

Inspection report for New Hall Primary and Children's Centre

Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	362530
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Philip Mann HMI

Centre governance	The governing body of New Hall Primary and Children's Centre
Centre leader	Anna Jaremko
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	New Hall Primary and Children's Centre
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	New Heights 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.

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.

An inspection of the maintained nursery was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Early Years Inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, representatives from the local authority and other external organisations, health services, parents and carers of children.

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

Information about the centre

New Hall Primary and Children's Centre is a Phase 1 stand alone children's centre providing the full core offer. It was designated in March 2006. It is managed by the governing body of New Hall Primary School on behalf of the local authority. It is located in an area of mixed housing with pockets of significant deprivation and above average levels of unemployment on the fringe of Sutton Coldfield. Over a third of children served by the children's centre come from households claiming benefits. The local population is predominantly White British with a growing proportion of users from minority ethnic groups. Children's attainment on entry into the Early Years Foundation Stage within the primary school is below average and particularly low in early literacy skills.

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

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

This is an effective children’s centre that is having a positive impact on outcomes and the life chances of children and vulnerable people within the local area. Purposeful leadership by the acting centre manager has developed a strong sense of teamwork amongst well qualified and active staff who work hard to maintain the best possible provision for users within the centre’s geographical area of responsibility, known as the reach area and beyond. There has been a concerted effort to identify weaknesses in provision, and recent improvements are already reflected in improving outcomes for all children and users of the centre. Clear structures and procedures are in place to support future improvement. As a result, capacity to improve further is good.

Outcomes are good in all areas. Children and adult users demonstrate positive attitudes towards eating healthy food and improving levels of safety awareness. There is clear evidence of positive impact of services on users’ ongoing learning. As a result of staff encouragement, vulnerable mothers are given confidence to enrol on child care courses. Young mothers are making new friends through attendance at a wide range of activities to develop their parenting skills. Children attending ‘wraparound’ out of school care sessions are purposeful and confident in their play. They quickly settle to their choice of activity and express themselves creatively in play. Adult users develop confidence in a range of skills through attendance at computer courses, parenting sessions and the ‘Job Shop’.

Services are well integrated to provide a cohesive range of support for the users in most need. The assessment of users’ needs is a key strength. Regular multi-professional meetings ensure that support is very effectively targeted to the most vulnerable families in the reach area and users of the centre. The procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment are robust. There are clear procedures in place for monitoring the welfare of children and the sharing of any concerns.

Effective use is made of accommodation both within the centre and the school to provide a totally integrated package of care and support for a wide range of users. The centre environment is welcoming and safe. The quality and range of resources

are good and staff are keen to improve the services on offer to users within the reach area. However, centre leadership recognises the need to further develop levels of expertise amongst the staff so that it can maintain its level of service; for example, in response to the withdrawal of funds for the local authority sponsored computer course.

The centre works hard to promote its services within the community. Data is used effectively to identify the most vulnerable users within the reach area. Some users, fathers and those from under-represented groups find it difficult to access services at the centre because of its geographical position. The centre is yet to devise effective strategies to engage these groups in the full range of its services.

Governance is effective. Staff display a shared vision for centre improvement. Detailed monitoring procedures have been implemented that engage all staff and key partners. These provide staff with a good range of information about the centre's overall effectiveness and are used well to inform a structured approach to further improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

To further improve the outcomes for all users the centre should;

- devise strategies to engage with the most hard to approach users, fathers and those from ethnic minorities in the reach area
- promote the services of the children's centre more effectively within the entire reach area
- make best use of staff and community expertise to extend the range of services on offer.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

The effective promotion of healthy eating is resulting in a reduction in obesity rates amongst five-year-olds. This starts with children in the New Heights Nursery and the 'wraparound' out of school club and playscheme eating healthy snacks and fruit. Parents attending healthy cooking sessions speak highly about how it has changed the eating habits of their family and how much better they feel. Improving trends in breastfeeding and teenage pregnancy rates are a direct result of stronger links with health professionals, inter-agency working and carefully targeted individual support.

Children are helped to learn about behaving safely and sensibly in a way they understand. Good numbers of parents attend safety training, resulting in improved levels of safety awareness. Adult users respond well to the offer of home safety visits by centre staff and the loan of safety equipment. Centre staff describe how using such equipment has improved home safety for those families in cramped and/or poor housing. Children at risk and those who are looked after are well cared for. Their needs are carefully monitored through highly effective multi-professional working and

detailed record keeping.

Children enjoy using the centre facilities and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Children attending daycare and other services such as the baby group are settled and comfortable. This is because adults working with them are friendly, approachable and provide good levels of care. Furthermore, analysis of data confirms a steady trend of improvement in those children attaining the expected level in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception class in the school. Personal and social outcomes are good and many children and parents grow in confidence as a result of attending activities at the centre. Caring staff effectively build trust with families and parents of the youngest children. They are especially receptive to those who may be struggling emotionally and activities like 'stay and play' provide parents with valuable opportunities to make friends and feel less isolated.

The contribution of users towards the centre and the local community is good. Parents' views are valued and used well to develop services further. 'Job Shop' surgeries provide good opportunities for adult users to follow pathways to work. For example, support in claiming benefits, jobs applications and attendance at training courses. Increasing numbers of users are attending the courses provided. Regular courses effectively support parents in developing their skills in a range of areas such as parenting, preparation for work and computing.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

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 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

Assessment is used effectively to identify users' needs and promote purposeful learning. Effective interagency working is having a positive impact on safeguarding children and supporting vulnerable families. Staff make good use of local knowledge and data to identify specific needs and inform the development and extension of services for users. Ongoing records such as the 'Learning Journeys' provide a continuous picture of users' development and enjoyment within each setting. These

in turn provide effective records of improving outcomes and inform self-evaluation. Common Assessment Framework procedures are followed carefully and fully engage a wide range of professionals through frequent and effectively organised multi-professional meetings.

The range of services has continued to increase and participation rates are improving steadily in many activities. Furthermore, outreach work is becoming increasing cohesive due to effective integration between professionals. Relationships between staff and users are very positive and these build a sense of trust between all parties. Staff are very caring and work hard to provide a secure and nurturing environment within the centre. They regularly celebrate user achievement, boosting confidence and promoting greater participation.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

Clear lines of accountability are firmly embedded and fully overseen by the governing body through an effective sub-committee that meets regularly. It includes representatives from both within the school, the centre, users, other services and the local authority. Day-to-day management is good. Responsibilities are effectively delegated to centre staff. Interim arrangements for centre leadership have successfully instilled a sense of purpose amongst the centre team. The acting centre manager demonstrates high expectations of staff. They display a strong sense of teamwork, are highly self-motivated and resourceful.

A good start has been made in using data to inform improvement planning and develop the range of services further. Key priorities for improvement have been carefully identified and shared with a wide range of partners and users. The monitoring of users outcomes is developing well. Self-evaluation effectively engages a wide range of staff, other agencies and users. This is used well to identify areas for further improvement within a comprehensive strategic plan. The effectiveness of this is clearly evident in improving outcomes and the many positive comments from users.

Strong partnerships exist between the centre and a range of other services such as

the local family support team, health and the local Baptist Church. Staff are deployed well and resources are effectively matched to the needs of users to provide good value for money. However, the expertise and skills of staff are yet to be fully utilised to develop the range of services further and compensate for a reduction in local authority funding.

Equality and disability legislation is fully implemented and all necessary policies are in place. Accessibility to the centre's facilities is good and effective levels of support are provided for individual users with disability and/or short term mental illness. Staff tailor support services to the needs of individuals well. For example, appropriate levels of support are provided for those parents with poor literacy skills and those who speak English as an additional language. However, the centre is yet to devise effective strategies to engage further with potential users from minority ethnic groups and fathers within the reach area.

Safeguarding is given a high priority. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and supported by effective tracking of children in all settings. Staff are well trained and safeguarding is an integral part of induction for new staff and specific settings.

These are the grades for leadership and management <

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 statutory duties	3
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	2
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	2

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

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision within New Hall Primary and Children's Centre was inspected at the same time under the Section 5 arrangements for the inspection of schools.

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 the New Hall Primary and Children's Centre on 15–16 September 2010. We judged the centre as good overall.

Many of you told us that staff at the centre are very caring and supportive. We agree with you. We were impressed with their ability to work as a team under the good leadership of the acting centre manager. They all work hard to support both your children's development and your own skills and confidence. They give good guidance on how to be healthy, safe, get extra support for your family and training for work.

New Hall Primary and Children's Centre is a secure and safe place for you to bring your children. The rooms are welcoming and allow your children to play happily while they learn indoors or outside. All of the children are making good progress in many areas of their development.

The centre provides a good place for you to meet other parents and people who can help you and your family. The staff use information well to plan activities for you and your children. However, we have asked them to use this information and their expertise even better to make sure more parents and children from all backgrounds know about the centre and use it regularly.

We would like to thank all of you who found time to talk to us and we wish you and your families the best for the future.

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