

# Inspection report for Bushy Leaze Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	383400
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jane Chesterfield

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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Bushy Leaze Early Years Centre 130861
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	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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## 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 centre leader and the head of centre, a local authority officer, the centre's senior management team, and a range of partners, health professionals and front line staff. They met parents and other centre users, observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

The centre is situated in a small market town in East Hampshire. It serves a predominantly White British community, housed in a mixture of owner-occupied, privately rented and social housing. There are some minority ethnic families within its reach, mainly from Eastern Europe.

The ward in which the centre is situated is the most deprived in East Hampshire with a score of 28.67% on the index of multiple deprivation. Unemployment is above the national average and more than 12% of the child population lives in households with no working adult. The proportion of families with children known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Children's levels of development on entry to Early Years Foundation Stage provision are below those expected for their age.

Bushy Leaze Children's Centre is managed by the governing body of the maintained nursery school with which it shares a site. The nursery school offers half of its places to children with disabilities and/or special educational needs. Bushy Leaze was designated as a phase two children's centre in 2009. It provides families and children with a range of services, including family support, speech and language support, outreach and home visiting, community-based health services, and advice on training, employability and benefits.

## 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**

**1**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**1**

## Main findings

The overall effectiveness of the centre is outstanding. Bushy Leaze Children’s Centre is very successful in meeting the needs of its community, and can demonstrate significant improvements in outcomes for its families, particularly those in target groups. Thanks to the exceptional quality of its senior and key staff, it has tripled its reach since it received phase two designation. The excellent range and quality of its provision mean that its services are extremely popular, and most are oversubscribed.

The centre’s systems for monitoring and evaluation are extremely strong. Systematic analysis of data and evaluations from families using services ensures that they are targeted to the areas of greatest need. The centre leader’s analysis of reasons for referrals, for example, established that half of these were because of isolation. Further research showed that the cause of isolation was either post-natal depression, a recent move, or domestic violence. As a result, the centre has set up provision specifically designed to address these problems, from baby and toddler drop-in sessions at a range of venues to courses for victims of domestic violence and outreach activities at the women’s refuge.

Staff morale is very high and front-line workers carry out their roles very competently. They are skilled in assessing the needs of families and recommending other services which could be of benefit to them. Relationships between staff and families using the centre are very positive, and this helps families from different backgrounds to mix with one another and feel comfortable and welcome at the centre.

The centre has established excellent partnerships with other agencies for the benefit of its families. This is particularly helpful for the high proportion of families attending the centre whose children have disabilities and/or special educational needs. Portage and inclusion services for the area are based at the centre, and services are geared to meet specific needs. A speech and language group, ‘Bushy Tales’, has been set up in response to an identified increase in cases of language delay, offering support to families before children enter the nursery.

Parents are heavily involved with the running of the centre, and take an active role in challenge and support through the well-attended 'Friends' meetings and the partnership board, currently chaired by a parent. Others run or volunteer at activities. Parents have taken over the running of a toddler group in an outlying village, for example, serving the hard-to-reach rural community.

Parents agree that the quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Outcomes for children on child protection plans have been very positive and the Common Assessment Framework is used very successfully. Safeguarding arrangements are exemplary. Staff training is rigorous, risk assessments are thorough, and parents say they are made very aware of the centre's policies and procedures, for example on the use of mobile phones.

Until recently, the centre has not been able to offer Jobcentre Plus services on site and has had to signpost families to other venues to access these services. As a result, the centre's impact on reducing worklessness has not been as great as its successes in other areas. Since the end of last year, however, Jobcentre Plus has been available on site, and is already making a significant impact. More than 60 individuals have had contact with Jobcentre Plus, and 12 have found paid work. The challenge now for the centre is to maintain this momentum and to remove barriers to work for those who have not found employment.

The success of the centre and the pace of its development are down to the vision and ambition of those who lead, manage and govern it. The day-to-day running of the centre is highly efficient, self-evaluation is accurate, and relationships with staff and families are excellent. The centre is highly inclusive and demonstrates a clear commitment to equality and diversity which strongly underpins its work. Its capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Build on the successful start made by Jobcentre Plus to reduce worklessness and increase the number of adults taking up training opportunities.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

<b>1</b>
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The centre works exceptionally well to improve outcomes for its families. Its analysis of participation data shows that almost every family using the centre has attended one of its 15 health promoting activities. Partnership working with health visitors and the National Childbirth Trust from the PVI (private, voluntary and independent) sector provides weekly support for breastfeeding mothers through the 'Bumps and Babes' group, and breastfeeding levels are above local and national levels. Monitoring has revealed that childhood obesity levels for five year olds and under are low. However, the centre's partnership with junior schools has shown that levels are increasing for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6. The centre has responded by introducing

healthy eating guidance through its 'Make, Take and Bake' cookery courses to help parents produce healthy packed lunches and evening meals for the whole family.

Children are kept very safe at the centre, and show from their behaviour that they feel secure and settled. Babies and toddlers form positive relationships with the adults working with them, and readily turn to them if they need help. Parents say that they value the support and guidance of staff, and that they feel confident their children's needs are well known to all staff.

Children learn and develop exceptionally well at the centre. Over the last two years, more than 75% of children who attended both the centre and the nursery went on to reach levels which were in line with or above expectations for their age, despite the high proportion with disabilities and/or special educational needs. This is above local and national figures. The proportion of children achieving at least 78 points across the early learning goals has increased by 24% over the last four years. Over the same period, the gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest has narrowed by 8%.

Adult learners too have been successful. In recent years, for example, the centre identified an increasing proportion of referrals of families from the Polish community, and so set up a regular coffee morning for Polish parents. From this, staff have been able to recognise language needs and help attendees sign up for ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) courses at the nearby college, so enabling them to integrate and find work in the wider community.

The centre plays a significant role in the life of the community, bringing together families who might not otherwise meet and mix with one another. Those who use the centre show respect for other users, and interest in their experiences. Children show a clear awareness of others and are rapidly learning to take account of their needs. Parents of all backgrounds play a very active part in the life of the centre and are well represented on the partnership board. Last year, for example, they initiated and organised a balloon launch to publicise the centre and raise awareness of funding concerns.

Children develop excellent skills for the future, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, ensuring that they are very ready to move on to nursery. Parents value the opportunities to improve their parenting skills, and, where appropriate, to improve their employability. The introduction of Jobcentre Plus services on site has meant that more parents can be supported to be ready for work and find employment. This is already improving outcomes for workless families, though is too recent to have had an impact on data returns.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for families*

<p><b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p>
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<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

<b>1</b>
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Excellent use of data means that the centre targets services very accurately against a wide range of needs, and over the last three years the centre has been very successful in increasing its reach among its target groups. More than 12,500 contacts have been made in the last three years, with almost 5,500 of those in the last year. Of these, contacts with lone parents and minority ethnic families are at a particularly high level of over 75%, well above local figures. Contact with fathers has increased by nearly 50%, thanks to the 'Dads' Saturdays' sessions which are fully subscribed.

Learning and development opportunities for children in the nursery school have not formed part of this inspection. They are described in full in the inspection report for the nursery dated March 2010. Learning opportunities for children with their parents are excellent. There is a wide range of groups for all ages from pre-birth to pre-school, all with a focus on helping parents support their children in their physical, social and language development. The excellent 'Baby Sensory' course, for example, gives parents ideas on how to stimulate all five senses of pre-crawlers.

Activities for adults are of a high quality and focus on helping them develop their parenting and employability skills. Parents speak highly of the level of personalised support and guidance they receive, irrespective of their different needs. One father who came to the centre for help with his child's special needs is now a regular volunteer training for a career in childcare. Mothers at, 'It's a girl thing', an outreach group for young parents, spoke warmly of how the centre tailors its advice and provision to suit their individual circumstances. The centre runs a group for foster carers, helping them to find solutions to the particular concerns they may have. Case studies show that children's needs are exceptionally well met through close liaison with other health and social services, and clear procedures for sharing information.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

<b>1</b>
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Leadership and management of the centre are exceptionally strong, and staff at all levels share a common vision for improvement and success. There are excellent arrangements for supervision, and staff are full of enthusiasm for their work and praise for the centre. Clear structures for performance management and an emphasis on well-targeted professional development mean that staff feel confident about doing their job. Recently recruited staff felt that their induction was comprehensive and relevant, and that they have been fully supported by senior staff as they settle into their roles. The local authority gives highly effective support to the centre and is rigorous in holding it to account.

The centre makes excellent use of data, and as a result, its service development plan is thoroughly grounded in the analysis of the needs of the area. Rigorous self-evaluation and prioritising have led to the centre's successes in improving outcomes for both children and adults, and in increasing its reach to make services more widely used, especially by target groups. The centre is constantly pro-active in tackling issues facing the area. It has recently secured funding to lead an initiative with five local infant schools to support speech and language development in the area, and spread best practice among other early years settings. It offers outstanding value for money.

Partnership workers value the quality of the centre's communications, facilities and support. They feel included in decision making through consultation and involvement on the partnership board. Parents are very happy with the centre and feel that they are very well involved and informed. Equality and diversity are exceptionally well promoted, and discrimination is not tolerated. The inclusion of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs is a particular strength, thanks to the range of expertise based on site.

Procedures for safeguarding are excellent. Required recruitment checks have been carried out on all adults who have contact with children, and these are renewed every three years. All staff have undergone training on safeguarding and clearly understand the steps to take if they have a concern. Records show that these are followed scrupulously. Staff are kept safe in their outreach work through carefully planned procedures for lone working. Liaison with other agencies to protect children is rapid and close, and support for domestic violence victims helps to keep parents

safe. Risk assessments are robust, and staff vigilance means that families are kept very safe on site.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>1</b>

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected Bushy Leaze Children's Centre on 14 and 15 March 2012. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Many thanks to those of you who met with us during the inspection, agreed to let us sit in on your groups or spoke to us about the centre. We were very grateful for your help with the inspection and interested to hear your views.

We found that the centre offers you an outstanding range of activities and services, and you told us how helpful and supportive the centre is, especially if you are in difficulties. Staff are extremely skilled at finding out what the needs of the local community are, and at developing their range of services to be of even greater use to the community. We know that you particularly appreciate the wide range of

services, and that all the groups and courses run by the centre are exceptionally well supported. We visited 'Baby Sensory', 'Bumps and Babes', 'It's a Girl Thing' and several baby and toddler sessions, and we saw and discussed with you the benefits you gain from what the centre provides. We were very impressed with the commitment and knowledge of staff, and the quality of resources available.

The centre makes an outstanding contribution to improving the health, education and well-being of people in the local community. To help improve the centre's excellent outcomes still further, we have asked senior staff to build on the very successful start made by Jobcentre Plus in helping members of the community find paid employment or training places. The centre will be pleased to hear your views and suggestions on how this can be done.

The senior staff are doing an excellent job in the way they run the centre. They have created a bright, clean, well-resourced environment where everyone is made to feel welcome. They monitor the work of the centre very closely so that they can see where improvements can be made and how activities can be tailored to suit the wants and needs of the community. Procedures for safeguarding are outstanding, and all legal requirements for this are fully met.

You told us that the centre values your views and ideas, and we know that a significant number of you are involved in the running of the centre, through being members of the partnership board or the Friends' association, or by running activities such as toddler groups. Many of you have gained new skills through the courses and groups run by the centre, including PEEP and baby massage. We hope that you will all continue to enjoy what the centre offers you and your families, and that you will continue to recommend it to others.

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