

Inspection report for Rawmarsh Children's Centre

Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	362547
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Rachael Flesher HMI

Centre governance	Rawmarsh Children's Centre Board of Governors
Centre leader	Judy Oldale
Date of previous inspection	n/a
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Linked school if applicable	Rawmarsh Children's Centre maintained nursery school 106827
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Rawmarsh Children's Centre early years provision EY372388

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, representatives from professional partnerships, representatives from the advisory board, and representatives from the board of governors including the chair, the local authority, parents and carers.

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

Information about the centre

Rawmarsh Children's Centre is situated in the village of Rawmarsh, north of Rotherham. It serves a community living in the 30% most deprived areas in the country. Families face issues, such as high levels of unemployment, low wages, low levels of basic skills and high levels of childhood obesity. The large majority of families in the centre's reach area are predominantly White British with a small percentage of families from minority ethnic groups. Children enter the early years provision with skills that are much lower than those expected for their age. Rawmarsh Children's Centre has its own advisory board, which is made up of representatives from various professional partnerships, centre staff and the local community. The children's centre is governed by the centre's Board of Governors. Rawmarsh Children's Centre evolved from a Sure Start Local Programme and was designated as a children's centre in 2003. There is a maintained Nursery school and an early years provision at the centre and the reports can be viewed at www.ofsted.gov.uk. In September 2008, the leadership of the children's centre, maintained Nursery school and day care facility was amalgamated into one role. The centre provides the full core offer.

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

This welcoming and very effective children's centre understands and serves the needs of its users and the wider community well, through strong and effective relationships. The centre actively involves users in the work and governance of the centre and in shaping the services for the future. There are good systems for monitoring and improving the quality and impact of services and activities provided, and staff are committed to continuous improvement. The centre's leadership team, advisory board and governing body have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and take effective steps to improve it. As a result, the children's centre demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

Very effective partnerships and information sharing systems between providers and most other agencies ensure an appropriately coordinated approach to service delivery. They also assist in the centre accurately knowing the needs of its reach area and wider community, including vulnerable groups, and engaging them with the centre. However, information held by health services on the location of potential users in the pre-natal stages of pregnancy is not always being shared with the centre. This means that the centre is not yet able to promote their services to this group and engage them in activities to support their early intervention and prevention work.

Provision is good and particularly strong in its provision for young children, and through the important work carried out by the family outreach workers. The inclusion of all children and their families is central to the centre's vision. Children and their families make good progress in almost all outcomes, often when facing the most challenging circumstances. All children are supported very well in the early years, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and as a result they make significant progress in their learning and development. However, support for parents and carers to ensure they are developing economic stability and independence, including access to training and employment so they too can achieve

their potential, is not as effective. Links with Jobcentre Plus are not developed.

Effective arrangements are in place to ensure the safety and health of children and other users. A strong emphasis is placed on promoting safe and healthy lifestyles and children, parents and carers are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. The centre's procedures for safeguarding children are of good quality and adhered to by all staff and services. The governor with the responsibility for safeguarding, carries out this role with rigour to ensure the centre's policies, procedures and staff are fully up to date and in line with the local authority guidance and best practice. Staff are skilled in identifying any issues; swiftly referring to other agencies where necessary. However, ongoing systems for assessing the needs of all children, to ensure their continued protection, are not efficient as the Common Assessment Framework is not fully utilised by the centre and services.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- With support from the local authority, improve information sharing systems between the Primary Care Trust and the children's centre to ensure a fully coordinated approach to locating and supporting all parents, including teenage parents, through ante-natal care.
- Improve links with Jobcentre Plus and other services to ensure that parents are developing economic stability and independence, including access to training and employment.
- Improve the efficiency of assessing the needs of children, to further ensure they are safeguarded, through the increased use of the Common Assessment Framework.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

The children's centre is a safe and secure environment, risks are minimised and children's well-being is given high priority. As a result, they are safe and protected. The centre works with, and supports very well, children on the child protection register and looked after children. It is reducing the number of those needing child protection plans, and preventing situations reaching crisis points, due to the early intervention and support provided by the family support team and outreach workers. The centre has carried out very few assessments using the Common Assessments Framework, but those children who have been subject to these processes have been well supported.

Children, parents and carers are learning how to keep themselves safe through activities and services provided by the centre. Parents and carers attend first-aid training and they value the information they receive. The home visits carried out by the family support team through the 'safe at home' scheme are crucial in helping

children and families adopt safe practice at home.

The centre works hard to reduce the high number of children who are overweight and obese and actively encourages families to adopt healthy lifestyles. For example, the well-attended healthy eating courses and cookery activities led to many parents and carers preparing healthier meals for their families and securing a greater understanding of suitable portion sizes and what constitutes a balanced diet. The centre is successful in securing smoke free homes and in reducing the number of mothers and expectant mothers who smoke. New and expectant parents greatly value the range of support and services provided and these are having a positive impact on increasing the uptake of breastfeeding, reducing social isolation and developing good parenting skills.

The centre's and related services' strong focus has improved children's speech and language skills. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in children assessed as being at risk of speech and language delay. Activities and services provided, such as the 'Cuddly's group' further supports children's communication and language development and also help parents and carers understand and support the social and emotional development of their children. These are having a positive impact. Children behave well, are developing greater self-esteem, good listening skills, learning to take turns and are forming friendships. The centre identifies and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and their parents and carers, extremely well and they are making good progress. The strong partnerships in place with the health visitors and parents and carers are a key strength to this success.

All children make good progress from their low starting points in the development of skills that will help them in the future. The centre effectively supports children and parents and carers during transition to the early years provision and to school. All families are fully informed of children's individual needs and how best to support them to reach their full potential and achieve good outcomes. Schools have reported that the centre's support has had a significant impact on narrowing the gap in children's skills, development and readiness for school.

Some parents and carers are involved in the governance of the centre, through membership of the board of governors and advisory board. The centre actively seeks the views of users in shaping the services of the future. The mentor and volunteer programmes successfully empower some parents and carers and develop their skills; some go on to gain qualifications and employment. However, links with Jobcentre Plus are not strong and, as a consequence, there is little support provided for all parents and carers who need it, to enable them to develop economic stability and independence, access training and secure employment.

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
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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	3

How good is the provision?

2

All centre staff, services and the local authority understand the issues facing the families in their community. The needs of children, parents and carers are assessed thoroughly to ensure tailored support. Services are generally well provided through the good partnership working and 'team around the child' approach. This ensures services meet most children's, parents and carers' individual needs and secures generally good improvements in their outcomes. The centre ensures parents and carers are involved at every stage when assessing, planning for and supporting the individual needs of children resulting in a coherent and consistent approach. The assessment processes in the early years provision are robust and staff are very well informed about what each child knows and can do, and what they need to enable them to develop further. Schools value the information they are provided with when planning children's next steps in school. The centre ensures that the welfare needs of children, parents and carers are assessed and reviewed. However, as the Common Assessment Framework approach is not used effectively to assess children's needs, the response and ongoing monitoring by the centre is not efficient.

A good range of services and activities are delivered to ensure there is a good balance of universal and targeted services provided to meet the needs of the community. The family support team and outreach workers are increasingly succeeding in engaging families, including vulnerable families and those hard to reach. The team are greatly valued by parents, carers and front line services and are having a significant impact on ensuring that children and their families receive appropriately targeted support, thus improving outcomes. The centre uses robust data provided by the local authority for example, feedback from users and services and participation rates. This knowledge ensures that the services provided meet the changing needs of the community. A wide range of case study evidence demonstrates how the centre has supported many families facing a range of issues, sometimes in times of crisis, and the positive impact they have made on their outcomes.

The early years provision is starting to have a positive impact on the outcomes of

children. This is due to the very effective learning environment and personalised support the children receive from the highly skilled and dedicated staff. Children, parents and carers enjoy their time at the centre and all children and some parents and carers achieve well. Overall, a good range of information, advice and guidance is provided to support improved well-being and good health for all the family.

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

Services work well together to safeguard children, adopting a clear focus on early intervention and prevention. The needs of children and their families are assessed. Targeted support is provided from a wide range of services through the 'team around the child' approach. Policies and procedures are followed by all staff who are well-trained in child protection and safeguarding. This ensures that concerns are identified promptly, that clear and accurate records are maintained, and information is shared appropriately, both internally and with other agencies where necessary. Robust arrangements ensure that all staff and other professionals delivering services from the centre are safe and suitable to have access to children. Thorough risk assessments and appropriate actions in response manage or eliminate risks ensuring the physical safety, health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

Governance and accountability arrangements are very well established and understood by all. Good monitoring and evaluation processes are in place at a strategic and centre level. The local authority has developed a successful system for providing children's centres with data to assist them in monitoring the impact the centre is having on the outcomes for children and their families. This data is used by the centre, along with the centre's own monitoring and evaluation processes, to identify strengths, any gaps in provision, and areas for improvement. The advisory board and governing body includes a wide range of representatives from partner services, parents and carers, and members of the community. They play a key part in the centre's success in achieving its aims and objectives, shaping services and developing effective partnerships. All hold the centre to account and ask challenging questions in order to secure good outcomes for the community. Meaningful targets are set and monitored to improve the impact of their services and activities in order

to narrow the gap for the most disadvantaged.

The inclusion of all families and children is central to the ethos of the centre to ensure the diverse needs of children and their families are supported with equal concern. The children's centre reflects the community it serves well.

Resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community and this helps to ensure good value for money. The centre is extremely well utilised by a range of services and professionals to support children and their families across all outcomes. Staff are well deployed and their skills and expertise fully utilised. The centre manager keeps a close eye on finances, always looking for ways to be more cost effective whilst maintaining effective service delivery. The centre is also proactive in developing partnerships with local schools and voluntary and private providers to share good practice and raise quality.

The centre, services and staff are well managed and professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood. Staff feel extremely valued and benefit from the lifelong learning culture fostered by the centre leader. They are fully supported to develop professionally, with many taking on further educational qualifications and accessing a wide range of training. This ensures that staff remain skilled to meet the changing needs they encounter in the community and in the centre. The centre has a 'can do' approach with very motivated staff, who are passionate in their drive to make a positive impact on children and their families.

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	2
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	2

commissioned to provide	
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 day nursery was last inspected in April 2009. The nursery school was inspected in May 2008. They were not inspected as part of this children's centre inspection. The reports can be viewed at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Rawmarsh Children's Centre on 20-21 October 2010. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you to those of you who contributed to the inspection. We found your children's centre to be very welcoming and friendly. The centre staff listen to your views and consults with a wide range of services to ensure everyone understands the needs of your community well. Your children's centre successfully supports most of you through the many challenges you and your families face, greatly improving your circumstances. Systems are in place to assess your family's needs and provide targeted support from a range of services. However, this could be more efficient if the centre used the Common Assessment Framework. Your children's centre has been asked to improve this. Your children are safe and their welfare is promoted due to the effective policies and procedures in place and adhered to by all staff and services.

Overall, the local authority provides good information to help your children's centre identify the families it needs to target, and the centre works hard to reach out to all those in the community who may benefit from its support. You told us you felt your children's centre was successful in reaching the families it needed to and it has indeed reached many vulnerable families. However, information held by the Primary Care Trust regarding expectant parents and carers, is not currently being shared with

the centre and this means staff and services are struggling to reach and engage them in the centre services. The local authority has been asked to improve this.

Your children's centre values and actively seeks your opinions and views to inform future plans in order to achieve even better outcomes for your families. It is keen to improve the services and activities it provides so they have a greater impact. You told us you are very satisfied overall with the services and activities provided by your centre and that you feel listened to.

Your children's centre is working with you and your families to help you all learn how to be healthier and how to be safer at home. You told us you particularly value the cookery activities and the first-aid training. You also told us that you value the support you receive as expectant and new parents with breastfeeding and parenting skills, and said you have formed friendships which have helped you feel less isolated. We were pleased to see that some parents and carers who have become mentors and volunteers at the centre have accessed training, achieved qualifications and gone on to find work. However, many of you are not always being provided with the support and guidance you need to access benefits, deal with financial issues, access training and secure employment. We have asked your children's centre to improve this.

Good partnerships are in place with services, and you and your children are well supported by a range of professionals. You told us that the children are making good progress in the early years provision, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and we agree with you. You told us you feel included in the decisions made about your children and are well informed about how to support them in their learning and development at home. You particularly value the support available to develop the children's speech and language skills and enjoy the opportunities for you and your children to play and learn together. This is having a positive impact on your children's progress and on your own parenting skills.

The centre works well with you to support both you and your children when they first start at the centre and when they move onto school. Schools told us that when your children start school they are well prepared and eager to learn. They get off to a good start and go on to achieve well at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is very good and must continue to ensure that all children get the best start in life.

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