

Inspection report for Broadmayne Children's Centre

Local authority	Dorset
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Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

Centre leader	Nicola Rae
Cluster manager	Louisa Payne
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Broadmayne First School, Knighton Lane, Broadmayne, Dorset DT2 8PH
Telephone number	01305 852843
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	broadmaynecc@dorset.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Not applicable

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

An inspection of the co-located/partner primary school 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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the local cluster manager and the centre manager, members of staff, and representatives of the local authority and parents. Discussions were also held with various centre partners including representatives of social services, the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Home Start, health professionals, representative from Ethnic Minority and Traveller Advice Support (EMTAS), leaders of a local pre-school and first school, and the Chair of the advisory Board.

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

Information about the centre

Broadmayne Children's Centre is a phase two centre which was designated as meeting its core offer in March 2009. Currently there are 820 children aged between nought and four years living in the reach area. Families are predominantly of White British heritage: 9% are of families from minority ethnic groups. There is a Traveller site within the reach area.

The reach area is within the 70% deprivation ranking nationally but there are two areas where the levels of multiple deprivation are higher. Approximately 13% of families are in receipt of workless benefits across the reach but the percentage rises to 22% in the more deprived areas. Many families live out of towns and villages where transport links are diminishing and experience isolation.

Children start in Early Years Foundation Stage provision with a range of skills and knowledge which are often below levels expected for their age, and low in the most deprived areas of the reach, particularly in language skills.

The centre was taken back into local authority management in September 2011. This resulted in significant reorganisation and the transfer of staff from Barnardo's to the local authority. Much of the centre's records and data about the impact of the centre's work were lost at this time. Broadmayne is one of five children's centres and two outreach settings managed by the cluster manager. The cluster manager and the centre manager took up post in December 2011. There is an advisory board in place which is shared with the Dorchester Children's Centre.

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 families

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

Broadmayne Children's Centre provides a satisfactory service for the families living within its reach area. Since the new managers took over in December they have had a positive impact on increasing the percentage of families registered at the centre, on the numbers of families engaging with the centre services and increasing the participation rates for the various activities. This is due to the manager and staff actively promoting the community's awareness of the centre's work. The quality of the care, support and guidance provided for families who participate in the services is effective, but at present not enough of the families whose circumstances make them most vulnerable access services and the numbers participating in some target groups, although improving, remain low.

The quality of the one-to-one support for those vulnerable families who do access the centre itself is thorough and leads to improved outcomes, particularly in ensuring that children are safe. The centre is a secure and friendly environment where parents and children feel safe and confident to share worries or concerns. This parent's comments were typical of those shared with the inspectors: 'All the staff have been wonderful and they have supported me through some bumpy times.' The activities provided both at the centre and at the various outreach settings are much appreciated by parents. A strength of the centre's work is in its partnership with the local women's refuge where they work with families who have experienced domestic violence. Another is the wide range of support provided for teenage parents. Most of

this group have worked with the centre for some time and are no longer teenagers and so the centre is appropriately focusing on the identification of and engagement with those teenage parents who do not yet access the centre's services. Similarly effective support is given to families who have a member with disabilities and/or special educational needs and to lone parents who participate in centre activities. However, information on those who are not registered at the centre is limited and data about those who do attend are often not sufficiently robust to ensure an accurate identification of their individual needs so they can be fully supported.

Strengthening links with other early years providers has led to a greater understanding of what the centre offers and the development of new activities. The centre is focusing on increasing children's language skills and the Getting Ready for School programme for families in the most deprived area of the reach came from discussions with a local first school. Currently, however, there is no way of showing how the centre is contributing to the children's learning as identified at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage as it does not track the ongoing progress of any of the children who regularly attend the stay and play groups. Parents are given effective opportunities to develop their parenting skills and in their understanding of how to help their children learn. Their confidence in their abilities is promoted well but there are few opportunities for them to increase their academic or personal skills to help them achieve future aspirations.

Parents' views about the activities are gathered and the manager has been swift to respond, making changes to the activities in line with their comments. Activities are now held weekly rather than fortnightly which has resulted in better attendance. Some parents asked for a course to help them manage problems associated with children's eating habits. This has also been quickly addressed and a Food Activity and Behaviour (FAB) course has just started. Stronger and more positive lines of communication have been established with partners, such as social services, and this has improved the support for vulnerable families. All these initiatives are based on the managers' clear and accurate evaluation of what the centre needs to improve, demonstrating their skills in moving the centre forward. However, there has not been enough time as yet to see the impact of these actions on improving lives so capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory overall.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the identification of families in target groups, especially lone parents, teenage parents and families with disabled children and special educational needs, so they are encouraged to engage with the centre activities and given appropriate support.
- Further develop partnerships with other early years providers so that centre staff support the work in developing children's early language skills, especially of the most vulnerable, and track their progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage so centre staff recognise the impact of their work and have a

- good understanding of how it can be improved.
- Introduce more opportunities for parents to improve their academic skills that lead to them achieving their personal targets.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

Promoting healthy lifestyles has not been a high priority for the centre as data show that child obesity is not a particular problem within the reach area. However, the various opportunities that are available to learn about healthy lifestyles are successfully helping young parents to meet their children's health needs. Data on dental health show that the rates of dental cavities are broadly average but to support their families the centre includes toothbrushes and toothpaste in the welcome pack provided for new families. Many parents commented on how they welcome meeting new friends and how visiting the centre's activities have reduced the sense of isolation.

The centre is a safe and secure environment for families and staff are good role models to promote safe practices. Developing an awareness of safety issues and parenting skills is a strong part of programmes such as the Incredible Years. Regular information is made available on safety issues and a strong focus of the work with vulnerable families is safety in the home. Eight parents recently completed a first-aid course. These activities are helping to keep the number of accidents in the home and hospital admissions below the national average. The welcome pack for new families also includes a thermometer to measure temperature of bath water and room temperature for babies. All staff are trained on safeguarding and on the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). They work closely with the various health professional and outside agencies, especially on the support of families where there is a child protection plan, to keep children safe.

Children behave well and respond positively to staff and other children. The proportion of children attaining 78+ points across the Early Years Foundation Stage at the end of Reception is broadly average and the gap between the lowest 20% and the rest of children is narrowing. Activities for children, such as the stay and play, are planned with children's interest in mind and promote children's early learning skills, independence and personal development. However, centre staff do not track the learning and development of those who are regular attenders or set next steps for individual children.

Most of the family services promote parenting skills, parents' understanding of how to support their child's learning and how best to manage their behaviour. One parent commented, 'They have helped to rebuild my confidence as a parent and helped me remember what is important.' Organisation skills and decision making are also encouraged. The families attending the Multiple Births group now run their own activities and the Young Stars young parents group are about to do so. Two of the teenage parents have been supported to return to college and, after acting as volunteers in the centre, two parents returned to work. Parents are encouraged to

evaluate the centre's activities and many attend the Family Forum making suggestions on how the centre's activities can be improved. There are usually parent representatives on the advisory board.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	3
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 children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	3
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	3

How good is the provision?

3

There is a satisfactory range of universal services and activities provided at the centre and outreach locations, such as the library, youth centre and local nursery within the most deprived areas. Support for families in their homes is a key strength and families state that this is meeting their needs well. Response to families in times of crisis is well focused and effective. Support for families who had to be re-housed had a significant impact on improving parents' and children's lives. Staff are developing an increasingly secure understanding of families' needs but the data show that only about 4% of lone families engage with the centre. This is a focus for staff, but at present they are still developing the systems by which lone families, teenage parents and those families with disabled children and special educational needs are identified and engaged.

Many activities are planned within the various services to promote the importance of healthy diets and exercise, such as Baby Massage and cooking programmes for teenage parents. A breastfeeding champion attends the stay and play activities giving advice when required. This timely support enabled one mother to carrying on with breastfeeding when she was about to give up. Although the staff signpost parents to adult learning courses and job opportunities, few opportunities for parents to develop their academic skills are provided. The family outreach worker and the representative from CAB provide crucial advice for a large proportion of their families on benefits and debt management.

Well-focused integrated multi-agency working is in place to monitor CAF arrangements and provide support for families. Social services are beginning to use

the centre more readily to support those families who have had a child protection plan removed so they do not slide back into problems. Good inter-agency working with the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Advisory Service (EMTAS) has promoted the centre's acceptance by the local Traveller community and enabled the manager to work more closely with Traveller families to identify their needs and support required. There are very few targeted activities, although some identified families are encouraged to attend the Baby Massage group. A good majority of the small number of families from minority ethnic groups are registered (66%) and 44% attend the centres activities. Advice and support on smoking cessation or alcohol abuse are mostly through signposting and leaflets, although appropriate support and information about sexual health, smoking while pregnant and healthy lifestyle are provided for the teenage parents.

These are the grades for the quality of provision.

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	3

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

New leaders are ambitious for the centre and are setting a quick pace in bringing about improvements. Accurate evaluation has led to identification of the areas that need to improve and clear strategies for improvement are being developed. The managers work closely with the advisory board to set challenging targets for improvement especially in the engagement with families in the target groups. The advisory board is developing its role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the centre and challenging the centre leaders. There is an improved focus on the analysis of data and on sharing information about the families in the reach area but they recognise that this needs to improve and better systems are now in place. Effective strategies are resulting in increasing levels of engagement within the target groups but the impact of this has yet to be analysed.

Staff understand their roles, carry them out effectively, and work closely as a team. The centre works within a cluster of other centres sharing staff expertise and resources to meet the needs of local families. Good partnership working is being developed to reduce costs and enable programmes to go ahead. The staff are developing positive partnerships with local pre-schools and schools and extending their services. The recent leaflet drop has had a positive impact on engaging more families, particularly in the most deprived areas. The centre provides satisfactory value for money.

Staff are proactive in ensuring equality and challenge any form of discrimination. Families of all backgrounds and heritage are welcomed into the centre. Every effort is made to respect the families' culture and beliefs. Good working links with the local Travellers' site through EMTAS has resulted in effective outcomes for those in significant need. The centre welcomes those families with a disabled member or special educational needs.

A high focus is given to safeguarding and procedures are regularly checked. All staff are trained in safeguarding issues and on paediatric first aid. Information on keeping children safe is displayed for parents, and all staff carry the necessary information and contact numbers if they have any concerns about a child or family. All the premises used by the centre are secure and risk assessments are thorough. Staff and volunteers are appropriately checked to ensure they are safe to work with children. Effective, well-focused inter-agency working is ensuring that families and children are kept safe and are well supported. Families experiencing domestic violence are well supported.

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	3
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
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 partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	3
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	3

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

None

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Broadmayne Children's Centre on 30 April and 1 May 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We would like to thank all of you who took the time to chat to us and tell us about the activities you enjoy at the centre. We can see that you are very pleased with the support and advice the staff give you and that you really love the opportunity to meet other parents at the Baby Massage and Under 1s groups. You also told us how worthwhile it has been for your children to meet other children so they can learn to play happily. Their independence and social awareness are developed effectively. The centre manager has had very productive chats with the local playgroups, pre-schools and the first schools and a number of new activities have started to promote children's language skills and to help them get ready for school. We have asked the centre to continue to work closely with the other early years providers to track how well your children are progressing so that together they have a clear view of children's development, especially their language skills, and how they can be improved further. We can see the centre does a lot for the children and we have asked them to make sure there are opportunities for parents to follow courses and increase your skills if you want to.

We can see from your many comments about activities that you are very pleased with what the centre has to offer especially those activities that help you learn about first aid and understand how to manage your children's behaviour. Many of you that we spoke to talked about how great the staff are at giving advice and that you feel really confident now in being a parent. Others told us about the tremendous support staff give when things get difficult at home. One parent stated, 'Thank goodness the centre's there, we know something will get done.' You are also very helpful to each other, sharing experiences and support, such as the advice from the breastfeeding champion who attends the stay and play sessions.

We have seen that the care, support and guidance the centre staff provide for those who have challenges at home are good. Strong support is given to those families who have experienced domestic violence. Relationships between the staff and you and your families are very good and we saw the warm welcome that all visitors to the centre receive. The centre is a safe place for you and your children and staff are good at helping parents understand how to keep their family safe as well. We saw how positively the centre works with other partners, for example the health visitors and the CAB, to give you advice. Many of you have benefited from help with claiming benefits and advice on debt management. We have asked the centre to monitor its different activities so they have a good understanding of what works best in helping you and your families to thrive.

The new managers have a good understanding of what the centre needs to do to improve and are developing many positive strategies. They have acted swiftly in response to parents' comments about the different activities the centre provides. For example, a new programme on understanding how to get children to eat healthily and behave well has just started in Dorchester (FAB) and activities such as the stay and play now run every week; this has helped families to attend more regularly. The managers have recognised that even more families could benefit from the centre's services and have made sure that more people in the community know about the centre and what it provides. There are still some families who have not been identified who may need help and we have asked the centre to continue their work in identifying and contacting these families, especially the teenage parents, those parents who look after their children on their own and for families who may have someone disabled or with special educational needs.

Thank you again for the time you gave in talking to us. We wish you all the very best for the future.

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