

Inspection report for Tipton Sure Start Children's Centre

Local authority	Sandwell
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Tipton Day Nursery EY289099

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior managers and leaders, members of the partnership board and parents' forum, health professionals, representatives of the local authority, school and community partners, family support workers, early years professionals, maternity support workers and parents.

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

Information about the centre

Tipton Sure Start Children's Centre is managed by Barnardos and is one of 20 children's centres in Sandwell. It is a phase one centre which was designated on 30 September 2005. Centre services are provided at Tipton and via a range of partner agencies. The centre's core purpose is provided through a range of integrated services that include health, family support and outreach work, adult training and full day care provision. The centre manager reports to Barnardos, which is responsible for the governance of the centre. A partnership board and parent forum supports the governing body.

Statistical data indicate that families living in the reach area experience significant social and economical disadvantage. Approximately 40% of families in the area are reliant on workless benefits. This is well above the national average. An increasing number of children start nursery with skills and knowledge below the expected levels for their age, particularly in personal and social and speech and language development. The population is predominantly White British.

The centre is located on the site of Glebefields Library. Tipton Day Nursery is a privately-run childcare provision on site, and was inspected separately.

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

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

The centre is firmly established in the hearts and minds of the very large majority of families living in the community. According one parent, the centre 'goes above and beyond in its support for families'. Outcomes for all families using the centre and the centre's overall effectiveness are good overall. The excellent range and quality of services, the high-quality learning and development opportunities, and the excellent care, guidance and support all contribute to the centre's outstanding provision. The leadership and management of the centre are outstanding. Leaders and managers at all levels and all other staff demonstrate an absolute determination to improve the lives of families. Regular monitoring of the centre's effectiveness is carried out by senior leaders within the organisation. Leaders understand the centre's strengths and areas for improvement. There are regular opportunities provided to evaluate families' satisfaction with the range of provision. Strategies to capture user engagement are effective. Accurate self-evaluation is used to inform improvement planning, although some recent targets are not sufficiently measurable, specific or challenging. This results in the centre having good capacity to improve which impacts on the centre's overall effectiveness.

Children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly over the last two years in relation to communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. The gap between the most disadvantaged children and their peers is narrowing each year and in some instances significantly so. This is as a result of the good-quality care and learning opportunities provided and the highly effective systematic support and guidance provided to children by early years partners and speech and language support. Childhood obesity rates are higher than expected and the reduced uptake of breastfeeding is a concern which reduces the impact of the implementation of positive health initiatives. Even so, children and families made vulnerable by their circumstances receive highly sensitive care, guidance and support. Staff are very enthusiastic and confident in their roles. They feel empowered through training and are well supported in taking significant responsibility for key areas of work.

Parents make an invaluable contribution to the success of the centre as members of

the partnership board and parent forum. The centre's volunteer programme provides an outstanding example of how parents can improve their confidence, skills and employment opportunities through highly effective support, induction and training. Parent volunteers spoke of the 'brilliant' support they had been given. One parent volunteer said, 'I would not have been able to do what I have done without their support.'

Safeguarding arrangements are exemplary. All leaders and dedicated staff have an impressive understanding of child protection procedures. All staff and volunteers are well versed in safeguarding protocols and procedures, and they ensure that any concerns are shared promptly with relevant agencies.

Equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are central to the work of the centre. Parent volunteers play an essential part in making the centre wholly inclusive to families including those new to the area. For instance, they identified the need to support Polish families. Parents reached out to these families, welcoming them into the centre and they also recruited a Polish-speaking volunteer to support their integration into the centre.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

Further enhance the centre's work by:

- ensuring the self-evaluation fully reflects the centre's achievements; and by clearly setting out the priorities and challenging targets for improvement, including targets for increasing the uptake of breastfeeding and reducing obesity rates.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

The large majority of families living in the reach area engage with services coordinated by the centre, many of which are developed and coordinated by parent volunteers. Families' health is promoted through the excellent range of health services. Healthy eating, the use of outdoor play and exercise, and the provision of healthy snacks all form part of the centre's healthy lifestyles strategy. There are highly effective systems in place to monitor and ensure safe practice in all work with children and their families. This enables families to develop their deep understanding of how they can keep themselves safe. Parent volunteers have developed a personal safety system where they can safely alert the centre and police if they are in need of protection or assistance. Children who are subject to child protection plans are extremely well supported across the multi agency partnerships and through the highly effective use of the Common Assessment Framework processes. Regular safeguarding and paediatric first aid courses are provided to volunteers and families to help them keep their children healthy and safe while being able to respond appropriately in case of emergencies.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage there has been a significant increase in the number of children achieving six or more points in their personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good or better progress because they access good quality provision and receive timely intervention and support. Parents make valuable contributions as active learning partners as they record their comments in their child's learning journal.

Families say they are welcomed and respected by centre staff. One parent said of the staff: 'They do not discriminate or judge you. They give you a second chance no matter what has happened before.' All parents who made their comments known to the inspectors said that they feel very safe and secure at the centre. Parents play a significant role in the governance of the centre and its strategic decision making. The partnership board is chaired by a parent volunteer, who won the local authority's award for Early Years Volunteer of the Year in 2011. Parents are extremely well represented on the board. There is a significant group of volunteers who are firmly established as part of the centre staff team. Parents, particularly those who are volunteers are key drivers of the centre's work. Services are arranged and developed under their influence and they are extremely well supported to successfully deliver services such as 'Stay and Play' and baby massage.

Children and families are developing the habits of inquisitive learners. Parents are increasing their skills in parenting and their knowledge and understanding of how children learn as a result of attending high-quality parenting programmes. Attendance has significantly improved because of very successful partnerships with professional partners and parents. For instance, pupils' attendance at one local school has increased from 92% to 97.7%. This is a significant achievement and demonstrates the effectiveness of partnership working, including work with families. There are excellent opportunities for families to develop their skills and learning as they attend a range of high-quality accredited training courses and workshops. These creditable training and learning activities are leading to an increased uptake of employment, both paid and unpaid.

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	2
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	2

parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	
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How good is the provision?

1

Participation in services, groups, activities and workshops are very positive. For instance baby massage sessions attract around 75 families. In 2011, 298 parents attended accredited training activities. The centre's own data show that most of those families made vulnerable by their circumstances are engaging with services. Services are matched well to users' needs. For instance, the family support workers provide vital, high-quality support to families with children on child protection plans and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teenage parents receive targeted support via the highly effective partnerships with health colleagues. Families made vulnerable by their circumstances are prioritised for premium provision such as nursery funding for two-year-olds. Families using the centre say they feel their needs are extremely well met. According to the centre's data, 98% of families expressed good levels of satisfaction with their involvement with the centre. The use of tried and tested assessments, such as the Common Assessment Framework, family reviews, and Early Years Foundation Stage assessments, are very effective and ensure that services and interventions improve outcomes for all.

Parents take part in a range of high quality adult learning activities such as paediatric first aid, safeguarding, parenting classes, childcare and education and youth work accredited training. Each of those attending courses receives a certificate of accreditation or achievement, and is presented with these at informal celebrations in recognition for their efforts, attainments and commitment. Parents report a great sense of satisfaction and achievement following their learning and development experiences. Many have gone on to gain employment and access further training. Some have become volunteers within the centre and are engrossed in the governance of the centre, playing a vital role influencing and developing services.

The quality of care and support offered to families at a time of crisis is outstanding. Powerful case studies and data show that high quality and timely services and support make a discernable difference to those families in need. The centre provides excellent information about universal preventative, intervention and treatment provision for children and families. Staff signpost families to health and other services, and the strong links with health and social care services ensure families access information and interventions and support quickly. Centre staff provide excellent one-to-one support to families resulting in improved outcomes for children and parents.

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 success of the centre is as a result of the strong leadership shown at all levels of the organisation. The partnership board, which plays an important role in the governance of the centre, includes a significant number of parents and representatives from the wide network of professional partners. They provide invaluable support to the centre and their skills and expertise are routinely used to evaluate the effectiveness of the centre's work. Centre leaders are rightly proud of families' contributions to the governance of the centre. During the last year, the leadership team has been highly focused on the lengthy tendering process currently being applied to secure the future of the centre. Leaders and staff provide a largely accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of the work of the centre. However, the success of the centre is not always fully reflected in the evidence contained in the self-evaluation document. The centre's improvement plans identify key priorities for the centre but recent plans do not consistently set out challenging targets and measures to be taken to meet them. Therefore, governance and accountability arrangements are good overall. Professional supervision of staff and regular one-to-one meetings with managers promotes the shared values of staff and their ability to meet organisational expectations. Teamwork among staff is strong and morale is good.

Safeguarding arrangements are very effective. Exemplary teamwork across agencies ensures that children and families are safeguarded. Highly suitable staff are employed because of thorough safer recruitment procedures and processes. All staff, leaders and parent volunteers are regularly trained in safeguarding matters, usually annually. As a result, children and families receive prompt attention and excellent support when concerns arise.

Parents play an active and vital role in many aspects of the life of the centre and user engagement is excellent. Leaders and staff take their responsibilities to ensure that the centre is fully inclusive very seriously and staff do all they can to meet the individual needs of all children and families. Highly cohesive packages of integrated support are provided which improve outcomes for children and families. This is supported by detailed information which shows the challenging and very complex child protection work undertaken by centre staff and their partners.

Resources are managed extremely well and in effective collaboration with key partner agencies to ensure services are flexible and are provided based on local

need. For instance, the Prince's Trust works with the centre to improve the confidence and skills of young parents. They described their partnership with the centre as 'excellent'. Other partners spoke with very high regard of their exceptional relationships with the centre leaders and staff and how these strong working partnerships are improving the life chances of children and families in the area. The centre provides outstanding value for money as outcomes for the large majority of families living in the reach area are good or outstanding and there is clear evidence of some rapid improvements.

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 effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	2
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

Tipton Day Nursery was inspected on 12 January 2012. Its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Tipton Sure Start Children's Centre on 18–19 January 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

The centre is firmly established in the hearts and minds of the children and families who live in its area. The agencies supporting children and families work extremely well together and are committed to making sure that your children get the best possible start in life, by providing you with excellent quality support and showing that what happens to you and your children is their primary concern. 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 supporting you in a great many ways and helping you to keep your children safe from harm and healthy.

Your children who attend the centre's provision are prepared well for starting school. The centre and its partners are also providing outstanding opportunities to help adults learn. Those of you who spoke to us told us how the centre has transformed your lives and has had an enormous impact on the well-being of your families.

The staff at the centre are well qualified and experienced professionals. You explained how well they support you, both in raising your self-esteem and confidence, but also in providing practical help and advice. We were particularly impressed with the very important and significant role many of you play in the life and development of the centre. For instance, parents are very well represented on the partnership board and contribute to decision making. In addition, the parent volunteer programme is an excellent way for many of you to develop your confidence, skills and expertise. The volunteers are doing a very good job by planning and delivering a range of activities such as baby massage and 'Stay and Play' sessions. Many of you told us that you believe your contact with the centre has been life changing.

The leaders and staff at the centre are committed to improving the outcomes for children and families in the area and are constantly looking for ways to improve the services provided. It has been a difficult year for the leadership and management of the centre and leaders are anxiously awaiting the outcome of their bid to continue the management of the centre. However, leaders and staff are determined to continue their work for the benefit of you all.

A great many of you access training and development courses at the centre and are able to do so because of the provision of the crèche facilities. You say that you know your children are very well cared for and will have fun! The leaders and managers know what to improve to make the centre better for you, and they have the skills to carry out their plans effectively. The partnership board is well placed to support and challenge the leaders well. Parents are making a huge contribution to the development of services and are helping to drive improvements. The centre supports target groups very well, such as very young parents, parents of children with

additional needs and families in great difficulty and crisis. It is successfully reaching those who are most in need.

We have asked the leaders to improve their evaluation of the centre's work and to ensure they plan for future success by setting challenging targets and monitoring their progress.

Thank you to those of you who met with us to tell us your views and for contributing to the inspection. Your comments proved invaluable to inspectors. Many of you make a positive contribution to the centre's services and the life of the community. As one parent told us you are keen to 'give back' as a result of the excellent support, training and experiences you have received.

We wish you and your families every success for the future.

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