

Inspection report for Sneinton Children's Centre

Local authority	Nottingham City
Inspection number	362570
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

Centre governance	Local Authority
Centre leader	Ms Dawn Claypole
Date of previous inspection	n/a
Centre address	The Centre for the Child Edale Road, Nottingham NG2 4HT
Telephone number	0115 915 0100
Fax number	0115 9155687
Email address	Dawn.claypole@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Edale Rise Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Busy Bees Childcare

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 the maintained nursery 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 two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the community services manager, the community team manager, representatives of the local authority, parents, teachers and other staff, health workers, family support workers and representatives of Jobcentre Plus.

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

Information about the centre

Sneinton Children's Centre is a phase one children's centre funded solely by local authority and children's centre monies. The centre is run directly by the local authority. It offers full core provision. There is a maintained Nursery class in the adjacent primary school. Childcare for children from six months to five years is provided by a private company on site. This has places for fifty children and opens from 8.00am to 6.00pm each weekday. Many services are run on site but there is also an increasing amount of outreach provision at the local annexe and at five local schools. The centre has partnerships with a range of social care and health agencies. Levels of deprivation in the area range from the bottom 30% nationally, to relatively undeprived families. The majority of families in the area are White British, but around a quarter are from a wide range of ethnic minority groups. Many of the users come from homes with some level of social disadvantage. Nearly a third of children are from households where no-one is currently in work and many are in receipt of benefits. Children's levels of attainment on entry to early years provision are below those expected for their age. Four children are currently in receipt of a child protection plan.

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

The effectiveness of the centre is good. Parents who use the centre are positive about the benefits and say such things as, ‘It has changed my life!’ This is because the management of the centre is good and, consequently, it provides a bright and welcoming haven for all who attend; carers and children alike. Information to users is managed efficiently, including pointing parents and carers to where they can get help and advice from those who work in the centre and also from other agencies. Communication with those who use the centre is good and a real strength of the provision. The warm and welcoming rooms and the friendliness of staff create a harmonious atmosphere that benefits all users effectively.

The local authority has statutory responsibility for the centre and is the centre’s accountable body in legal and financial matters. Leadership of the centre is effective and leaders make good use of clear data provided by the local authority to help to measure the centre’s impact. This, combined with accurate self evaluation, ensures that decisions are made which are effective in improving provision still further. The centre has a good capacity to continue to improve. Monitoring and evaluation are good. One of the areas leaders have highlighted for development currently is improving parental input into decision making by extending the parents’ forum and further developing the role of the advisory board. Another is to maximise the use of the recently refurbished annexe in the nearby high street, which is unused at some times during the day.

Children enjoy the many activities provided by the centre. They make good progress in developing skills and competencies as a result. Parents say they find this enjoyment reassuring and are happy for their children to attend. The care the centre provides with regard to ensuring safety and child protection is excellent. Parents say that all staff are approachable and helpful. Service partners work efficiently as a team to make a real difference to parents and families, particularly those from vulnerable groups and those with a protection plan. The centre works well to ensure equality of access to all. It celebrates diversity well. It has, however, identified some groups which are not currently making full use of the services it provides. As a result, centre leaders are currently devising ways to let Roma and Czech families know of

the work the centre does. They are also preparing to reintroduce the good provision which was running specifically for pregnant teenagers and teenage parents, which had to be put on hold in recent months.

The work the centre undertakes towards health outcomes is good. The efforts to ensure that children from all groups achieve well and enjoy their learning are also effective. The centre runs courses for parents; for example, they enjoy cooking healthy food, learning to speak English and child management. Staff also 'signpost' parents to other providers so they they can gain access to further qualifications. The centre has good links with Jobcentre Plus. There is direct computer access for all who need it and a twice weekly opportunity for lone parents to have individual meetings to discuss what is available to them. As a result, the economic stability of a significant number of families has been improved.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Develop links with hard-to-reach groups, such as teenage parents and Czech and Roma families, to ensure their needs are met.
- Increase the use of the Annexe at 144 Sneinton Dale Road.
- Build parental input into decision making, such as through the advisory board and the parents' forum.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

The health outcomes for children from all groups, including those who are most vulnerable, are good. This is as a direct result of the work the centre does to promote this. Parents and carers develop a good understanding of how to provide healthy diet through the focus given to this at the centre. Children enjoy learning about healthy foods and how to prepare them. This has resulted in a small cookbook being produced by the centre. The development of the garden area for play and to grow a small amount of food is enjoyed by all. Activities, such as 'wobble wobble' are greatly enjoyed by carers and children alike. There is a positive take-up of groups to support breastfeeding, weaning, and home safety. Families benefit from the well integrated services, including health care.

The extent to which children feel safe and protected is good. The centre works hard to help parents and carers keep homes safe, through free safety checks. It is aware of the high numbers of children in the area who are admitted to hospital. Those children using the services at the centre are safeguarded exceptionally well. Users, including children, say and show that they feel safe at the centre and are confident to approach staff with any concerns. The support for children subject to Common Assessment Framework processes is good. Support for young pregnant teenagers and teenage parents has been very effective in the past, being well implemented

with advice, help and support around sexual health. This group has not been running in recent months, but is planned to be reformed in the coming year.

The overall extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development is good. The gap between the lowest scoring 20% of children and others is being effectively closed. The development of children's personal and social skills is good. Children are developing good skills for the future. The take-up of formal childcare is good. Courses are provided for adults, which are greatly appreciated and enjoyed. Centre workers signpost parents and carers to other providers for courses to improve employability and workplace skills. Links with Jobcentre Plus for lone parents is very good and the surgeries held twice a week on site are greatly appreciated and lead to positive outcomes for many who attend. Those who access the centre's provision benefit well.

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	2
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

The provision is good because it is based on good assessment of the needs of children and their families. The local authority provides the centre with clear data, which it supplements with its own. This is used effectively when planning activities, so that they are focussed effectively on need. Health visitors and others work effectively with outreach provision to assess and review the welfare needs of users. There are good links with other agencies to effectively inform assessments to meet learners' individual needs well. The provision to help children learn and develop is good. Activities, such as trips to the library and sessions to help prepare children and carers for starting school, are particularly good. Parents are enthusiastic supporters of the centre and say such things as, 'My link worker is my rock.'

The centre knows its users well. Adult and community learning achievements are celebrated and all adults in the centre encourage users to build on their

achievements. There is a good range of services for users. Provision for teenage parents and pregnant teenagers in the area was particularly strong in the recent past, as virtually all of this group in the reach area were provided with support. The centre has plans to restart this group, which was put on hold due to staffing issues. Recently, the centre leaders have tried to establish links with Czech and Roma parents in particular, as these groups tend not to use the facilities on offer. Links with other local groups are strong. The centre is further developing a 'mothers only' clinic at the annexe, for Asian mothers in particular.

The quality of care and support to vulnerable families is good, as is the care and guidance of children who attend the Nursery and childcare. The centre signposts parents to good quality support for smoking cessation. The quality of information, advice and guidance for parents seeking work is good, particularly for lone parents, who can attend the twice-weekly surgery, run on-site by Jobcentre Plus. The views of users are sought regularly to help the centre to refine its provision still further and to meet the needs of the whole community. To this end, there are plans to develop ways to gain parents views still further.

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 good quality of the provision and the positive impact upon children and adult users alike is due to the good quality leadership and management at all levels. The recently appointed manager of the centre has a good knowledge already of the many strengths of the centre and the aspects which can be improved still further. All staff are fully committed to ensuring the centre is as effective as it possibly can be and that relationships and levels of communication are good. Governance is good and systems to ensure accountability are secure. The activities are thoughtfully planned and carefully evaluated. Centre leaders take good regard of the clear data, including national comparisons provided by the local authority.

Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. Child protection arrangements are excellent and records are kept meticulously, including criminal record bureau checks.

The centre ensures that all partners are fully trained and that procedures are known to all. Policies are clear and implemented fully. Risk assessments are rigorous and monitored to a high standard. There is a well recorded system to provide safety checks in the home, and even equipment, such as safety gates, when required. The fire safety systems of the site are extremely good. Parents are also provided with fire safety advice for their homes and equipment such as smoke alarms which are available through the centre's good links with the fire service. Multi-agency work is well co-ordinated to ensure early intervention for health and welfare issues, if this is required.

Senior leaders are effective in promoting a good range of services which are well matched to the wants and needs of the users. The centre leaders are aware of the need to extend the range of users to include more from hard-to-reach groups, such as pregnant teenagers and members of the Roma and Czech communities who live locally. Plans are in place to tackle this, including plans to extend the numbers and range of parents and carers who contribute to evaluation and decision making at the centre.

The centre provides effectively for equality and diversity. Equality of opportunity is given suitably high regard and the centre is fully inclusive. Provision to ensure disabled access is good. Celebration of cultural diversity is also good. Centre leaders ensure good use is made of skills of staff and resources of the centre. Value for money is good. However recent reviews of efficiency have highlighted that greater use could be made of the well-resourced space in the annexe next to the local shops, which might also help more people in the community to become aware of all the work the centre does. There are plans to further develop the use of this asset in the near future.

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	2
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	1
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	2

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 findings of the recent report on the childcare delivered on site were considered. In addition, the findings of the section 5 inspection of nursery provision at the adjacent primary school were considered, which was undertaken in the same week as the inspection of the children's centre.

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 Sneinton Children's Centre on 28–29 September 2010. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would first of all like to thank those of you that we met and who spoke to us about the centre and its work. It was a great help to us. We agree with you that this is a good place for your children to attend and that all of the staff involved in the centre's work do a good job to help you and your children. You told us how friendly and approachable everyone is and how happy your children are. You told us how well they get on as a consequence, and we agree with you. We could see how much those of you and your children who use the centre regularly enjoy and benefit from all that it has to offer, such as the new garden area, 'wiggle giggle' and trips out. One of the things we have asked the centre to do to be even more effective is to try to reach out to those people who live in the area who do not yet use the centre.

We think that the wide range of things that the centre plans for you and your children is really good. The centre helps you in many ways, such as lone parents looking for work, people who want to change housing and even advice and practical help to make your homes safer places for you and your children. We know that a few of you, including some of you who spoke with us, already contribute to decision making at the centre through the parents' forum. We know you have said what courses you think would be helpful. We agree with the leaders of the centre that it would be a good idea to widen this group and for some of you to be on the advisory board as well. We agree with centre leaders, that your input into what the centre

does is extremely important to make sure that what is planned really matches what you want.

There are many good things at the centre to admire. These include the bright and welcoming rooms and the plentiful information. Some of the rooms are used for many things at different times. This is because so many good things are going on all of the time, such as baby clinics and stay and play sessions. Centre leaders feel that they could do even more events and sessions if they made more use of the annexe at 144 Sneinton Dale Road. We know they have already planned to do more things there, such as drop-in sessions. We think that they are right and that the annexe may also be more convenient for some people to get to.

All of the people who work at the centre are doing a good job. This is especially the case with regard to the centre leaders. The work that they do to assess what is needed and to plan to make things even better is good. They are helped by the local authority who have ultimate responsibility for the centre. They are helpful in providing data to let the centre leaders assess how well things are doing. The new leader of the centre is working to make things even better all the time and all of those who work at the centre say you are 'fully on board' to help with this.

We judge that one of the aspects of the centre is already excellent. That is the way that the centre plans and puts into action things to ensure that children are safe and well protected. Staff are all trained well and regularly update their training in these aspects. Security and safety are held in the highest regard and records that have to be kept to ensure that all who work at the centre are properly qualified and checked are meticulous.

It was a pleasure to meet you during inspection and to hear your views. We hope that you, your children and many more families who live in and around the Sneinton area will continue to enjoy and benefit from the many services the centre offers. Thank you for contributing to our evidence base by sharing your comments and thoughts so openly.

Yours sincerely

Sheelagh Barnes

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