

# Inspection report for Castleton Children's Centre

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Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	383404
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY371117 Castleton Children's Centre

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.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager and staff, local authority, members of the advisory board, health professionals, statutory partner organisations and parents.

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

## Information about the centre

Castleton Children's Centre is a phase two children's centre. It was designated in 2008. The children's centre is based within the grounds of Castleton Primary School. The headteacher of the primary school also leads and manages the children's centre. There are three primary schools in the reach area all offering nursery education. In addition, there is one private provider of childcare and 21 childminders.

Castleton Children's Centre serves children aged from birth and five years and their families. It offers family support, integrated childcare and early learning. There are significant levels of deprivation in the reach area. The centre serves families of which 63% live in the 10% most deprived areas of the country. The centre is physically located in an area which is in the highest 4% of deprivation.

The strategic management of the centre is the responsibility of the governing body of Castleton Primary School, which is commissioned by Leeds City Council to provide the children's centre service. An advisory board provides support and guidance to the centre. The board is made up of an independent Chair, who is a centre user, headteachers from the local schools within the reach area and other professionals. The centre has four family outreach and support workers who deliver services from the centre and from other sites

within the reach area. They work in partnership with other agencies to deliver a programme of family support.

In 2011, 873 children aged from birth to five years lived within the reach area, of which 58% were registered with the centre. Nineteen per cent of children under five years live in households dependent on workless benefits. Most families are of White British heritage. The community is becoming increasingly diverse with 20% of families from minority ethnic groups. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age. The childcare provision on site is subject to a separate inspection. A maximum of 57 children aged three months to four years may attend this provision and the inspection report is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## 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**

2
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### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2
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## Main findings

Castleton Children's Centre meets the needs of its community well and overall effectiveness is good. The family outreach and family support workers are particularly effective through their careful research of needs. Multi-agency staff teams sensitively support families at the centre and in the community.

The centre is the hub of its community and is a friendly and welcoming place where users feel listened to. The centre has effective strategies to engage registered users and to make contact with those who are not yet using the centre. For many the centre provides a safe haven and a place to make new friends. 'We have fun and learn a lot from each other', is typical of the comments parents told inspectors.

The centre offers good quality services to children and families, which lead directly to improved outcomes. This is particularly the case in relation to mental health issues, where an excellent counselling service offers one-to-one sessions and works very closely with users who are suffering from depression or stress. The centre is very inclusive and users are treated with understanding and respect. The centre takes appropriate action to overcome weaknesses and improve outcomes. For example, it has identified that boys' attainment is lower than that of girls; strategies are effectively helping to reduce the gap.

Staff have high levels of expertise, are well deployed and offer effective levels of care guidance and support. Good partnership working ensures that users receive the advice and support they need in a coherent and integrated approach. The full range of services and available advice are very well used. As one user commented, 'I've had lots of support from the centre... staff are really welcoming and supportive'. Safeguarding arrangements are good and users state they feel safe. Detailed policies and procedures are embedded and underpin effective practice across all areas of work. A particularly effective programme of home visiting ensures that families most at risk understand the potential hazards in the home and are able to respond appropriately.

The advisory board is committed to improving outcomes for the community it serves and the centre, through its management and governance, has a clear vision for future improvement. Members have a good range of skills and experience and parents are increasingly involved in decision making. Self-evaluation is accurate although it is not currently used well enough to set sufficiently challenging targets against local and strategic priorities. The use of data to monitor the centre's effectiveness is improving. However, data are not yet used routinely to monitor the effectiveness of the centre on outcomes for children and families.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

Further improve performance by:

- setting sufficiently challenging targets against local and strategic priorities so that progress towards meeting these can be regularly monitored and reviewed
- improving and increasing the collection and analysis of data to monitor the effectiveness of the centre's services and activities and demonstrate how the centre is making a difference to outcomes for children and families.

## How good are outcomes for families?

2
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Outcomes for centre users are good and there is an extensive range of services to support local families. Effective use is made of the very good counselling service, which is highly valued by centre users and contributes to positive emotional health outcomes. Participation rates at the centre have increased significantly over the past year and a majority of families, including target groups, now actively engage with the centre on a regular basis. Consequently, there is clear and persuasive evidence of and improved understanding and take up of more healthy lifestyles by families. There is an increase in sustained breastfeeding at six to eight weeks and the drop-in support centre is positively contributing to the steady increase in the uptake of breast feeding. An extensive programme of home visiting through the family outreach workers supports families to address issues of obesity and poor diet. Healthy eating is actively promoted in the centre through cooking sessions for teenage mums and dads, as well as through the nutritious and healthy meals offered to the

children using the centre. The centre offers many opportunities to encourage physical well-being. For example, children benefit from the play and learn activities in the attractive outdoor space. All appropriate health partners attend the centre to provide a holistic and effective support network for families.

All centre users report that the centre is a warm and welcoming place, where they feel safe and their children can flourish. Children behave well and have a good understanding of how to keep safe. Family outreach workers actively contribute to families staying safe through targeted home visits, carrying out over 70 ROSPA home safety checks as well as providing additional equipment when necessary. An improvement in confidence and parenting skills is evidenced by the majority of families in target groups. The centre offers very good support for those in crisis and works with other agencies to ensure that children and their families are kept safe. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is integral to identifying need and supporting outcomes. Child protection plans reflect excellent levels of appropriate support.

Children and adults enjoy learning and achieve well. Parents improve their parenting skills and develop their self-confidence and self-esteem through activities offered at the centre. Many families are clearly improving their economic skills and readiness for employment through the strong partnership with Jobcentre Plus and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Children are well prepared for transition to school, with tracking and profiling systems demonstrating good progress, often from low starting points. An increasing number of children are achieving 78 points or more on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Communication, personal and social skills are effectively promoted and developed well in both children and adults. The centre works closely with the speech and language therapy team and has achieved ICAN accreditation.

The children’s centre plays a pivotal role in its community, offering a full range of integrated services in a non threatening and welcoming environment. The Chair of the advisory group is a centre user and consults effectively with other centre users as well as potential users. Facilities and resources at the centre are continually being developed and extended, where possible in a response to users’ views. Parents are undertaking training in their role as volunteers and some are already using their skills within the centre to benefit their community. There is a real sense of ownership, with users talking passionately about ‘their’ centre and the difference it has made to their lives.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>2</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>2</b>
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The centre meets the needs of its community well because staff have an in-depth understanding of their reach area. Outreach programmes are particularly effective in identifying, supporting and securing the engagement of families most at risk. The family outreach and support team uses a variety of approaches to engage families so that they do not feel threatened. They often accompany parents to the centre on their first visit and are always there to support and encourage. The programmes respond to assessed need and there is a very strong commitment from staff to ensure that all community needs are met. The centre staff are aware that they have found it difficult to engage successfully with teenage parents and are developing strategies and activities to attract this target group. There is clear evidence of partners working very effectively together to ensure that assessments, including those carried out under CAF, and assessments of children with specific needs are robust and well informed.

The centre promotes purposeful learning well. Parents welcome the opportunity to come together in groups to learn about parenting in different and interesting ways. The baby massage and the baby Makaton groups are fun and provide parents the opportunity to get together and discuss their children’s development in a comfortable atmosphere. The centre celebrates achievement well and helps to raise aspirations of children and parents. Users of the centre really appreciate the ‘award’ ceremonies, where they receive recognition of their achievement. Many of the case studies gathered by the centre clearly demonstrate considerable progress made by members of the target groups.

The quality of care provided is good with a personalised service offered to families. The family support and outreach service is flexible and very responsive to the needs of users. This approach is particularly effective when meeting the needs of families and individuals in crisis. Good information, advice and guidance are offered by a range of agencies, which impact positively on users’ outcomes. Both the Citizens Advice Bureau and Jobcentre Plus have a presence in the centre offering a wide range of advice, including help on budgeting. There is insufficient signposting to further education and local adult training providers at present; however, this weakness and the need for stronger links with the local college have been identified as an area for development and the centre is already addressing this. The centre displays appropriate information and guidance on a range of health related issues, including smoking cessation, alcohol and drug misuse, and more sensitive information regarding domestic abuse and sexual health is displayed confidentially in toilet facilities and washrooms within the centre.

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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.</b>	<b>2</b>

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

<b>2</b>
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Governance and accountability arrangements are good. The advisory board is composed of a wide range of individuals with appropriate levels of skills and experience. The centre is working hard to develop strategies to involve more centre users on the advisory board, including planning for the introduction of a 'Parent's Forum'. The board reports regularly and appropriately to the school's governing body which has the strategic management responsibility for the children's centre. There are appropriate levels of scrutiny in place, although the centre leadership team has as a priority to develop clearer targets across all performance measures to enable the board to more easily monitor all outcomes. Financial reporting is appropriate and the children's centre has developed a sound and sustainable financial base.

Leaders and managers are highly motivated and committed to improvement. A clear management structure has been developed for the children's centre which is understood by all staff. All staff receive regular supervision and a supportive performance monitoring process is in place. Good professional development opportunities ensure that staff develop their skills and share experience effectively. The self-evaluation process is inclusive and involves staff. Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders and managers know the area they serve well. Centre managers are aware that currently, evaluation is not sufficiently linked to measurable target setting within their development plan.

The centre is well used, clean, safe and conducive to learning. At present the centre is open daily and there are plans to extend the opening hours to evenings and weekends. Resources to support learning are good and some joint planning with a neighbouring children's centre avoids duplication of activity. Outcomes are improving overall and the centre's efforts to effectively narrow any achievement gaps are well supported through effective partnership working. For example, best practice from the primary school informs the centre's work in reducing the discrepancy between girls' achievement and that of boys. The centre provides good value for money.

The centre's arrangements for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are good and staff are appropriately trained. Robust vetting and recruitment processes are in place for staff. The highest priority is given to safeguarding and all policies and procedures are consistently implemented. Appropriate risk assessment procedures are followed. Agencies work together to ensure close cooperation takes place in relation to early intervention, appropriate referrals and follow up support. The centre promotes equality and diversity well. The centre is inclusive, with the differing needs of individuals and groups being respected.



The achievement of the Stephen Lawrence Education Standard at level one is helping to develop new ways of working and thinking about race and inclusion. Strong partnerships provide an integrated approach ensuring that families, and target groups in particular, have more opportunities in life and improved outcomes. The centre management team takes an active role in establishing and sustaining these partnerships. Families using the centre are able to influence the shaping of provision. Centre staff are strengthening consultation mechanisms to get the views of more users including those who have a more limited connexion with the centre.

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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</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>2</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>2</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>2</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>2</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>2</b>

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

The Ofsted inspection for the linked school, Castleton Primary School, took place concurrently and the findings were taken into consideration.

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## **Summary for centre users**

Thank you for your help when we inspected Castleton Children's Centre on 7 and 8 February 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We enjoyed the chance to talk to many of you during our inspection of the centre. You told us how friendly and welcoming the centre is and how helpful and supportive the staff are. You appreciate that your views are taken into account in developing activities in the centre. You told us you were listened to and that you felt more confident in dealing with many of the issues facing you. We found that the centre meets the needs of the community well.

The centre's close work with partners enables many activities to be offered at the centre. We were impressed with the advice and guidance offered at the centre. You told us how much you appreciated the opportunity to get health advice, support in stopping smoking, counselling and other services all at the same place. You liked the fact that this was accessible when you brought your children to play and learn activities.

The centre itself is warm and friendly and you told us it makes a real difference to your lives. The centre is a safe environment and there are many opportunities for you to make new friends and learn new things. You told us that you found some of the parenting programmes both interesting and useful. We know that you also appreciate that staff come and visit you in your homes to offer help and support.

The staff at the centre are very committed to making the centre even better. We have asked them to use data more effectively to set targets and measure the impact the centre is having on outcomes for families.

Thank you very much for your welcome. We enjoyed talking with you and wish you all well for the future.

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