

Bannerman Road Community Academy and Children's Centre

Bannerman Road, Easton, Bristol BS5 0RR

Inspection date

6–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	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 children's centre requires improvement. It is not good because:**

- Although registrations have significantly improved recently and levels of engagement are rising rapidly, the centre is still not reaching a high enough proportion of its families living in the local area. In addition, there is a very high number of anonymous attendees at many of the centre's activities. These families are well known to their centre staff which means their needs are being met but the fact they are not registered adversely affects the centre's data and its ability to accurately measure its success rates.
- The centre does not always record the results of its own tracking and evaluations of activities with sufficient rigour. This particularly applies to those activities relating to family services. Staff do not always ensure that recording contains sufficient information about how successful an activity has been and what the next steps for further development are. In a few cases, small, but important, details such as dates are missing.
- The leadership and management of the centre requires improvement because as yet there are too few opportunities for some workless families to develop the skills necessary for them to prepare for work. There are few opportunities for volunteers, and classes of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) are not always available at a range of appropriate levels.

This children's centre has the following strengths:

- The recently appointed centre manager has imbued the centre with new life and provides staff with robust leadership focused strongly on improvement. Staff are passionate about their work and dedicated to improving the lives of the families in the area. They have responded positively to tough but realistic targets and as a result, significant improvements are already being seen in the quality of provision and access to services, which has seen an increase in registrations of 65 new families in recent weeks.
- The centre works well with partners, particularly the Academy and health workers, to identify the families most in need. The appointment of staff from diverse cultures considerably helps the centre to ensure it meets the needs of those in its target groups.
- The centre provides a well-chosen and relevant range of programmes and these are run well by an experienced and skilled staff.

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 the manager of the children’s centre, the local authority member responsible for the children’s centre, health, education and social care partners, family and community care workers, play leaders, volunteers and representatives of the advisory board and the Chair of the governing body of the school.

The inspectors observed the centre’s work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation as well as visiting activities at Lansdowne Court, a high-rise block of flats in the area.

Inspection team

Christine Huard, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gail Robertson, Team Inspector	Additional Inspector
Pippa Wainwright, Team Inspector	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

The centre is situated within the Early Years Building at Bannerman Road Community Academy (URN 139050). It meets its core purpose by providing a range of services including health, adult courses and workshops as well as a range of outreach activities. Services for children and families are delivered at the centre and also at various outreach venues such as Lansdowne Court, a high-rise block of flats in the area. The centre is managed by the local authority. The day-to-day management of the centre is the responsibility of the centre manager, who is line managed by the principal of the Academy with whom it shares a site. The provision is currently in a period of transition as Bristol is currently undertaking a review of its Children's Centres to be concluded in 2014. The centre is part of the remit of the Academy board of governors and a new Advisory board was formed in the late summer. The childcare provided on site has been subject to a separate inspection and the report can be seen at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Bannerman is close to the city centre. In recent years it has seen a very large increase in young families, particularly from minority ethnic communities. It currently has 1300 children in the reach area and about 54% are registered at the centre. About half the area covered by the centre falls into the top 10% most deprived nationally. Over 38% of children live in families who claim out of work benefits, although this figure has reduced by 20% in the last two years. The population is ethnically diverse and about 38% of families are of Black and minority ethnic heritage. There has been a high increase in the proportion of families from Somalia, but also a higher than average population from the traveller community. There is a good deal of mobility in the area, with families moving into and away from the area. Most children in the area start their early years provision with skills at below the levels expected for their age, particularly in communication and literacy.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should work closely with the local authority to ensure that data provided is reliable and relevant so that they may be used more accurately to identify families most in need of support and ensure that they attend services.
- Improve the quality of recording and evaluation of activities, particularly those relating to family services, by ensuring these are complete as regards evidence, including impact and next steps, and ensure details such as dates are included.
- Improve links with Jobcentre Plus and enable more families to gain the skills they require for work by providing more opportunities for volunteers to work at the centre and ensure that classes for speakers of other languages are provided at a range of levels.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Access to services requires improvement because the centre does not reach the enough families in its area even though levels of engagement are significantly increasing. The data provided by the local authority provides much useful information for the centre. From this, it is evident that there is a particularly high proportion of anonymous families at many of the centre's activities. These are recorded but do not count towards the centre's performance targets.
- The centre has a good range of partnerships with other agencies, which means that it receives appropriate information about the families in its area, enabling it to identify families most in need and define where needs are greatest.

- Support for families most in need, such as those from Somalia, has been well matched to need and they have received well-targeted help. For example, many mothers of young children are reluctant to come to the centre and are wary of 'formal' activities so staff hold a regular 'stay and play session' at one of the large blocks of flats in the reach area, which is exceptionally well attended. In addition, the centre is opening up one of its rooms for an informal 'coffee and chat' session on a weekly basis to encourage mothers to come to the centre on a more informal basis and, hopefully, to eventually register.
- Most two-year-old children in the area take up their entitlement to free early education. The centre's provision for two-year-olds taking up funded early education has been exceeded and is oversubscribed. As a result, the centre is looking to start an additional group to ensure that the needs of the community are met. In the meantime, it has worked hard with the Academy to ensure most eligible children access other good quality provision locally.
- In order to improve the readiness of young children for school, and in particular to improve early reading skills, the centre has provided a range of activities for babies and children from birth to three years old. These include a specific activity where the staff show parents how, for example, they can share a story with their children and encourage a love of books and reading from an early age.
- Attendance at courses and activities is carefully monitored by the staff and the staff have discovered that some longer courses show a greater drop-off rate. As a result, the centre is developing a range of shorter course courses to meet needs, with more follow-up sessions out in the community.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The centre provides an appropriate balance of universal and targeted services. Services targeted at families speaking English as an additional language and those families where there is substance or domestic abuse are well organised. However, the centre's services to support families living in workless households in the local area require improvement. Many activities are useful to those who attend.
- The quality of support provided for parents who are trying to find employment is not sufficiently focused on the skills they may need. The provision of ESOL classes to enable them to develop the English skills necessary to enable them to apply for work is absolutely right, but currently the centre does not provide enough support for those who are ready to move on from the more basic levels. In addition, there are too few opportunities to become volunteers at the centre in order to help prepare parents for the world of work.
- There are insufficient links with partners such as Jobcentre Plus, although the centre refers many families to 'Advice and Guidance'. The centre has correctly identified the necessity of improving its work with workless families as a key priority in their development plan.
- 'Stay and Play' sessions give staff good opportunities to show parents how they can play and interact with their children in a number of different ways. They also show how parents can provide economical toys for their children to play with through using easily accessible everyday materials such as cardboard boxes and yoghurt pots! In addition, support staff are able to give much valued one-to-one support to individual mothers at these sessions who may have specific needs or concerns.
- Such activities have contributed to a rise in the proportion of children attaining a good level of development when they start school. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of children reaching age-related expectations at the age of five to a level well above the Bristol average.
- The centre has rightly identified the incidence of domestic violence as a key area to address.. Through individual sessions and through the use of the 'Freedom group' valuable help and support are provided for those most in need.
- Safety is of high priority. A good range of strategies, such as child safety week, targeted information at 'Stay and Play' sessions, as well as the provision of first aid courses and a clear focus on the safety of the child, has had a positive impact on the safety and well-being of children.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The new centre manager provides strong and effective leadership. The appointment of most members of the leadership team is recent and a large number of new staff have been appointed in the last few months. There is a wholehearted commitment and dedication from the centre staff and they display a determination to do their best for families. Nevertheless, although the positive impact from actions taken is already being seen, procedures are not yet fully established and embedded.
- The centre manager quickly and efficiently evaluated the work of the centre and identified key priorities for development, in particular increasing the number of registrations especially of targeted groups. The response to the actions taken has been effective and a positive impact is already being felt of more staff going out into the community.
- Arrangements for governance are secure. The governing body and advisory board both understand how well the centre is doing and the key areas for improvement. They are aware of the quality and effectiveness of the services provided as well as the arrangements for ensuring that all staff can provide as high quality service as possible through training and support.
- Support from the local authority and evaluation of services via its termly reviews are effective. The local authority has been supportive during the current period of transition and is working closely with the centre manager to bring about improvements and ensure the centre continues to target key areas.
- The centre manager has closely monitored activities and courses taught by centre staff in order to improve practice still further. She has correctly identified that the quality of evaluations and recording by staff is not always high quality. This is particularly true of recording some of the family services activities where information is not always properly captured and is sometimes not dated so it is difficult to identify the true impact of provision or what next steps should be.
- Safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements and all essential policies and procedures are in place. The specific arrangements for monitoring and assessing the needs of children subject to child protection plans or the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), looked after children and children in need are fully in place. Records kept are conscientious and wide-ranging and individual cases are tracked effectively.
- The centre is committed to promoting equality and diversity and it involves as many people as necessary in ensuring that the needs of all are met effectively, especially for families and disabled children or children who have special educational needs.
- The centre has established a good range of partnerships and services in order to ensure provision has a positive impact on the lives of the families. Resources are well managed and reflect well the determination not to duplicate and replicate services.

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	20180
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	428654
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,300
Centre leader	Ellen Genge
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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