

Inspection report for Wheeler Children's Centre

Local authority	Kingston upon Hull
Inspection number	362624
Inspection dates	29 – 30 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Jean-Marie Blakeley

Centre governance	Hull Local Authority
Centre leader	Gail Simpson
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	The Rainbow Centre Wheeler Street Hull HU3 5QE
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Linked school if applicable	Wheeler Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY337000 Little Treasures at Wheeler Children's Centre

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 additional inspector and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with staff and senior managers from the centre, parents and carers, members of the governing body, the advisory board, parents action group and local authority representatives. Inspectors also met with a number of partners, including health and children's social care, adult education, speech and language therapists and extended services managers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Wheeler Children's Centre opened in 2006 on the site of Wheeler Primary School. Day care at 'Little Treasures' is provided by the school, in the school and at the adjacent Rainbow Centre, and all other services are in the Rainbow Centre. Pickering and Newington Development Association Ltd (PANDA), owns the Rainbow centre and is a voluntary, not for profit organisation with charitable aims, limited by guarantee. Some services have been organised via local outreach centres.

The centre is a phase one children's centre, providing the full core offer of services. It is situated in the residential area of Newington, west of Hull city centre. Wheeler Street is geographically central to the area of Newington ward and Gipsyville. This area consists of three distinct communities with the railway line separating the Gipsyville estate from the rest. All of the super output areas covered are within the 30% most deprived areas nationally. In Newington ward, four of eight super output areas are within the 5% most deprived areas nationally, two are in the 6-10% most deprived and two in the 11-15%.

The proportion of children who are living in households where no one is working and the numbers of families on benefits is well above the national average. The skills and knowledge with which children enter the nursery are generally below those expected for their age. The majority of people living in the area are of White British heritage.

The local population is transient and there are increasing numbers of East European families moving into the area.

Governance is through Kingston upon Hull local authority. The headteacher of the primary school is responsible for the day-care provision and is the designated head of the children's centre. The centre coordinator manages the Rainbow Centre and coordinates all other services and provision.

The day-care provision complies with registration requirements and has places for 56 children. The day care was inspected as part of the Wheeler Primary School, Early Years Foundation Stage provision in October 2010. The inspection report can be found on the Ofsted website www.Ofsted.gov.uk.

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 centre offers good support to children and families. Outcomes for users, quality of provision, leadership and management and capacity to improve are all good. Parents, carers and children enjoy the friendly and welcoming centre. Parents told inspectors that they feel their children are happy, safe and well looked after at the centre. They describe staff at the centre as, 'a great support'. A particular strength of the centre is its success in empowering users to manage their own lives and be less dependent on services. This aspect of the provision is outstanding. The strong parent action group has developed the skills to apply for funding to run and manage its own projects. A good example of this is the allotment project where families can learn to grow vegetables. The centre continuously seeks the views of users through surveys, evaluations and good involvement of parents in the advisory and action groups. In response to feedback from users, the centre is increasingly adapting aspects of its provision. A prime example of this is the response to parents express wishes that the new centre be developed on the school site rather than one previously designated.

Safeguarding is good. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures; they are well trained and ensure that any concerns are promptly shared with relevant agencies. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The centre actively engages with some of the hardest to reach families and has engaged with a good number of families from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities as well as teenage parents and dads.

Outcomes for users, including those who are most vulnerable, are good in all five Every Child Matters areas. This is because services and activities are well matched and particularly responsive to the needs and interests of users. Children behave well during sessions and make good progress in developing skills. Many of the adults interviewed have gained confidence, skills and qualifications and improved their economic and social well-being. However, too few mothers are breastfeeding and the number of pregnant women using support to stop smoking is low.

Monitoring and evaluation of all the different aspects of the centre's work is good. However, it would now benefit by bringing all aspects together in one overall evaluation, more fully utilising the expertise of the head of centre. The advisory board, parent action group, PANDA board and local authority peer review system challenges the centre's performance well, which helps it improve. However, there is incomplete use of all the available data to monitor performance and set targets.

The leadership team is focused on improving areas of weaker outcomes, building on their strengths and partnerships and filling any gaps in provision. Good outcomes, together with a sound understanding of strengths and areas for development, demonstrate a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Make better use of data to monitor success and set targets in order to further improve outcomes for vulnerable families.
- Strengthen self-evaluation by bringing together the monitoring of all the different aspects of the provision.
- Continue to promote breastfeeding and smoking cessation to increase the healthy outcomes for users.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Outcomes for vulnerable families who attend the centre or receive support through outreach and home visits are good. New and prospective parents receive good quality guidance through antenatal and post-natal clinics, home visits and sessions focusing on preparing for birth, play and development and nurturing. These provisions all have a positive impact on the health, safety and well-being of both

mothers and children. The percentage of obese children in the area is reducing. The incidence of breastfeeding, although increasing is low and too few pregnant women take up support to stop smoking. These areas are recognised as key priorities by the centre. Good communication and integrated working make a strong contribution to improving the safety and well-being of children. There is very effective use of the Common Assessment Framework. Timely support for families with children identified as at risk or in need is helping to ensure that difficulties do not escalate and families receive prompt and relevant support from different agencies. Children in care or on child protection plans are very well supported. Families benefit from free safety equipment and home safety visits. As a result, the number of children under five reported as having accidents or those aged one year who fall down stairs has reduced.

The centre is very welcoming, enabling children to play and parents to develop their skills in a safe and secure environment. The nursery provision, childcare and play and development sessions make a good contribution to children’s enjoyment and achievement. Children show how much they enjoy the sessions through their happiness, enthusiasm and good behaviour. Positive, respectful relationships between staff, children and adult users of the centre are evident in all activities. Good use is made of parents’ evaluations to inform future events and adapt sessions to meet needs. The on-site support for jobs has resulted in a high number of parents returning to work and lifting their children out of poverty. A good number of parents have progressed to employment in the centre, within the charity or with other employers. Two mums interviewed told us how they have been supported to set up their own business. A Dad told us how his life had been turned around by the support from the centre ‘I am now able to look after my children’.

These are the grades for outcomes

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 range of services provided by the centre is flexible and meets the needs of those who use the centre well. There is good participation and the centre is successful in reaching the hardest to reach vulnerable families. Outreach services are highly effective in engaging with the families who are not already using the Rainbow Centre. The attractive cafe, located in the entrance of the centre, encourages families to come into the centre and provides informal opportunities for support and assessment.

Parents and carers make good gains in their learning and development. The extensive displays around the centre, the newsletter and the presentation evening celebrate the many successes of the users and contribute to their enjoyment. Assessment for adults is used effectively to plan learning from first steps courses to accredited literacy and numeracy courses. Families increase their parenting skills and gain knowledge of managing behaviour and keeping safe. The newsletter to parents contains handy tips such as how to keep safe at Christmas when using decorations, tree lights and other potential hazards. Particularly effective and early assessment of children with learning difficulties enables early intervention.

Parents and carers who met with inspectors explained how their involvement in the centre had built their confidence and changed their lives. 'I had post-natal depression and was scared of talking to people. I don't know what would happen to me if I didn't have the centre', said one parent. Case studies clearly show that support from the centre is making a big difference to vulnerable families. Users particularly appreciate the prompt and practical support they receive at times of crisis. One parent said, 'The staff at the centre were the only people who offered me something practical when things at home were so bad I didn't know what to do'. Parents in crisis highly value the free childcare respite places that are offered to them.

These are the grades for 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 centre is at the heart of the local community and runs smoothly on a daily basis. Staff are very motivated and committed to improving their work with the most vulnerable families. They have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The open plan office encourages good communication between the many partners and services provided. Close liaison and sharing of information between the centre coordinator the headteacher and other partners provides a good service for families. Staff seek every opportunity to identify additional sources of funding to extend the good services offered to families. They manage budgets and resources very imaginatively so that as many families as possible benefit from their work.

Monitoring and evaluation of the different aspects of the centre's work is good. However, this could be even more effective if it were brought together in one overall evaluation, more fully utilising the expertise of the head of centre. The advisory board members understand their responsibilities. Members who met with inspectors articulated their high expectations for the centre and have a very good understanding of the needs of their community. The local authority monitors the work of the centre on a quarterly basis and gives a clear strategic direction to its work alongside the other local centres. However, data are not fully utilised to monitor the impact of all services and to set targets. The centres ability to encourage the community to engage with services and use their views to develop the range of provision is outstanding.

Safeguarding is good. Procedures to ensure the protection of users as they move around the site are effectively implemented. Staff have a clear understanding about their roles in identifying and reporting concerns and do so promptly. The centre has robust systems in place for recording information related to the vetting and recruitment of staff. Policies are appropriate and regularly updated. Activities are risk assessed. Strong partnerships with other services contribute to good outcomes for users.

Centre staff and partnership agencies are committed to promoting the inclusion of all children and their families. Equality and diversity are promoted well. Multilingual staff at the centre help promote inclusivity and provide translation for new users. One parent said, 'My English has improved through the English for speakers of other languages classes and both my child and I have made lots of friends in the community'. Inclusive practices are promoted for children with disabilities. Services in the centre are supporting good outcomes for users. Therefore, the centre provides 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	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	1

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

Inspectors looked at the inspection outcomes for the Early Years Foundation Stage of Wheeler Primary School inspection. It was inspected in October 2010. The report shows that the 'Little Treasures' is well led and the quality of day-care provision is good. As a result, children make good and sometimes outstanding progress.

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 Wheeler Children's Centre on 29 and 30 November 2010. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you very much for making us so welcome, for talking with us and contributing to the inspection of your children's centre.

Those of you we spoke to told us how much you enjoy coming to the centre. You said that you feel your children are well cared for and that they are safe.

The centre offers good support to all of you that use it. You said that staff are, 'highly supportive', and quickly respond if any families are in crisis and they offer you practical help that you appreciate. We found that staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and that they are well trained. Some of you told us how the support you have received at the centre has helped keep families together and made you better parents. The health care workers, family support workers and children's centre and childcare staff work closely together to try to make your experience a good one.

You told us that the services and activities at the centre meet your needs and that you now run some of your own sessions such as keep fit and the Monday morning walking group.

You and your children really like the play and singing sessions and you enjoy the adult learning classes and the community café. Some of you have gained qualifications and quite a few of you have managed to gain employment. The centre is good at employing local people and parents. Your children behave well and you all learn more about how to stay healthy and be safe. We found that, although the numbers are increasing, not many pregnant mums have taken up the offer of help to stop smoking and not enough are breastfeeding their babies.

The centre listens to you and asks you what you think of the services and activities they offer. They change how and when they do some things because of what you say. For example, your centre is on Wheeler Street because that is what you particularly asked for. Many of you are involved in making decisions about your centre and making sure you have the right services through the Parent's Action group or by being on the advisory board. It would be good to see some of the Dads in these groups.

We found that equality is promoted very well at the centre. Hull local authority helps the centre make sure it knows who lives in the area so that the staff can try and make sure everyone finds out about what the centre can offer them. Some staff speak other languages, which helps migrant families get involved with the centre, and it is fully accessible to families and children with disabilities.

The local authority, headteacher, centre coordinator and all the staff are really keen to further improve the centre and they already know the things they need to do. We think your centre could be even better if they work more closely together to evaluate their work and make greater use of data to check their success and set themselves targets that are even more challenging. Because the centre has continually been improving over the past few years and they know what they need to do to improve further, we are very confident that it will continue to improve.

Thank you very much for sharing your views with us– we wish you good luck for the future.

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