

Inspection report for Broomhall Nursery School and Children's Centre

Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	366344
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Reporting inspector	Alison Veall HMI

Centre governance	Sheffield City Council
Centre leader	Gill Peacock
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Broomhall Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Broomhall Nursery School and Children's Centre

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.

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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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the senior management team, parents and carers, staff, local authority and health authority representatives and partner agency representatives. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Broomhall Nursery School and Children's Centre is a Sheffield local authority provision designated in 2005. Services are commissioned from Sheffield Primary Care Trust via Sharrow Sure Start whose manager is responsible for developing the children's centre core offer in the wider reach area. The headteacher has developed and manages activities on site and has links in the community. Broomhall Children's Centre covers a large reach area. There are many affluent households which surround an area with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Eleven per cent of children aged nought to five years live in households dependent on workless benefits. There are approximately 310 families who live in one of the 30% most deprived wards in the country. Housing for these families is generally multi-storey flats and some tower blocks. Fifty per cent of children living in the reach area are from Black and minority ethnic communities with many from Southern Asia, Africa and a growing number of Eastern Europeans. The area includes a large student population and is highly transient. Many speak English as an additional language. In total, there are approximately 22 languages spoken. Children from vulnerable families enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are lower than others. The centre's Sure Start house is based in Broomhall Nursery School grounds. The childcare core offer and some of the play and adult and family learning sessions are delivered from this site. Non-childcare core offer services are also delivered from here with a high number being delivered in a range of other venues

which include Sharrow Sure Start building, Broomhall community centre, children's centre neighbouring the reach and in user's own homes during outreach work. The centre has its own advisory board which is a sub committee of the nursery school governing body. The advisory board is made up of staff, parents and community governors, partner agencies who include the private, voluntary and independent providers, the inclusion service, health visitors, and community representation. It is chaired by a community representative.

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

The centre's senior management team and staff have built good effective relationships with many families who they know well. The commitment made by staff and the creative manner in which resources are used are significant strengths of this children's centre. High expectations for children's achievement and a strong belief that the family's contribution is vital are shared across centre staff and partners. As a result, everyone works as a cohesive team for the benefit of users. Sessions and groups are very well attended and the outreach work in the local community is consistently reaching more families and identifying the most vulnerable.

The centre's staff team is proactive and works effectively with neighbouring children's centres to ensure families access the most appropriate provision. However, work still needs to be done to ensure it is reaching out to all families within its complex reach area who might want to take up services. Improvement targets are now more challenging but data are not precise enough to enable the centre to measure the success of its work more accurately. The local authority and Primary Care Trust are aware of the limitations of the data to which it has access. A new E-start system is being developed to improve information accessibility. A children's centre advisory board is in place, although parent and carer involvement is not strong. This limits their contributions to the ongoing development of the centre. Their voices are heard, however, through the many evaluations of the centre activities. The senior management and leadership team are aware of the areas which need to improve and have identified a range of strategies for implementation

including more specific targets. This, coupled with the strong commitment from all ensures the centre's overall effectiveness and capacity to improve are good.

Users and past users of the centre are unequivocal in their appreciation and praise for the services and activities provided. 'Amazing', 'flexible', 'very supportive', are just some of the words they use to describe the centre and the staff. Parents and carers within minority ethnic communities new into the area talk about how they have been supported in settling into the community and how they quickly feel part of it. They also comment that being able to communicate with staff in their language has been important. Inclusion is a key strength of the centre's work.

Good, effective safeguarding arrangements are in place. Staff have appropriate and regular training in child protection and safeguarding and know what action to take when risks to the safety of children are presented. The centre works productively with a range of agencies to protect children. Health visiting and midwifery teams, while not based at the centre, are an integral part of the delivery of services which have improved outcomes for vulnerable families.

Parents who have moved onto training, volunteering and employment talk about how the centre has given them ambition and a life they would not have had without it. While positive, this is not happening in significant numbers. There are wide-ranging opportunities for parents and children to learn and play together through provision such as baby massage, the sensory room, stay and play, talking toddlers, ready steady go, the care provided from the nursery school and other early years providers within the area. The focus on improving children's speech and communication skills and their personal and social development is having a good impact on children's learning and development. Children from vulnerable families enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are lower than others but early intervention from a range of agencies ensures that in the Broomhall area they are making good progress.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- With the local authority and Primary Care Trust partners improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring systematic and accurate management information and self-evaluation record the full impact of the centre's work and are used to set consistently challenging targets for improvement
 - communicating and signposting the centre's work more effectively to the wider community and to those groups in the reach area not yet accessing services.

- Ensure users are more involved in the decision making of the centre by:
 - increasing parent and carer membership on the advisory board.

- Ensure that adult learning opportunities support increased numbers of parents

and carers into employment and improved economic stability.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Child and family health services enhance children's, parents' and carers' emotional well-being. Comments such as, 'nothing but praise', 'no more could have been done', 'support has been crucial', are typical of comments made by users of the children's centre. A wide range of initiatives to support breastfeeding including support from a specialist worker and the breastfeeding café have resulted in higher continuation rates than those found nationally. Parents including dads were eager to share their positive experiences of the support they had received. 'Incredible amount of care', breastfeeding is a way of life for me', are just two of the many statements made. Smoking cessation guidance ensures that the prevalence of smoking during pregnancy is lower than city and national rates. A range of healthy cooking initiatives including healthy food days at the dads group, support during weaning and the involvement of the food and community worker in children's activities are supporting parents' and carers' development of a healthy lifestyles for themselves and their children. Information suggests that there is high attendance at accident and emergency departments for minor ailments. Children's centre staff are working effectively with parents and carers in order to embed the use of GPs as an alternative.

Children, parents and carers are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and reduce risk. Parents talk positively about how the ongoing support and information from the centre, such as the 'Triple P Parenting' course and the workshops on safety delivered through the Tuesday surprise sessions, have helped them to think about many things, including child safety. They also express their appreciation of the time taken to arrange fire safety checks and to explain issues in relation to safety during home visits. There is a strong focus on ensuring that the most vulnerable children are well provided for. The processes relating to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) are firmly embedded and, together with effective 'team around the child' and child protection systems, result in prompt intervention and support. This often negates the need for higher level social care work.

Through an extensive range of supported play and development opportunities such as the 'Raising Early Achievement in Literacy project (REAL)', 'Stay and Play' groups and individualised support for vulnerable families, parents and carers are learning how to support their children's learning and development at home. Excellent arrangements support children's transition into and out of childcare and education provision. As a result, they are fully informed of children's development and individual needs, ensuring that they benefit from seamless provision. Within the wider reach area, children's attainment by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is variable, with Broomhall showing a 6% increase overall in relation to the 2009 figures. Parents state that the positive parenting courses have made them more aware of the need to read, talk and play with their children. Children with

special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Specialist staff support them and their families. Children's needs are assessed and planned for during progress review meetings with their parents. The centre actively encourages adults to volunteer in supporting activities within the community and in the children's centre. This is increasing knowledge, skills and confidence but there are too few opportunities for users to benefit from specialist job-seeking advice. However, evidence from case studies and from speaking to several parents shows that economic stability and independence have improved at a satisfactory rate for some parents as a result of the opportunities the centre has provided.

All members of the centre make a positive contribution and demonstrate high levels of respect to staff and each other and children are encouraged to do the same. Parents from all communities within the reach area comment on how friendly the centre is and how they are always made to feel welcome. 'It is a haven', and, 'never afraid to speak', are some of the comments made. The centre collects the views of parents and carers through widely distributed questionnaires and satisfaction surveys at the end of activities, courses and events. Dual language family outreach and family support staff collect the views of users who speak English as an additional language. Parents and carers happily express their views. However, there are not enough parents and carers representing the reach area on the advisory board which limits users' contribution to the strategic decision making and development planning of services.

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	3
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	3

How good is the provision?

2

The shared vision of the senior management team drives all actions and is clearly focused on providing what each child, family and the local community who are known to them needs. Assessment of individual cases is robust, especially for children and families referred to the centre who are then provided with timely, high quality multi-agency support where necessary. A knowledgeable and very committed

staff team demonstrates good understanding and uses effectively the multi-agency assessment team procedures. Parents and carers told their stories of how the centre as part of this team has made a difference to their lives. As they said, 'They help me to be a better parent', 'Triple P helped me to see that everyone has difficulty bringing their children up sometime'. The use of assessment to ensure activities are appropriate to the needs of the whole reach area is less well developed and children's centre management team are aware of this.

The flexible provision is well designed to meet the needs of adults and children and takes good account of the needs of working families, for example through the provision of wraparound childcare and nursery provision. Holiday activities provide a range of opportunities for families to take part in play and learning together. For some it also reduces the stress of school holidays and trying to make provision for children in multi-storey living accommodation. The childminders' network group meets regularly at the centre and has very good access to the centre's activities and resources. Activities at the centre are open to all families. However, the centre is well aware that many families do not require their services and therefore they concentrate a significant amount of their resources on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable families.

Opportunities for children to make progress in learning and development through the varied range of activities and events both within the centre and the community are good. The large, attractive and welcoming indoor and outdoor areas within the centre's base at Broomhall Nursery School provides a wealth of opportunities for the development of children's imaginative, physical and discovery play. However, provision for adults is satisfactory. As a result of its limited resources, Jobcentre Plus is not in a position to offer regular opportunities for those seeking work to have face-to-face interviews at the children's centre. Weekly vacancy updates are provided and displayed within the centre. Staff including family outreach workers support adults with the completion of application forms which is particularly relevant for those users who speak English as an additional language. The Central Area Learning Partnership also provides advice and support for adults in relation to learning and development opportunities. A barrier to improvement for some workless adults is the limited availability of crèche provision to support training, especially for English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes.

There is strong ongoing support for families in crisis, and users say that the centre responds quickly to their requests for help. There is plenty of information on display in the centre, such as pamphlets on a wide range of matters from contraception to weaning, and posters providing information on services such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau and domestic abuse support services. The centre also works in partnership with the linked speech and language therapist. Parents of children who are between two and two and a half years are offered the chance to attend the 'Talking Toddlers' group and drop-in sessions. These are aimed at developing skills and confidence in order to empower parents to communicate more effectively with their children. The inclusive nature of the centre ensures that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported through a wide range of initiatives. The 'Ready

Steady Go' group provides an opportunity for parents to receive additional support and guidance. Parents talk about how they have been helped to see beyond their children's disability. They also comment about the effectiveness of the centre's sensory room.

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	3
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

Governance, lines of accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood. As a result, multi-agency working and case management are effective. The senior management team continually strives for the centre to offer the best service possible. This ambition is shared by all the staff, who work together exceptionally well. Work has been done to analyse local needs and staff are not complacent about the ongoing need to target the hard-to-reach. The successful involvement of fathers and male carers in the centre's activities is testament to how hard the centre has worked on the inclusion of all. The Broomhall Nursery School and Children's Centre Partnership and Advisory Board is a sub-committee of the nursery school governing body. The advisory board is made up of staff, parents and carers, community governors and partner agencies. However, by comparison to the community, staff and partner representation, parent and carer involvement is minimal. This limits the extent to which they can effectively contribute to the ongoing development of the centre.

Self-evaluation is detailed and provides some evidence of improvement in outcomes for users, although it is a little overambitious in its judgement grades. The local authority has provided a much more accurate reflection of the centre's work, and, through its annual review of the children's centre service it has issued targets which are specific and measurable. There is a wealth of data available from a range of partners involved in the delivery of services. However, the local authority and the Primary Care Trust do not provide this in a systematic way and this prevents the centre from using it to fully evaluate the impact of its work and to ensure that all targets are specific and measurable.

Safeguarding procedures are good and in line with Sheffield City Council, the Local Children's Safeguarding Board and Sheffield Primary Care Trust. The recruitment

process checks all applicants' identity, qualifications and suitability and recording exceeds requirements. All staff follow comprehensive risk assessments to ensure good levels of supervision of children and users. They also ensure that the centre and off-site venues are safe. A lone working policy ensures the safety of staff when working off-site. Staff state they feel confident in the protection afforded to them by the centre's management and administration team. Effective partnerships and multi-agency working via the Multi-Agency Support Team initiative ensure a team around the child approach to services, affording good levels of protection.

The centre is very positive in its approach to the cultural, religious and ethnic differences of its users. It makes a valuable contribution to community cohesion and to breaking down the barriers between families of different backgrounds. However, it is aware that work still needs to be done in this area, particularly in relation to the development and delivery of English for Speakers of Other Languages courses and supporting crèche provision. The centre makes a strong contribution to the inclusion of children and families with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Dads' Saturday group; the support given to lone parent dads and dads' inclusion in the breastfeeding café evidence the importance placed on their involvement in their children's lives.

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	3
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	2
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	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

None

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

As many of you know, we inspected the Broomhall Children's Centre which is linked to Broomhall Nursery School on 30 and 31 March 2011. I would like first of all to thank you for the welcome you gave us and for the time that you gave up to talk to us. Particular thanks go to those of you who shared your stories of difficult and stressful times in your life.

As part of the inspection we visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's documentation, and talked with a range of children and adults including: parents, staff, community representatives and partnership workers. The information given and the stories shared with us enabled us to judge that the centre is good overall. In order to make the services better we have asked staff to continue to support you in your search for training and employment so that more of you can improve your economic well-being and independence. We know that you are willing to share your ideas and concerns with the parents who are on the advisory board. We have asked the centre to ensure that more of you are involved in the advisory board so that you can contribute to the ongoing development of the centre.

The centre staff are continuously reviewing how to manage the demand for popular activities. From our observations, discussions and case studies, we were able to see how much impact the centre is having on your lives. For example, some of you told us that you were able to improve your own health and that of your children after attending particular sessions at the centre, or by receiving guidance and support from the well-trained and qualified staff. Well-established partnerships ensure the health, safety and well-being of you and your families. The close working relationship between health visitors, midwives, speech therapists and children centre staff ensures that from an early age your children are getting the best possible start and you are getting good quality information.

You told us how your children's centre has supported you and how your self-esteem and confidence have grown. It is evident that you are very proud of your achievements and those of your children. You told us how it had become easier to ask for help and how the centre had helped you in dealing with isolation and a range of other personal issues. You told us about the friends you had made. Many of you said that the centre was fantastic and you do not know what you would have done without it. Some of you told us about how the transition to school sessions were helping you to prepare your children to move on and how they had helped you to know what was expected of them and you. It was reassuring that so many of you were willing to talk to us. The centre obviously means a great deal to you, your children and in some cases your extended families.

The senior leadership team and the staff make a real commitment to you and the centre. No wonder you trust them and use their expertise to support you when you need help. To develop further the work of the centre we have asked the managers and the local and health authorities to use all of the information they receive to monitor how effective the centre is. We have also asked them to make sure they are setting ambitious targets and to look at how well the centre meets them.

Thank you very much for your welcome and openness with inspectors. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you, sharing your stories and learning alongside you.

We wish you every success in the future.

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