

# Inspection report for Redhill Children's Centre

Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	362592
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Elizabeth Srogi HMI

Centre governance	Stockton-on-Tees local authority	
Centre leader	Janet Seddon	
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected	
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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.

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## 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 an Early Years Inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, representatives from the local authority and other external organisations, health services and parents and carers.

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

## Information about the centre

Redhill Children's Centre is housed in a two storey building. It was originally developed as part of the Sure Start local programme to provide a venue for the delivery of services to local parents and carers with young children residing in the estates of Hardwick, Roseworth and Ragworth. It then became part of Stockton Borough's children's centre provision. As a Phase 1 centre, Redhill provides the full core offer, including health and education services. Support is also provided from satellite centres in the community rooms in Hardwick Green Primary School and within Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre. Governance of the centre is provided by the local authority and there is an advisory board in place. The second storey of the building provides the venue for the Teenage Pregnancy Support Service for Stockton-on-Tees and there is an anxious pupil unit on site. The centre manager also has responsibility for the management of two other children's centres.

The estates of Hardwick, Roseworth and Ragworth are predominately comprised of social housing. The estates are geographically close but are separated by busy ring roads; they are distinctly different communities and have their own infrastructure of shops and schools. The majority of families living in the area are of White British heritage and 38% of children under the age of five live in households dependent on benefits. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills below that expected for their age.

## 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

Redhill Children’s Centre is a vibrant, warm, welcoming and safe environment for all those who use its services. The enthusiasm and commitment of the centre manager and the leadership team, which is made up of both centre and health staff, are strengths of the centre. This positive attitude is replicated throughout the workforce, be it in the outreach work provided by home visitors, in the childcare team, or by the health service staff who work in the centre. Using a true partnership model, their dedication to improving the lives of the children and families in the area is evidence for all to see. This high level of commitment means that there is good capacity to improve further.

The centre’s work is greatly valued by all who come into contact with it. Parents, carers and professionals all speak highly of how they are involved in the centre and of the services provided. Users highlight how support from the centre has improved their lives. For example, as one parent put it, ‘You can call into the centre with the worries of the world, have a cuppa in the café, have a chat and someone will help sort out your problems or will point you in the direction of further help.’ The centre café was observed to be a significant hub of the centre. The enthusiasm with which users and staff alike entered into the inspection process is testimony to how highly the centre and its work are valued.

Children’s enjoyment is evident in their happiness and contentment as they take part in the stimulating activities provided in the centre. The centre’s work is improving children’s progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is contributing well to closing the achievement gap for the most disadvantaged. Through its policy and practice, the centre demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting equality and diversity.

The range of effective services and activities provided for users promotes good outcomes for children and families within the local area. The activities provided within the centre include Cooking Kitchen, a breastfeeding support group and a smoking cessation group. Staff work tirelessly to support these initiatives. However, they are very aware that the number of mothers sustaining breastfeeding following

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discharge from hospital is low, despite the staff's continued effort to encourage and support them. Managers are aware that, currently, there is insufficient sharing of personal information between health services and centre staff. This inhibits targeted support for those most in need. Local data to show the impact of this work are either not available or are limited and therefore the centre is restricted in how it can demonstrate its effectiveness against targets.

Safety and safeguarding are distinctive strengths of the centre. All staff working in the centre are fully committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all who use its facilities. They have a clear understanding of their roles in protecting children and of the processes to follow if they have concerns about a child.

Partnership working between children's centre staff and health staff based in the centre is seamless and is a significant strength of the centre. For example, each ante-natal clinic run by midwives has a children's centre home visitor in attendance to provide a joined-up service and to encourage further participation in children's centre activities such as baby massage and breastfeeding support.

All staff involved in the centre's work have a good knowledge of the local community and strive to involve users from across the reach area. Work is ongoing to improve continually the numbers of users accessing services and these are increasing. Those who are registered with the centre but have not accessed services for a period of time are contacted. There are plans to introduce incentive schemes to improve overall usage.

## **What does the centre need to do to improve further?**

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Improve the collection, quality and use of data, including that which relates to the national indicator sets, which is specific to the immediate reach of the centre.
- In partnership with health providers at a strategic level, improve the sharing of information about specific groups of the centre's users and potential users.

## **How good are outcomes for users?**

<b>2</b>
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Observations of activities in the centre and the comments of adults using its facilities clearly show how they and their children feel safe and comfortable in the centre. Many of the courses and activities include information on how to ensure children are kept safe. All courses and activities are evaluated to measure impact. Cooperative working provides support to children on child protection plans and evidence shows how centre involvement has helped children to come off plans. The borough wide home safety scheme which is run in conjunction with Tristar Housing and Cleveland Fire Brigade is effectively used and is promoted by all centre staff including home visitors when carrying out outreach work. In the last six months, 86 families in the area have accessed the scheme to improve safety in their homes for their children. Behaviour of children throughout the centre is generally good and there is a climate

of mutual respect between staff and users.

The importance of weaning is given a high priority in the centre as a step to helping to reduce childhood obesity; weaning classes are provided for groups or for individual mothers dependent on need. Parents and carers report how, in response to staff’s encouragement, they now use and prepare fresh vegetables for their babies that, before doing the weaning course, they did not even know the names of. They are developing effective skills in preparing and cooking healthy meals on a budget through such provision as Cooking Kitchen sessions. These sessions were particularly highlighted by parents as having had a big impact on improving what they feed their children at home. The centre’s food and drink policy, Tiny Teeth oral health promotion strategy and centre café are all successful in helping and encouraging families to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Children who use centre facilities make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enjoy the activities such as Stay and Play and, with the support of centre staff, parents and carers engage and get involved in their child’s learning. Parents are encouraged to contribute to children’s development records. Activities such as Men Utd give parents, carers and children opportunities to learn and play together. Children aged two years in need of speech and language support develop their skills well in the funded day care provision. Close working between the centre teacher, other staff and local schools established that children’s skills when joining the nursery were 18 months below those expected for their age. In response to this finding, the centre set up a pre-nursery which is open to every child who is due to go to a school nursery in the following term. Feedback indicates that starting points are improving and that the support given to parents when the children start nursery is valued.

Parents’ attendance at the centre is helping to raise their aspirations and gain confidence in their own abilities. Several courses lead to recognised qualifications and that, alongside the input available from Jobcentre Plus, the centre’s information and guidance advisor and other centre staff, results in some users going on to further training or into employment. Comments received from users highlighted how support from the centre for job seeking and training completed in the centre had helped them get back into work. They emphasised how staff’s good quality support had kept them going as a family in what were difficult times.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for users*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision making and</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>governance of the centre</b>	
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

<b>2</b>
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The centre provides good quality services, which are helping to improve the outcomes for families attending the centre and for those who receive more targeted work in their own homes.

Partnership working within the centre ensures that the needs of users are effectively identified and that appropriate services and support are provided, particularly for those in greatest need. For example, the Teenage Pregnancy Support Service encourages young parents to become involved in centre activities to access ongoing support. Key centre staff are trained in condom distribution and signposting to other services and courses such as the Skills for Caring and Nurturing Parenting courses which support parents in building confidence and in their understanding of childcare. Families, some of whom are the most vulnerable across the reach area, can be referred to specific services by the home visiting outreach team. All families who have outreach input have a common assessment framework pre-assessment check carried out by a home visitor. Further work is ongoing to embed the use of the framework.

The centre is fully committed to promoting the learning and development of all users. Staff provide a variety of activities, including Men Utd, a Saturday session specifically for male carers and their children. The children's centre information, guidance and advice advisor and other centre staff help users to explore their learning and developmental needs. They also provide help with job applications and curriculum vitae for those who are looking for work. Following the identification of interests, eight users from the reach area study an accredited National Vocational Qualification course in health and social care. All achievements in the centre are celebrated, certificates of achievement are given and qualifications through accredited courses are gained. Creches are provided and, as necessary, full day care for children to enable parents to access training to improve employment opportunities and therefore improve the well-being of their families.

Care, guidance and support are threads that run through the centre's work. The centre café acts as a real hub of the centre and is a service that is used well by the community including those who do not use any other centre services. Staff have sensitively and creatively introduced supportive activities into the café area to encourage users to use its organised activities and courses. For example, children were often bored so children's activities facilitated by the Early Years team were brought in to the café area. These follow the interests of the child and in some cases parents and carers have engaged in the activities with their children.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

**2**

There are clear processes and accountability arrangements between the direct centre management and the local authority. All those involved in the running of the centre have a firm and strong commitment to its work in improving the lives of the children and families it serves, and in narrowing the gap of achievement for the most disadvantaged. As yet, they do not have access to enough relevant data about the immediate area through which to gain hard evidence about the centre's success in relations to its targets. The centre manager and her management team work very well together to drive the quality of the provision forward and there is a strong 'can do' attitude throughout the centre. There are clear management structures in place, all staff have regular supervision and appraisals, and training is given high priority. Team meetings are a regular management feature and fortnightly whole-centre meetings, which are open to all centre and partner staff, ensure a cohesive approach to the services provided. Minutes are available for those unable to attend. The active advisory board and family forum provide the centre with support, advice, guidance and challenge. Parents are very clear that they have an input into the running of the centre and what it provides. Effective monitoring provides financial oversight of the centre to ensure it gives good value for money.

Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of children are robust. All centre staff, partners who work regularly in the centre and volunteers have had the required checks carried out and all staff have had relevant training and are clear as to who is the centre's nominated officer for safeguarding. Partner staff, for example health visitors and midwives, are clear as to how their procedures link with the procedures for the centre to ensure any concerns are dealt with efficiently. Some staff have had training in such areas as domestic violence awareness to further support the work they do. The wide range of risk assessments is reviewed regularly and appropriately. Security in the centre is given substantial priority. For example, access is facilitated by vigilant customer care staff who welcome individuals into the centre.

Inclusion is embedded throughout the centre. All activities encourage full inclusion

and, as highlighted by one parent, the high standards of hygiene in the centre have ensured her child with specific needs can be fully included in the Stay and Play activities. All disability and equality legislation is implemented throughout the centre and the building is very user friendly. Parents and carers are able to access such services as speech and language support from teams within the centre.

Partnerships, particularly at a local level, are a significant strength of the centre. Work carried out by health and children’s centre staff provides good and improving services for families. Partnerships with local schools are improving and all local schools have an identified link worker from the centre. Links with the local women’s refuge and Holmehouse Prison further supports families in the area. There are clear links with the local police and community police ‘drop in’ to the centre to maintain contact with staff and users.

*These are the grades for leadership and management<*

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre’s policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>2</b>

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



Inspection report for Redhill Day Nursery.

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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## **Summary for centre users**

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

During our visit we looked at the centre's activities and documents, and spoke to many of you as well as managers, staff and other professionals who work in the centre. Please accept our thanks for taking the time to talk to us.

You spoke highly of the centre and the support it provides. Many of you gave examples of how the support and the activities at the centre had made a difference to your lives. You also highlighted how well staff listen to you and that your views affect the activities and courses provided. You all appreciate the centre café and use it regularly. It is seen by you and staff at the centre as an important informal hub of the service.

Children who attend the centre are helped in making good progress in their learning and development. Children and adults who attend the many activities enjoy the sessions and you told us that staff have made you more confident in bringing up your children. Help given to access training and employment has resulted in some adults gaining qualifications and work.

All centre staff including health partners have provided families with a good range of services to improve their children's and family's lives. The local access to midwives and health visitors is appreciated. You particularly welcome sessions on weaning and healthy eating and many of you said how you have made changes to food served at home as a result of these. The centre provides a great deal of support for those mums who wish to breastfeed, and sessions to stop smoking. However, centre staff cannot fully show how the usefulness of support like this is measured so we have asked them to make sure they collect data to measure their success. We have also asked them to improve the information they receive from such people as strategic

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health services so that more people can access the good services that the centre provides.

Ensuring the safety of children is a strength of the centre and all staff work well together to reduce the risk of harm to children. You told us that you and your children are safe in the centre. Staff advise you on safety in your homes and safety equipment has been made available for use in your homes from the Stockton-on-Tees Safety Scheme.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).