

Inspection report for Kimberworth Community Children's Centre

Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	362506
Inspection dates	8 – 9 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Jean-Marie Blakeley

Centre governance	Rotherham
Centre leader	Marion Tapp
Date of previous inspection	NA
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Linked school if applicable	Kimberworth Community Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY342904 Kimberworth Community Primary School full daycare, out of school care, creche

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 one 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 and local authority representatives. Inspectors also met with a number of partners, including health and children's social care, adult education, extended services and Jobcentre Plus professionals. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Kimberworth Children's Centre opened in 2006 and forms part of the Kimberworth Primary School building. The centre is a phase one children's centre, providing the full core offer of services. It is situated in the residential area of Kimberworth, north of Rotherham city centre. Statistical data for the Kimberworth area indicates that the area is one of high social and economic disadvantage. Many families in the catchment area live in poor-standard rented accommodation and the area falls into the top 30 per cent of deprived areas nationally. The catchment area is changing with a growing number of families from a non-British White background moving into the area, alongside the Pakistani families, who are first or second generation. Some services have been organised via outreach groups and partnerships.

The proportion of children who are living in households where no-one is working is above the national average. Known free school meal eligibility for children attending schools in the local area is above the national average. The skills and knowledge with which children enter the nursery are generally below those expected for their age.

Governance is through the local authority. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010 and the deputy headteacher in November 2010. The head of the school is also the head of the centre. However, day-care provision and the centre are managed on a day-to-day basis by the Centre Coordinator, with early years provision and practice supported and developed by the lead teacher.

There are breakfast and after-school clubs run by staff members, which enables parents and carers to continue to access full day-care provision, after their child moves in to the Early Years Foundation Stage. On-site childcare is provided with a birth- to two years room that is registered for six babies and a two-three years room, which is registered for 16 children, with three to five-years-old children accessing the Early Years Foundation Stage unit. The provision complies with registration requirements and has recently gained flexible entry status. The day care was inspected as part of the Kimberworth 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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

The centre offers satisfactory support to children and families. Outcomes for users, quality of provision, leadership and management and capacity to improve are all satisfactory and improving. Parents and carers and users enjoy the friendly and welcoming centre. They told inspectors that they feel their children are happy, safe and well looked after at the centre. They describe staff at the centre as ‘friends’. A particular strength of the centre is its swift response to families in crisis and the practical support it offers them. Safeguarding is no better than satisfactory because of some omissions in paper work. However, staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures, they are well trained and ensure that any concerns are promptly shared with relevant agencies. This vigilance has contributed to the number of children on child protection plans. Innovative practice for parent-contact sessions has been successful in rebuilding some relationships and families.

Outcomes for users, including those who are most vulnerable, in all five Every Child Matters areas are satisfactory. This is because services and activities are adequately matched to the needs of users. Children behave well during sessions and make steady progress in developing skills. Evidence from case studies and discussions with users show that aspects of provision are having a good impact on some children, adults and families. Despite the best efforts of centre staff, links with some partners,

in particular Jobcentre Plus, are less well developed or effective.

The centre seeks the views of users through surveys, questionnaires and on-going discussions. In response to feedback from users, the centre is increasingly adapting aspects of its provision. For instance, new 'stay and play' sessions have been introduced so that families with a number of children under five can attend mixed-age group sessions. The new leadership team recognises the need to involve users more and to increase the opportunities users have to contribute to the centre's decision making process, strategic planning and evaluation.

Equality is promoted satisfactorily. With effective support from the local authority, the centre has identified the number of users attending the centre from different groups in the reach area. This analysis shows that numbers of users from some of its target groups, such as those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and those with disabilities, are relatively small. The centre has yet to identify the precise actions it will take to engage and support these groups and others such as lone parents and teenage parents.

The recent change of leadership has resulted in significant changes in the involvement of centre staff in strategic decision-making and to the evaluation of the impact of its services. Members of the newly-formed team are very motivated to eliminate identified weaknesses, but are not yet effectively using available management information systems.

The centre's improvement plan identifies most of the priorities for development and includes criteria against which success will be measured. The advisory board, although meeting regularly, does not have a sufficiently wide representation of users from the reach area and it is in the early stages of rigorously challenging the centre's performance and provision.

The newly formed leadership team is focused on improving areas where outcomes are weaker and on filling any gaps in provision. Steadily improving outcomes, together with a sound understanding of strengths and areas for development, demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Develop strategies to engage with parents and children with disabilities, black and minority ethnic families and teenage parents so that more of them access the centre and its services.
- Ensure that all services are rigorously evaluated and that impact data is both recorded and analysed in order to monitor effectiveness and improve outcomes.
- Increase user involvement in the centre's evaluation and in its decision-making.
- Improve those partnerships that are not yet fully effective in multi-agency working, particularly that with Jobcentre Plus, in order to improve the quality of

provision.

3

How good are outcomes for users?

Outcomes for children, adults and families are satisfactory and improving. The centre has systems in place to demonstrate how it is improving outcomes across most areas, although its work with some partners to evaluate the impact of their services is not fully effective. In the day-care, young children are happy and make good gains in developing their personal and social skills but overall their progress is satisfactory. Families and children are developing a secure understanding of how to keep healthy through cooking sessions and the promotion of healthy meals and snacks. Children have good opportunities to take physical exercise in the well-equipped play areas. Immunisation rates are good. The impact of the programmes to promote smoking cessation for pregnant mothers or to initiate breastfeeding has been limited.

Through networking and partnership working, the centre has been able to obtain free safety equipment for some families, such as fire alarms and window locks. The family support worker provides highly-valued individual training for families to extend their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The centre is a safe and secure environment where users feel they can share their concerns. Centre staff told inspectors that systems for coordinating support for vulnerable families, including looked-after children, have been strengthened. Case studies indicate that some users, such as those who have been subject to domestic violence, have been provided with good support. One such mum, whose children had been on a child protection plan, said that the centre 'has helped me be a better parent, I would never have done as much as I have'.

Good attendance at baby clinics is leading to a positive impact on mothers and babies, with mums gaining confidence and able to ask questions about their child's development. A good number of families progress to stay and play sessions as their children develop. Parental evaluations of parent-child sessions, such as 'Tiddlywinks' and 'Little Cherubs' show that they make a sound contribution towards developing users' parenting skills. Children's communication and language skills are developed satisfactorily through a well-coordinated and consistent approach, based on the 'Every Child a Talker' initiative. 'My child is very happy and confident' explained one parent. A few parents and carers engage in training and adult education and although some gain literacy or numeracy qualifications, the number is low in proportion to the reach area.

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	3
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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	3
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
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	3

How good is the provision?

3

The range of services provided by the centre is flexible and meets the needs of those who access the centre adequately. There is variable but improving participation and previously low day-care occupancy rates have recently improved. Senior leaders recognise that more needs to be done to increase the proportion of users from some target groups. These include parents and carers and/or children with disabilities, young mothers and those from ethnic minority groups. Some success has been achieved with increasing the participation of fathers, particularly since the centre started to run Saturday morning activities. One father interviewed said 'If I need some advice there is always someone there, I wouldn't have my kids now if it wasn't for this centre'. Some activities offered at the centre particularly aim to improve community cohesion but their impact is insufficiently evaluated.

The centre has a clear system for assessing the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for tracking their progress. However, sometimes, evaluations of children's progress are overly optimistic. Staff use this information to inform their planning. They support child-initiated activities well by encouraging children to talk and think about what they are doing. Children's achievements are celebrated through informal discussions with parents and carers and through 'learning journals' and photographs. Parents and carers make satisfactory gains in their learning and development. The lack of available funding remains an issue and limits expanding the range of courses offered.

Parents and carers who met with inspectors explained how their involvement in the centre had built their confidence. 'I have gained the confidence to become a breastfeeding mentor and have now gone on to a role in the community' said one parent. Case studies clearly show that the centre is making a difference to some families. Users particularly appreciate the prompt and practical support they receive at times of crisis. However, the quality of information and the guidance users receive, is not always presented in a way that is accessible for all members of the community, particularly for those users from minority ethnic groups.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	3
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	3

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

The centre is a happy and welcoming place and runs smoothly on a daily basis. Staff are motivated and committed to improving the work of the centre. The impact of leaders and managers on improving outcomes for users is increasing and more managers have recently become involved in decision-making.

Their ability to monitor and evaluate the centre's work and to demonstrate its impact is developing satisfactorily. Evaluation is sometimes supported by evidence of the impact on outcomes for users and has resulted in some changes to provision, such as the development of small groups for parent/child supervised contact sessions. Leaders recognise that few children and families, who may have multiple needs, are subject to the common assessment framework in order for the services they receive to be more closely coordinated and monitored.

The advisory board meet termly and members mostly understand their responsibilities, although some partner members' attendance is poor and this limits its effectiveness. Members who met with inspectors articulated their high expectations for the centre and they have a good understanding of the needs of the community. Although the board and the local authority regularly monitor outcomes, the rigour with which they hold the centre to account is not sufficiently evident. The contribution that users are asked to make to the strategic work of the centre is limited.

Safeguarding is satisfactory. 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 good systems in place for recording information related to the vetting and recruitment of staff. Policies are appropriate and routinely updated, but sometimes when small changes are made, files are not updated promptly nor are partners and staff informed. The safeguarding policy makes no reference to the use of mobile phones by staff or users. Activities are satisfactorily risk assessed. Partnerships with other services, in particular, the health service and the family support team contribute to satisfactory outcomes for users.

Centre staff and partnership agencies are committed to promoting the inclusion of all children and their families. Staff have yet to identify how services in the centre can be developed to further improve outcomes and to better meet and engage with its target groups. Therefore the centre provides satisfactory 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	3
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	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	3
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	3
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	3

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 Kimberworth Primary School inspection. It was inspected in October 2010. The report shows that children make satisfactory progress overall, although their personal, social and emotional development is good in relation to their starting points.

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 Kimberworth Children's Centre on 8-9 November 2010. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you 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. You like the 'password' arrangements in place, in case you need someone to collect your child for you if you are at work or unable to get there.

The centre offers satisfactory support to all of you who use it. You said that staff are like 'friends' 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. The health care workers, family support worker and children's centre staff work, closely together to try to make your experience a good one, but we think they could improve their planning to help you even more.

You told us that the services and activities at the centre meet your needs but we found that some people who might benefit from the centre are not using it. You like the baby clinic, the play sessions and adult learning classes. Some of you have gained qualifications but the centre doesn't know how well Jobcentre Plus helps you back to work and we would like to see more opportunities for you to get qualifications and skills to help you improve your opportunities. Your children behave well and you all learn more about how to stay healthy and be better parents. We found that not many pregnant mums have taken up the offer of help to stop smoking and not enough mums understand that breastfeeding is the best start to a child's development.

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, some of you with more than one child under five wanted to have 'stay and play' sessions where all your children can play, so now you have the 'Tiddlywinks' group. The new headteacher and inspectors would like to see you even more involved in making decisions about your centre and making sure you have the right services, perhaps through a 'Parent's Forum' or getting involved on the advisory board.

We found that equality is promoted satisfactorily at the centre. Rotherham local authority helps the centre make sure it knows who lives in the area and is attending

the centre so that it can try and make sure everyone finds out about what the centre can offer them. This has shown that not many people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, or those with disabilities, or teenage mums are using the centre. The centre staff need to find ways of making sure all the people in the area know about what it offers and use your centre, so that their families can get more support to improve their lives.

The new headteacher and all the staff are really keen to improve the centre and they already know the main things they need to do. They are having training to make sure they can use all the information and records that are produced so that they can really focus on the successes and weaknesses of the centre. Some of the partnerships the centre has, such as with Jobcentre Plus, do not sufficiently check that what they are doing is helping you.

Because the centre has steadily been improving over the past few years and they know what they need to do to improve further, we are confident that it will continue to improve. This would be even better if the advisory board give more feedback about the effects the centre has on you the users and are clear on what else they need to do.

Thank you very much for sharing your views with us- we wish you well for the future.

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