

Balsall Heath Hub Children's Centre Group

10 Malvern Street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, B12 8NN

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| Inspection dates | 9–10 September 2014 |
| Previous inspection date | Not previously inspected |

| Overall effectiveness | This inspection: Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
|--|---|--------------------|----------|
| | | Not applicable | |
| Access to services by young children and families | | Outstanding | 1 |
| The quality of practice and services | | Outstanding | 1 |
| The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for children and families

This group of centres is outstanding.

- Almost all of the families who live in the area are known to the group, and a very large majority of them regularly engage with the vast range of excellent services available.
- The staff have very close links with all local communities. They have an excellent understanding of the needs of local families and provide highly effective support at the right time.
- Outreach work is very effective because staff visit all local families at home to explain what the centres have to offer and gain an accurate understanding of how best to support each family.
- The staff successfully and sensitively help families overcome difficulties and find solutions for their problems. Families facing the greatest challenges and those most in need receive very thorough and effective support.
- Highly effective partnerships with health, education and early years providers ensure services are thoroughly integrated and meet families' needs very well.
- Children who attend the centres' activities make very good progress in their development and are prepared well for school. However, staff do not always update children's written records soon enough, so there is a delay planning for the next steps in their development.
- The group manager is an inspirational leader. Her energy and vision for excellence enthuse others to have high aspirations for all children and families. Staff and partners are thoroughly committed to doing whatever it takes to continually improve the health, well-being and safety of all children and families, particularly of those families in most need.
- The group's highly effective leadership, governance and management, together with rigorous checks on how well the centres are doing and very thorough training for all staff, ensure the centres continue to improve.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all written records of the tracking of children's progress are completed thoroughly and regularly so that staff can set new targets to extend children's development.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre group 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 and children, the centre manager, outreach and support workers, and representatives from the local authority. They also met health, education and early years partners, adult education coordinators, volunteers, apprentices and representatives of the advisory board.

The inspection covered the following centres: Balsall Heath Children's Centre and Muath Children's Centre. The inspectors observed activities at St Paul's Nursery and a satellite centre situated at Anderton Park Primary School. They observed the centres' work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including parents' evaluation and satisfaction surveys.

Inspection team

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|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Dan Grant, Lead inspector | Additional inspector |
| Karen Cooper | Additional inspector |
| Catherine Hairsine | Additional inspector |

Full report

Information about the group

Balsall Heath Hub Children's Centre Group was formed in June 2012. It consists of three previously stand-alone children's centres, that have merged and share services, staff and an overall manager. The group meets its core purpose by offering a range of services including family play sessions, parenting courses, adult learning and family support. These services are delivered to families from the children's centre buildings, community venues in the area and through outreach home visits. Balsall Heath Hub Children's Centre Group forms part of Birmingham's Sparkbrook/Hill locality, which has a total of five children's centres.

There are approximately 2,853 children aged nought to five years in the reach area. The area covered by the group is close to the city centre. Almost all families served by the group live in areas considered to be within the 10% most deprived in the country. The target groups identified by the group include: families facing multiple disadvantage such as poverty and homelessness; and those identified by the local authority and its partners as being particularly vulnerable, including disabled children, those subject to child protection plans and children in need.

The vast majority of families within the area served by the group are of minority ethnic heritage and speak English as a second language; a small minority of parents are unable to speak English. The largest ethnic groups are of Pakistani and Yemeni origin. Most families live in private rented accommodation and there are pockets of social housing. Levels of unemployment are high, and a large number of children live in households dependent upon workless benefits. Most children enter early years provision with knowledge and skills lower than expected for their age.

The group has five linked early years settings:

Chatterboxes Pre-school Playgroup (EY311445) is operated by St Paul's Community Development Trust and is based at Calvary Church Hall

Amanah Day Nursery (EY227197) is operated by The Muath Trust and provides onsite childcare at Muath Children's Centre

St Paul's Nursery at Balsall Heath (EY216824) is operated by St Paul's Community Development Trust and provides onsite childcare at the Balsall Heath Children's Centre

St Paul's Nursery at Tindal (EY434401) is operated by St Paul's Community Development Trust at the Tindal Ark Primary Academy Site

St Paul's Nursery at St Barnabas (EY341942) is operated by St Paul's Community Development Trust at St Barnabas Church, Ladypool Road

These settings are subject to separate inspection arrangements. The reports from these inspections are available on the Ofsted website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The group is managed by St Paul's Community Development Trust on behalf of Birmingham City Council. There is an advisory board made up of representatives of local organisations who work in partnership with the group, members of the local community and parents. Muath Children's Centre occupies premises owned and operated by The Muath Trust. The children's centre staff team is line-managed by St Paul's Community Development Trust. The local authority monitors the performance of the group, and an independent consultant provides advice to help improve the quality of services.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Outstanding

- Highly effective planning and very thorough analysis of data ensure that the group remains fully aware of every family with a child under five years of age that settles in the area. Particularly effective outreach workers visit almost every family at home to explain what the centres have to offer. This results in a very high proportion of families registering with the group and attending activities regularly because they understand how the centres will help them.
- The group has established a very strong reputation for providing high-quality support for all families within the area. The group maintains particularly strong and productive partnerships with community groups, schools, health services and adult education providers. These enable the group to obtain accurate information about families most in need of support.
- Families most in need of services and support are accurately prioritised and receive very well planned specialist support for as long as it is needed. Those at risk from homelessness, poverty and violence have very good levels of engagement, as do those facing poor health, debt and disability. Staff are particularly effective at encouraging isolated and reluctant parents to get involved in the life of the centres.
- Families benefit from the wide range of well-targeted information and support available. Health visitors and midwives hold clinics at the centres several times each week. These services are very well attended and are fully integrated with other activities at the centres. Expectant parents are introduced to the centres and accompany staff on arranged visits to the maternity centre to learn more about the services on offer.
- The group delivers a vast array of highly relevant services tailored to individual families' needs and circumstances. The centres have a large team of dedicated and highly motivated staff, such as specialist outreach workers for families whose circumstances make them unable to attend sessions. Legal advocacy services are provided to ensure families understand their rights, and counselling and mental health services promote and sustain well-being for families.
- The staff ensure that most eligible two-year-old children take up their funded place at an early years setting. All of these places are at settings that are of at least good quality. There are similarly high levels of take-up for three- and four-year old children who receive funded places.

The quality of practice and services

Outstanding

- The excellent range of high-quality services provided by the group is having a very positive impact on the families who attend, including those most in need. These services are available in the centres, at several community locations including schools and in families' own homes. The quality of care, guidance and support offered to individual families is outstanding.

- The centres offer very effective and focused support for families' specific needs, such as well-crafted parenting programmes, which take account of cultural and religious values, and stay-and-play sessions for disabled children. Tracking and monitoring of the progress made by those who attend these sessions clearly indicate the significant benefits and the improvements in family life.
- A majority of women breastfeed their babies and the number is increasing significantly because the group and its partners are working together very successfully to provide highly effective support, information and guidance. The group and its partners deliver very effective healthy eating and exercise activities which are well attended. As a result, levels of childhood obesity are low.
- All activities are carefully planned to make sure children and families get the most out of them. This makes sure they continue to make good levels of progress and quickly find solutions to problems as they arise. Staff use their high levels of skills, knowledge and experience continually to model the highest standards in parenting and children's play, learning and development work.
- The group has particularly effective processes to measure the impact of services, and staff use these well to prioritise targets for development. This makes sure that the group continually improves what it has to offer so that families receive greater benefit. Detailed evaluations show that almost all sessions, including parenting sessions, make a positive difference to the adults who attend.
- The centres ensure that all parents have easy access to a broad range of good adult learning courses, vocational training and information about job vacancies. The group has identified that many adults require better skills in English and mathematics, and staff work very closely with partners to ensure high rates of attendance and success. A large proportion of parents from minority ethnic backgrounds improve their language skills and are better equipped to help their children learn.
- The group has a very well established volunteering programme which provides a good variety of valuable experiences. This enables parents to improve their employability skills and gain useful vocational qualifications which help them to find paid work.
- Children are increasingly well prepared for school. Data show that children who attend the centres' activities make significant progress in their development. However, in a few instances, written records of children's progress are not updated often enough so that staff can plan to stretch children's learning and development even further.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Outstanding

- Arrangements for leadership, governance and management of the centre are highly effective. The centre manager and the advisory board have a very good understanding of the local area and the needs of the communities who live there. They are aware of the group's strengths and know what is required to ensure that it continues to provide outstanding services to local families.

- The quality of services and overall performance of the group are monitored closely by senior leaders, the advisory board and the local authority. Close analysis of data and trends in performance are used effectively by leaders to ensure that the local authority's and the group's priorities continue to reduce inequalities for families.
- Very effective arrangements are in place to ensure parents make a significant contribution to the running of the centres. The parents' forum is very active and meets regularly to review services. Parents also make a valued contribution through membership of the advisory board, through their frequent and thorough evaluation of services and through their responses to consultation on new developments.
- The group manager is an inspirational leader who provides very effective support for the staff. She makes sure that staff are very well trained and that their performance is managed well. Policies and procedures are effective and are understood by all.
- The centre has an extensive range of stimulating resources which ensure families get the most out of their time at the centres. For example, the group has a minibus, farm, narrow boat, well-equipped art studio and drama group. In addition, there is a very good range of toys, books and equipment which is used very well.
- Staff work very effectively with partner organisations to safeguard children and families. Procedures are robust, and staff know what to do if they become concerned for the safety and welfare of those who use the centres. This includes children subject to child protection plans, looked after children and those identified as in need. Staff make very good use of the Common Assessment Framework to ensure families receive planned support. Adults who have experienced domestic abuse also receive very effective support.

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. |

Group details

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| Unique reference number | 80026 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 447584 |
| Managed by | St Paul's Community Development Trust on behalf of the local authority |

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|--|----------------------------------|
| Approximate number of children under five in the reach area | 2,853 |
| Centre leader | Alison Moore |
| Telephone number | 0121 4646349 |
| Email address | alison.moore@stpaulstrust.org.uk |

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 20177 Balsall Heath Children's Centre
- 22069 Muath Children's Centre

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