

Inspection report for Glossop Children's Centre

Local authority	Derbyshire
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Linked school if applicable	None
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Little Beavers Childcare Ltd

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 centre staff and senior managers, the chair of the advisory board, health professionals, local community partners, user groups and parents. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Glossop is a phase two children's centre which gained full designation in September 2007 and began delivering services in 2009. It is housed in a single storey building which is shared with the supporting families and multi-agency teams. The centre provides the full core offer to the community of Glossop. There are approximately 1223 children aged 0–5 living in the reach area; 286 of these children live in the 20% most deprived areas. Nearly all families are White British.

The local authority has responsibility for the strategic management and direction of the centre. The advisory group oversees the work of three children's centres, Hadfield, Glossop and Gamesley. Some of the centre staff work across all three centres.

Most children enter early education with skills in line with those typical for children of this age. The centre's full day-care provision is provided by Little Beavers Childcare Ltd. The nursery is managed privately and is subject to separate Early Years Foundation Stage inspection arrangements. It was last inspected in 2009 and the inspection report can be found on the Ofsted website.

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

4

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

4

Main findings

Despite some positive features, the overall effectiveness of the children's centre is inadequate. Until recently, the centre has had no clear analysis of the make-up of the population in its reach area. It has, therefore, not been effective in ensuring that services are focussed on the needs of target groups in the area. The centre provides a small range of good-quality services which satisfactorily meet the needs of the minority of families in the reach area who are engaged with the centre's services. Although the centre has information about attendance at courses, this is not used to monitor the level of engagement of different families and groups. This means that the centre does not have a clear picture of the extent to which families with whom they have contact, are engaged with and are using services provided.

The centre lacks strong governance in developing provision. A lack of strong strategic direction from the local authority has hindered the centre in making enough progress since its designation. The centre's self-evaluation identifies some key areas for improvement, and these are linked to the business plan. However, the business plan is not based on a firm analysis of the needs of those in the reach area. It does not set ambitious or measurable targets for development. Systems to monitor and evaluate services are at an early stage of development. Relevant information is not analysed systematically to inform future plans and ensure that satisfactory outcomes for families who use the centre are improving. For these reasons, the centre's capacity to improve is inadequate.

Outcomes for children, families and centre users are satisfactory overall. The centre can demonstrate some improvements in some health outcomes, such as centre users' understanding of healthy eating. However, it is unable to show improvements in other areas because it does not receive data from the Primary Care Trust about breastfeeding and rates of emergency hospital admissions. It is difficult to determine the level of improvement over time as the centre does not monitor the impact of its work effectively. For example, although the centre signposts adults to the local adult education centre for training courses, it keeps no record of how many of these parents and carers take up courses and there is no evaluation of the impact of this training on users' achievement and economic well-being.

Parents and carers who do engage in the centre's services are happy with the services they receive. They find the centre staff welcoming. A parent commented, 'All staff are approachable and helpful. We are seen as individuals and staff remember our names.' Parents and carers are comfortable to approach the staff with problems and they appreciate the centre's support. The centre works well with individual families who need specific support to help them overcome difficulties in their lives. Positive partnerships with other local services and agencies help to ensure families have the right type and level of support. Children and families are well protected. Arrangements to keep children and users safe are effective and staff have a good level of training and knowledge in this area.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the centre's leadership and management by ensuring:
 - the local authority provides a stronger strategic steer to improve governance and support the centre's capacity to improve
 - the centre's planning sets out ambitious and measurable targets for development
 - robust systems are developed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of service provision and the impact on outcomes for users, including those from target groups.

- Improve the quality and impact of provision by:
 - increasing the numbers of users engaging with services
 - developing a wider range of appropriate services and activities based on a firm analysis of the needs of all service users and the wider community
 - ensuring the Primary Care Trust provides the centre with relevant key performance indicator data regarding breastfeeding and emergency hospital admissions, to enable the centre to monitor more effectively the impact of its provision.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

Parents and carers, who use the centre, report that they have improved their understanding of healthy eating and have been given helpful advice on weaning. Activities such as 'Baby Massage' promote positive relationships between parents and their babies, and 'Little Wrigglers' helps to promote babies' physical development. Parents report that the centre has had a positive impact on their emotional well-being and feelings of isolation. Obesity rates in children have declined from 9.3% in 2008/9 to 6.4% in 2010, but figures for 2011 were not available. Immunisation rates and the take-up rates for one and two-year-old health checks are high, indicating that most families are engaged in relevant health services. The centre provides a breastfeeding support group. Those involved in operating the group report that the

support provided encourages parents to sustain breastfeeding for longer, but the centre does not effectively monitor the impact of this provision. The centre is also hampered in demonstrating the impact of its work on improvements in breastfeeding rates as relevant data regarding this key performance indicator are not provided by the Primary Care Trust.

Parents and carers say they feel safe in the centre. Outcomes for the small number of children on child protection plans have improved. Parents and carers report their improved confidence and skills in parenting as a result of courses offered by the centre. Support provided through the partnership with the Women's Aid worker has helped to build adults' confidence and security.

Children enjoy the activities the centre offers. Parents report that sessions such as 'Stay and Play' are enjoyable and help them to promote their children's learning and development. The centre does not monitor children's progress effectively in the sessions offered. Children's attainment has improved. Targeted speech and language support programmes successfully support children's satisfactory progress.

Parents and carers are invited to contribute their views about the services provided, and some are involved in governance of the centre as members of the advisory board. Their views are used to influence decisions about the timings and nature of services. Parents and carers show respect for others. A small number act as volunteers in the 'Little Angels' support for breastfeeding. An increasing number of parents and carers benefit from advice by visiting Citizens Advice Bureau workers on issues such as benefits and debt. Individuals report improvements in their economic well-being. Data from the Citizens Advice Bureau demonstrate that advice provided has had a positive impact on centre users' financial stability.

The centre signposts adult learners to the local adult education centre for available courses. Some families are engaged in training and adult learning. The centre has monitored the attendance at a recent family learning course attended by 69 families this year, 98% of whom completed the course. Data provided by the adult education centre shows that some families in the reach area have undertaken and completed courses in literacy and numeracy, but the impact of these are not monitored by the centre.

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	3
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	3
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop	3

positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	
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	3

How good is the provision?

4

The centre does not have an accurate insight into the needs of all target groups across the reach area, although they work with some target groups such as teenage parents. The centre does not monitor the extent to which it is meeting the needs of target groups in the area, although it now has data which identify the number of each group living in the area. The limited information available indicates that a small number of target groups are accessing services. For example, only four lone parents attended the 'Stay and Play' and 'Little Wrigglers' sessions over the last quarter of the year out of 100 identified as living in the reach area.

Care, guidance and support for families are satisfactory. Individualised support for families who have been identified as in need has had a positive impact on their well-being and family situations. The Common Assessment Framework and other assessment procedures are utilised appropriately to identify needs and swiftly engage multi-agency support. The centre has provided some one-to-one support for families with children with disabilities.

The range of services offered by the centre is small. The centre has constraints of limited accommodation as it operates services from one room within shared provision. In the past the centre has worked to overcome this barrier by offering sessions at a local school. Families are encouraged to take up family learning and other courses, and there are individual instances where adults have been helped to find employment. The centre signposts families to other services such as adult learning, smoking cessation and job centre plus. However, signposting is not fully followed up to gauge effectiveness. Although users are directed to smoking cessation advice at a neighbouring centre, the centre does not monitor the success of those referred.

The centre's outreach work is limited, although there are plans to develop this further. Centre workers have recently begun to attend the baby clinic in the nearby health centre to make contact with health partners and increase registrations. They have also carried out leaflet drops in areas identified as having a greater number of vulnerable families. However, there are no systems to measure the outcomes of these initiatives, and the centre cannot show to what extent registrations have increased over time. At the time of the inspection, the centre was holding a consultation session in a nearby youth centre to gain the views of parents and carers in the reach area who are not currently attending the centre.

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	4
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	3

How effective are the leadership and management?

4

The centre's leadership, which is not sufficiently ambitious or focussed in driving improvements, prevents outcomes for children and families being better than satisfactory. The centre has made too little progress in developing sustainable and progressive services since its designation. The management of resources has no consistent effect on improving outcomes for families. The centre does not, therefore, provide satisfactory value for money.

The new management arrangements resulting from the local authority's recent restructure are just starting to show impact. The advisory board provides a satisfactory level of challenge and support and is proactive in helping the centre to become better known in the community.

The centre has limited systems to monitor the quality of provision or to analyse its effectiveness in improving outcomes for users. Activities and services are not based on a firm needs analysis. The local authority's recent provision of data has clarified the numbers of different groups living in the reach area. As a consequence, the centre has now calculated that 81% of the reach area is registered with the centre. However, analysis of these data has not been used to inform business planning and future priorities. The centre has not been effectively held to account because the local authority has not assured the quality and appropriateness of the centre's self-evaluation and business plan. The current plan for the reach area makes broad statements about the priorities for improvement such as providing information to centre users to support smoking cessation, but there are few targets against which success will be measured. This makes it difficult for the advisory board to hold the centre to account for its performance. The centre's management team has recognised that this is an area for development and has recently introduced specific targets for centre staff, relating to increased registration and participation rates. However, it is too soon for these actions to have had a measurable impact.

Partnership working has a satisfactory impact on improving outcomes for children and families. Partner agencies with whom the centre works, report clear communication and a good level of information sharing. Partnerships are able to demonstrate some improvement in outcomes for individual families. Speech and language therapy workers and the library service have a positive impact on children's learning and development.

The safeguarding of all who use the centre is a priority and, as a result, families report that they feel safe there. Staff have a good level of training in child protection. The centre's implementation of protocols for making referrals and sharing information ensure that children are well protected. All staff working at or with the centre have been subject to statutory checks.

The centre provides a welcoming and inclusive environment. The centre has worked effectively, on an individual basis, to meet the needs of parents with disabled children. The extent to which equality is promoted is satisfactory. The centre can demonstrate that it has taken positive steps to encourage some target groups such as teen parents to engage in the centre's work. The centre has not proactively sought information about the minority ethnic groups confirmed to be registered with the setting, but has identified this requirement as a priority in development planning.

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	4
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	4
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	4
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
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	3
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	3

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

None.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Glossop Children's Centre on 14 and 15 December 2011. We judged the centre as inadequate overall.

Thank you for talking to us during the inspection and helping us to find out what we needed to know about your children's centre. Unfortunately, we found that the centre is not led and managed well enough. While the services offered are appropriately meeting the needs of those of you who attend the centre, there are many other families in the community who are not benefitting from the centre's work. Leaders and managers do not monitor the impact of what the centre offers well enough to know what difference it is making to the lives of children and families. The local authority has not provided enough support and direction to make sure the centre is accurate in its knowledge and assessment of how well it is doing and how it needs to move forward. The Primary Care Trust is not providing the centre with all the information it needs to help staff know how well they are helping you to be healthy and safe. The centre has not used information about the make-up of the local community to make sure that its plans for improvement meet their needs.

We agree that the centre staff welcome you all at the centre. You said that you feel safe at the centre and enjoy the activities provided. The centre gives you helpful information about healthy eating and weaning. Some of you have benefited from guidance provided by the Citizen's Advice Bureau representative. You say that staff give you individual support and you can go to them for advice. We know that you have found the parenting course offered by the centre to be helpful in developing your skills and confidence as parents. We know that some of you have attended a family learning course which was helpful to you. We also know that some of you have attended other courses at the local adult education centre, but staff at the centre do not know how well you have done and whether the courses have helped you to move into further training or employment.

The centre provides adequately for your health, safety and welfare. The staff are well trained in safeguarding and good procedures are implemented to make sure you are and your children are well protected. There are a number of things we want the managers of the centre to improve. We have asked the local authority to more effectively support and guide the centre to plan and make improvements. We have asked the Primary Care Trust to share with the centre appropriate information so that they can measure their effectiveness more easily. We have asked the centre managers to develop ways of effectively monitoring the impact of what it does, so that it knows how well it is improving families' and children's lives. We have also asked the managers to use the information they have about who lives in the area so that they can plan more accurately the activities and education and training courses that you need.

The centre's planning outlines what the centre wants to improve, but it generally does not say by how much services need to improve or how many people will benefit. Because the plan is not very precise and clear, it is hard for staff to know

how much difference the provision makes in helping families to move forward in their lives. We have asked the centre's managers to make plans more precise so that the centre will know better what progress it is making.

Thank you for speaking with us and best wishes for the future.

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