

Inspection report for Havercroft Children's Centre

Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	383447
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Reporting inspector	Janet Stacey HMI

Centre leader	Liz Robinson
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Cow Lane Havercroft Wakefield West Yorkshire WF4 2BE
Telephone number	01226 726478
Email address	lrobinson@havercroft.wakefield.sch.uk

Linked school if applicable	Havercroft Junior and Infant 130950
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Red Roof Children's Day Nursery 322063
	Butterfly's Day Nursery EY346645

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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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

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with members of the school governing body, members of the extended services sub-committee and parents. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the centre's development plans, evaluations, key policies and the centre's safeguarding procedures.

Information about the centre

Havercroft Children's Centre is a phase two centre which was established in 2007 and received its full core offer status in September 2009. The centre is on the site of Havercroft Junior Infant and Nursery School in Wakefield, West Yorkshire. The centre does not have childcare on site, but is affiliated to Red Roof Children's Day Nursery which is run by a non-profit making organisation (Kinsley & Fitzwilliam Community Resource Centre) which is part funded through adult education. The centre is also affiliated to Butterfly's Day Nursery. Early years activity is also provided by private and voluntary early years organisations in the local area. Children's levels on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage vary considerably between different parts of the reach area.

Approximately 602 children under five years of age live in the reach area. The centre's area encompasses the wards of Havercroft, Ryhill, South Hiendley, Walton and Notton. Havercroft is quite diverse in terms of social factors. Some areas are relatively affluent, particularly parts of Walton and Notton. The remaining wards are ranked amongst the 30%

most deprived areas in the country. Social issues affecting these areas are a growing number of lone parents, families on workless benefits and adults with low level skills and qualifications. Health issues affecting the area include high levels of obesity and women smoking during pregnancy.

There is low ethnic diversity in the area; most families are White British. The reach area is characterised by social and private housing. The centre takes referrals from and supports families with children in four local schools.

Governance of the centre is provided by the governing body of Havercroft Junior Infant and Nursery School. An extended services sub-committee, which is made up of representatives from parents, neighbourhood partners, health and centre staff contributes to the strategic management and direction of the centre. The centre manager, with the oversight of the head teacher at Havercroft Junior Infant and Nursery School, carries out day-to-day management of the centre.

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

Havercroft Children's Centre set out to establish itself as a place at the heart of the community, where families can go for support, advice and guidance and to be an accessible place in times of crisis. It has achieved these aims. Through concerted efforts made by centre staff and key partners, data show that the numbers of families who are registering and engaging with centre activities, particularly those families whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, are increasing month by month. This demonstrates good capacity for sustained improvement.

The overall effectiveness of the centre is good because of the effective leadership and governance of the centre. From the start leaders have listened to the views of the local community and tried to gain their trust to give children the best start in life. Users of the centre now have an extremely meaningful influence on how the centre operates and how resources are determined and agreed. The highly effective parent's forum, with the support of centre staff, received constitution status and has already raised funds to spend in

neighbourhoods across the reach area. Several other bids are underway to help its disadvantaged communities tackle the causes of poverty and deprivation and bring about real improvements to their communities.

The centre is a thriving, busy place. Parents and children have a good understanding of safety and the centre ensures all users are well safeguarded. The centre is a place of enjoyment for the children and families accessing its services. Typical comments which reflect the views of many are, 'this centre has given me a whole new lease of life' and 'the centre staff are invaluable, they are just fantastic'. The centre promotes good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. A real success has been the drive to encourage new mothers to sustain breastfeeding which has already resulted in 50% of women in the community breast-feeding their babies. Building on this success the centre is now encouraging more mothers to stop smoking during pregnancy and helping parents and their children look closely at what and how much they eat to reduce some high levels of obesity in the area.

Through good family support and outreach work families who are considered most at risk receive timely intervention and support. The early years team are highly skilled and play a pivotal role in helping adults understand how they can assist with their child's learning and development. However, not enough parents are engaged in the 'FEET' transition into school programme to ensure that their children are well prepared for when they start school. In addition adults have too few opportunities to learn basic skills in literacy and numeracy and are not in a position to seek employment. Those already in work do not gain the necessary additional skills to apply for jobs that pay higher salaries than the minimum wage.

Leaders and managers successfully promote equality and respect for diversity and work hard to include those at risk and those families most vulnerable due to their circumstances. Effective early intervention work is put in place quickly for children and families who need it through the good partnerships with key professionals such as health visitors, midwives, special educational needs specialists, social workers and early years settings.

The school governing body's extended services sub-committee acts as an advisory board. Participation in the group is good with a wide range of representation from key partners. The parent representative and chairperson of the board also sit on the school governing body and this has helped to establish a clear strategic link between governance and accountability. Families' views, opinions and expectations of services are raised at a strategic level, and partners discuss the impact of their work and how they address the numerous issues that affect many families in the reach area. Although priorities for the centre's development are clear and management has a good idea of its success, more centre specific data would help the centre staff further improve their understanding of where to target the support needed.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- In liaison with the local authority:
 - rationalise data to provide a succinct overview of key target groups, trends and benchmarks against which the centre can evaluate its strengths and target resources more effectively.
- Improve the economic well-being for families in the area by:
 - extending the range of opportunities available for adults to access training and learning opportunities that will lead to employment.
- Improve outcomes for children and narrow the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest by:
 - working with local schools to increase participation of families onto the transition to school programme.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Outcomes for users are good. Parents who attend the centre are very positive about their experiences. Most evaluation forms confirm high levels of confidence and satisfaction. They show that they value the advice, information and support from other specialists provided by the centre. Typical comments are: 'I felt alone and isolated before coming here' and 'the staff talk to us in an appropriate way, they don't use jargon'. Children and families who attend the centre make the most of a good range of activities helping them lead healthy lifestyles, such as 'Cook and Eat' where parents learn the benefits of healthy eating and how to cook cheaper and healthier food options. Monthly weaning sessions are supported by very good information booklets to help parents understand that children using bottles are more likely to have tooth decay and that these children may not consume enough solid foods to meet their nutrient needs. Despite this support some children are not entering school at a healthy weight. The centre staff are working hard to improve attitudes to the benefits of a healthy diet and are well supported by the Community Food Educator to help address this issue. 'Baby Massage' sessions are popular and help parents learn the positive value of physical stimulation including holding, movement, touch and relaxation techniques.

The 'Growing Together' course, established through parents' requests, helps to build bonds between parents and their children and provides the security that young children need if they are to thrive. Fathers are seen regularly in the centre and attend a good range of activities with their children. Users say they feel completely safe when accessing activities at the centre and in the community. Several parents have attended first aid training and activities such as, fire safety events which are helping to keep children safe. Children in the centre move around safely and are extremely well monitored. Where families need specific support the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is used effectively to identify their needs. Due to this work, there is good evidence of improved outcomes for children subject to a child protection plan and for looked after children.

Well-established relationships and a sensitive approach ensure users are confident to seek professional support. They can discuss any weaning, eating, sleeping and behavioural

concerns in family learning and crèche sessions. Health service links provide good access and support through the midwife ante-natal clinics. The centre has successfully exceeded its targets for sustaining breastfeeding at six to eight weeks. Staff are building on this success to encourage more mothers to understand the harm caused to babies in the womb who are exposed to smoke.

Through 'Stay and Play' sessions parents learn useful skills and activities they can try out at home to support their child's learning. For example, children and their parents enjoy singing while developing their physical skills during an energetic parachute session. In addition parents can and do borrow one of the many learning sacks to extend what they have learnt at the centre into the home environment. While data show that the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest has narrowed overall across the area from 48.6% in 2008 to 23.2% in 2011, the skills and knowledge of children when they enter school varies considerably between different parts of the reach area. The centre's teacher role has been reduced from five days to one day per week. Staff believe this is one of the factors that has contributed to a loss of momentum and the decrease in attendance in the 'FEET' transition into school programme. In addition, few users take advantage of the opportunities to gain certificates and qualifications in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, and childcare at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level.

Users have excellent opportunities to contribute their views through the parent forum. They have proposed suggestions for further activities such as, swimming club, fitness and well-being classes at the local gym, family days and picnics in the park. A 'Saturday Family Fun Day' proposed by users was very popular and is likely to become an annual event. Head teachers report that parents who have attended the centre are now entering the school environment keen to be involved as regular volunteers and members of the governing body.

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	2
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 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.	3

How good is the provision?

2

The centre is a very welcoming place. There is a good mix of consultation and training rooms which are used by a wide range of partners. The resources throughout the centre are of good quality. The centre ensures that a wide range of information about many aspects of parenting, including advice about how to keep children healthy and safe, is freely available to parents.

The centre provides a broad range of integrated services and activities, which has resulted in an increasing number of families accessing what is on offer. Outreach is a vital and successful part of the centre's work, and its involvement in the community. The centre successfully ensures that families benefit from a coordinated approach and for those who cannot attend the centre joint home visits are made to provide support and encourage engagement with other services. Staff have a good knowledge about local families and individual children through their determined approach to draw on local knowledge. Some of the data from the local authority fails to give precise information about the target groups in the area. Despite this, support and intervention are clearly improving parents' and children's life chances.

Children who attend the crèche are assessed and learning journals used to help build a picture of the child's progress to share with parents. The centre has many examples of improvements made through its work, ranging from healthy food cookery sessions, first aid, weaning programmes and purposeful play. The centre runs a very successful volunteer programme where parents take an active part in all aspects of the provision. However, there are insufficient opportunities for adults to build on these skills and gain recognised qualifications or employment.

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	2
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.	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The centre's leader is passionately committed to the provision of the best opportunities for children, their families and users. Staff share this view and work collaboratively to provide a highly integrated service. Operational management is good and financial resources are carefully managed. There are rigorous performance management arrangements and regular

supervisions. Staff feel valued and are able to develop their own professional expertise through a wide range of training opportunities. Governance is effective and offers very clear challenge to the centre manager. The extended services sub-committee is successful in supporting and holding the centre to account for its work. The centre provides good value for money.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and include the vetting of staff and others who have unsupervised contact with children and vulnerable adults. All legal requirements are met. Child protection procedures are thorough and the centre's records reflect best practice. Early intervention arrangements are good, exemplifying the good partnerships with a wide range of agencies and services. All staff are trained to use the CAF. Safeguarding users is a clear priority at the centre and keeping children and families safe is at the forefront of their work

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All members of staff demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusion and to tackling any discrimination. Careful consideration is given to the design of the centre so that all users can gain full access. Centre staff and partners provide a very good level of service for families with disabled children and those who have special educational needs. The area special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and advisory teacher work closely with these families to explain the statutory assessment process and what support is available for their children once they start school.

User engagement is exceptional. The centre consistently seeks the voice of parents and children through regular questionnaires and surveys. The 'Wish Net' is very well used and provides an interesting and creative way for parents and children to make suggestions to help shape provision. Outcomes are shared on the 'you said we did' notice board which is ideally placed so that all users know their views have been considered and what action has been agreed. For example, children helped to design the excellent outdoor play area and, in response to a request from working parents, childminders and fathers, evening and Saturday activities are now taking place.

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 secures 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	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
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	2
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 Havercroft Children's Centre on 7 - 8 March 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us during the inspection. We spoke with a number of you about the centre's work and looked at the comments you made on feedback sheets and evaluations. We really enjoyed talking to you in your activities and around the centre in the community groups. You expressed your opinions very clearly and they were very helpful to us. We were delighted to hear how helpful and friendly you find all the staff. Like you, we were greeted with a warm welcome when we arrived at the centre and found staff very communicative and helpful. The centre promotes equality and diversity well. Everyone is included, treated with the utmost respect and able to access all that the centre provides. We gathered evidence to confirm that the majority of you are very satisfied with the service you receive.

Those of you that we spoke to clearly appreciate the guidance and support on offer and you gave us examples of how the centre has helped to change your lives for the better. This caring approach by all the adults working in the centre is reflected in the good safeguarding procedures that help local children and families to live and learn safely. We were particularly impressed by the work of the parent forum that is not only helping you to have a real voice at the centre, but also their outstanding commitment to help others in the community.

We have said that some elements of the centre's work need to improve. We have asked the local authority to make sure that the centre receives the specific data that it needs so that they can be even more successful in reaching out to those in the community that could benefit from their support. The centre's early years team offers a wonderful service to you and your children. You told us how much you appreciate the help and support they give you

to help you understand how your young children learn and develop. While some children are entering school ready and keen to learn, this is not the case for all children. Therefore, we have asked the centre to look at ways they can work with the local schools to ensure that more of you take up the opportunity of attending the centre's transition into school course, 'FEET'. Whilst some of you told us that you are learning new skills yourself, such as basic literacy and numeracy we found that there are too few opportunities for more of you to learn these skills and gain recognised qualifications that will help you find employment and improve your family's economic stability. We have raised these issues because once they are in place the centre will be in an even stronger position to see how well they are meeting all of your needs.

It was a pleasure to meet some of you during the inspection. We hope that you, your children and many more parents who live locally will continue to enjoy and benefit from all of the services available to you in the future. Thank you for your contribution to the inspection. We are very grateful and wish you every success in the future.

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