit element of Working Tax Credit.

There are 1186 children under five years of age living in the centre's reach area. Children enter early years provision at levels typically below those expected for their age. Almost two thirds of families are of White British heritage with a small percentage being from a wide range of minority ethnic groups including Black, Asian and Mixed backgrounds.

The governing body of the Nursery School and Children's Centre manages the centre on behalf of the local authority. A sub-group of the governing body acts as an advisory group and comprises of partners and parents.

The centre has identified its main priority groups as children who live in workless households, children or parents who are disabled, fathers, and children from minority ethnic backgrounds.

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

- As a matter of urgency the local authority and governing body should work with leaders, managers, staff and parents to:
  - ensure the Children and Families Committee (advisory board) has representation from all key partners particularly health and local schools
  - establish an accurate view of the centre's performance by rigorously analysing information, so that all those involved in delivering services are clear about what the centre is seeking to achieve for families
  - update and sharpen the development plan to include specific, measurable, achievable performance targets
  - review at regular milestones the centre's performance based on the agreed targets.
- Increase the proportion of children registered and accessing services, particularly those identified by the centre as requiring additional support, including children living in workless households, children or parents who are disabled, fathers, and children from minority ethnic backgrounds by:
  - ensuring that live birth information provided by health visitors is used to register families with babies or those who are new to the area
  - working with other partners, including private, voluntary and independent settings, to ensure all families in the local area are registered and known to the centre.
- Increase the proportion of adults supported to access training and further education, and to gain employment.
- Build on the effective practice of the Nursery School by implementing processes to track children and adults who attend children's centre activities to demonstrate the difference the children's centre makes to improving their lives.

### Inspection judgements

#### Access to services by young children and families

Inadequate

- Too few families access the children's centre, despite the close working between The Limes, Little Hayes and Hillfield children's centres. Although registration rates have increased over the last two years, of the 1186 children living in the reach area 413 are currently registered with any centre (34.8%) and a small minority access services. Registration rates in the most deprived area are slightly better but over half of children living in this area are not known to the centre.
- The centre has correctly identified key groups which it wants to encourage to engage. However, of the estimated 220 children living in workless households only 12.7% accessed services over the last six months and 11.1% accessed services between April 2012 and April 2013. There is a similar pattern of engagement for lone parents, and other target groups. The proportion of children from minority ethnic backgrounds registered and attending is better.
- Some other key target groups have exceptionally low engagement, for example only 3.4% of fathers access services.
- The centre receives good quality and regular live birth data from health services which tells the centre where new babies and children who have moved to the area are living. The centre writes to these families but does not then proactively encourage them to participate in children's centre services.
- Outreach activities to encourage families to register with the centre are limited. The Baby Clinic, which was delivered onsite and previously well attended no longer takes place due to a shortage of health visitors locally.
- The local authority is not able to tell the centre how many two-year-old children are eligible for free early education in the reach area. As a result, and the overall low registration rates of children, staff are not able to proactively seek out these families. However, children who are eligible for 15 hours of free early education per week and who are known to the centre are supported to access good or better childcare on site or with other local providers. The centre's own on-site provision for two-

year-olds is full and the centre has good plans in place to increase its capacity.

### The quality of practice and services

Inadequate

- The overall quality and impact of practice is inadequate because leaders and managers have not developed sufficiently clear plans outlining what outcomes the centre is seeking to improve and do not adequately track the impact of services on children or adults. Less than a small minority of adults from targeted families are supported by the centre.
- However, for those families who do attend the centre, the quality of practice observed by inspectors was good. The centre delivers a range of effective targeted services including 'English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)' and 'Rock-A-Bye'. The 'Branching Out' creative weekly activities, supported by a free crèche, encourage centre users from a wide range of ethnic and social backgrounds to share skills, experiences and cultural understanding.
- The intensive support that families receive from family support workers is effective. Families in most need are ably supported by the skilled, experienced and well-qualified staff who enable families to address a wide range of issues including housing, benefits advice, and domestic violence, for example.
- Targeted services are balanced by a wider range of universal services including 'Stay and Play' and 'Fun with Food'. However, too few families, particularly from those groups requiring additional support, attend these activities and too few adults are supported to access further education, employment or training. As a result, not enough families are supported sufficiently well to improve their economic well-being.
- Information is not always sufficiently analysed to help the centre show the difference it makes. For example, the centre does not adequately track children who have accessed children's centre services and so is unable to show the difference it makes to ensuring children achieve a good level of development. However, information provided by the local authority shows that the achievement of children is improving steadily, although it remains below levels seen nationally.
- The achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and their peers is narrower than that seen across the city and nationally and has remained broadly the same over recent years. However, as effective tracking is not implemented the centre is not able to demonstrate the contribution that children's centre services have made to reducing inequalities.
- A volunteer provides breastfeeding support for an hour per week at the centre. However, breastfeeding rates have remained stubbornly below local and national levels over the last five years and show little signs of improvement. The obesity rates of children at the end of Reception year are broadly in line with levels seen nationally but did increase by 2% between 2010/11 and 2011/12.

### The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Inadequate

- Leadership, governance and management are inadequate because together they have not sufficiently identified the centre's priorities and specific, measurable, achievable objectives for the centre to work towards are not in place. As a result the local authority, advisory board and leaders and managers do not effectively monitor the centre's overall performance and their self-evaluation is overly optimistic. Leaders and managers do observe activities and their judgements about the quality of the two activities jointly observed during the inspection were accurate.
- However, the governing body, centre leader, managers and staff are passionate and committed to delivering a truly integrated nursery school, children's centre and childcare, particularly for vulnerable children. They have ambitious plans to facilitate the development of a new community centre, which will provide the community with a hub and the centre with space to expand its provision. The centre now has a wide range of resources in place, including staff; however, these resources are not sufficiently well used as too few families access services.
- The centre's advisory board, a sub-group of the governing body, does not have sufficient representation from partner agencies to offer a broad enough level of support and challenge.

However, parent governors are actively involved in evaluating the centre's services. For example, a parent recently met with the family support manager to understand what the service delivers for families.

- The newly appointed local authority children's centre adviser has undertaken visits to the nursery school, childcare and the children's centre but the reports of these visits do not include clear areas for improvement for the children's centre. The previous lack of robust challenge from the local authority contributes to the centre's over generous view of its performance.
- Children who are subject to child protection plans, children in need and others who are potentially in need, including those under police protection, are well supported by the centre's family support workers and through strong working with the local authority early help social worker. Case files clearly demonstrate these families receive effective support. However, leaders and managers do not always quality assure these case files adequately and as a result managers do not always have an appropriate view of the quality of work undertaken by family support workers.
- The local authority no longer uses the Common Assessment Framework and has introduced the Single Assessment Form, which the centre is committed to using.
- Recruitment and selection processes for staff and volunteers are in place and all have been subject to appropriate recruitment checks. Staff regularly undertake training on a range of issues including child protection, although the recording of this was not sufficiently clear. This issue was addressed during the inspection.

**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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	22807
<b>Local authority</b>	Bristol
<b>Inspection number</b>	428656
<b>Managed by</b>	The governing body of Speedwell Nusery School and Children's Centre on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1186
<b>Centre leader</b>	Lindsey Fuller
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0117 903 0329
<b>Email address</b>	head.speedwell.n@bristol.gov.uk



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