

# W2 Berrygrove Children's Centre

Berrygrove Primary and Nursery School, Cow Lane, Watford, WD25 9PW

**Inspection date** 29–30 April 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Good	2
The quality of practice and services		Good	2
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is a good centre.

- Strong partnership working ensures most families with young children register with the centre and have easy access to services.
- Enthusiastic outreach staff actively encourage families, including those from priority groups, to use centre services by visiting them in their homes and by putting on activities in different community venues around the area.
- Strong professional relationships with early years providers and schools is enabling the children's centre to improve children's listening and social skills so that children are better prepared to start school.
- Through the high quality parenting courses and support offered by the centre, parents improve their parenting skills and learn how they can support their children's learning and development.
- Families are developing healthier lifestyles as a result of the centre's work. More women are breastfeeding and fewer children are obese when they start school.
- Children and families are well cared for and supported by staff. Families feel safe in the centre and value its relaxed and friendly environment.
- Leadership, governance and management of the centre are effective. The centre knows its strengths and weaknesses and is improving strongly.

### It is not outstanding because:

- The centre does not have access to all of the up to date information it needs to establish how many vulnerable families, from some identified priority groups, live in the reach area
- The centre does not hold sufficient information on the progress adults make after they have completed courses and don't know if learners continue into further training or employment.
- The centre is working from too many different plans. Agreed actions to address current priorities are on one plan while the development plan reflects targets that have been completed.

## 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 parents, centre staff, members of the advisory board, volunteers, representatives from professional partnerships including health, housing, early years and education, as well as officers commissioned by the local authority.

Inspectors observed the centre's work including four activities, one of which was observed jointly with the centre manager. The inspectors visited activities at the Meriden Community Centre and the LeMarie Centre.

Inspectors took into account parents views as expressed directly to them during the inspection, as well as through their recorded evaluations about the centre's work.

Inspectors looked at a range of relevant documentation such as the centre's checks on its performance, development plans and data, information relating to safeguarding and a selection of case files.

## Inspection team

Mary Dudley, Lead Inspector	Additional inspector
Catherine Hairsine	Additional inspector
Ann Taylor	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

W2 Berrygrove Children's Centre is a standalone centre situated to the north-east of Watford. It shares a site with The Grove Academy (URN 138507) which manages the centre on behalf of the local authority, and Berrygrove Pre-school and Day-care (URN EY440334) both of which are subject to separate inspection arrangements. Reports are available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). The centre delivers or supports access to a range of services including family support, adult and family learning, early education and health services, which are delivered from the centre and a range of community venues in the area.

The centre serves a diverse community. The north of the area has significant levels of economic need and low levels of educational attainment, the south is culturally diverse with pockets of deprivation, while in the middle is an area of comparative affluence. There are 1148 children under five years of age living in the centres reach area, of which almost half (48.4%) are from minority ethnic families. Families registered with the centre speak 69 different languages. Generally children enter early years provision at levels typically expected for their age, however, children that live in the most economically deprived parts of the area enter early years provision at levels typically below those expected for their age. Around 20% of children under five are living in households where families are in receipt of out of work benefits and 14.5% of families are eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit.

The centre has identified its main priority groups as transient families, families experiencing domestic violence, adults with mental health issues, vulnerable children, and families who speak English as an additional language.

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

- Further improve tracking and monitoring of families' access to services and progress they make in order to improve outcomes by;
  - ensuring baseline information on all target groups, particularly, transient families, victims of domestic violence and adults with mental health issues, is as accurate as possible.
  - extending data collection to include tracking the progress of individuals that have completed adult training courses with the centre.
- Ensure that the centre has one development plan that includes all priorities, and is updated in line with local authority monitoring.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

**Good**

- A very large majority of families are registered with the centre and have access to good quality services, information and guidance. The centre is well-established, welcoming and makes a positive difference to families lives. Staff know the community well and regularly consult with families to ensure that the centre's services are matched to the needs of different groups and effectively reflect the diverse community in which they live. As a result, it provides popular activities such as 'Dinky Dancers', Dads and Family groups and the 'Rainbow Toy Library'.
- Well-established links with health partners means that all new parents are made aware of the centres' services. Weekly midwife and breastfeeding sessions, plus the baby weaning and two year development checks result in the large majority of families, including those expecting children, accessing early childhood services.
- The balance of universal and targeted services for families most in need of help is good. Programmes advertised to all families in the area provide attractive activities that engage new and existing families. Specialist provision provides additional support, that enables families with particular needs to develop parenting skills in a supportive way. Groups such as 'Positive Beginnings' provide advice and support to parents, working effectively to reduce inequalities in their knowledge.
- Outreach workers have a good knowledge of the many issues and challenges facing families in the community. Effective work in the home successfully ensures that many of those suffering from a range of difficulties are very well supported.
- The centre prioritises its work so that groups of families and individuals that need additional support are well served. However, for some of these groups and individuals such as transient families, victims of domestic abuse and adults with mental health issues, it is not always possible to know whether all those needing support are being reached. Staff recognise that there is more work to be done to ensure that all those needing help have access to it.

### The quality of practice and services

**Good**

- Leaders and staff are pro-actively working with early years partners, schools and parents to narrow the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest. Training and shared professional dialogue has seen a big shift in attitudes and understanding and a real desire to share knowledge and work together for the good of families. Parents receive skilled support in helping them understand how best to help their children learn and develop. This is helping to reduce inequalities.
- Users of the centre reflect the ethnic make-up of the community it serves. An equality impact assessment is completed for each group and activity to ensure no-one is excluded. Families that require additional help with English are supported by volunteer translators from the community and are signposted to 'English as an Additional Language' courses delivered locally.
- The centre's volunteering programme makes a positive contribution to the life of the community. Volunteering inside and outside the centre is promoted and managed well, and helps to improve the employment prospects of parents. Centre volunteers benefit from effective induction and supervision. The majority of those taking part have been drawn from the groups that the centre has prioritised as needing support and are keen to 'put something back' into a service that has helped them.

- Records of adult users' achievements are rather limited so their successes are not gathered together productively. Staff rely too heavily on informal means to find out how adults get on when they are signposted to courses. This means that staff only have partial information when planning future services that specifically enhance families' economic well-being.
- The centre works well with other agencies to support families who are most in need. Intervention for children subject to child protection plans and children in need, is effective in ensuring vulnerable children are well protected. Staff make effective use of the Common Assessment Framework to ensure children and families are kept safe from harm. Well-maintained case files show significant improvements in the outcomes for children in these families.
- The promotion of healthy lifestyles is a key part of the work of the centre and its partners. Activities such as Dinky Dancers and Toddle Fit promote a more active lifestyle, healthy eating courses promote better nutrition and breastfeeding support and volunteers encourage new mothers to take up and sustain breastfeeding. As a result, the levels of breastfeeding have increased to above the national average and less children in Reception Year are obese.

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

**Good**

- The centre manager is totally committed to making sure local families enjoy healthy and fulfilled lives and overcome the personal challenges they face. She has built a hard working team whose members have the necessary qualifications, experience and expertise to respond well to children's and families' needs. Performance management and professional supervision of staff are well-established. The strong teamwork and high levels of commitment by all stakeholders contribute well to improved outcomes for local families.
- Governance arrangements are effective and the advisory board is both supportive of the work of the centre and is providing increasing levels of challenge to drive improvement. It reports regularly to the governing body which in turn make sure its contractual obligations are met and all resources are allocated efficiently. The local authority monitors the centres' performance through rigorous reviews three times a year, and regular checks on registration and participation rates.
- The centre has a clear view of its strengths and shortcomings. Local authority monitoring visits enable managers to identify changing priorities and to monitor its progress against agreed targets. However, rather than update the development plan and use it as a live document the manager is working from a number of action plans which is an unnecessary complication to monitoring the centres' progress.
- Safeguarding matters are taken very seriously. Staff vetting procedures are thorough, and the skills of staff are kept up-to-date with on-going safeguarding training. Staff work closely with health and social care partners to reduce the risk of harm to children. They provide good practical support for families in some very difficult and challenging circumstances, such as domestic violence and support for parents with mental health issues, which helps parents to reduce the risk of harm to their children.
- Parents and children are consulted frequently and effectively through a range methods, such as voting boxes and consultations. Consequently, families contribute well to shaping the services provided. For example, weaning support is now delivered separately from the baby group and the weekend Dad's Group now alternates with the Family Group.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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>	23427
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	442859
<b>Managed by</b>	The Grove Academy on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1148
<b>Centre leader</b>	Debbi Keeley
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 484312
<b>Email address</b>	manager.berrygrove@hertschildrenscentres.org.uk

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