

Inspection report for St Werburgh's Park Nursery School and Children's Centre

Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	366916
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Reporting inspector	Mo Roberts HMI

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Linked school, if applicable	St Werburgh's Park Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	

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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.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with representatives of the centre's management group, the local authority, governors, partnership agencies, members of staff and users of the centre.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of documentation including key policies such as safeguarding, the centre's self-evaluation documents, its development plans, evaluations of services and data about people who use the centre and the local community.

Inspection judgements

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

Information about the centre

St Werburgh's Park Nursery School was the first purpose-built nursery school in Bristol and opened in 1931. Over the years there have been many changes and it added a Phase Two children's centre with the full core offer in January 2010. The nursery school and children's centre offer a range of extended services. The centre's reach is mainly the Ashley ward of Bristol, an area of high social needs, but it also welcomes users from adjacent areas. Sixty-one per cent of the children at St Werburgh's Nursery School live in the Ashley ward, with other children coming from inner city wards including Lockleaze and Lawrence Hill. A small percentage of children also come from the more affluent area of St Andrews. Children and families speak 30 different languages and the centre embraces a very wide range of cultures. There is a 20-strong governing body which also covers the nursery school. A high proportion of families are on benefit and many are jobless.

Services provided directly by the centre include provision for 0 to three-year-olds, stay and play facilities, family support, half-day nursery classes and support for childminding. The centre also offers a holiday club (with breakfast club), and an after-school club. The centre's other partners include health professionals, who provide ante-natal classes and check-ups for two-year-olds. There is also a Counsellor for one to one interventions.

The nursery school was judged outstanding by Ofsted in September 2008. Children's attainment on entry is typically low, especially in communication, language and literacy and personal and social skills. It is located next to a primary school of the same name and they share some facilities.

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

2

Main findings

St Werburgh's Park Nursery School and Children's Centre makes an outstanding contribution to improving outcomes for users. A fully integrated management team ensures the setting runs smoothly all year round and meets the needs of all comers. Staff get to know the families who use the centre exceptionally well and this enables them to quickly and astutely assess what support and help are required. The work with partner agencies is exemplary, including with social services and the police. Much is done that is preventative and timely as a result of some innovative programmes, such as the 'unattached' social worker with an area-wide remit. Recently, cutbacks have resulted in the loss of the on-site weekly link to Jobcentre Plus. The centre now signposts people to the service but the loss is felt as the link person was exceptionally good at identifying and reducing the barriers to work.

Inclusion is excellent. The centre meets its goal of actively embracing and celebrating the community it serves. It is evident that everyone is treated with unconditional respect. Resources and the environment carefully reflect and support families' very diverse cultures. Staff offer good support to children who have specific needs to ensure they are fully included in all activities. The services offered are seamless and carefully focused on families' needs. Outstanding practice is evident in the nursery and 0–3 class classes, where children have tremendous fun and learn exceptionally well. As a result, attainment is improved so children reach, or are significantly closer to, the expected level when they start school; they have learned very valuable skills and know 'how to learn'. Children from the nursery move on to many different schools, and this makes it difficult for the centre to gather data to show its impact on all children's subsequent achievements.

The centre was said by a number of people to be amazing, with 'great leadership'. The inspection team agrees with these sentiments and judges leadership and management to be outstanding. Users report that the staff go the extra mile to help and support them. Of particular note is the superb quality of the learning areas and the displays, the support given to the most vulnerable families and the exceptionally high quality of the work done to safeguard children. Working parents, however, would welcome more advanced notice of some activities and information about childcare that is available locally when the centre is closed.

Processes for staff management and professional development are excellent. In general terms, the centre's knowledge of its programmes is good but there is more to be done in relation to identifying the specific impact it is having on some issues, such as improving the rate of immunisation and other national indicators. Exceptionally strong leadership combined with outstanding governance means that despite the gaps in data and self-evaluation, this already excellent centre has a good capacity to continue improving.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- With the local authority and partners:
 - refine data further to enable the centre to cross check that no groups are being missed
 - use data already available to further develop self-evaluation to check if more needs to be done in some areas such as improving the rate of infant immunisation.
- Further support working parents by ensuring they get timely information and are signposted to wrap-around care if they are working unsociable hours.

How good are outcomes for users?

1

The links with health services are good, despite the limited number of health visitors. The centre hosts medical centre professionals from two health centres, including antenatal classes and health checks for two-year-olds. This leads to better health for mothers and babies and one of the highest breastfeeding rates in Bristol. Postnatal support through the very varied groups is of good quality and has a significant impact. For example, depressed and isolated parents are successfully drawn into the centre's activities which support both the mothers' emotional welfare and the babies' overall development. There are good links with the portage service and cross-service referrals are effective; the risk of families falling through the gap between services is minimised. Improved family nutrition is stimulated by both the 'Cook4Life' programme and the children's award-winning vegetable garden. The Forest Schools trial has got parents and children out in the fresh air and feeling more confident about using the park and woodlands spaces within the local area for physical recreation. Schemes to reduce dental decay are provided but the impact over time, like that for the immunisation rate, is not clear.

Children of all ages are taught to avoid dangers and keep themselves safe. Behaviour in the setting is good and is given excellent support. The safety awareness programme regularly reminds parents and children in all the groups, including 'stay and play', of the issues involved. They use excellent visual safety displays that are easily understood by all. Safeguarding procedures are of the highest standard so children are exceptionally well protected. There is sustained evidence that child protection plans have a positive impact in both the short and long term. Staff take an on-going interest in the safety and well-being of children who move on to school. Parents are effectively alerted to the dangers in modern urban Britain as many are newly settled here. The community police have good links with the centre and a community liaison officers helps parents, often preventing issues escalating. Parents experiencing difficulties are well supported to maintain their family's safety, even in some very trying circumstances.

Bilingual support is good and supports parents' and children's learning. Makaton is also used effectively to communicate in the setting. Children learn quickly, begin

closing any gaps between them and their peers and make excellent progress from their starting points. They have lots of fun as a result of the well-resourced provision and outstanding staff interaction with them, both indoors and outside. Evidence shows they are ready for school when the time comes, the centre assesses that they mostly enter school having reached their 'age related expectations'. They gain confidence in their own abilities and know how to explore, investigate and learn. Parents develop important skills, such as better English fluency as a result of the language programme, and improved parenting through an adapted version of the Peers Early Education Programme (PEEP) parenting programme. They also learn to challenge their cultural preconceptions and feel more at home in the local community as a result. They form productive relationships in the centre and learn from the excellent role models provided by staff. All parents spoken to were very complimentary and enthusiastic about the centre and what it offers. Parents make excellent progress from their initial assessment points and learn to be more temperate and open to new ideas.

The centre is at the very heart of the community and is recognised by users and multi-agency partners as a safe and happy place. Parents are supported to make appropriate decisions for their children through the family support provision. Individuals all make progress dealing with their specific issues as the centre is exceptionally creative in dealing with a wide variety of issues, including eviction and poor housing. Parental and community representation on the governing body is excellent and reflects the community. This shows that the centre is a leading light in meeting and addressing the recommendations in the Bristol-wide report on community cohesion. Users are encouraged to be non-judgemental to each other and the ethos is totally inclusive because of a deliberate policy of colleague-to-colleague challenge and support, as well as on-going training.

Children and parents learn all sorts of new skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), and to communicate with people beyond their immediate family. The centre offers excellent support to vulnerable families and offers adapted training opportunities so some parents have progressed from National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses to employment in the centre. The centre offers good volunteering and training placements for a variety of professionals so there is a good range of role models for both men and women in the setting. Parents are helped to access employment opportunities and shown how to apply. In the recent past there have been regular sessions with Jobcentre Plus but as a result of the cutbacks parents are now signposted to another centre or given a phone number, which is less satisfactory. The centre continues to build parents' confidence and supports small but significant steps towards employment.

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
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The extent to which children are safe and protected, and their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
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	1
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment.	2

How good is the provision?

1

Home visits take place for all new children coming to the nursery classes. These form a strong foundation for future work. Parents are made aware of the excellent family support services that are on offer. All staff listen to parents and carers and signpost families to any additional service they may need. Users' needs are assessed in a culturally sensitive way and rapid action is taken to deal with priority issues such as health, child welfare and, where possible, housing. The pre-comprehensive assessment framework (pre CAF) is used effectively by staff to identify what needs to be done. Case studies and discussion with users show excellent outcomes and on-going support for children and families long after they are officially off the roll. The exemplary partnership working ensures that assessments are well informed and that links with siblings and other family members are followed through effectively. Action by social services is prompt.

The provision to help children learn is a joy to observe. The centre promotes excellent high quality activities for a very diverse group of children and their parents and carers. Individual needs are exceptionally well considered and adult users flourish as a result of the very high quality support and challenge they receive. Training for parents, including conflict resolution, English language courses for new learners, 'Money Matters', family learning, and 'Cook4Life', builds well on participants' skills and prior learning. An on-site NVQ assessor encourages and supports learning for the local community, including trainees and apprentices. Groups are well attended. Outreach provision effectively draws families in from the more distant parts of the reach area. However, data currently provided by the local authority do not yet capture the significant numbers of families who come from adjacent areas outside of the official reach.

The range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community exceptionally well because they are carefully adapted to the needs of all ethnic groups. Services are well integrated and multi-agency working is excellent. This has a very positive impact on some highly vulnerable peoples' lives. Flexible outreach ventures draw people in as the outreach worker is well established as a contact point in the community; for example, she attends an off-site baby clinic.

She also signposts users to the best provision for them, which is sometimes a centre closer to their homes. Vulnerable peoples' needs are paramount and staff definitely go the extra mile to see the best provision is sought out. The quality of care, guidance and support offered is exceptional as there is a great deal of care and kindness extended to families in crisis and need. Parents are successfully supported to overcome hurdles and barriers and to improve their children's lives as well as their own.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	1
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

The exceptionally strong senior leadership team and governance have grown to meet the needs of the expanded setting. Leadership reflects the nature of the centre with a range of experience and expertise. Line management arrangements are clear and reflect the various functions that the setting fulfils. Communication between senior leaders and the staff is good, despite the complex staffing arrangements. All staff have performance management goals which are firmly linked to the centre's improvement plan. They are effectively monitored throughout the year.

The orderly and well-established governing body has representation from a range of professionals, including health and social care, parents and the wider community. They contribute to the development of the setting by acting as critical friends and are not afraid to challenge staff to think again if an issue arises. They have, for example, helped reconsider the use of a newly created room in order to prioritise the needs of local families with children who have additional needs.

Senior leaders set high standards. They are relentless in trying to improve the setting, although they tend to favour informally gathered local intelligence over a rigorous analysis of all the available data in order to assess needs. Because the nursery school is so well known, this works effectively but there is a risk that some new or small groups could be inadvertently missed. Resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively. Centre staff are determined to forge better links with adult mental health services, although the barriers in this regard are hard to breach. While childminders are invited to whole-school training and can access specific training, the centre acknowledges there is more to be done to help develop childminders' skills and confidence.

The centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies is strong in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The centre is fully inclusive, with, for example, the admissions panel including a local voluntary sector childcare provider. The centre is an active member of the extended schools partnership and this inspection judges that it provides excellent quality after-school care. The single-parent action network also uses the setting to hold regular training courses and there is a good 'dads' day' each term to further involve men in the setting. There is a good support programme for women run from the centre. As part of the proactive relationship with health professionals, centre staff attend doctors' practice meetings to advertise the centre's services.

The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities is a mixed picture. Some areas of evaluation are extremely detailed, such as the tracking of black and ethnic minority boys' progress. The local authority's annexe to the nursery school's self-evaluation also led to a thorough listing of provision and ensured the setting reviewed most aspects of its work. However, overall, this analysis had too little regard for the data available from a variety of sources and has not yet fully explored how the setting is doing in relation to some indicators. A few visiting staff have not formally evaluated sessions, whereas others are diligent in this respect, adapting quickly to users' ideas. Self-evaluation is often informal and is effective but the centre acknowledged that, as a result of the inspection, it now has a much clearer idea about the degree of rigour required to fully document its impact and ensure no group is missed out.

The range of partnerships is extensive and they are all useful and productive in helping the community. Everyone the inspection team met was truly delighted with the centre and cannot speak of it highly enough. Users, be they parents or carers, or co-professionals, all reported that their views and concerns are taken seriously. They know the centre staff will do their utmost to support everyone and they are always on the look-out for the next solution or good idea.

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	2
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	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	1
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 nursery school was judged outstanding by Ofsted in September 2008. The educational programme was not the focus of this inspection; other than to judge overall if children were enjoying and achieving.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected St Werburgh’s Park Nursery School Children’s Centre on 16 and 17 February 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

We found that the centre provides you and your children with outstanding support. Staff and management work exceptionally well together and are committed to improving the lives of the families who live within your community. They know you and your families very well and provide services which meet your needs. However, the information given to them by the local authority does not yet include those of you who come from outside the local area. Staff need to check they are meeting the local health targets and if there is any more they can do to improve your and your children’s health.

Centre staff have excellent relationships with other professionals and organisations and this means that they are able to offer you an outstanding range of support, information and guidance. We agree with you that staff are exceptionally warm and welcoming. You told us that you value that staff take time to get to know you and your children and you really appreciate the fact that they are always there to listen to you when you need to seek advice or need someone to talk to.

We could see you make a strong contribution to the running of the centre and the services it offers. You are well represented on the governing body and are given

regular opportunities to present your views. Staff and management listen to you and value your ideas. They have adapted some classes such as the English language classes (ESOL) to suit your specific needs. We think it is a pity the job centre staff are no longer at your centre because of funding cuts but the centre can tell you where you can meet her. We recognise that working parents would like more information sometimes and would like to know where they can find out-of-hours child care.

The Rainbow Room and nursery classes give children a happy and productive time so they can achieve well. Centre staff work well with local schools. They often make visits with families to help them select a school or help settle a child with special needs. This ensures that each child in the area makes as much progress as they can and that they all have a positive experience when they start school. They offer good support to children who have specific needs to ensure they are fully included in all activities.

Staff do all they can to make sure you and your children remain safe. The centre provides good guidance for you on how to keep your families safe and healthy. We saw the safety team giving you guidance on how to avoid potential accidents. Staff are very well trained in how to safeguard children and managers have taken the correct steps to ensure that anyone who works with you and your children is suitable.

We would like to thank those of you who spared the time to speak with us and were willing to share your thoughts about the centre. We are very grateful and we wish you every success for the future.

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