

## Children's Centre Update

May 2011

There are now 16 children's centres in Portsmouth covering all areas of the city. This means that all parents and families are within walking distance of a local children's centre which is available to give support and advice on a wide range of issues for both parents and their children.

Four new children's centres have opened in the last few weeks. One is a brand new building shared with a community centre on the Highbury estate in Cosham which is part of Portsdown Children's centre. Another is in a refurbished building in the Havelock Community Centre in Southsea developed in partnership with the community association. A third, the Drayton and Farlington Children's Centre, has been developed in partnership with Cosham Baptist Church in the "Link" at Cosham. And finally the Caretakers Lodge on the site of Meredith School in North End has been completely refurbished to provide a stand alone children's centre which will be used alongside the community rooms at Isambard Brunel School. All these new buildings will be offering the best possible facilities for their communities, and everyone involved is very excited about the opportunities they will be offering. In particular the Highbury Centre will have a focus on children with special needs and has been especially equipped to meet their needs. Towards the end of the year a fifth new centre will be opening at Milton Park School.

Several children's centres have now had OFSTED inspections. Somerstown was inspected in October 2010 and was graded as good with five outstanding features. Inspectors commented that the centre employs exemplary safeguarding practice, adults feel safe and "outreach is highly effective in supporting families who may be harder to engage"

The Brambles Nursery also had an OFSTED inspection in February 2011 and was also graded as good with number of outcomes that are outstanding. In particular "the integration of children's centre provision and its successful work with children and their families significantly enhances the care, guidance and support children receive".

Northern Parade Children's Centre, the newest and latest of the centres to have an OFSTED was inspected in March 2011 and was given a grade of "good" The inspectors commented "through its care, guidance and support for families the centre makes a real difference especially to families in crises".