

# Crawley 1

**Bewbush Children and Family Centre, Dorsten Square, Bewbush, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 8XW**

**Inspection date** 14-16 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
		Not previously inspected	
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		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### **This children's centre group is inadequate. It is not good because:**

- The information and support provided by the local authority governance does not help the team manager, centre coordinators or the centre partnership group to measure how well the centres are engaging with families. Clear data showing how many two-year-olds living in the locality are eligible for free early education places and what proportion of these children are attending early years settings are not made available to the team manager. This limits any help with school readiness.
- Planning is not focused sharply on key local priorities, such as the underachievement of boys, and does not contain precise and measurable targets. Consequently, improvements are slow to emerge.
- The centres are not tracking the progress of children and adult learners, and systems to show how the centres are making a difference to children and families are not well established. Partnerships with adult learning providers, schools and pre-schools are underdeveloped.
- The role of the family outreach worker is too broad and requires review. Staff capacity is stretched and currently insufficient, which means some families have to wait for family support services. Consequently, the centres have not been able to move forward with improvements to services, such as developing links with parent and toddler groups, as quickly as they hoped.
- Achievement at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is a concern in the Bewbush locality, especially for boys. Insufficient priority has been given to addressing this issue through the universal group sessions provided.
- Too few fathers are engaging with services. In some sessions parents are using mobile phones, which is against the centres' policy.

### **This children's centre group has the following strengths:**

- The group has a strong, dedicated and highly capable team manager who has provided good support to staff not only in this group but also across the Crawley 2 group during staff absence.
- Staff at all levels are committed and have sustained services despite staff shortages. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the locality and parents highly value services.
- The centre partnership groups provide effective support and challenge to the team manager when making difficult decisions regarding the delivery of services.

## 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. The centres that form part of this children's centre group are Bewbush Children and Family Centre, and the merged Pound Hill and Maidenbower Children and Family Centres. The centres also work collaboratively with the Crawley 2 group of centres which consist of Langley Green and Ifield Children and Family Centre, Northgate Children and Family Centre and Southgate Children and Family Centre. Each group is managed by a team manager. Many services operate across the Crawley locality.

This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings and discussions with: parents and users of the centres; the two team managers of the Crawley locality groups and each centre coordinator; the Early Years and Childcare Team Manager and Associate Advisor; senior leaders and managers in the local authority; family outreach workers; early years practitioners; volunteers; representatives from commissioned services; and representatives of the centre partnership group.

The inspectors visited a range of services offered at each of the centres, including 'Play and Learn' sessions and visits to linked early years settings.

They observed the centres' work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Inspection team

Penny Fisher, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jo Caswell	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marianick Ellender-Gele	Her Majesty's Inspector
Helen Hutchings	Additional Inspector
Joan Lindsay	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the group

The Crawley 1 children's centre group is one of two groups which cover the Crawley locality. The two groups consist of five children's centres in total. Each of the centres is governed by a centre partnership group on behalf of the local authority. The majority of services are shared across the Crawley locality. A team manager oversees the leadership and development of each centre group and centre coordinators hold responsibility for daily management. Both centre groups work collaboratively together and were inspected at the same time. The inspection report for the Crawley 2 group can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). Each centre group delivers the full range of children's centre services, including early education, adult learning, parenting support, health services, speech and language therapy and family welfare. Bewbush Children and Family Centre has links with three early years settings, one of which shares the same site. Bewbush Academy is also adjacent to the centre. None of these settings were inspected at the same time as the centre. The most recent inspection reports can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). Pound Hill Children and Family Centre shares the same site as both Pound Hill Infant and Pound Hill Junior Schools. The Maidenbower Centre shares the site with Maidenbower Junior School. All of these schools are subject to separate inspection arrangements.

The Crawley 1 group consists of two children's centres – Bewbush Children and Family Centre, and the Pound Hill and Maidenbower Children and Family Centres which are merged but operate from two separate sites. All centres serve very diverse communities within the town of Crawley. The Bewbush community is the fourth most deprived area of West Sussex. Although the Pound Hill and Maidenbower areas are more affluent, there are a growing number of homeless families being temporarily housed in a hotel in this area. The lack of affordable housing and high unemployment are issues for families across Crawley. An increasing number of children live in workless households and this figure has risen continually since 2009. In the Bewbush community, 29% of children aged under four years live in households dependent on workless benefits. This figure is reduced to 13% in the Pound Hill and Maidenbower area.

The majority of families living within the Bewbush, Pound Hill and Maidenbower communities are of White British heritage, although there are an increasing number of families from minority ethnic groups. Within the Bewbush area, there are a significant number of families who speak English as an additional language. Crawley is the most ethnically diverse area of West Sussex. Services within the Crawley 1 Centre group are targeted specifically at teenage parents, lone parents, low income families, fathers, children with a disability, families living in the most deprived areas and children being supported by social services.

In the most deprived areas of the locality children's levels of entry to early years provision are typically below, or significantly below, those expected for their age.

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

- The local authority should review and improve the quality and use of data in order to:
  - ensure the centres have a clear picture of how well they are engaging with priority families in the locality
  - ensure that centres know how many two-, three- and four-year-olds in the locality are taking up their entitlement to early education places
  - set relevant priorities that are based on knowledge of the locality
  - inform action planning and set targets that are precise, achievable and measurable.
- The local authority should ensure that the centres are provided with the support they need to enhance the quality of early education delivered in universal sessions and provide activities to narrow the achievement gap, especially for boys.
- Ensure coherent systems are well established to effectively evaluate service delivery and demonstrate the difference that services are making to children and families in the locality.
- Develop partnerships with schools, early years settings and adult learning providers and introduce systems to track children's and adults' progress from their starting points in order to ensure families are making good progress in their learning and development.
- Review the role of the family outreach worker to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to prioritise individual family support work and the provision of good quality universal early education.
- Ensure that all parents abide by the mobile phone policy within the centres.

### Inspection judgements

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

Inadequate

- Unwieldy, and sometimes contradictory, data sets provided by the local authority do not help team managers, staff or the centre partnership group to clearly understand how well the centres are engaging with priority families in the locality. The baseline data are often not meaningful and the proportion of families regularly engaging with children's centre services is not transparent. Therefore, managers do not have a clear picture about access to services by priority groups, such as teenage parents and disabled children.
- 'Play and Learn' sessions are open to all families although not always easily accessible as places are now limited to improve quality. However, places are reserved for priority families. Sessions are popular overall, but sometimes, for example at Maidenbower, are not accessed by enough priority families.
- Work is ongoing to develop sufficient good quality early education places for vulnerable two-year-olds. However, the local authority data does not clearly show how many two-, three-, or four-year-olds are eligible for free early education places in the locality and what proportions of these children are attending early years settings. Initial information suggests the take-up of two-year-old funded places may be low.
- The provision of health clinics within all centres ensures that almost all those attending are registered with the centres.
- The delivery of the Local Assistance Network service which provides support for families in economic crisis, such as food parcels, white goods or school uniforms, has led to many families, who would otherwise not have used services, coming into the centres and being introduced to the support available from the family outreach workers.
- Families with high levels of additional needs, such as those with children subject to a child in need or child protection plan, are helped to access services. Family outreach workers skilfully encourage isolated and less confident parents and carers to join in the centres' activities. The welcoming family information service assistants provide a wide range of good quality information, advice and guidance to families.
- The team managers and centre coordinators know the local communities well and local priority

groups are identified. The monthly 'RH10 Men' group at the Maidenbower Children and Family Centre is becoming increasingly popular, with a choice of activities used to promote fathers' understanding of their children's physical and emotional development. However, the group has not sufficiently focused on helping parents understand how to support the learning needs of boys. Further work is needed to encourage more fathers to use the centres across the locality as currently only a minority are engaging with services.

### The quality of practice and services

Inadequate

- Despite staff shortages, individual families are provided with effective targeted help by the highly committed family outreach workers. In some cases this prevents the need for children's social care intervention. However, at present their role is too broad, combining intensive family support work, the delivery of targeted programmes such as parenting courses, attendance at multi-agency meetings and the need to plan and deliver universal group sessions. The negative impact of this can be seen in the waiting list for family support work and the quality of universal early education sessions.
- Plans to support family support work are in place for each individual family, but actions, including those agreed through the Common Assessment Framework, are not precise enough and plans do not clearly outline who is going to carry out the actions and within what timeframes. In some cases there is too long a delay before reviewing the impact of interventions.
- Despite data clearly showing boys' underachievement, universal sessions are not focusing on this issue either in planning or practice and the quality of sessions is variable. Links with early years settings are tenuous in relation to children's achievement and reducing inequalities, although they are effective in relation to pastoral care and the sharing of relevant information. Support for transition and readiness for school is patchy and not clearly established with early years settings and schools.
- The centres are not carrying out observations and assessments of children's progress in order to identify children's needs in sufficient detail to move them on in their learning and development. Plans are in place to introduce learning journals and centre staff are visiting other children's centres to gather ideas on how to implement these successfully. Children's progress is not tracked when they move on to schools or early years settings, so impact cannot be measured in the short or long term.
- Families can access a range of courses to improve their chances of gaining employment, but there is scope to improve the take-up of these opportunities, particularly to improve language, literacy and numeracy skills. Links with some local partners, such as Central Sussex College, are underdeveloped and tracking and monitoring of adults' learning are not sufficient to demonstrate impact. Guidance on welfare benefits, jobs and training opportunities is readily available. The volunteering programme is developing and some volunteers have gone on to further employment, education and training following their time with the centres.
- Parenting courses are positively evaluated by parents and longer-term tracking of these families is being introduced. Parents that are on the current parenting course speak positively about the care, guidance and support provided by family outreach workers, who have enabled them to overcome barriers in order to attend the course and, although it is early days, they have clear aims about what they want to achieve for their children and families.
- The centres' involvement in the Healthy Children and Family Centre programme has had a positive impact in relation to staff's knowledge and understanding of health issues and developing links with wide range of health partners. Parents enjoy 'Cook and Eat' courses and 'Cookery for Weaning' and provide positive evaluations, but health outcomes remain a concern, especially in the Bewbush area.
- Work in conjunction with the Family Nurse Partnership to support young parents' well-being has been highly successful in introducing more young parents into children's centres and enabling them to engage with the Baby Club and other centre services across Crawley. However, the impact of their attendance at the centres has not been fully evaluated yet.

- There is a good range of high-quality resources, including sensory equipment, which is made available to all families across the locality through the toy library. Parents spoken to during the inspection praised the care, guidance and support provided by the centres' staff.

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

Inadequate

- Monitoring by the local authority has not been effective in identifying key issues for improvement and the centres' self-evaluation is overly positive. Some of the recommendations arising from the inspection of the Bewbush centre in December 2011 have not been fully addressed. Too many unnecessary and sometimes inaccurate data are presented to the team manager. This means that the centres are unable to clearly identify how well they are performing, especially in regard to priority families.
- The overarching Crawley 1 and Crawley 2 action plan for 2013/14 does not give sufficient priority to the key issues that the centres need to address, such as boys' achievement and improving health outcomes. It lacks precise, locally agreed and measurable targets. Consequently, the centres cannot clearly see how they are making progress.
- The group is managed by a dedicated, experienced and capable team manager, who has ensured that services have continued to run across both Crawley 1 and Crawley 2 during a challenging period of much change and long staff absences. However, her ability to bring about improvements is currently hampered due to the limited availability of staffing resources. The manager has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the centres, but is having to dedicate too much time to operational, day-to-day fire-fighting, rather than driving the necessary identified improvement.
- Staff feel well supported and supervised. They are diligent and committed. Along with the team manager they have 'gone the extra mile' to ensure that services continue to be delivered across all six centres in the Crawley area. Parents spoken to throughout the inspection praised the staff and thanked them for their help.
- Governance arrangements are well established. The two centre partnership groups have independent chairs and a good range of members, although not enough parent representation. They provide a good level of challenge and have acted as a critical friend to the centre manager when making difficult decisions about changes to services.
- Parents' forums are in place and thriving in the Pound Hill and Maidenbower locality, but less active in Bewbush. Parents are regularly asked to provide their views on services they attend and surveys show high levels of satisfaction.
- Professionals work together well to support the most vulnerable families, including those on child protection plans, children in need and those no longer in need of children's social care intervention. The use of the Common Assessment Framework is improving. Health visitors and family outreach workers carry out joint visits and provide a high level of one-to-one support in the home where relevant.
- Partnerships with health are good, leading to more families attending universal health provision and development checks within the centres. However, partnership working with other agencies such as schools, local early years settings, adult learning providers and Jobcentre Plus are underdeveloped, resulting in poor tracking of children and adults progress through their learning journeys.
- Safeguarding children is given serious priority across all centres with comprehensive policies to promote children's safety. All staff have been checked and vetted appropriately. Staff receive good training and work well with partners to reduce the risk of harm to children, including those subject to a child protection plan, in need or looked after. However, the application of the mobile phone policy is not consistently upheld and this needs to be addressed within group sessions.

**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 well-being 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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	80769
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	440204
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	2,735
<b>Group manager</b>	Elaine Blanks
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01293 651760
<b>Email address</b>	elaine.blanks@westsussex.gov.uk

**This group consists of the following children's centres:**

- Bewbush Children and Family Centre (URN 20288)
- Pound Hill and Maidenbower Children and Family Centre (URN 22412)



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