

Inspection report for Woodroyd Children's Centre Plus

Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	23665
Inspection dates	30 June – 1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Padgett HMI

Centre governance	Board of Directors, Sure Start West Bowling
Centre leader	Mrs Sonia Leigh
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Centre address	Woodroyd Road
	West Bowling
	Bradford BD5 8EL
Telephone number	01274 777035
Fax number	01274 738657
Email address	sonia.leigh@woodroydcc.co.uk

Linked school if applicable	not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	First Steps Nursery

The inspection of this Sure Start Children's Centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No.100080

© Crown copyright 2010



Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with centre managers and staff, members of the Board of Directors, parents and carers, representatives of the local authority, and representatives of the statutory, community and voluntary organisations working in partnership with the centre.

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

Information about the centre

Woodroyd Children's Centre Plus is situated within the Woodroyd Centre in West Bowling, where it shares accommodation with a local health centre. It occupies part of the first floor of the Centre. Its associated day care nursery, First Steps Nursery, occupies part of the ground floor. The children's centre is run by a private company, Sure Start West Bowling, on behalf of Bradford local authority. It is a Phase 1 children's centre providing a full range of services. The 'Plus' designation within its title indicates that the centre also provides services for children with additional and complex medical needs.

The centre serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The majority of families in the area belong to a well-established Pakistani community. West Bowling is also home to families from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including those of White British and African Caribbean heritage. More recently, the area has seen an influx of families from East European countries.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management

1

Main findings

This is a highly effective children's centre that serves its ethnically diverse community exceptionally well. It capitalises on its unusual governance arrangements, as a private community venture, to ensure its services are matched closely to the needs of the community. The local community has a substantial stake in the centre and contributes significantly to its strategic development. The centre adapts quickly to changing needs, best seen most recently when families from Eastern European countries arrived within the area.

Children and families make good progress across all the Every Child Matters outcomes, often from a very low base in the case of families facing the most challenging of circumstances. Parents' knowledge and awareness of being healthy and staying safe within the home is often good as a result of attending courses and activities within the centre. Very good links with voluntary organisations working on behalf of fathers and young men ensure that the improvement in parenting skills and knowledge is not confined to mothers. The centre has had many successes in enabling parents and carers, mainly women, to achieve educationally and broaden their horizons. Many mothers and young women have gone on to achieve qualifications at college and enter employment as a direct result of the support and encouragement they have been given. Outcomes for Eastern European families are improving. They faced significant hardships on arrival in this country, particularly for the Roma families. Through the support and efforts of the centre staff and the community, the life chances of parents, carers and children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds have improved considerably.

The good and improving progress of children and families is the result of high quality provision across the full range of services offered by Phase 1 centres. In many aspects, provision is exemplary. For example, the centre's links with Jobcentre Plus are particularly strong, as is the provision in the nursery, and the work of the family support workers. The centre has earned the full trust of the local Pakistani

community. Indeed, many of the staff are from this community. Respect for the Muslim heritage of Pakistani families ensures women feel safe within the centre. The centre's range of influence is exceptionally wide. It supports children with complex medical needs through its strong connection with the local child development centre. It is involved with youth work through voluntary organisations, seeing youth as parents of the future. It is a vital member of the local consortium of schools extending the centre's quality and range of provision into local schools. It works well with local adult education providers, but here it does not quite maintain the rigour of evaluation it demonstrates with its other activities, to ensure that parents and young people are enrolled onto the right courses for them.

Leaders and managers have proven outstandingly successful in bringing together services to meet the needs of a very varied community. Equality is promoted sensitively and discrimination challenged. Safeguarding is managed extremely well. The centre and nursery run smoothly and calmly, which is reassuring for the children and families who use the services. Senior leaders have expert knowledge of partnership working. They work very effectively across the range of partner organisations, including the voluntary sector. However, although many aspects of the centre's work with health services are good, weaknesses in the relationship make this the weakest of the partnerships. The senior team has the confidence of their Board of Directors and a good, productive relationship with the local authority. Staff morale is high. Leaders are very effective in evaluating the success of what is achieved and reflective and creative about where further improvement may lie. The governance of the centre ensures its adaptability to the changing needs of the community. It is in a strong position to maintain its high effectiveness.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Strengthen the partnership with the health authorities by improving the sharing of relevant data and the strategic commitment to integrated working (This recommendation is addressed to the local Children's Trust Board).
- Improve the evaluation of the quality of information, advice and guidance for adult learners and monitor their outcomes more closely.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Across the range of users outcomes are good. This represents significant progress for most children and families from low starting points. Outcomes might be higher than this but families needing support and facing significant challenges frequently arrive within or leave the community, requiring the centre to adapt its provision to whatever new families need most. Providing wholesome food and the adoption of a healthier lifestyle are often of paramount importance and home cooking is an important area of learning for many parents and carers. Improvement in safety at home is another priority for the centre and for users. Many parents and carers set out with the intention of using the centre only to access what they want, such as a community development grant, but stay on as their interest in learning new skills develops and as their confidence increases. Some parents and carers have been subject to domestic violence and abuse. Family support workers provide excellent support in these circumstances and the centre works well with agencies to resolve situations and to protect children as well as parents. Parents' evaluations of the success of courses and activities are particularly positive. The provision of supported day care within the outstanding nursery leads to all-round improvements for families, for as parents' skills are improving, so are those of their children. The data to show improving outcomes and increased involvement of families are becoming more secure, although there are substantial shortcomings in health-related information. Case studies and other evaluations indicate that family learning is significantly improving outcomes for parents and carers. Education data show a narrowing of the gap between the outcomes for the most vulnerable groups and others, and a general rise in attainment by children within the area. Parents go on to take further education courses in basic skills and in English, as the language barrier is significant for many new arrivals and for the established Pakistani community. The centre has had particular success in guiding young Asian women into learning, training and into employment, often through childcare, and often within the centre. It has achieved this sensitively, whilst respecting the cultural traditions of the majority Muslim community. The work of the Board of Directors illustrates well the significance of the contribution parents and carers make to the centre's work and future direction. As half of the Board is comprised of parents from the community and it is chaired by a parent and member of the community.

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and	1

governance of the centre	
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	2

How good is the provision?

1

The distinctiveness of the centre's high quality of provision lies in its knowledge and understanding of the community it serves and of the holistic nature of the services it provides. It does not work in isolation with parents or children. It always seeks to improve the life chances and personal development of both. It is well equipped for this challenge. The centre's own resources are formidable. It has a very effective nursery, recently recognised as an outstanding provider by Ofsted. It has teachers and nursery practitioners with specialist skills. It has an experienced team of family support workers who go out into the community and who have an exceptional understanding of the community and its needs. The building is well equipped to put on family learning courses and activities for parents and carers and crèches for children. The assessment of need and the tracking of progress are good. Data collection and analysis are rigorous and improving as better quality data becomes available. Data from health sources are markedly poorer, including the information vital to the centre on births in the area. The interventions with and progress of all vulnerable families are well documented and prioritised and provide a bank of case studies to help subsequent evaluations.

The centre is exceptionally effective as a facilitating resource for the families and children. It has outstandingly good links with family and children's services: statutory and community and voluntary. Through these it provides support for all of the most vulnerable groups, such as teenage mothers, lone parents, families in crisis and those experiencing domestic violence. Some aspects of its provision are exemplary, such as the support for families with debt problems, and its links with community organisations promoting activities for fathers and their children. It is extremely sensitive to the particular needs of its culturally diverse community. For example, it is proving very successful in enabling young Muslim women to enter into education and employment in ways that are acceptable to the community, and in tackling the serious problems of oral hygiene suffered by many children arriving from Eastern Europe. The partnership with primary schools is very strong. Language is a potentially significant barrier in preventing families from accessing services. The centre provides bilingual support for its Pakistani and Eastern European families. Although the links the centre has with health are not as effective as others, and that there is further work to do with adult learning, there are also strengths in the centre's links with both. The centre works closely with a range of health professionals such as health visitors, midwives, speech and language therapists and paediatricians and has successfully supported hundreds of young people and parents into adult learning.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	1
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	1
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

Although the Woodroyd Centre was only opened in 2007, the community has benefited from a children's centre since the days of Sure Start Local Programmes. It is, therefore, well established. From those early days, the community was determined to have ownership of the agenda for community improvement. This has led to the relatively unusual governance arrangements, where the centre is run by a private community enterprise with strong parent and community representation. This arrangement is working very well. The head of centre and her deputy provide exceptional leadership and management for the centre and the guidance of the Board of Directors ensures that their expertise is fully focused on the needs of the immediate community, and more recently, the slightly wider postcode area of BD5. The independence of the company and the flexibility with which it adapts quickly to local needs, combined with the success of the centre, add up to excellent value for money.

Senior leaders are highly effective in ensuring children and families are safe. Partly this is through rigorous attention to child protection, vetting and recruitment procedures. Partly it is through the sensitive approach to ethnic, cultural and religious differences, to ensure families feel comfortable with staff and protected. Its work to promote quality and tackle discrimination against minority ethnic groups is of the highest order. The centre makes a very positive contribution to community cohesion and the breaking down of barriers between families of different backgrounds.

Teamwork among staff is very good and morale is high. Staff are highly qualified and experienced and play a significant training role for other professionals, such as social workers in training. The essential business of bringing together all the different agencies to support families and children is accomplished extremely well. Evaluations of support by parents and carers attending the centre and testimonies by partners are very positive. The centre provides the full core offer and in some respects provides more, such as its engagement with services for youth and the forging of links with schools to ensure a seamless transition of support for children and families beyond its 0–5 years remit. No partnerships are weak but the partnership with

health, despite sharing its building with a health centre, is the weakest of them. It appears that the partnership has been stronger; for example, at the time of the Sure Start Local Programme. Inspectors could find no lack of ambition for better communication and information sharing from front-line staff. They conclude that if the partnership is to ensure no family in need slips through the net, an improvement at a more strategic level with the health authorities is required.

Senior managers are very reflective about what is provided and keen to improve even further. The cycle of evaluation and improvement planning is well established and rigorous. At present, performance data are still being developed but are improving rapidly. The process is well managed and results clearly indicate improved indicators for families and children and a narrowing of the gap for the more vulnerable children and families, even taking into account the background of change within the community. The constitution of Sure Start West Bowling enterprise ensures the needs of local children and families are gathered and addressed. The centre is therefore well placed to continue its improvement.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	1
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	1
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	1

Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The judgements made in this inspection took into account the findings of the inspection of the associated day care nursery, First Steps Nursery, which was inspected by Ofsted in November, 2009. The full report on the nursery may be found on the Ofsted website. The nursery's reference number is EY335903.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected Woodroyd Children's Centre Plus on 30 June and 1 July 2010. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

The centre serves the community of West Bowling very well. Inspectors had not come across a children's centre that was run by a private company before and we were curious to see how well the arrangement works. It works very well indeed! The reason why, as many parents and carers told us, is because the centre places the needs of the community first and foremost. Although it works very closely with the local authority, on whose behalf it runs the centre, it uses its independence to adapt its services quickly as needs change within the community. It has, therefore, a flexibility of operation that many centres do not have.

The First Steps Nursery was inspected last year. Inspectors gave it the top grade, so we knew that your children attending the nursery are learning well. We found that parents and carers are also learning a great deal; for example, about how to be healthy and to stay safe. Learning about food and cooking healthy meals were popular and appreciated by you. The mothers' and children's swimming sessions have proved extremely popular. You tell the centre staff how useful the activities are, which we think is important. We were very impressed that, when you rated what you learn, you sort your responses by the Every Child Matters outcomes. Many of you who start by making contact with the centre become more involved than you expected. We saw that for some of you, your contact with the centre has led to you develop new skills, go on to further training, volunteering, gain qualifications and find work. In doing so, many parents said how this was improving their lives, and how much you appreciated the support and encouragement staff gave you.

We were impressed by how sensitive the centre is to the different needs and cultures of the different communities living within West Bowling. Most obvious is the clear respect for the Pakistani community and its culture. Muslim women feel safe within the nursery and centre. We noticed that alongside supporting the women and mothers in the community, it supports fathers as well, particularly through West Bowling Cricket Club. Staff have gone out of their way to welcome and understand the needs of families from Eastern Europe, many of whom have come to England

seeking a fresh start and an escape from very difficult conditions in their own countries. The centre works well for everyone in the wider community, irrespective of their origins and background, and in doing so it contributes very strongly to community harmony and cohesion. Many of the organisations working in and around West Bowling told us how they regard the centre as the hub for the community and how much they appreciate what it does. It seems that the excellent work of the centre with the youngest children is being extended into the local schools for children of school age. Family services for schools are building on the foundation laid down by the centre, so you can expect the same level of support and service you have enjoyed in the centre to be continued when your children move into primary school. Children are beginning to achieve more. The gap in achievement between children from the most disadvantaged families and other children is beginning to narrow. Local schools are improving, and, like this centre, some are beginning to be judged as 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

We recognise the excellent leadership and management that makes the centre so successful. Within its leadership you have a most dedicated team of senior staff with considerable experience and expertise. The senior team work really well together and they have built a very impressive and committed staff. The staff put their hearts into the work of the centre. No wonder you trust them and use their expertise to support you when you need help. Behind the scenes, senior staff rigorously check how well the centre is working. They use their links and influence to call on professionals from health, education, voluntary organisations and social care to make sure you get the best service. The Board of Directors meets regularly. It is set up so that parents and members of the local community have a strong voice but it also has a good representation from experts in different subjects and can call on their expertise. The whole enterprise exists to support the community of West Bowling. It challenges, supports and guides the work of managers well.

There is very little we identified where the centre might do more to serve you even better. We believe it could do more to check that those of you who go onto college for adult learning are enrolled on the courses that are right for you. We think that the partnership between the centre and health services could be strengthened. Informal arrangements between centre staff and health visitors work well. The arrangements for children with additional complex medical difficulties work very well. However, the communication and information sharing between the centre and the health service is not as good as it needs to be. We took evidence that the partnership arrangements between the local authority and the primary care trust were improving, but at present, despite the closeness of the children's centre to the health centre, this was the weakest of the links between the centre and its many partners

The full report is available from your centre or on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.