

# Inspection report for Bedworth Heath Nursery and Children's Centre

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Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	366333
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Weston HMI

Centre governance	Governing body of Bedworth Nursery School
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Linked school if applicable	Bedworth Heath Nursery School URN125486
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Bedworth Heath Nursery School EY330743

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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 additional inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the head of centre, centre manager, senior management team, representatives from the governing body, the local authority and a range of agencies, and parents and other users of the centre. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Bedworth Heath Nursery School and Children's Centre serves a less advantaged area although there are pockets of high deprivation within its reach. It serves a disadvantaged area when it is compared with other parts of Warwickshire with the average household income is amongst the lowest in the county. The area is predominantly White British with a very small percentage of families from minority ethnic groups. Employment figures in the area are relatively low, with an above average number of families receiving a variety of benefits as their main source of income. Educational attainment in the area is low with fewer attaining 5 GCSE grades A\*-C than the county average. Most children enter child care and early education with skills that are lower than those expected for their age.

The centre provides all the required elements of the universal offer. It makes available education, care and family services for children and families from birth to eight. It has its own governing body which is made up of representatives from Warwickshire local authority, parents, the school and centre staff. The centre is also represented on a joint advisory board with neighbouring Rainbow Children's Centre. Bedworth Heath Nursery School Children's Centre has evolved from a former maintained nursery school and opened as a phase 1 children's centre with Rainbow in 2006. It was re-designated as a standalone centre with an extended reach area in 2008. In July 2010 it was designated as a Centre for Excellence. The centre is housed on one site that accommodates three units which provide flexible services for families. Because of space limitations, a range of activity is provided at Exhall Old School Community Centre. All staff who work at the centre are employed by the governing body.

## Inspection judgements

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

The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

1
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### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

1
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## Main findings

This highly effective children's centre serves the needs of its community extremely well. It truly lives its vision: 'You make the difference – today, tomorrow, together'. It provides a warm, welcoming and safe environment for children and families within its reach and extends its services to those living outside its designated area. Relationships with families are strong. They appreciate the work it does and recognise the positive impact it has on their lives. Many families say it is their first port of call if they face difficulties. One user described how support from the centre has 'turned my life around. I don't know what I would have done without them.'

Leadership and management of the centre are outstanding; there is a strong team ethos, with staff working together extremely well. Excellent inter-agency working by highly skilled professionals means that they identify the needs of potentially vulnerable families at an early stage. They intervene appropriately with provision tailored carefully to match families' individual needs. Safeguarding users' health, safety and well-being is a top priority. The work of police community support officers, health visitors and social care professionals is highly valued and helps keep children and families safe. The centre is particularly successful in its work with children, especially those at risk of becoming vulnerable or with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children gain much from the imaginative range of high-quality activities and experiences on offer in the nurseries. As a result of these factors, the centre is making a positive difference to the lives of children and families, particularly for those most disadvantaged by economic and social circumstances.

The outcomes for children and adults within the centre's reach are excellent. They are learning to lead healthy lifestyles. These are promoted through a wide variety of initiatives such as post-natal drop-ins, healthy eating and 'Fit for Life'. Positive health messages and a variety of physical activities are increasing fitness levels and reducing the high levels of obesity in the area. The recent economic downturn has led to an increase in drug and alcohol abuse and incidents of domestic violence in the area. When the centre is aware of those at risk it has provided prompt support and guidance. However, more proactive action is required in identifying families most

at risk and providing guidance and support to help them.

The centre is raising aspirations and increasing the confidence of adults in the community by providing practical assistance to help them achieve better futures. Parents and carers participate in a wide range of activities and courses which develop their academic skills, contributing well to their future economic security. Limited space means that much adult learning is located at other venues such as St Michael's Children's Centre, Nuneaton and Bedworth College and North Warwickshire and Hinckley College. Adults participate regularly in a wide range of courses effectively designed to build their skills and confidence. They are gaining qualifications in basic literacy, mathematics, and information and communication technology, preparing them effectively for future employment. The centre works well to ensure equality of access to all and celebrates diversity well. It strives to include all groups that are hard to reach, particularly those not currently making full use of the services it provides.

Parents and carers say they feel listened to and respected. Although most families in the area are White British, an increasing number of families from different minority ethnic groups are now using the centre. Users' views are sought regularly through formal evaluations and informal conversations. Where parents make requests for services, the centre strives to provide them. The centre's self-evaluation is accurate. Performance management is thorough and outcomes are effectively linked to staff professional development. Action plans contain clear priorities with precise targets for improvement. Priorities are monitored and evaluated thoroughly so that leaders have an accurate view of the full impact of the centre's work. Consequently, all staff know what needs to be done to help improve life for people in the area. These factors demonstrate that the centre has outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

## What does the centre need to do to improve further?

### Recommendations for further improvement

- By January 2012, protect families by providing further support for drug and alcohol abuse and those suffering from domestic violence.

## How good are outcomes for users?

1
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Many parents and carers set out with the intention of using the centre only to access a single service, such as ante-natal care, but stay on as their interest in learning new skills develops, and as their confidence increases. Users' evaluations of the success of courses and activities are particularly positive. Case studies and other evaluations indicate that family learning such as 'Play A' Weigh' and 'Pride and Joy' are greatly improving outcomes for parents and carers. Parents and carers, including grandparents, fathers and young mothers, commented on how their confidence as

parents has improved as a result of the activities offered by the centre.

High-quality early years education is enabling children to fulfil their potential. Children are well behaved and relate well to one another. High numbers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend the nursery and their needs are met extremely well. Support for children subject to Common Assessment Framework processes is good. Excellent practice is delivered by a well-qualified, committed and knowledgeable staff. This ensures that all children make outstanding progress. Participation in strategies such as '2Help' and 'Every Child a Talker' also makes a valuable contribution to their progress. The environment plays a key role in supporting children's learning. A wide range of sensory materials, colourful displays and outdoor learning stimulates both boys and girls. Children are interested, confident and purposeful in play. Education data show a narrowing of the gap between the outcomes for the most vulnerable groups and others, and a general rise in attainment by children attending the centre, which is sustained as they progress into school.

The centre has helped a number of adults into learning, training and employment. Their economic stability and independence have improved greatly as a result. An increasing number of centre-based placements has led to the achievement of a wide range of qualifications for a number of adults. Innovative solutions have been initiated by the centre due to the limited space to deliver training onsite. Close liaison with the St Michael's and Rainbow children's centres, coupled with effective links with nearby colleges, has resulted in an increase in the take-up of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology courses and qualifications. In addition, the centre has both supported and signposted to Rathbone (a support agency for young people) through the provision of training placements. Also, a significant number have attended Early Years improvement training over the past year. Further scope to provide additional training opportunities will be afforded by the development of outreach provision in the Mount Pleasant area.

Partnerships between agencies, including child and family health and social services, are having a highly positive effect on children's and families' emotional well-being and physical health across the reach. High-quality activities are also making a significant difference. Post-natal drop-ins, 'Fit 4 Play', 'Big Chef, Little Chef', the allotment and sessions such as 'Blow bubbles, not smoke' all help to ensure that families are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy. Health visitors consistently provide an excellent level of guidance and support on a range of issues such as breastfeeding, weaning advice and parent craft. They also provide specifically targeted support and advice for teenage parents. The key messages from these sessions are reinforced by the family support workers during 'Stay and Play' sessions. The impact of these activities is positive. For example, all children in the nurture nursery and nursery participate in physical activity on a daily basis. There is a reduction in under-18 conception rates and the percentage of mothers smoking during pregnancy. Also, there is a high take-up of immunisation.

Excellent procedures ensure that children are extremely well safeguarded. Parents say that they feel safe in the centre and that they trust the staff to help them in times of crisis or personal difficulties. Partnership working with health visitors, police community support officers and other partners is helping most successfully to raise children's and families' awareness of safety in the home and their communities. Participation in the 'Safer at Home' project which undertakes safety visits to homes and provides home safety equipment for families, is contributing to a significant reduction in the number of accidents in the home over the past 12 months. There has been a 50% reduction in the number of emergency admissions to George Eliot Hospital over the past year. Some parents and carers have been subject to domestic violence and abuse. Family support workers provide excellent support in these circumstances, and the centre works well with agencies to resolve situations and to protect children as well as parents. However, the centre recognises that it needs to be more proactive in dealing with this increasing problem.

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	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, 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	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	2

How good is the provision?

1

The centre team know and understand their community extremely well and this informs very high quality provision. Effective communication, such as through regular 'Family Matters' meetings, supports this work exceptionally well. The centre does not work in isolation with parents or children, but always seeks to improve the life chances and personal development of both. It is well equipped for this challenge. During the inspection, meetings took place with a range of the centre's users who expressed great appreciation of the support they receive through the centre and of the positive changes that have resulted for their children and themselves. Typical comments were, 'When I arrived at Bedworth I knew no-one. The staff made us feel a part of the family,' and 'I love coming to "Stay and Play" with my son because we always have fun and learn some very creative ideas for play.'

The centre's early years practitioners demonstrate outstanding specialist skills and a thorough understanding of the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

This promotes children’s learning and development exceptionally well. Close links with childminders, the Integrated Disability Service and involvement in the ‘2Help’ project provide extremely valuable support for different groups of children. Experienced family support workers operate in the centre and also go out into the community; they have an excellent understanding of the community and its needs. This will be further enhanced when the outcomes of the recently commissioned community consultation is known. Outcomes will be used to increase the range and appropriateness of services and engage more widely with those hard to reach.

The assessment of need and the tracking of progress are thorough. Detailed assessment, the interventions used and the progress made by children and vulnerable families are well documented and evaluated. These are supported by a bank of case studies to help subsequent evaluations. The centre is exceptionally effective as a facilitating resource for the families and children. It has good links with various children’s services: statutory, community and voluntary. Close partnerships exist with the nearby Rainbow Children’s Centre and outreach at Exhall Old School community centre. Through these it provides high-quality integrated support for all of the most vulnerable groups, such as teenage parents, lone parents, families in crisis and increasingly those experiencing domestic violence or suffering from drug and alcohol abuse.

Some aspects of its provision are innovative, such as welfare rights support for families with debt or legal problems. It is extremely sensitive to the particular needs of its culturally diverse community. For example, it is proving increasingly successful in encouraging parents coming into the area from other countries to integrate within the community. The partnership with nearby primary schools is strengthening. The centre works productively with a wide range of professionals, such as health visitors, midwives, speech and language therapists and social workers, and has successfully supported or signposted a number of young people and parents into adult learning or work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	2
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 head of centre and the centre manager provide exceptional leadership and management for the centre. Leaders are fully focused on the needs of the immediate

community. Their expertise and the skills of a united staff team combine to ensure that a high quality of service is provided across the centre's operations. Senior leaders are highly effective in ensuring children and families are safe. This is through rigorous attention to child protection, vetting and recruitment procedures. Health and safety procedures are particularly thorough. It is also the result of a sensitive approach to the variety of needs the centre's users present, which ensures that families feel comfortable with staff and protected. Parents and carers speak highly of the way the centre staff care for their children. One mother said, 'Staff always make a fuss of the children and welcome them into the centre. They cherish them.'

Teamwork among staff is excellent and morale is high. Staff are highly qualified and experienced. Established and comprehensive performance management systems are in place with a strong link to professional development. The centre is bright and welcoming and is highly inclusive. The building is well equipped to put on family learning courses, activities for parents and carers, and crèches for children. Although space is restricted, every inch has been utilised well, and the learning environment throughout the centre is of high quality. The centre manages its resources efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community. The centre provides outstanding value for money. Its work to promote equality and tackle discrimination against vulnerable groups is good. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is excellent. The centre is increasingly making a valuable contribution to community cohesion by breaking down the barriers between families of different backgrounds and engaging those hardest to reach. Plans are being implemented to engage with these groups further to close the gap with those who achieve well.

The governing body is supportive and firmly committed to the centre and to the ongoing development of its role in the community. Development planning is aligned to local and national indicators for children and families. Leaders evaluate the impact of actions and services regularly and conscientiously. Outcomes are measured against the data provided by the local authority. Although the availability and quality of up-to-date local authority data are improving, delays in receiving timely information prevent centre leaders from interrogating the data to target promptly those areas most in need. Although governance is strong for the centre, parents have only just started to participate as members of the advisory board. They recognise that they are not yet fully representing Bedworth Heath in the wider decision-making processes of the area.

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	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and	1

effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	
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	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	2

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

The Ofsted report for Bedworth Nursery School conducted in June 2009 was taken into account. The overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Bedworth Heath Nursery School and Children's Centre on 19 and 20 January 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Your children's centre staff team are extremely well-qualified and experienced professionals. They meet regularly to discuss the centre's work and plan for improvement. They work extremely well together and are committed to making sure that your children get the best possible start. All staff place the utmost importance on you and your families and always provide a listening ear for you. They are passionate about creating an extremely warm and welcoming environment where you feel at home and able to talk freely about things that matter to you or are causing you concern. As a result, you value the centre, which means you have no hesitation in using the services regularly. You explained how well staff support you, both in raising your self-esteem and confidence. Most importantly, you said it provides practical help and advice, particularly for those of you who are facing difficult challenges in your lives.

The centre provides an excellent range of activities which are helping to improve your parenting skills. Staff at the centre encourage you to engage in play with your children from a very early age at sessions such as 'Stay and Play', 'Play a' Weigh' and 'Fit 4 Play'. We could see how much you and your children enjoy the activities you access at the centre and the positive effect these are having on you and your families. Those of you who access courses at the centre are able to use the childcare facilities, knowing your children will be very well cared for and will have fun!

The head of the centre and the centre manager are determined to improve the outcomes for children and families in the locality and are constantly looking for ways to improve the service the centre provides. For example, they recently started an allotment which contributes to the community, provides access to fruit and vegetables at reasonable prices and supports families working together. Many activities are run at times to suit you, including during the holidays. The programme is carefully worked out with the Rainbow Children's Centre to allow you to attend sessions on both sites.

Several of you told us you believe your contact with the centre has been life changing. You commented on community activities, such as the family days as well as the support you have through ante-natal and post-natal care, and the one-to-one support from family support workers and health visitors. You told us how the centre is making a positive difference to your lives and those of your children. We found that the centre is outstanding in helping your children to keep safe from harm, be healthy and to enjoy and achieve. Your children who attend the centre's provision are prepared extremely well for starting school.

The leaders and managers know what is needed to make the centre even better for you and have the skills to carry out their plans effectively. The governing body supports and challenges the leaders well. The centre supports groups who are potentially vulnerable well, such as very young parents, parents of children with additional needs and families who have recently come to this country. It is increasingly successful in reaching those who are most in need.

We have asked the centre to do one thing to improve it even further for you. There is an increase in drug and alcohol abuse, and domestic violence in the area. We have asked the staff to provide you with more information and with help and support with these issues.

We would like to thank everyone who came to speak with us. It was a privilege to be able to talk with you. Your honest and open discussions with us helped us immensely during the inspection. We thoroughly enjoyed spending time at your centre and we wish you and your families the best for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).