

Inspection report for All Saints Children's Centre

Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	362425
Inspection dates	22-23 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Clark

Centre governance	Local Authority
Centre leader	Teresa Drew
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	School Street, Darfield, Barnsley, S73 9EU
Telephone number	01226 753366
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	teresadrew@barnsley.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	All Saints 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.

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, representatives from the local authority and other external organisations, health services, parents and carers of children. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

This is a Phase 1 Children's Centre and opened in 2006. The centre is governed by the local authority. It is based in a stand-alone building near the site of Darfield All Saints Primary School. The centre offers a range of integrated services including health, family support, adult training and early year's support and guidance. It is in an area of mixed housing with pockets of significant deprivation. The vast majority of families are from white British backgrounds. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the on-site day care with skills which are well below those typically expected for their age. The levels of unemployment and of families receiving benefits are above average. At the time of the inspection the centre was undergoing extensive building work.

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

All Saints Children’s centre is a warm, welcoming and safe resource for all users. Parents and carers value the support and advice they receive and feel the centre has enriched their lives. ‘It is a lifesaver! The staff can never do enough for you,’ is typical of their views.

The enthusiastic and enterprising leadership of the centre manger and her team, in strong partnership with the local authority, is a key reason for the centre’s success. Leaders lead by example and set high standards for others to follow. Staff are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed to achieving shared goals such as improving the health of all users and reducing obesity. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and self-critical. It draws on the views of both users and providers. The centre is well supported by the advisory board. The centre has good procedures for planning future improvements. As a result, there is a good capacity to continue to improve. However, the range and quality of data to monitor all aspects of the centres effectiveness is variable. This limits the centre’s ability to evaluate the full impact of all elements of its work. The partnership with the local authority is working to address this. The manager’s thorough and strategic budget management, with local authority support, contributes significantly to the good quality of provision throughout the centre.

Outcomes for users are good. Children and adult users demonstrate very positive attitudes towards adopting healthy lifestyles. Health visitors and the outreach worker provide good levels of guidance, support and information about children’s health and well being. The Breast Feeding Groups are particularly successful in improving the health of mothers and babies. Almost all those involved in these groups have gone on to take further advantage of all the centre provides and cement close friendships. Children are helped to understand about behaving safely and sensibly in a way they understand. For example they learn to take risks sensibly in a safe environment when climbing on high quality apparatus. Fathers are increasingly accessing the support the centre provides to help them develop a better understanding of how to meet the needs of young children. There are effective links with adult learning

opportunities in the primary school. However, despite some marked successes in supporting adults into work, the information and guidance to tackle unemployment and support families on benefit is limited. This is a target for development.

The centre is fully inclusive. It promotes equality of access well. It is very responsive to the differing needs of families, through good quality multi-agency, outreach and family support work. The hard work and persistence of all key staff in supporting adults and children in crisis is very evident in all their work. As a result, the number of families using the centre's services has doubled over the last two years. It is significantly improving the physical and mental well-being of many in the community and promoting safe and healthy lifestyles.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the quality of data about the performance of the centre so that areas for improvement can be identified and actions taken to improve provision.
- Ensure arrangements are in place to provide good quality information and guidance about job opportunities, welfare and benefits advice.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Children relish eating healthy snacks and fresh fruit because the centre promotes this aspect of learning well. Initiatives such as weaning groups and healthy cooking are developing healthy lifestyles amongst adult users. Such activity is contributing to reduction in obesity rates. An improving trend in breastfeeding rates is a result of strengthening links with health professionals, inter-agency working and carefully targeted individual support. Baby massage and baby yoga activities are as much enjoyed by parents and carers as they evidently are by babies and contribute to everyone's health and well-being. The centre's imaginative work in encouraging adult users to eat healthily during these group sessions has been recognised in a local authority award. The family support and outreach Worker make a strong contribution to the health and well-being of families in crisis both through specific projects such as Two Steps Forward and by carefully planned individual programmes of support. Outcomes for staying safe are good. Staff are well trained in identifying any safety and child protection concerns, and in taking swift and appropriate action. This is complimented by the strong multi-agency links and role of the family support worker. Rigorous risk assessment procedures ensure children and adults are safe even though major building work is going on.

Children attending day care and other services settle very quickly and respond very positively to the good care provided by their key workers and other adults. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals through all the centre's activities. Children play well together, displaying very positive relationships with others in all aspects of provision. Parents make new friends through attending centre-based sessions, and they display a good sense of enjoyment during activities. A strong focus on language development, particularly through regular links with

speech therapy professionals and the 'Every Child a Talker' project are helping children to overcome learning and communication barriers. Furthermore, storytelling sessions and song and rhyme activities help parents and carers become more involved in their children's early language development. Good links with the primary school and other early years providers contributes to children's smooth transition to the next stage of learning. The individual support the centre provides for its most vulnerable families and the work with babies contributes to their future economic well-being. However, links with institutions, including Job Centre Plus, are less well established to signpost and support greater levels of adult employment.

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	3

How good is the provision?

2

The centre provides good quality services, care, guidance and support through its centre-based activities, family and outreach support and home visits. Constructive relationships with parents and carers help them to feel confident to seek advice and support. All staff who work for and with the centre are passionate about their roles and have a good level of expertise and professional knowledge to successfully help families improve their health, well-being and achievement. Good multi-agency partnerships are increasingly making sure that the individual needs of children and their parents and carers who are referred to the centre, are assessed quickly so that interventions and support can be targeted appropriately. Assessment of individual cases is robust and the Common Assessment Framework is successfully ensuring that teams can be gathered quickly to support children and families identified as in need. Where a child protection plan is in place, the centre works effectively with social services and the child protection team. Parents and carers report that the timeliness and quality of individual support is good and available for as long as needed.

Staff know the community well; they are aware of the needs and demands for services and activities. The centre is proactive in taking services out to groups who are hard to reach and who they know to be vulnerable. These services are supported by good partnership working and the centre's persistence in establishing links with hard-to-reach groups through schools and other partner agencies. There is an

increasing use of data to support this work although it is not always accurate at a local level to ensure the centre is having all the impact it could. Assessment is used effectively to record children’s progress and inform teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The day care receives good and valued support from the Early Years Foundation Stage consultant and Darfield, All Saints Church of England Primary School. As a result of these partnerships, the centre effectively promotes the learning and personal development of children.

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

Leadership and management are consistently good at all levels. The centre manager and her senior leadership team provide clear leadership with high expectations for the community firmly at the heart of the centre’s work. The advisory board and staff share their aspirations and are well motivated in providing a wide range of good quality and effective services to the community, particularly those that are hard to reach and vulnerable. As a result, the centre has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development and sets ambitious targets based on good self-evaluation. This leads to good quality action planning which is supported by good partnerships.

Evaluation of the impact of the work with individual families takes place within team and multi-agency meetings, case studies and through regular supervision of staff. The success of groups’ activities is increasingly monitored. However, this information is not yet consistently collated into manageable data to measure impact at a more strategic level. It occasionally lacks quantifiable measures against which the centre can evaluate the impact of its actions on the outcomes for users, or gauge improvement over time. Consequently, full evaluation of the impact of the improvement plan is not fully established. Despite this, the manager has a good understanding of the priorities and needs of the centre and the community it serves, and a particularly good knowledge of the impact of services.

Resources are used well to provide a welcoming environment, particularly as the limited amount of space available at the centre means it is necessary for some services to be delivered at outreach sites across the area. Robust financial

management systems are in place to monitor day-to-day expenditure and delegation of responsibility for resources is at an appropriate level to ensure timely and effective packages of support to families. This ensures good value for money.

Good safeguarding arrangements are supported by the 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 centre places a strong focus on developing the skills of all staff, through high-quality training, to deliver inclusive provision to be sensitive to the needs and views of users. The impact is well recorded in case studies.

Equality and diversity are promoted successfully. This is because all services are designed to engage users from the range of backgrounds in the local area, including the promotion of inclusive practice for children with special education needs and/or disabilities. The manager, advisory board and partner agencies have a reflective approach to working and continually look for new ways to reach into the local community and include groups of users effectively. For example, men are being encouraged to attend the centre through a newly established men's group which is based on enjoyable activities that they can share with their children and 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 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

None

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 All Centres Children's Centre on the 22nd and 23rd November 2010. It is good overall.

During our visit we visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with a number of you and the professionals who work with you. Many of you told us how much you enjoy the activities provided through the centre. You told us that staff listen to you and make sure that you get the right advice and support. We found that the centre is good at helping people at times in their lives when they most need it; action is taken quickly and different people and organisations work very well as a team to support both children and families. We found the centre to be warm and welcoming to all families and busy with activity and children's happy laughter. The staff have a high level of expertise and offer good practical and emotional support to families who need it.

The centre is working well with a range of partners and providers such as social care, health services and education. We found that services work well together as a team to provide help and support to families where a child has physical or emotional difficulties. It provides good support for children to make sure they get a good start in life. Adults are guided well so they can realise their potential. Some adults now work as volunteers in the centre and its partner agencies. However, we also found that some chances are missed to provide information and guidance to help people into work. The childminder, breast feeding and other groups provide good opportunities for social interaction and further education. The whole family is at the heart of what everyone is doing and this is seen in the wide variety of activities on offer. Sessions related to healthy cooking, child development, 'sunshine' groups and practical activities are examples of effective support. Everyone loves the baby massage and baby yoga sessions. The centre also does well in offering guidance

about how you can play with your children at home by, for example, in storytelling and nursery rhyme activities.

You told us that you feel safe at the centre. This reflects the good work it does to promote safety, welfare and good safeguarding arrangements. Children are well-behaved and confidently explore the learning environment. You play an important role too. We were impressed by the positive and supportive relationships you have with one another and with your children.

The people in charge of running the centre are doing a good job. The manager has worked hard to make sure that everything the children's centre does for you will make a difference to the area in which you live. She makes sure that everyone who works with the Darfield All Saint's Children's Centre share this commitment and we heard lots of examples from you about how they are making a positive difference to your lives.

The popular manager is well supported by the local authority and the advisory board. However, the ability of the centre to understand properly how well it is doing in improving the lives of you and your families could be improved. This is because the centre does not yet have the information to measure the impact that its activities has on your lives. The local authority, advisory board and manager are aware of this.

We have asked the manager of the children's centre, her senior staff and the local authority to look at how they can make things even better. The most important things to do are:

- Improve systems to measure how well the centre is doing in all its work
- To provide more guidance on job opportunities and training

Thank you very much for your welcome and openness with inspectors. We are very grateful and wish you every success in the future.

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