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.

Report published: October 2011
The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to ‘Subscribe’.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

No.100080
© Crown copyright 2011
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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the head of centre responsible for managing the children’s centre, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, parents, carers and representatives from the local authority. The inspectors observed the centre’s work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Adderley Children’s Centre is a phase one children’s centre designated in April 2005. It is integrated with Adderley Nursery School and operates from shared premises on one site. The centre provides the core offer and the provision includes early education integrated with day care, family support and outreach services, child and family health services and links with schools and advice services. Governance of the centre is the responsibility of the governing body which also has responsibility for the nursery school. The children’s centre is managed by the head of centre who is also the headteacher of the nursery school.

The children’s centre is situated in an inner-city area of north-east Birmingham in the Washwood Heath ward. The area consists mainly of Victorian terraced houses with some areas of medium and heavy industry. Mobility in the area is high as families move into and out of private rented accommodation frequently.

The area is within the 10% most deprived in the country and has the highest level of child poverty in Birmingham. The proportion of families where no-one is in work is above the national average. The proportion of families who have children under five and are in receipt of benefits is also high. There were 791 children under the age of five in September 2011 in the reach area. A large majority of the families are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the highest proportion being of Asian or Pakistani origin. Children’s skills, knowledge and abilities are below those expected for their age on entry to early years provision.
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

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

Main findings
Adderley Children’s Centre offers children and adult users a satisfactory level of service. Relationships with families are good and the centre rightly prides itself on the warm welcome it extends to all. Users speak very positively about the services provided by the centre and their experience of the support offered. One user said: ‘The centre meets my needs. It is in my area and I know I can get help and support here’. Parents and carers who use the centre are encouraged to let the staff know what they would like. For example, parents say what courses they would be interested in, and they are confident that their wishes will be considered. However, parents and carers do not have enough opportunities to contribute to the decision-making and governance of the centre.

Systems for safeguarding and child protection are good, and users say they feel safe and welcome at the centre. At times of crisis, the care, guidance and support it offers are good. The centre meets the emotional needs of users well because staff regularly give them highly individualised support. One mother said, ‘They support me like a sister or a close friend’. Staff respond effectively to the needs identified by users. However, the centre does not analyse its assessment data rigorously enough to help it identify the needs of users. This means that information is not used effectively to improve the range of services, activities and opportunities for children and their families.

The good support offered to families to improve their health and well-being has made a difference to the lives of families within the community; for example, the ‘Cook and Taste’ sessions where parents learn how to make healthy food swaps has contributed to a change in attitude of parents towards healthy eating. It has also helped the ‘Walk2swim’ sessions where mothers walk together to an all-female swimming class. This has enabled some women to swim for the first time.

Diversity is celebrated effectively and cohesion within the centre’s community is good. Children and families play and learn together in the parent and toddler group. Parenting advice from the family support workers has helped families experiencing
difficulties and adults undertaking accredited and non-accredited courses have achieved well, with some going on to further training and employment.

Leadership and governance are satisfactory. However, the centre does not have a system to measure accurately the impact of its provision and its overall effectiveness. This is because the gathering of information on outcomes for users is not systematic; evidence is available but in a variety of forms and is not collated in a meaningful way which makes it difficult for managers to accurately measure the success rates of adult users. As a result, the centre’s ability to measure its accomplishments, recognise what it needs to do and inform strategic planning is limited. Its overall capacity to improve is therefore satisfactory.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Develop processes to enable increased user involvement in the decision-making and governance of the centre.
- Conduct a rigorous analysis of all the available assessment data to identify the needs of children and their families, and use the information to improve the range of services, activities and opportunities for users and target groups.
- Establish a system to measure accurately the impact of the centre’s provision on users’ outcomes, and use the information to improve strategic planning.

How good are outcomes for families?

Parents and carers who use the centre regularly are enthusiastic about its benefits. They recognise the hard work and commitment of the staff. The centre effectively addresses users’ feelings of isolation and insecurity with parents saying, ‘Staff are friendly and outgoing and you are welcomed with real warmth’.

Parents who use the centre are provided with good support in relation to health and well-being. Effective partnerships support the centre to provide breastfeeding and weaning support, children’s weight management programmes, healthy eating and participation in sporting activities. As a result, users are developing good outcomes in relation to health. Support for families with emotional needs, including those who are most vulnerable, is highly effective and families are quick to recognise this. A large majority of those using the centre are able to show that they are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. Parent volunteers have been trained as ‘breast buddies’ and offer support within the community. Breastfeeding rates at birth and continuation show an upward trend. There is a significant incidence of smoking in the area, but the centre does not accurately identify users’ needs.

Safety and the safeguarding of children and families are good. The centre provides a safe and welcoming place for children and adults alike. Particular attention is given to the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to ensure they feel secure in the environment. There is particularly effective care for families and individuals in times of crisis; for instance, parents have been supported to access
respite care and bereavement counselling. One parent said that she felt staff had ‘saved my life’. Children with a protection plan and those who are subject to the Common Assessment Framework are supported securely.

Families benefit from the centre’s satisfactory provision of a range of accredited learning opportunities. This has resulted in some improvement in educational and personal development for a few adult users, with a minority progressing on to further training. Users are able to demonstrate new skills and confidence, enjoy the courses offered and are keen to do more. Parents and children have opportunities to play, have fun and learn together. Starting points for many children are low, particularly where English is not their first language. Nevertheless, a large majority of the children who have used the centre achieve well and reach the expected levels at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They demonstrate good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children are well prepared for their transition to school and parents are well supported and informed about their progress.

Families using the centre volunteer in a variety of roles, such as running the toy library, cooking for families taking part in activities and helping run activities. Children are well behaved and all centre users treat each other with respect. Parents know that their comments are listened to and several improvements have come about as a result of their suggestions. The Family and Schools Together (FAST) programme, recently introduced, is engaging more families in the life of the centre. However, the engagement of parents in the governance and strategic decision-making of the centre is limited. Some families using the centre enjoy a range of training and learning opportunities and are developing confidence and acquiring skills for the future. English language and literacy courses offered from the centre are particularly popular. Three women involved in the ‘Go Woman!’ project have been supported to set up their own businesses and others have progressed to further training.

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 | 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 children and parents, including those from target groups, 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 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?

Staff have a broad picture of the needs of families in the area and are responsive to the needs expressed by children and families. Some information is provided from the local authority and health services, and from outreach work. However, because the centre does not have a clear overview of data, it does not fully meet the needs of parents, carers and target groups. One mother said, ‘If we want to do something, they will try to put it in place’. However, outcomes are not systematically collated and managers do not have a clear overview of the difference the centre is making. A small minority of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and their parents are given practical help, for example, to attend specialist health services. The quality and range of services is satisfactory overall.

The centre promotes purposeful learning well and builds on prior learning and achievements to raise aspirations. Achievements are actively celebrated and adults are encouraged to go on to build on their achievements. The centre has been particularly successful in working with women from minority ethnic backgrounds, with pass rates of 90% and 95% for Childcare NVQ 2 and 3 respectively, while a good quality English literacy and numeracy course is very popular. Provision to help children learn and develop is good, such as the innovative use of outside space to create a meadow, forest and beach for children to enjoy and explore.

The quality of care and support for families provided by the centre is good, both in times of crisis and on an on-going basis. The centre’s role in the life of the community is good. Staff are tenacious in following up issues, such as the work done with children in foster care, and parents and carers turn to staff in a crisis. As one parent said: ‘Their (the staff) support to me has been second to none. I have not felt so alone.’ All parents who spoke to inspectors were clear about the positive impact different services have had on their families.

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 | 2 |
| The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups | 2 |

How effective are the leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of the centre has high aims for its development, which she communicates to staff and users effectively. The centre has faced significant budgetary and contractual challenges over the last eighteen months but the staff have maintained a positive attitude and are focused on improving outcomes for children and families. Governance is satisfactory. Financial
oversight is sound. The governors are supportive but they are not sufficiently informed to challenge the work of the centre. There is a developing parents’ forum, although its membership is currently small, and only a few parents and carers are actively involved in the strategic development of the centre.

The management team has a general understanding of different vulnerable groups and provides integrated services to users. Despite this, the data used by managers is insufficiently detailed to ensure that users accurately reflect all groups in the community that the centre serves. The lack of rigorous systems means that the centre cannot measure the impact of its work on outcomes for users. The centre has taken a proactive role in developing a wide range of partnerships with statutory, private, voluntary and independent providers, so that a range of high-quality activities are available on site. Partner agencies speak positively about the centre and the high regard with which the centre is held by the community. Families whose circumstances make them vulnerable are effectively supported by a range of agencies through a coordinated approach. As a result, the centre provides satisfactory value for money.

Staff are deployed to make best use of their knowledge and expertise; there has been a good training programme for staff and volunteers to help them support families. Outreach to vulnerable groups in the area is developing and beginning to have an impact. The centre is welcoming, safe and conducive to learning. It works to ensure effective equality and celebrate diversity, and it promotes understanding and the importance of inclusion for all. All cultures and faiths are respected. The centre removes barriers to allow users to access services, for example, by providing crèche facilities, disabled access and hearing loops.

Good safeguarding arrangements, with clear lines of communication and collaboration between agencies, ensure that children are effectively protected. The staff have a strong commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Staff receive regular training on how to keep children safe, particularly for child protection. Checks are made with the Criminal Records Bureau to make sure that all staff are suitable to work with children, and qualifications are maintained effectively. The centre has clear and appropriate policies for health and safety, child protection, risk assessment and safe recruitment, which are all up to date and reviewed regularly. Risk assessments are undertaken for all activities and visits. Parents are well informed of the centre’s policy on protecting children and sharing information with other relevant agencies.

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 | 3 |
effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups

| 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 partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose | 2 |
| 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

The inspectors took account of the findings from the inspection of Adderley Nursery School, which was judged to be good in September 2009.

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 Adderley Children’s Centre on 20–21 October 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We would like to thank all of you who spoke to us during the inspection of your children’s centre. Many of you went out of your way to tell us how important the centre is to you, what a difference going there has made to you and how much you enjoy the activities provided. We have judged that the extent to which the centre keeps you and your children safe is good. It is effective in its support of you, especially at times of crisis. We know that you are asked for your views on the activities and that some of you have already made suggestions about what you would like. A few of you are on the governing body or the parents’ forum, but we have asked the centre to involve more of you in developing the provision still further.

A large majority of you who spoke to us were able to tell us what you had learned in the centre and how you are well informed about the needs of your children. You also told us that you know about eating healthily and have improved your English in order to improve your lives. We have asked the centre staff to look more carefully at all the information about the different groups in the community who need their support so that they can plan to meet everyone’s needs more efficiently.
The centre does some things well. We know that it has helped some of you who have experienced real difficulties in the past to be much more confident and able to look forward to a brighter future. We watched you enjoy activities such as the Family and Schools Together (FAST) programme, where whole families are able to take part in fun-filled activities. We know that one reason why you like coming to the centre is the friendly and caring staff who work there. You told us that they are always prepared to listen and they try to help you make improvements in your lives. Some of you told us how grateful you were that the staff had helped you deal with bereavements, gain the correct benefits and get respite care.

Currently, leadership and management are satisfactory but leaders are keen to make the centre even better. We have asked them to analyse the information they have more effectively so that they can gauge whether the activities they provide are making a difference to you and devise a strategic development plan for the future. Thank you very much for your welcome and willingness to speak to inspectors. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and sampling the centre’s work. We wish you every success in the future.

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