

# Bromley Pensnett Children's Centre

Bromley Pensnett Primary School, Bromley, Brierley Hill, DY5 4PJ

**Inspection date** 5 - 6 December 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 is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Access to services requires improvement because, in the most deprived area that the centre serves, only a small proportion of families are registered and a minority attend. The proportions of children living in workless households and of lone parents who access services are too low.
- Attendance at activities is variable and, too often, parents do not complete courses, including 'Chatterbox', 'Baby Yoga' and 'Get Cooking'. Although these programmes make a positive difference to those who do attend, the use of resources is not good because too many places are vacant.
- The proportion of mothers breastfeeding at six to eight weeks has remained stubbornly well below national averages over recent years and does not show signs of improvement.
- Although, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at five years old improved well between 2010 and 2012 the lowest-achieving children are not catching up with their peers and the centre's own tracking systems do not show that the centre makes a difference to their achievement.
- Opportunities for adults to develop basic skills for work or further study are limited.
- Leaders, managers and those responsible for governance of the centre have an overly optimistic view about the centre's performance because information is not always interpreted well. Although there is some tracking of how well the centre contributes to the progress that adults and children make, this aspect of the centre's work requires improvement.
- The local authority has not provided sufficient supervision or challenge to the centre since the change in governance arrangements in April 2013. The local authority has not adequately supported the centre manager or management committee members to undertake their roles as well as they should.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- Despite changes in governance and a period of uncertainty about the future of the children's centre, staff have remained motivated, enthusiastic and committed to improving the life chances of families in the local area.
- The strength of partnership working between family support workers and other services contributes well to improving the well-being of the most vulnerable children who access services. Children who are subject to child protection plans, children in need and those subject to Common Assessment Framework processes are safeguarded very effectively.

## 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 two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with: representatives from the local authority and the management committee (advisory board); the centre manager and senior leaders; the headteacher of the co-located primary school; the staff of the children's centre; various parents and other users of the centre; a wide range of representatives of organisations who work in partnership with the centre, including health visitors, a social worker and staff from the voluntary sector.

The inspectors visited a crèche taking place at the centre and jointly observed 'Get Cooking' with the centre manager.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation. They looked in detail at family case files and followed these up by meeting the families.

## Inspection team

Michael Blakey, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Mary Dudley

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Bromley Pensnett Children's Centre, initially developed as a phase two children's centre, opened as a phase one purpose-built centre in 2008. It is attached to Bromley Pensnett Primary School (URN: 103812), which until April 2013 was responsible for the centre. The school is subject to a separate inspection and the report can be found on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). In April 2013, the local authority took direct control of all children's centres in Dudley, and a consultation on the future of children's centre services is currently underway.

There are 921 children under five years of age living within the area served by the centre, and 641 of these children live within the top 30% most-deprived areas in England. Most of the families in the area are of White British origin. Levels of unemployment and the proportion of families dependent on benefits are above the national average. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to early years provision are below those expected nationally for their age.

The centre has identified its key target groups as: children living in workless households; children living in the most deprived super output areas (SOAs); fathers; teenage parents and lone parents; families who have experienced domestic violence and those with mental health issues.

An advisory board (the management committee) is in place. The centre works with a range of partners, including health services, to deliver a range of services to meet its core purpose.

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

- Improve access to services so that it is at least good by ensuring:
  - a large majority of children and families in target groups access services and that families living in the 10% most-deprived super output area, lone parents and families living in workless households are well represented
  - attendance rates of children and parents at a wide range of activities are high and that most parents complete the courses which they start.
- Improve the quality and impact of services so that they are at least good. Specifically, ensure that:
  - the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is at least in line with national levels and the lowest-attaining children catch up with their peers
  - breastfeeding rates at six to eight weeks improve so that they are closer to levels seen nationally
  - there is a wider range of opportunities for adults to engage in learning so that they develop skills for work or further training
  - the impact of activities and services is tracked to show what difference they make to children's and adults' lives.
- Strengthen leadership, governance and management at all levels so that they more effective at analysing data, accurately evaluating the difference the centre makes and planning for improvements. Specifically:
  - the local authority should ensure that its quality assurance and performance management processes are implemented so that it has an accurate view of the centre's performance and provides appropriate support to the centre manager and advisory board
  - the local authority should ensure that the centre manager receives regular quality supervision so that she is both effectively supported and challenged
  - the local authority should ensure information, such as obesity and breastfeeding data, is made available to the centre so that leaders and managers can effectively evaluate the centre's performance and demonstrate the impact of their services
  - the local authority should develop, in conjunction with partners and the advisory board, an action plan which includes specific, measurable and time-limited targets so that everyone

understands what they are doing and can deliver on it

- The management committee should ensure that they have a wider range of partner agencies attending and provide training so that members are more able to interpret data and challenge the centre to drive improvements faster.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- At approximately 84%, most families living in the reach area are registered with the centre, and 42% accessed services over the last 12 months. However, this overall positive picture masks some areas for improvement. The proportion of families accessing services from the majority of the centre's identified groups is not yet high enough. For example, 93 of the 153 children living in the most-deprived area are registered but only about a third access services.
- The engagement of lone parents is not strong. Approximately 115 of the 214 lone parents living in the area are known to the centre and only a small minority of those attend services.
- The centre has been effective at registering the large majority of new births. Between April 2012 and April 2013 the centre received 167 new birth referrals from health partners and staff wrote to all of these families. However, the centre does not always follow up the families who are not registered sufficiently well so that they are also engaged in the centre's work. As a result, registration rates have remained broadly static over the last year.
- The centre estimates that 46% of families access services more than eight times per year. However, there are anomalies in the way in which information is analysed, and by whom. As a result the information that leaders hold about participation rates, particularly of fathers, is not always accurate.
- Families access a range of services delivered by the centre. Some of the most-well-accessed services include 'Tots Together' and family support. The centre also provides families with passes to Dudley Zoo.
- The centre proactively seeks out two-year-old children who are eligible for 15 hours of free early education per week. As a result, almost all eligible children are supported to access a range of good or better provision and also receive a package of effective family support from the centre.

### The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The centre delivers a range of appropriate activities and services for families, with a particular focus on targeted early help for families in greatest need. This is jointly provided by the family support workers and the centre's partners. At the time of the inspection, the team was working with 80 families in this way.
- At 19, the number of mothers supported by breastfeeding buddies over the last year is low. The centre has access to some data on breastfeeding rates at six-to-eight weeks, but this is not directly comparable with Dudley levels or levels seen nationally. The data that is available to leaders and managers show that breastfeeding rates are low at 20% and not improving.
- The proportion of children in the reach area achieving a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has risen steadily from 51% in 2010 to 60.9% in 2012. However, over the same period the gap between the lowest-achieving children and the rest did not narrow. Information from 2013, although not directly comparable, shows that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was again well below the Dudley and national levels.
- The centre is not able to demonstrate sufficiently well the impact that it has had on those children who attended children's centre services. Information shows that only a third of children attending half of the schools in the reach area, including the co-located school, achieved a good level of

development in 2013. However, schools report that children that attend the centre are well prepared for school.

- The range of opportunities for adults to develop basic skills so that they can access further study or work is limited.
- Almost every parent who responded to the children's centre survey in 2013 stated that they were satisfied with the centre, and three quarters of these reported that the centre had made a positive difference to their lives. Likewise, parents who spoke to inspectors at 'Get Cooking', for example, said that they had changed the type of food they bought to reduce salt, sugar and fat and that they were now more confident in cooking fresh food.
- Families in greatest need are well supported, kept safe and, as a result, they improve their personal circumstances. Assessments are effective, case files and records are well maintained and up to date. Many families with children subject to child protection procedures and children in need plans improve their circumstances so that they no longer require the same high level of support.
- Effective partnership working with the Citizens Advice Bureau ensures that families receive good information, advice and guidance on a weekly basis. This helps families to improve their financial situation, for example, by accessing the right benefits including the disability living allowance to support disabled children.

#### **The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management**

Requires improvement

- The centre manager has created a culture in which centre staff feel fully involved in reviewing and planning the services they deliver. Despite the recent uncertainty about the future of the centre, staff have remained positive and committed to delivering services and morale has remained high. However, governance requires improvement because, throughout 2013, the monitoring of the centre and supervision of the centre manager by the local authority have been too infrequent and not sufficiently robust.
- The management committee has made efforts to ensure that it is effective following changes to its membership. However, minutes of the meetings show that the committee has not been well supported by the local authority, and a number of issues, including service planning, terms of reference and support to analyse and interpret data, remain.
- The centre manager, the management committee and the local authority do not always use all of the information available to them to evaluate how well the centre performs. As a result, they have an overly optimistic view of the impact of the centre. Although they use data, their analytical skills are not yet sufficiently well developed, and so they do not always reach the right conclusions about what data show. The joint observation undertaken with the centre manager clearly demonstrated that leaders know how to evaluate accurately the quality of activities.
- The centre has a development plan to which all staff contribute. It clearly sets out priorities for the centre and the centre's activities are linked to this. However, the targets in the plan are not always sufficiently well defined and it is, therefore, difficult for the centre to know when these are met. Resources are used adequately to encourage families to attend and to provide appropriate services.
- In the crèche, children are fully engaged in activities which are appropriate for their needs and based on their expressed preferences. However, children's individual progress is not recorded or monitored. Leaders and managers do not measure how well most adults make progress during their engagement with centre-led activities and do not always keep track of how well they do when they

take up other services.

- The centre does not have access to some of the information that it needs to demonstrate the impact of its services. For example, the latest data it holds on obesity rates of children at the end of Reception Year are too old and cover the whole of Dudley. As a result, the centre is not able to demonstrate if it is contributing to reducing obesity rates.
- All statutory safeguarding requirements are met including safe recruitment checks. Centre staff are appropriately trained and receive effective and supportive supervision. Children subject to Common Assessment Framework processes, and those known to social care, are well supported.

**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>	20463
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	427453
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	912
<b>Centre leader</b>	Manjit Dehal
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 812325
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