

Inspection report for Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park Children's Centre

Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	362538
Inspection dates	9-10 February 2012
Reporting inspector	Qaisra Shahraz

Centre leader	Mrs Michelle Townsend
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Woodlands Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY 377605 Butterflies Day Nursery

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: February 2012

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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 additional inspector and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the local authority, centre staff, health professionals, voluntary and statutory partner organisations, a local headteacher and parents.

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

Information about the centre

Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park Children's Centre is situated in Nunsthorpe in the south ward of Grimsby. It is situated in a purpose-built building next to Nunsthorpe Community Primary school. It is a phase one centre and provides the full core offer of integrated childcare and family learning, health services, family support, outreach work and financial and employment advice in partnership with Jobcentre Plus. It serves a community living in the top 30% most deprived areas in the country. Families face issues of poor housing conditions, high levels of unemployment, social deprivation, drug and alcohol misuse, crime and domestic violence.

About 66% of children live in families where incomes are low and where families access workless and other benefits. Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills that are much lower than those expected for their age. The large majority of families in the centre's reach area are predominantly White British with a small percentage of families from minority ethnic groups, mainly Eastern European. Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park Children's Centre has its own advisory board, made up of representatives from various professional partnerships. The centre is governed by North East Lincolnshire Council.

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

Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park children’s centre’s overall effectiveness is outstanding as are outcomes, quality of provision and leadership and management. This centre is an excellent model of practice. It serves and engages its local community extremely well. The excellent leadership team coupled with the highly effective use of first class resources, services and accommodation show that the centre has outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

Outcomes for the under-fives are improving rapidly, with a local headteacher stating that ‘children who have accessed services from the centre are at a much better place to access learning.’ This results in their higher levels of communication and better social skills.

The outcomes for most adults are outstanding. Users demonstrate much improved parenting skills, knowledge of healthy eating and lifestyles and positive relationships. The economic well-being of many families and, in particular, those who experience isolation is very greatly improved because of their engagement with the centre’s services. The centre recognises that healthy outcomes for users are still not as high as they could be.

Users benefit from an extensive range of excellent services that have been very carefully personalised to meet the needs of individuals and families. The excellent range of activities is of a high quality and results in excellent outcomes for users. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Exemplary personalised support ensures even families whose circumstances have made them hard to reach are helped to access both targeted and universal services.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The centre leader is highly experienced, skilled and very effectively leads a team of hardworking and motivated staff. The centre is extremely skilful in engaging, recruiting and supporting users as volunteers. Users’ views are highly valued and help to shape the range of services and activities offered. However, there

is currently no parent representation on the advisory board, resulting in a missed opportunity to take users' views to shape the services.

Governance and accountability of the centre are highly effective. Data collection and analysis are rigorous. These are used exceedingly well to shape services and to meet the needs of users. Results clearly indicate improved outcomes for users and a narrowing of the gap for children and families whose circumstances make them more vulnerable.

Safeguarding arrangements are excellent. The centre's leadership is acutely sensitive to the need to safeguard children both in the centre and at home. Staff promote equality and celebrate diversity exceptionally well and, as a result, barriers to access and learning are swiftly overcome. It promotes a strong sense of community well. The centre benefits from the many outstanding partnerships and collaborative links to meet the needs of all its users.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Continue to improve healthy outcomes for users, especially those linked to breastfeeding, smoking cessation and reducing obesity.
- Increase the involvement of users in the annual review and planning cycle, their contribution to the governance of the centre and to determining and shaping services.

How good are outcomes for families?

1

Health outcomes are good as the physical, mental and emotional health of most users improves following support from the centre. For example, the rate of mothers' breastfeeding continues to rise because of the excellent support and use of other parents as 'Breast Buddies'. 'Breast buddies helped me continue with breastfeeding, if not for them I would have given up' is the view of one mother. Children's health is promoted extremely well through antenatal and postnatal services. The parents take up excellent advice and support for breastfeeding and weaning, with baby massage and yoga to help develop bonding. Users respond very well to this strong promotion of healthier lifestyles. They respond positively to the advice given in cookery classes and in the weighing and fitness sessions. Cookery demonstrations for healthy meals and portion sizes give many users a better understanding of how to eat well and stay healthy. Healthy eating is also very effectively promoted through the availability of fruit in the centre at discount prices. Despite this outcomes relating to health, particularly linked to breastfeeding, smoking cessation and reducing obesity are not as strong as other outcomes.

Men's health is a major focus in the area as men are slower to access services. However overall, users' awareness of the means to stop smoking, to tackle obesity and to improve dental health is improving greatly. Dance exercise sessions provide users with opportunities

to develop their own fitness and general well-being, which also benefits their families through increased activity.

The centre is extremely successful in promoting positive relationships and behaviour among users. Adults who previously felt isolated speak very highly of the social aspect of the centre’s life, particularly in helping them to make new friends. They report how much they enjoy socialising with other parents. ‘I love coming here. It’s nice to mix with people from this estate as I don’t know anyone. I’ve made good friends through coming to the centre’, are the views of one very happy user. Ensuring the emotional well-being of parents is a high priority for the centre, particularly for those who have children with disabilities.

Adult users report a high level of enjoyment and achievement. The centre is extremely successful in developing the educational and employability skills for its users. Many parents, some of whom did not have a successful school experience, make good use of the adult and community learning opportunities provided at the centre and at its other venue at the Woodlands Centre based on the link school site. Eighty per cent go on to gain qualifications and enter training and employment. In particular, the centre supports adult users to develop their numeracy, literacy and volunteering skills and this strongly supports their eventual economic stability.

Many users are now successfully improving their employability skills. Some have gone on to become volunteers. Of these, 90% are either working in the centre or taking part in work placements. The centre’s dedication to celebrating users’ achievements, much evident in the lively wall displays and the charting of the ‘learning journey’ of former users and volunteers, is exemplary. Parents and children feel safe and secure on the premises and recognise the centre as a place of great safety. Children are not upset by the arrival of strangers and feel very secure and protected.

Children’s communication and social skills are developing extremely well, enabling children to settle into school far more quickly. This represents significant progress for most children and families from low starting points. Their reading skills are well developed through conversation and ready access to books and stories. The enthusiastic staff actively encourage parents and children to borrow and use books. The inviting book corner with exciting and attractive books makes reading and storytelling both pleasurable experiences.

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	1
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, 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 parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	1

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.	1
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How good is the provision?

1

Through its excellent range of learning opportunities, the quality of its work and the holistic nature of the services it provides, the centre has won the high regard of users and key service providers for children. Activities for children are very well planned to promote their rapid development in all six areas of learning. The first class provision ensures that children’s personal, social and emotional development is very good. Staff promote good behaviour exceptionally well so that children develop a clear understanding of acceptable behaviour. Staff build excellent relationships with both adults and children.

Similarly, the wide range of purposeful learning opportunities aimed at improving adult users’ lives is outstanding. The ‘confidence’ and ‘health for happiness’ programmes and family links courses help parents to build their self-esteem and develop parenting skills. They also enable parents to grow through opportunities to share ideas and solve family problems. One parent said, ‘They helped me learn to manage my son’s tantrums and bad behaviour.’ A high level of enjoyment underpins most learning opportunities, including taking part in trips and the planning of community events such as the royal family party later in 2012.

Once under the care of the centre, parents receive excellent support and guidance, which is well tailored to their needs. This is much appreciated by users. One user told inspectors how, ‘staff go out of their way to help.’ Some aspects of its provision are exemplary such as the support for families with debt problems or those in crisis. ‘A lifeline, really helpful in an emergency,’ one user commented. Some parents and carers have been subject to domestic violence and abuse. Family support workers provide excellent support in these circumstances.

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	1
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	1
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

The leadership of the centre manager and the team are outstanding. They successfully demonstrate a passion and determination to improve the life chances of the local community. Staff are extremely good at breaking down barriers and secure the attendance of hard-to-engage families. There is a strong focus on developing the skills of all staff and volunteers through professional development and training. The centre's volunteering programme in recruiting and supporting users to become volunteers and to take up work placements and training is outstanding. It is particularly successful in its concept of cascading or 'pass it on' training from volunteers to other users, especially the important messages about healthy eating.

The local authority provides a clear policy framework for the centre. Development planning for the centre is fully aligned with the national indicators for children and families. Excellent use of data, responses from users and case studies are expertly combined to inform self-evaluation and to shape services. This guarantees outstanding value for money because services are so accurately targeted to users' needs. Service evaluation and assessment of need are excellent. The centre's staff are highly ambitious to improve further. They evaluate rigorously the activities and courses they provide.

Users appreciate the centre's outstanding range of suitable resources including the sensory room and the kitchen. The building is spacious and exceptionally well equipped to provide family learning courses and activities for parents and carers as well as a crèche for children. Excellent wall displays on many topics including health, safeguarding, trips and children's activities both educate and enliven the environment.

Promotion of safeguarding is excellent. Senior leaders are highly effective in ensuring children and families are safe, through rigorous attention to child protection, vetting and recruitment procedures. Safeguarding practice and protocols for making referrals, sharing relevant information and helping families in times of crisis are exemplary. Improvement in safety at home is a priority for the centre and for users. The offer of safety equipment is complemented by the safety induction events for parents and by the fire service's 'Hazard Home' sessions. Home visits are also successful in highlighting hazards.

Promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The centre is highly inclusive. Premises are readily accessible. The kitchen used for cookery classes is adapted to accommodate wheelchair users. This successfully enables a group of adults, some with physical disabilities, to take part in the cooking lessons.

Although most users are White British, the centre is extremely committed to actively promoting diversity by celebrating different world festivals. Also exemplary is the use of positive images of children and women from different minority ethnic groups in all the wall displays. Similarly, to make its services accessible to a small group of Latvian users, the centre had its leaflets translated into the Latvian language.

Partnership working is exemplary. The centre has developed excellent relationships with the statutory, private and voluntary services for children and families. All the partners regard the centre very highly. The siting of the health team within its premises has resulted in raising positive and healthy outcomes for users, although further work on healthy lifestyles would enhance users outcomes even further.

User engagement and the use of their comments are both robust. Outreach staff go into the community and are able to engage parents very well. Apart from the six weekly consultations with parents to identify future activities, staff also use the coffee sessions, 'news and views' meetings and user satisfaction surveys to gather information and identify future activities. However, users do not currently have the opportunity to participate in formal decision making processes through membership of the advisory board.

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	1
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
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 partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	1
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.	1

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

None

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Summary for centre users.

We inspected the Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park Children's Centre on 9 and 10 February 2012. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

During our visit we looked at the centre's documents, visited a number of activities and talked with you, centre staff and others who work with you. Many of you told us how the centre has transformed your lives, helping you to gain more confidence and self-esteem and to develop closer relationships with your children. The centre provides you with opportunities to form new friendships and this helps mothers among you to feel less isolated.

The centre's outcomes are excellent. All of you we spoke to said that you have gained new knowledge and developed new skills, including about parenting and healthy lifestyles. Some of you have even lost a lot of weight as a result of exercise and learning about healthy eating. The centre has been very successful in making you aware about healthy lifestyles and cooking healthy meals. You told us how you have also been helped to achieve qualifications including in literacy and mathematics and with CV writing and applying for jobs.

Several of you have become volunteers at the centre and run some of the groups that parents really enjoy. We are pleased to note that your children too have developed good communication and social skills as well as being encouraged to read books. The headteacher of a local primary school told us how your children, as a result of using the centre, are far better prepared for entry into the school.

The centre's provision is outstanding. We could see how much you enjoy coming to the centre and appreciate the excellent learning opportunities and services that the centre provides for you including the family trips. 'The trips were really good as we couldn't afford a holiday', one of you told us. The activities the centre offers are very well matched to your needs. They are run by highly skilled and dedicated staff, including those who visit you at home.

Some of you told us how the centre provides you with outstanding support both in the centre and at home. This includes support with childcare, information, buying of safety

equipment or help for you in a crisis. The centre also gives you good advice on how you can prevent accidents in and around your home and helps you to keep your children safe.

Leadership and management of the centre are both excellent. The centre manager's work is outstanding. She is highly skilled, very approachable, ambitious and extremely good at running the centre and knows all of you and your local community well. She also has a team of excellent staff and a group of partners who work very hard. All are keen to support you and meet your needs. This includes the health professionals who offer their services from the centre, including the baby clinics.

The centre building and the learning resources that you and your children use and appreciate are excellent. You view the centre as a safe, warm and welcoming environment with staff 'who always have a smile on their faces' as one of you told us. We agree with you and find the centre offers outstanding value for money, in the way it supports you in so many ways. To engage you further in the life of the centre and to improve your skills the staff actively encourage you to contribute your views and to act as volunteers. Your views are welcomed and constantly used to develop the centre.

We have asked the centre to continue to improve healthy lifestyle outcomes for you and your families. We have also requested that the centre involves some of you as parents to sit on the advisory board so that your views can be further used to shape the services and activities that the centre provides.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed their ideas, came to speak with us or wrote us long letters telling us about the support the centre gives and how much you love using it and appreciate the work of the staff.

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