

Inspection report for Horsley Hill Children's Centre

Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	365801
Inspection dates	2-3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Judith Elderfield

Centre governance	Sea View Primary School
Centre leader	Julie Carr
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Norham Avenue, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE34 7TD
Telephone number	0191 427 4343
Fax number	0191 427 4344
Email address	Julie.carr@Southtyneside.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Sea View Primary
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Horsley Hill Children's Centre Day Care Nursery

The inspection of this Sure Start Children's Centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

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 Sea View Primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

An inspection of the registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. The reports of these inspections are available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with a range of users, staff, partners, representatives from the advisory board and with representatives of the local authority. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Horsley Hill Children's Centre is located in the East Shields Ward of South Shields and is part of the Horsley Hill Community Campus which houses a primary school, nursery and a school for children with medical conditions, physical disabilities and children who are emotionally vulnerable. The campus was opened in 2006 and the children's centre opened in 2007. The area in which the children's centre operates is among the top 10% of deprived areas in the country. The reach population of the centre is 1127. The centre has 40.19% of the reach registered. Recent figures show that 25% of households are lone parents with dependent children. The percentage of children aged from birth to four years of age living in households dependent on workless benefits is over 26%. Most children enter childcare and early education with a much narrower range of experiences and skills than expected for their age. The majority of local families are of White British heritage. A small minority ethnic population of various origins comprises around 7% of the total population of South Tyneside. The governance of the centre is by Sea View Primary School and the headteacher is head 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 users and the wider community

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

'Supportive, welcoming, confidence-building and enjoyable' are words used frequently by parents and carers to describe the impact Horsley Hill Children's Centre has had on their lives. The well-led, vibrant centre is friendly and welcoming to all users. The support, dedication and commitment of all centre staff and local partner services has ensured that the life chances of people living within its locality are improving, often in the face of the most challenging of circumstances. The staff work hard to build up trust and respect among local families.

Provision is good, both in relation to the high quality activities delivered within the centre, and the outreach work carried out by health professionals and family support staff. The importance the centre gives to reaching out into the community and developing positive relationships with all users is the foundation stone of its success. The expertise, knowledge and effective communication demonstrated by all the staff within the centre is good and has ensured the provision of effective support and guidance to all families whom they meet. This is reflected in the fact that parents and carers often have the confidence to ask for help and support, increasingly before they reach a point of crisis. Children, who attend the centre and go onto Sea View primary school, have a seamless transition due to the good relationships that have been established between the children's centre and the school staff.

Good, effective safeguarding arrangements are in place. Staff have appropriate and regular training in child protection and safeguarding and know what action to take when risks to the safety of children are presented. The centre works productively with other agencies to protect children and operates good policies for inclusion. The centre has worked hard to encourage fathers and male carers to use the centre on a regular basis with good results.

The centre manager has worked diligently to maintain provision and services without a full complement of staff. The work of the centre has improved greatly over the last

six months with the appointment of an additional outreach and family support worker and all administration staff are now in post. More attention is being given to strategic planning and establishing systems to identify local need. However, some difficulties with the sharing of data with the local authority and its partners limits the information available to the centre and impacts on the centres efficiency. The centre shows a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Establish clear agreements with the local authority and partners to ensure that the centre has sufficient data to show precisely its impact on the outcomes for the children's centre reach.
- Strengthen the quality of the self-evaluation and the delivery plan by setting and monitoring targets using as much reliable information as possible.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Outcomes for users of Horsley Hill Children's Centre are good. Described by one parent as, 'the centre which keeps me sane'. The centre has affected some real lasting change; improving outcomes for many parents and children in the locality. Children's enjoyment and achievement can be clearly seen in sessions. Good displays of photographic evidence show activities taking place in the centre and provide further proof of the enjoyable participation of all who use the centre. The centre has actively sought the involvement of dads and male carers. The sessions have proved very popular and run during the week at the children's centre and on a Saturday at a community centre in South Tyneside. One dad said, 'It puts me on a real downer if I can't get to a dads group.' Users of the baby massage sessions make only positive comments about the sessions and evidence suggests they help to improve the bond between parent and baby. The centre runs adult courses in literacy and numeracy. These courses are well attended. Data show that learners progress to further levels, other training courses and into employment. Jobcentre Plus has a dedicated adviser for the centre, who can be contacted through centre staff. Job opportunities are advertised and large posters are visible for Nissan car manufacturers, a major employer in the area who are recruiting at this time.

Safety is actively promoted in the centre and within the home. Many parents and carers have had their homes assessed for the risk of accidents and subsequently had free equipment installed to make their home a safer environment. Staff act as good role models by making an immediate and effective response to any observed unsafe practice exhibited by parents and carers.

Family support workers are actively involved in multi-agency work to protect children and their families who are deemed to be vulnerable. They signpost families to appropriate agencies or to the centre for targeted parenting support. One mother said when interviewed, 'If it wasn't for the family support worker I wouldn't have my

kids today'. Many vulnerable families are supported with home visits. The centre also supports children who are looked after and where the care plan is to return the child home to their parents. Case studies show that families remain involved with the centre.

Guidance and support are very effective in helping users make informed choices about health. In the well-attended parent and toddler group the promotion of healthy eating is used during snack time. Health professionals support families with activities such as 'Play, Weigh and Stay', baby massage and breastfeeding. Breastfeeding initiation rates are increasing from 18.2% in 2008/9 to 24.5% in 2009/10. However, figures are low in South Tyneside at 21.34% compared to the national average of 49.6%. A weaning programme, which runs for three weeks also promotes healthy eating. On completion of the course the parents receive a tasty treats recipe book, electric hand blender, weaning spoons and containers for the freezer. One parent interviewed said, 'It has made me much more aware of certain foods and how to save money.'

Behaviour is good in the centre. The centre staff successfully promote a sense of belonging and respect that users appreciate. As a result, users and staff enjoy their time spent in the centre. Play sessions successfully engage parents and carers. The parents complete questionnaires and use the graffiti boards which can be seen around the building to air their views. However, the centre has been unsuccessful, despite much advertising, to persuade parents to play an active role in future activities or join the parent's network committee.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable 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 users 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 users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	3
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	2

How good is the provision?

2

Provision at Horsley Hill Children's Centre is good. Sessions, services and courses are of good quality with purposeful learning. For example, the 'Jiggle and Wiggle' session provides exciting and stimulating opportunities for many parents and their children to

enjoy quality time together. The parent and toddler sessions which run twice a week are so popular, a waiting list is in operation. However, the centre signposts parents to a drop-in session at the centre, which alleviates the waiting list. The children play in a safe and nurturing environment and parents are provided with good quality advice and support from a range of professionals.

Users can see the relevance of training and attendance at sessions to improving outcomes in their lives. Signposting and referral to services and courses is swift and effective, particularly for families facing complex difficulties. Home visits and early stage assessment support families and risk can be monitored, helping to alleviate crisis. Children with disabilities are supported well and staff work with family workers to ensure positive outcomes for parents and children. Parents reported that they were able to access a range of services to improve the outcomes for their families. Many users report that access to groups and professionals improved their attitudes to and relationships with their children.

The quality of care, guidance and support for those families who currently access the centre is good. Parents are very positive about the variety of activities, resources and experiences they and their children can access together which support learning and achievement. Case studies from family support workers illustrate how effective their support is in helping parents to become more confident and successful in managing their lives.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The leader and centre manager know their centre well and its major strengths and areas for development. Governance of the centre is good. The advisory board and governing body work well, offering challenge and support to the centre team and to each other. Close working partnerships enable the board to give a strong steer for future improvement and to monitor performance, including the varying costs of services. There is limited involvement of parents and carers at this level but the views expressed through questionnaires and graffiti boards are taken into account.

Good safeguarding arrangements are supported by clear lines of communication and collaboration between agencies to ensure children are safeguarded. All checks, vetting and recruitment processes meet current guidelines and staff have up-to-date training in safeguarding, child protection and first aid.

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meets the needs of users in the wider community cannot be evaluated accurately by the centre. Currently, the local authority is not providing sufficiently robust data to the centre. Assessment of individual cases, by the centre is robust and detailed, especially for children and families referred to the centre who are then provided with timely high quality support. Case studies clearly demonstrate that professionals from different services are finding ways of working together effectively to support individual cases.

Self-evaluation is satisfactory. Target-setting and monitoring of the delivery plan are not robust, due to the lack of reliable information. Family work is evaluated through case studies. Staff are involved in self-evaluation formally through appraisal and team meetings, and are confident that their views are heard but are also able to approach leadership informally. Staff are totally involved in what they are doing and morale is very high.

Equality and diversity are promoted successfully. This is because all services are designed to engage users from a range of backgrounds in the local area. In the reach area, 6.65% of children are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the centre has almost half of these children registered. The leaders have a reflective approach to working and continually look for new ways to reach into the local community and include all groups of users effectively. For example, fathers are effectively encouraged to attend the centre to improve their relationships with their children and families. The centre offers good value for money.

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 extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	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 evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	3
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	2
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	2

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

The Horsley Hill Children’s Centre Nursery and Sea View Primary school were inspected in the same week as the children’s centre. Both provisions were judged as good overall.

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. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected the Horsley Hill Children’s Centre on 2 and 3 February 2011. We judged the centre as good overall. We met a number of you during our visit. We talked with staff from the centre and from other organisations who work with your centre to provide services and activities. During our visit we were able to observe some sessions and activities.

Those of you we spoke to told us that you enjoy coming to the centre and that you feel happy and safe there. You also told us that your children enjoyed coming too, and particularly enjoy activities, such as 'Jiggle and Wiggle', crèche sessions, parent and toddler group and drop-in, 'Baby Bounce', and that you like being able to meet up with other parents and carers and share ideas. The children’s centre provides good support and is very much at the heart of your community.

The advisory board play a very proactive role in the ongoing development of the centre. However, the centre would like parents to become more involved in the decision making within the centre by becoming active members of the Parent Network group. The centre staff are continuously reviewing how to manage the demand for popular activities. From our observations, discussions and case studies, we were able to see how much impact the centre is having on your lives. For

example, some of you told us that you were able to improve your own health and that of your children after attending particular sessions at the centre, or by receiving guidance and support from some of the well trained and qualified staff.

Your centre offers a good and varied range of activities and training sessions. You can also get good quality guidance and support to deal with health problems, parenting and safety in your home. Some of you also told us that you have received help to make your homes safer for your children by having safety equipment installed. The staff at the centre offer you home visits if required and give you personal and individual attention to help you become more confident parents and carers and to help your children succeed in life.

We have suggested the centre requests accurate and up-to-date data from the local authority and Health authority, to help the managers to improve target-setting and drive ambitious targets forward.

Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with us during the visit. We very much enjoyed talking with you and we appreciated your willingness to talk with us about some of your personal experiences. We wish you all the best for the future.

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