

# Little Hayes Children's Centre

Symington Road, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2LL

## Inspection date

3–4 December 2013

| Overall effectiveness                                      | This inspection:     | Inadequate           | 4 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|---|
|  | Previous inspection: |                      |   |
| 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 |                      | Requires improvement | 3 |

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is a centre that is inadequate.

- The centre's restructuring and re-staffing have hampered its improvement over the last 12 months. Things are getting back on track but only a minority of children and families, including those from target groups, are currently registered with the centre.
- There is no systematic approach to tracking the quality and impact of the centre's work on improving the lives of priority families who attend groups.
- The take-up of free early education by eligible two-, three- and four-year-olds is too low and the gap in achievement between the lowest achieving 20% of five-year-old children living in the area and the rest is much wider than seen nationally. Results in 2013 show that only a third of five-year-olds reach a good level of development.
- Not enough adults with young children, especially from workless households, are helped to enhance their education, access relevant training or get back into work. Links with Jobcentre Plus are at a very early stage of development.
- Leadership, management and governance are strengthening but still require improvement. The local authority is now keeping a close check on the centre's performance and provides effective support. Leaders and governors have established a robust action plan that is well focused on driving necessary improvement at a good pace, but challenging targets have yet to be realised.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- Parents who attend benefit from sessions that help them build confidence and develop positive strategies for managing their children's behaviour. Most teenage parents are in regular contact with the centre and praise the centre's support in improving their lives.
- Good care, guidance and support, coupled with rigorous safeguarding procedures, ensure that families in crisis and children, including those subject to a child protection plan or in need, are well protected.
- Partnerships with other children's centres, Eden House, and health and social care professionals assist the centre's good work with families most in need of support.
- The centre's self-evaluation, based on the rigorous use of data, is accurate and realistic. New staff are upbeat and positive about the way forward, and there is secure capacity to build for good effectiveness.

### 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 three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the head of centre, staff, officers from the local authority, partners, members of the governing body and the advisory board, childminders and parents. Several activities were observed by the inspectors, including some jointly with the head of centre and the family and community support manager, who also attended all team meetings.

Inspectors looked at the centre's self-evaluation, improvement plan, a sample of case studies, safeguarding policies and procedures, and a range of other documentation.

### Lead Inspector

|                  |                                      |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Christine Field  | Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector |
| Joyce Cox        | Additional Inspector                 |
| Graham Saltmarsh | Additional Inspector                 |

## Full report

### Information about the centre

This phase two centre, designated in 2008, was previously known as Oldbury Court Children's Centre. It opened in its present form in September 2012 following its amalgamation with Little Hayes Nursery School, under the service level agreement set up by the local authority with the governing body of the school. The headteacher of the Nursery School is also the head of centre and oversees the work of a small team of staff which has undergone considerable changes in the last year. An advisory board was established earlier this year.

There are 1,293 children under the age of five years living in the reach area. The centre is in the east locality of Bristol city centre within the Frome Vale area. The reach area is mixed socially and economically with pockets of significant disadvantage. Nearly a quarter of families are in receipt of out-of-work benefits, a fifth are eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit and over half of children are assessed as living in income-deprived homes. Most housing comprises a mix of detached and semi-detached homes, privately rented flats and bedsits that are used for temporary accommodation for families. There is also a safe house, a rehabilitation centre and Eden House, supporting women in the criminal justice system, located within the reach area.

Most families are of White British heritage with a rising number from other ethnic groups. When they start in early years provision, children's skills and knowledge vary, but are typically below the level expected for their age.

Target groups are identified by the centre as: teenage and young parents, workless families, minority ethnic families and fathers.

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

- With the local authority, move quickly using all the resources available to implement the challenging improvement plan and ensure that targets are met on time.
- Plan and deliver an appropriate range of good-quality services that meet local needs and increase the number of priority families using services and attending sessions, so that they are at least the large majority.
- Establish a rigorous system for tracking the quality and impact of services on improving the lives of families in target groups.
- Work effectively with the local authority and early years partners to close the gap in achievement for the most-vulnerable children, and increase the percentage reaching a good level of development when they are five-years-old to meet or better that seen nationally, by:
  - significantly increasing the proportion of eligible two-, three- and four-year-old children who take up their free early education places
  - widening the activities on offer to young learners and ensure these focus closely on assisting their good development
  - establishing a 'school readiness' programme that parents know about and which helps them and their children prepare confidently for the transfer to nurseries across the reach area.
- Increase the take up of adult education and employment-related skills training in order to enhance the economic well-being of families most in need of support, particularly those who are workless, and capitalise on the established partnerships and developing links with Jobcentre Plus to support this work.

### Inspection judgements

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

Inadequate

- Access to services by young children and families is inadequate because, with the exception of teenage parents, only a small minority of those in target groups are using centre services. Securing family registrations has been hampered by staffing problems. Since September, with the new team in place, numbers have seen a dramatic increase with challenging targets set to aid further improvement.
- Live-birth data are usefully provided to the centre on a regular basis, but the opportunity this provides for following up, registering and supporting those who most need support is not acted on well enough. The high turnover of health visitors has impeded staff in this area of work, but the partnership already established with the new link health visitor has potential for making positive change.
- The take-up of free early education by eligible two-, three- and four-year-olds living in the reach area is not high enough. So far, there has been insufficient follow-up to find out why this is. Data on this, held centrally by the local authority, only came to light during the inspection.
- Leaders are working effectively to extend the range of services provided across the area to widen access for families including those expecting children. A new outreach group, 'Singing, Rhyme and Storytime', is located in the most disadvantaged community and take-up by target groups is growing. Participation in some groups such as the 'Men Behaving Dadly' group provided for fathers, specific support from the Family Information service on debt counselling, and the community learning opportunities to help parents get back to work is relatively low.
- The centre is working hard to improve its image and has been successful in establishing itself as a community focal point. Parents told inspectors how far the centre has come in such a short space of time in reaching out to the community. Key priorities to market the centre include a 'pop up shop' in the main supermarket and leaflet distribution at the health centre. Families, including teenage

parents, using the centre say the welcome they receive from staff is; 'warm and friendly' and successfully builds trusting relationships.

### The quality of practice and services

Inadequate

- Services are increasingly being located to enable families to access them more easily; however, currently, the range is not sufficient to meet the needs of all target groups. Sessions are typically of good quality and enjoyed by the relatively small number who attend. Leaders rightly recognise that more work is required to establish a rigorous system for tracking the impact that services have on improving the lives and well-being of children and families most in need of support.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development, at 30%, is well below the national average of 52%, and the gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest is wider than seen nationally. A third of eligible two-year-olds and a quarter of three- and four-year-olds are not taking up their free early education places. Not enough is being done to find out why this is or to encourage more parents to take up their entitlement. Early years partners are keen to work collectively to bring improvement and reduce inequalities, but await specific resources from the local authority to support children's readiness for school.
- Some services such as the popular 'Skills for Life' group support Asian women in building practical skills, for example making home-made clothes. A few parents have accessed numeracy, beauty-therapy courses and confidence-building sessions, but there is no clear pathway to enhance their education and employability. Partnerships with community learning services are well established, but those with Jobcentre Plus are not yet strong enough to promote families' economic well-being, particularly for those who are workless.
- The childminder group supported by the centre and the 'Jelly Babies' sessions are both very well attended. Experiences such as woodland learning, messy play, and talks on weaning and oral health assist children's learning and development. The 'Time for Me' group at Eden House helps mothers in the criminal justice system build new skills for the future, enhances their well-being and supports healthier lifestyles. One mother's comment sums up its impact: 'It kick starts my week.'
- The 'Nurturing Programme' successfully helps a good number of parents who most need support to build their confidence and set clear boundaries for behaviour and discipline. One child, when asked about the programme, said: 'My mummy is now listening to everyone and playing more.'
- Early help is effective. Information provided by the police reflects high incidence of domestic violence and the centre does good work to support families in very challenging circumstances. All children living in the reach area subject to a child protection plan are known to the centre and strong multi-agency working ensures these families receive timely and effective support to reduce any risks. Events such as 'Child Safety' week help parents to understand their responsibilities for their children's well-being.

### The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership, management and governance are strengthening but still require improvement as some of the actions they are taking have yet to show demonstrable impact. Monitoring has been effective this year and the local authority has supported centre leaders in managing the significant changes in staffing and the appointment of a whole new team. Governors have a firm grasp of the challenges and opportunities in going forward and with leaders have set the centre firmly on an improving course. Resources are currently sufficient to assist the leaders' capacity to improve the centre's effectiveness.
- The improvement plan, which aligns with that of the nursery school, judged good at its last inspection, is rooted in accurate self-evaluation and is an effective tool for taking things forward. It has a manageable number of priorities and challenging targets which are precise and measurable, such as that of increasing access to 65% by April 2014.
- The advisory board is being skilfully nurtured by senior leaders while members get to grips with

their role. A parent takes over the chair next month. Health and education partners are on board and three parents from target groups have recently joined, one of whom is also a governor. Leaders are working proactively to extend the board's membership to encompass social care and the voluntary sector.

- The performance management and professional supervision of staff are effective and tie in securely to their ongoing professional development. The team's qualifications, expertise and experience complement one another and between them they have much to offer families. They share in leaders' aspirations to serve the community to the best of their ability and make sure the centre turns around rapidly.
- Parents make their views known through informal channels, through the feedback forms they complete following participation in activities and in their 'Smile' book entries. The centre has yet to circulate a community survey but plans to do so following its marketing activities.
- High priority is given to all aspects of safeguarding. Staff vetting procedures meet requirements. Partnerships with social care professionals are strong and effective. The rigorous use of early help procedures ensures joined-up working and well-coordinated approaches that reduce the risk of harm to those who are most vulnerable, including children subject to a child protection plan and those who are in need. Close scrutiny is given to all visitors and the risk assessments carried out by the centre ensure a safe environment.

**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> | 22255  |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Bristol  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 428655   |
| <b>Managed by</b>              | The governing body of Little Hayes Nursery School and Children's Centre on behalf of the local authority |

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b> | 1,293                              |
| <b>Centre leader</b>   | Shirley Doveton                    |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                                 | Not previously inspected           |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 0117 903 0405                      |
| <b>Email address</b>   | head.little.hayes.n@bristol.gov.uk |



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