

# Inspection report for Sure Start Barkerend Children's Centre

Local authority	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Inspection number	362436
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Reporting inspector	Janet Stacey HMI

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Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school	Byron Primary School
Linked early years and childcare	The Children's Place Womenzone Crèche

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## Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents and carers, prospective parents and carers and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents and carers, prospective parents and carers 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Early Years Inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, a member of the advisory board, a range of providers, parents and carers, users and a local authority officer linked to the centre. They observed the centre's work, and looked at sessions in operation in the children's centre and in nearby locations. They also looked at a range of documentation including the centre's development plans, evaluations, key policies and safeguarding procedures.

## Information about the centre

Sure Start Barkerend Children's Centre is a purpose built centre run directly by the local authority. The centre has evolved from a Sure Start local programme and became a phase 1 children's centre in 2004. The Children's Centre Plus designation has been allocated by the local authority to offer additional support and funding to families who have children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The centre manager has been instrumental in developing this provision. Most families are of South Asian heritage, although the number of families from other groups, most notably Eastern European, is increasing. The local statistics indicate that unemployment figures are high, which results in the centre serving a community including some of the 10% most deprived wards in the country. The centre operates a variety of groups and activities at four community venues within the reach area and operates its own playbus. A range of integrated services including health, family support, adult training, and early year's advice and guidance work from the centre. The centre takes referrals from, and supports families with children, in seven local schools. Private and funded full day care is provided onsite for under-fives at the Children's Place private nursery. The centre also provides crèche facilities at Womenzone which is within walking distance of the centre.

An advisory board, which is made up of representatives from parents and carers, neighbourhood partners, health, and centre staff contributes to the strategic management and direction of the centre. Evidence indicates that the skills and

knowledge with which children enter school are well below those expected for their age.

The Ofsted report for The Children's Place from August 2010 judged the childcare provision as outstanding. This report can be viewed at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## 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  
Capacity for sustained improvement

2
2

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

### Main findings

The centre is a welcoming place that offers a good range of services, quality resources and information materials, which generally reflect the community's diversity. Barriers of isolation that some groups in the community have experienced are starting to be successfully broken down. Families enjoy coming to the centre and are very pleased with the help they have been given. Parents and carers told inspectors that this had made a big difference to their lives. 'I wouldn't have had a clue which way to go if it had not been for the centre' said one parent after attending a training session on child development. Parents, carers and children get along well with each other and demonstrate respect and understanding of everyone's different circumstances. Families, including those who are often hard to reach, regularly use the centre or its satellite sites.

The strengths of the centre are in the good leadership and management provided by the centre manager and her leadership team. The family support staff are a major force within the centre. Their dedication is clear for all to see. They effectively identify and target support, not only to ensure that parents and carers get the right support to help them with parenting skills, but also to point them in the direction of training and advice so they can find work and improve their family's financial positions. Some users' views are regularly sought and sometimes these are used effectively to inform courses and service plans. The local authority and advisory board fully support the centre but are not entirely holding it to sufficiently rigorous account; whilst targets are in place they are not always precise enough or focused

on the key areas of need.

Outcomes for users and the centre's provision are good. Outcomes in relation to how well users enjoy and achieve are outstanding. The centre has quite rightly identified and implemented successful strategies that focus on raising children's attainment by the time they enter school. The result of this concerted effort by all key partners, including the nursery and local schools, is that children's attainment is now at a comparable stage with their peers in the local authority. The support given to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very good. The centre goes the extra mile to do all it can to help these children succeed in society.

The centre works very hard to address any shortfalls in partnership work through signposting families to the appropriate service, particularly in Jobcentre Plus provision and adult education courses where outcomes for users are good. However, the impact of the centre's work upon health outcomes is variable as not all health partners work towards clear and common goals or share relevant information with the centre.

Provision is adapted well to serve the needs of all members of the community, including those most vulnerable, and is impacting positively on their lives. In addition, the centre works effectively to keep users engaged and increasing numbers of parents and carers are successfully taking advantage of the generally good range of opportunities to improve their parenting, vocational and academic skills. Appropriate policies are up to date following a recent review. Safeguarding and equality procedures are good. Staff and other adults consistently give the highest priority to safeguarding all children and their families and the quality of care guidance and support to users provided by the centre is good.

Considering the success the centre has had so far it has good capacity to improve further.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve action planning and self-evaluation by ensuring that targets are specific and measurable and focused on improving outcomes for users.
- Create and secure agreement towards a clear and shared vision with the Children's Trust and Primary Care Trust to improve the sharing of relevant data and a strategic commitment to integrated working.

## How good are outcomes for users?

2
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The centre places a great deal of importance on personalising services to match the particular needs of users. English for Speakers of Other Language courses (ESOL) help users to develop their communication skills and empower them to move onto

further training. This includes courses for NVO Levels 1, 2 and 3 in childcare which are run in conjunction with Bowling College at the centre site. This not only builds self-esteem for users but is also fundamental to improving their future life chances, and to narrowing the gap between the disadvantaged and others.

The centre provides an extensive range of activities which are developed extremely well in partnership with other agencies and professionals. Uptake of all courses is high and attendance is sustained. A comment in the survey of one adult education course was 'it means a lot to me and I have really enjoyed it. Sometimes I haven't wanted to get out of bed in the morning but because I have had this course to come to I have'. This not only demonstrates the confidence the users have in the centre staff but also their enthusiasm to develop their knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. A very enthusiastic dads' group spoke positively about the impact sessions have had, in particular first aid, cook and eat courses and Do It Yourself (DIY) all of which they commented helped to improve their understanding of hygiene, healthy eating, and making their homes safer for their families. A well equipped gym based at Womenzone provides plenty of opportunities for all users to take part in physical exercise and develop a better understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles. Baby Zone breast feeding group operates once a week and relevant data shows an improving trend of mothers taking up breast feeding.

The centre has forged strong and effective links with the early years setting. Children make outstanding progress in their learning in the nursery as activities are very well chosen and stimulating. Staff are very aware of the next steps in learning for every child and record these well in individual learning journals. A wide range of opportunities for parents and carers and children to play and learn together, along with a range of good information and advice is given to parents and carers in all aspects of child development. As a consequence, parents and carers are gaining a better understanding of education through play and they are in a position to pass on positive learning behaviours to their young children.

The centre is very effective in ensuring that parents, carers and children keep themselves safe and free from harm. This is demonstrated by a wide range of preventative measures and advice, including the distribution of a good range of safety equipment for the home. This service is provided free of charge by the centre to every family in the area with children under five years of age. Family support workers discuss home and road safety on all home visits. As a result, road accidents have been reduced and there are fewer reported incidents requiring medical treatment.

The centre provides many opportunities for users to make a positive contribution. The Family Links Nurturing programme enhances parents' and carers' and their children's self-esteem. Through the course, parents and carers learn about behaviour and the impact of their actions on their children's lives. There is a range of opportunities for them to express their views. These include regular evaluations of activities and courses. Parents and carers are involved in decision making and show initiative by their involvement in the active parents' forum and dads' group. However,

only representatives from groups of women are represented on the advisory board and participate in the governance of the centre. As a consequence, the views of all users are not being represented at a strategic level.

Support provided by the centre helps to promote economic stability, for example, by users accessing local training courses, securing benefits and gaining qualifications to return to work. Evaluation taken from adult learning show that 34% of users who have attended courses during 2009-2010 have now secured employment and 21% have gone onto further education. A parent told the inspectors how she became a volunteer in the centre and went on to gain qualifications. As a result of the skills she gained she developed her own projects in the community for which she received three awards from the local authority. She spoke with great pride when she said 'It made me realise I can manage people. I can start my own projects. I know I am a good role model for the women in this 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	1
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	2
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?

2

The centre provides good quality services which are helping to improve outcomes for families attending the centre and for those who receive more targeted support in their homes. The centre is very aware of some of the sensitive issues in their reach area and uses the playbus to good effect to ensure that all users are able to access its services. This is particularly valuable for helping those who feel isolated to socialise, make new friends and speak with staff if they require support or advice. The centre is very good at finding ways to support individual children and families and offers a rapid response when help is requested or a need is identified. Provision is enhanced through the committed work undertaken by the family support team. Its members are dedicated in trying to reach those in the community who they know are under-represented as users of the centre, in particular families from Eastern Europe and asylum seekers. They are creative and hardworking in their efforts to attract such groups to the centre but the centre manager recognises that there is more to do to encourage more users from these particular groups.

Assessments made by the centre staff of users' needs, ensure that skills are developed well and that provision is appropriately matched to improve outcomes. Good assessment in stay and play sessions focuses well on children's needs and ensures that their activities are interesting and relevant to their lives. A concerted effort has taken place to attract fathers to the centre. This effort by all the staff has been a resounding success, as the number of men accessing training and information has rapidly increased. However, some of the women at the focus group did comment that the men seemed to have more exciting courses, such as DIY and door and CCTV security courses that they would like to attend. The centre manager was pleased that the women felt empowered to speak out but did accept that more consideration should be given regarding equity of access for some of the courses that run at the centre.

The common assessment framework (CAF) and child protection plans are well-embedded and the staff at the centre contribute fully to protecting children and providing appropriate support. The centre is committed to removing barriers to achievement and it runs a broad range of courses to support children and families. The Early Bird course runs on a regular basis to help educate and support parents of children with autism or behavioural problems. Free childcare and transport are provided to help with attendance. Parents and carers are very appreciative of this service; as one parent commented about their child, 'his behaviour has improved since he has been coming'. The children's centre plus teaching staff work closely with the day care staff to embed inclusive practice. The centre provides braille facilities on site and offers training in the home environment to help parents assist with home learning. Although there is very good support at the centre for children and families with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the centre plus teacher commented that the centre is not always informed of referrals to the education department for an early years assessment of needs. This lack of a coordinated approach impacts on the centre's ability to provide early intervention and means that not all children who may be having difficulties learning receive the help they need in a timely way.

The centre provides good quality information and guidance documents in its reception area but these do not fully reflect the range of diverse needs of users, for example by being available in other languages or in large print. Accommodation is of a good standard and is very well maintained.

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	2
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	2



## How effective are the leadership and management?

2
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The centre manager is highly respected by professionals and parents and carers. As a staff member put it 'she is a strong leader always willing to listen and offer support'. The manager ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the centre and effectively manages the performance of centre staff. She is very successful in thinking outside the box and does not simply rely on the funding made available to her from the local authority. She has a track record of making successful bids to access external funding or bids for specialist support from the local authority. This is a real strength of the manager and it is down to her unyielding determination that a large majority of the most successful projects have taken place and are still ongoing. These include the Black Multi-Ethnic Early Years Project, the genetics community project, and Children Centre Plus. The manager and advisory board know the strengths and weaknesses of the centre and have supported some very good plans to secure further improvements at both neighbourhood and local level. However, although the plans identify actions, they do not have clear and measurable targets to enable the centre to fully demonstrate the impact of its work. The manager is very committed, but at times overstretched as the reach area is more than double that expected for an area of such high deprivation.

The centre is committed to the concept of integrated service provision, building the team around the child. However, whilst some key partners are fully committed to an integrated approach, health partners spoken to felt the lack of any multi-agency meetings means not all partners are aware of the key issues affecting the reach area. This lack of a true integrated approach means that the centre, whilst doing all it can, cannot wholly guarantee that children are not slipping through the net.

The centre's comprehensive range of policies and procedures are well embedded and applied routinely. The centre promotes diversity which is celebrated through resources depicting different faiths, cultures, and backgrounds. Careful consideration has been given to the design of the centre so that all users can gain full access. Safeguarding users is a clear priority at the centre and keeping children and families safe is at the forefront of their work. The centre is a secure environment to visit because a wide range of safety measures are in place.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	2
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its	2

statutory duties	
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	3
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	3
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	2

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

The August 2010 Ofsted report for The Children's Place.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected Sure Start Barkerend Children's centre on 15-16 September 2010 and spoke to many of you about the centre's work. We judged the centre as good overall. We really enjoyed chatting to you in meetings, around the centre at Womenzone and on the Playbus. We learnt a great deal. You expressed your views very clearly and they were very helpful to us. Firstly and most importantly, we are pleased to tell you that the centre provides good support to you and your families. We were pleased to see that many of you recognise this and are using the services that the centre provides.

The centre does some things extremely well. For example, the way it helps you to develop your understanding of child development and the way it works with others to help you gain employment and go on to further education. You told us how much you appreciate the fact that the centre staff go out of their way to listen to your views and to create a caring and safe environment. We can see that the centre does all it can to get you involved and staff work really hard to ensure that all the activities are usually exactly what you need. It is clear to us that they know local families and the wider community very well and we can see how the centre is making a positive difference to your lives. Everyone we spoke to told us how much the centre had helped you and your families. We were delighted to hear that some of you now feel more confident to support your children at home and that the centre has had a huge impact on improving how you feel about yourselves. It was really encouraging to hear that many of you feel less isolated in the community and have been able to socialise more by popping into the centre or some of the sites used by the centre. We were particularly impressed by how much the centre has done to raise attainment for children in your area as they enter their first year in school. This is a tremendous achievement and one which we are sure you are equally proud of.

The staff work really hard to make the centre as good as it can be. To help them we have suggested that they focus more on self-evaluation by ensuring that the targets they set are more specific and measurable and focused on improving outcomes for all families in the area. By doing this, they will then be in a stronger position to see how well they are doing to meet all your needs. Whilst there are many good key partners working with the centre, such as Bowling College and Jobcentre Plus, we found that the health partners do not always work together to share information and help the centre prioritise and identify where help may be needed for the most vulnerable families in your area. We have asked the Children's Trust to address this.

Thank you to all that we met for your input into the inspection. It really was appreciated.

Yours sincerely  
Janet Stacey  
Her Majesty's Inspector

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).