

# Inspection report for Basford Children's Centre

Local authority	Nottingham City
Inspection number	366416
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Reporting inspector	Mary Dudley AI

Centre governance	Nottingham City
Centre leader	Charlotte Staves
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Whitemoor Primary & Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Tiny World Stockhill Lane EY256718

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.

## 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 two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the community team manager responsible for managing the children's centre, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with members of the parent's forum, the advisory board, parents, carers and representatives from the local authority. The inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Basford Children's Centre is a phase two centre designated in March 2008. The main building is based on the Whitemoor Primary school site with its own access. The centre is at the southern end of the Basford ward, the majority of provision is delivered from the main site with activities being delivered from four other sites to ensure equality of access. The centre provides the full core offer of services, including integrated childcare and early learning, health, family support and outreach, and links to Jobcentre Plus.

Basford Children's Centre is managed by Nottingham City council. In June 2010, Children's Services, which held the children's centre remit, was restructured and children's centres became part of the new Family and Community team. The management structure for the children's centre changed, and accountability for the centre is the responsibility of the community service manager. The community team manager has responsibility for the staff team and the day to day running of the centre.

Basford is a densely populated area, located on the main route of Nottingham Express Transit (tram) which connects Nottingham city in the south to Hucknall and Bulwell in the north. The tram line and main road divide the area into four, Whitemoor, Stockhill, Park Lane and Old Basford. Families generally do not move

across areas. Housing is a mixture of privately owned, housing association and council owned properties, and there is a large college campus in the area. There is no discrete town centre and different communities relate to adjacent areas due to service and transport availability. The majority of local families are of White British heritage although there is a small number of Black and Asian heritage families in the reach area.

The children's centre is in an area of high levels of deprivation. Unemployment is high, and the number of incapacity benefit claimants is higher than the national average. Children enter school with skills below those expected for their age. Crime in the Super Output Area (SOA) for Basford represents one of the highest 10% nationally.

## 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 users and the wider community**

**1**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**1**

## Main findings

Basford Children's Centre provides an outstanding quality of service for children and families. This popular, well-led centre is an integral part of cohesive provision for children and families in the area. New and prospective mothers benefit from a full range of services which effectively promotes their health and well-being. The centre's inclusive approach ensures that families from different backgrounds feel welcome and able to enjoy the wide range of provision on offer. Many centre users went out of their way to tell the inspectors how much they enjoy activities and about the excellent practical and emotional support they have received.

A real strength of the centre is the way in which users are involved in decision-making and governance of the centre. Users are very well represented on the advisory board and have their own parent's forum, 'Our Voice'. Parents told us that they enjoyed being involved in the forum and were keen to express their views about the centre because they knew they would be listened to. Fathers are currently under-represented on the forum, although forum members are working to extend the membership. Some parents who initially had not felt confident enough to be involved had been supported by staff and other parents and are now active, vocal members

of the group. There are some hard to reach families living in the area who are not yet accessing provision, because of their geographical location. There are also a number of volunteers, who, having undergone training, play an active role in the centre and in other agencies.

The centre makes an excellent contribution to the economic stability and independence of families. Working with other agencies the centre has been able to support users into employment and further training. Parents have been able to access literacy and numeracy courses, volunteer training, employability workshops, and individual support and guidance. Centre staff have supported a number of families to claim the appropriate benefits thereby reducing inequality and making a real difference to their economic stability.

Children and users report that they feel safe in the centre. This reflects the high priority given to the promotion of safety and welfare, and excellent safeguarding arrangements. The site is safe, with good quality risk assessments, and all staff and volunteers are subject to appropriate checks. Children are well behaved and confidently explore their environment and interact with one another. Children and families grow in confidence because their contributions are valued and encouraged by staff.

The centre makes a good contribution to improving the health of families and the educational achievement of children. Centre staff and health professionals promote healthy lifestyles through play sessions, outreach sessions, home visits and specific support groups. Health outcomes are improving for most, although the health needs of a small number of users are still to be addressed. There is insufficient evidence of impact on obesity and smoking cessation. Adults accessing learning provision have shown real improvement, with many achieving accredited qualifications and having a good time in the process. Children in the 'Getting Ready for Nursery' sessions also show good progress in their learning and development. In some children's sessions there is insufficient planning for individual need, session plans are for the whole group rather than for the differentiated needs of the children who attend.

The community service manager and community team manager provide effective leadership that puts high expectations for the community at the heart of the centre's work. Wall displays reflect positive role models and celebrate user's achievements. Staff are enthusiastic, committed and hard working. They have a high level of expertise supported by good quality professional development. Parents and volunteers have a key role in the success of the centre and are involved in planning, evaluating and decision-making processes. Systems to evaluate the longer-term impact of provision are not yet fully embedded throughout the work of the centre. Evaluation is supported by very good quality data provided by the local authority. Plans are clear and well supported by parents, partners and staff. The success of the centre is well supported by the excellent outcomes of users, particularly in their economic stability and safety.

Given the excellent outcomes overall, the shared ambition and drive, and effective action planning, the centre has excellent capacity to build on its good provision and further improve outcomes. It is effectively monitored, supported and challenged by the local authority through its annual review and monthly monitoring. The centre provides excellent value for money.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Develop links with the wider community to draw in those remaining groups whose circumstances have made them hard to reach and who are currently under-represented.
- Embed processes to ensure all children's learning is planned to meet their individual needs.
- Continue to embed systems to evaluate the long-term impact of the centre's work.

## How good are outcomes for users?

<b>1</b>
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Most outcomes for centre users are outstanding with strongly improving outcomes in families' safety, economic wellbeing, positive relationships and behaviour. The centre effectively addresses users' feelings of isolation and insecurity with parents saying, 'It has been life changing for me being able to come here'.

Improving health outcomes are the result of good support from specialist health professionals, midwifery services and children's centre staff, together with the promotion of healthy lifestyles in all children and family sessions. Families physical, mental and emotional needs are met well by a good range of services delivered through positive partnership working. The counselling provision available through the centre is particularly valued by users, with one parent saying 'I have had days where I come in crying because things are too much and there is always someone to listen'. There is evidence of improving outcomes in reducing teenage conception rates and in the percentage of infants being breastfed at six to eight weeks old. Smoking cessation and tackling obesity are not specifically addressed within the children's centre, but provision is focused at the nearby health centre, although not all centre user's access the provision.

Relationships between staff, children and families are very trusting and staff know them very well. Consequently, early identification and prevention of potential risks play a key role in reducing harm to children. Children are safe and protected as good steps are taken to address their individual needs. Families' awareness of how to keep

their children safe is raised by the home-safety assessment visits undertaken by staff. Well-structured parenting programmes have a marked impact on outcomes for users experiencing difficulties with children's behaviour. Children and users feel safe at the centre and parents are confident to share their concerns with staff, 'If I walk past the centre with my son he cries if I do not come in'. There is significant and sustained evidence of improved outcomes for children on child protection plans. Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is an integral part of the centre's work with families.

The provision of a range of learning opportunities has resulted in excellent outcomes for adult users, with many progressing on to accredited courses and further training. Users were able to demonstrate new skills and confidence. One parent said: 'The literacy course has helped me with my eldest daughter who is twelve. I feel able to help with her homework now. I am going to do the numeracy course next'. Users enjoy the courses offered and are keen to do more. Parents and children have opportunities to play, have fun and learn together.

Children who have accessed services engage in positive behaviour and develop better relationships with family and others. There is a highly effective and proactive parent's forum called 'Our Voice' which is an integral part of the governance of the centre. Parents feel valued because their views are listened to and acted upon, as one parent said, 'All the parents are really enthusiastic and will give their opinion as they know that something will be done'. Parents volunteer to take on roles such as publicising the centre; they design and produce publicity, which they then distribute in the community, learning new skills in the process. Parents who feel unable to express their views are supported by staff and other parents to be able to do so.

The centre's involvement in the child poverty pilot, Steps to Success, and the close working relationship the centre has with Jobcentre Plus and Skills for Jobs has resulted in excellent outcomes for users. There has been a significant drop in the number of four- year-olds living in workless homes. The number of teenage parents in education, employment or training is much higher than the city average. Centre workers have provided benefit advice to parents resulting in an increase in benefit uptake. Employability workshops, and literacy and numeracy courses have also helped support parents to gain economic stability. The volunteer training programme proved highly successful, the majority of participants found volunteering opportunities and some went on to paid employment. One parent having completed her time as a volunteer was offered a paid position; however, she had problems finding a childminder, an issue in which she was supported to resolve by the centre.

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>	<b>1</b>

## How good is the provision?

**2**

The centre accurately assesses users' needs, provides good quality services and excellent care, guidance and support through its centre-based activities, outreach support and home visits. Constructive relationships help parents feel confident to seek advice and support. Staff have a good level of knowledge and expertise to successfully help families improve their well-being and achievement.

The assessment of need is supported through good inter-agency working and communication. User's needs are assessed sensitively and appropriately to ensure services are tailored to suit individual circumstances. There is a strong family support strategy and, for families facing complex difficulties, the assessment of need and follow-up multi-agency support is excellent. Case files are well organised, indicating the good impact of support and where further work is needed. Some staff have a leading role in implementing the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) with good engagement by partners and parents. Where a child protection plan is in place, the staff work effectively with social care and health professionals. Assessment informs programme and course development; one example being the introduction of a breastfeeding support group run by the community nurse.

The centre raises the aspirations and expectations of families and children by supporting their personal and educational development, with many users progressing to further training or employment. Sessions and courses for adults are of good quality and are informative. Some of the activities for children are planned for the whole group but do not take sufficient account of their individual learning needs. Outcomes for children in sessions delivered by the teacher are supported by good observational assessment and individualised learning, but there are other sessions which do not sufficiently focus on observational assessment so that the individualised learning needs of a few are not met. There is good recognition of adult users' prior knowledge and learning, and achievements are recognised and celebrated. Outcomes for families are improved because they lead safer and healthier lives and they benefit from greater economic well-being.

The centre provides a good range of services and activities that are responsive to users' needs. Users are regularly consulted on the range and programme content

and there are good examples of programmes being changed to meet the needs of individuals and their changing circumstances. The centre has identified families in some parts of the wider community that are not yet accessing provision although provision is offered in a range of venues throughout the reach area to improve accessibility; for example, the 'Getting Ready for Nursery' programme is offered at three primary schools. Participation by the majority of target groups of users is good and improving.

The quality of care, guidance and support for families is excellent, both in times of crisis and on an on-going basis. Staff are tenacious in following up issues and parents and carers turn to staff in a crisis. As one parent said: 'If I did not feel confident enough to come to the centre, they were brilliant. They would come to my home and offer me courses and chat to me to get me out of the house'. All parents who spoke to inspectors were positive about the impact different services have had on their families. Parents feel empowered to improve their circumstances.

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>

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

**1**

Leadership and management are excellent overall. The community service manager, community team manager and leadership team set high expectations and demonstrate effective leadership. Governance and accountability arrangements are well established and understood. There are strong links between strategic planning and operational planning. Staff, users and partners are actively involved in these processes. The advisory board and staff are motivated and committed to ensuring community access to provision. Financial oversight is good. There is excellent professional supervision of staff which is valued by staff and management. The centre's service improvement plan sets out clear targets for improvement based on good self-evaluation and comprehensive data. A system for long-term evaluation of impact is in place but not yet fully embedded throughout the centre.

There is an excellent use of resources; provision is offered in a range of shared accommodation within the locality, ensuring delivery at the point of need. The children's centre building is small, well used and attractively decorated. Attendance at activities is monitored regularly. Staff expertise and knowledge is appropriately deployed and well supported by volunteers.



The inclusion of all children and their families is central to the work of the centre. Staff are sensitive to the needs of those who use its services and respond accordingly. Some good examples of this are the inclusion of disabled parents and strong links with portage provision (the home visiting educational service for pre-school children with additional support needs and their families). Diversity is actively celebrated and provision is differentiated well to meet individual and group needs equally. The centre itself is a highly cohesive community where positive relationships flourish.

Excellent safeguarding arrangements are in place, with clear lines of communication and collaboration between agencies to ensure children are effectively protected. The staff have a strong commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Staff receive regular training on how to keep children safe, particularly for child protection. Management provide good supervision to staff. In addition, there is external supervision provided for staff with the most challenging cases from the Safeguarding Children Nurse Specialist. Children's safety and well-being are significantly enhanced by the rigorous and highly consistent implementation of policies, procedures and practice.

The centre has a clear process for evaluating impact, underpinned by excellent data. Users and partners actively contribute to evaluations which have resulted in changes to provision. Systems to evaluate the long-term impact on improving outcomes are in place and beginning to be effective. Partnership working at a strategic and operational level is excellent. Families whose circumstances make them vulnerable are supported by a wide range of agencies through a coordinated approach. User involvement is central to partnership working.

Users express high levels of satisfaction and confidence in the centre. Parents' and carers' involvement in decision-making is central to the work of the centre and its partners. One good example of this was where children using the centre were consulted by staff from the neighbourhood team on what playground equipment they would like in a local playgrounds. Their responses were then incorporated into the choice of equipment purchased.

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision</b>	<b>1</b>

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

The inspectors considered information about Whitemoor Primary & Nursery School and Tiny World Stockhill Lane.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected Basford Children's Centre on 3-4 February 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Thank you for making us so welcome when we recently inspected your children's centre. During our visit we looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with a number of you as well as the professionals that work with you. Many of you went out of your way tell us how important the centre is to you, what a difference going there has made to you and how much you enjoy the activities provided. You told us that the staff are friendly, good listeners and give you excellent support. We found the centre to be welcoming to all families and buzzing with activity. The staff have a high level of expertise and offer excellent practical and emotional support to families who need it.

The centre does some things especially well. All the professionals from the different agencies work exceptionally well together to make sure you receive the very best advice and support. Families who are facing complex or difficult times receive excellent support. The support given to those of you who are not currently working

is exceptionally good, and we know many of you have been able to find paid employment or gone on to further training or volunteering because of the support the centre has given you.

We were particularly impressed with 'Our Voice' - the parents forum you have set up to make sure you have a say in what happens in the centre. You are very enthusiastic and committed to making things at the centre even better and seem to have a really good time doing it. It was very clear that you see the centre as a safe place for all the family and we were very impressed by the positive and supportive relationships you have with one another and your children. Many of you have a say in deciding the range of courses on offer at the centre and lots of you have taken the opportunity to learn new skills. You also told us how you were able to use your new skills to help your own children.

The community team manager inspires confidence among staff and is well supported by the local authority, the advisory board and a number of volunteers. All staff have high ambitions for everyone in the community. They all work hard with great enthusiasm. They are constantly striving to improve the quality of the services they provide and they have an excellent capacity to bring about further improvements.

There are three things we have asked the centre leaders to work on in the immediate future: we want them to encourage even more people to use the centre; make sure that all children's learning is planned to meet their particular needs; and make sure that they track what difference the centre makes to users over a long period of time.

Thank you very much for your welcome and willingness to speak to inspectors. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and sampling the centre's work. We wish you every success in the future.

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