

Inspection report for Creations Community Children's Centre

Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	365773
Inspection dates	10-11 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Jean-Marie Blakeley

Centre governance	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Centre leader	Marie Reid
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Albert Road Pellon Halifax West Yorkshire HX2 0QD
Telephone number	01422 434006
Fax number	01422 434007
Email address	marie.reid@calderdale.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Ling Bob Junior, Infant and Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY383086 Creations Community 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 advisory board and parents' forum and Calderdale local authority and North Halifax Partnership representatives. Inspectors also met with a number of partners from health, education, Jobcentre Plus and community representatives. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Creations Community Children's Centre was designated in 2008. In January 2009, it moved into purpose built premises, on the site of Ling Bob Primary school, in the Pellon area of Halifax. The centre is a phase two centre that provides the full core offer of services. The centre is part of a cluster model and is one of five children's centres located across north east Halifax, Calderdale. An area manager who is employed by North Halifax Partnership (NHP), a local commissioned non-profit organisation, leads the cluster. Calderdale local authority maintains overall governance of the centre with NHP leading the advisory board. A central team, employed by NHP provides the outreach team, crèche team and family support staff.

Since May 2010, the health visiting team have been team co-located in the centre. They deliver child and family health services, such as a well baby clinic, baby massage, postnatal services and weaning groups from the centre. Midwives deliver antenatal clinics from the centre.

The centre is situated within an area of high social deprivation, although the total reach area has some more affluent areas within it. The majority of local families are of White British heritage with a small percentage of families from ethnic minority

groups. A growing number of East European families are moving into the area and the local population is increasingly transient. The percentage of children who are living in households where no-one is working is above the national average at 37%. The number of families that are in receipt of the childcare element of working tax credit is also high at 29%.

Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills and abilities that are lower than those found nationally. Governance arrangements are through Calderdale local authority. Day care is provided at the centre and is open from Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 18.00, for 50 weeks of the year. This provision, Creations Community Children's Centre was subject to its own inspection in 2009 and its report can be found at 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

Creations Community Children's Centre is satisfactory overall. Some aspects of the centre's work are good. The centre manager and staff team have successfully developed a secure basis for the provision in the last two years. Outcomes for users are improving, for example, obesity levels are falling and are below the national average. Parents, carers and children enjoy coming to the safe, friendly and welcoming centre. Support is good for vulnerable families and children, particularly in times of crisis. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures. They are well trained and ensure that any concerns are promptly shared with relevant agencies. Parents told inspectors that they and their children are safe and well looked after at the centre. As a result, users stay safe, gain confidence and develop parenting skills. One parent said 'my only support is the centre; it's a very safe place. I don't know what we would do without it'.

Good partnership working, particularly with health colleagues, means that parents and carers and children have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Early interventions are successful and as a result, the number of children placed on the child protection register has reduced. The promotion of equality and diversity is

good. The centre actively engages with some of the most vulnerable families. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities receive particularly effective and timely support. One parent told inspectors 'the sensory room is fantastic; it's great that my child can still use it even though they are now at school'.

Parents and carers play a role in the development of services. The centre continuously seeks their views through surveys, evaluations and consultation. In response to feedback from users, the centre develops its provision to meet their needs. The centre is seeking ways to engage more with teenage parents, Black and minority ethnic groups and families in the areas of severe deprivation. Practical strategies such as 'door knocking' by centre staff is having some success in identifying local needs.

Children behave well during sessions and make satisfactory progress from low starting points. Adults interviewed have gained confidence and are developing parenting skills. Early interventions to improve children's communication, language and literacy skills are having a satisfactory impact on their development of skills and progress. Adults and children are developing skills, such as cooperation and inquiry, to help them in their future lives. However, few adults attend adult learning courses, training or progress to employment.

The centre manager is ambitious to continue improving the provision, building on its strengths and reaching vulnerable families and young parents that are not engaging with the centre. The advisory board, NHP and local authority support the work and development of the centre through good relationships and sharing information. The centre recognises that the parents' forum and advisory board, which are shared with the other four centres in the area, have low user representation.

The local authority provides clear strategic direction and is increasing the collection and availability of data. However, monitoring and evaluation, although well-focused on the users' experience, lacks sufficient rigorous analysis of outcomes. Target setting is underdeveloped and the leadership team recognises this area for improvement.

Satisfactory and improving outcomes and quality of provision, together with a secure 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

- Increase the rigour of evaluation and monitoring of outcomes to improve target setting.
- Strengthen the role of the advisory board by securing greater representation of parents and community members on the board.
- Develop effective strategies to engage with teenage parents, BME groups and

- families from the areas of severe deprivation.
- Increase the promotion of adult learning and training to improve the skills, knowledge, employability and economic well-being of families.

How good are outcomes for users

3

Outcomes for vulnerable families who attend the centre are satisfactory overall. New and prospective parents receive good quality health guidance through antenatal and postnatal clinics, home visits and sessions focusing on preparing for birth, play and development. The good attendance at these provisions has a positive impact on the health, safety and well-being of both mothers and children. Centre registration rates of children under one year old are high at 97%. The percentage of obese children in Reception classes is reducing and at nine per cent is below the local average.

Good partnership working makes a strong contribution to improving the safety and well-being of children. Families benefit from home safety visits, free safety equipment and advice. As a result, they have a better understanding of how to keep their families safe. One mother said 'I don't know what would have happened to my children and me if it weren't for the centre. They are a great support'. There is prompt and effective use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Timely support for families with children identified as at risk or in need is helping to keep children safe. Children in care or on child protection plans receive good support which helps them progress.

The new centre is welcoming, enabling children to play and parents to develop their skills in a safe and secure environment. The day care provision and play and development sessions contribute to children's enjoyment and achievement. Early intervention to promote communication, literacy and language development is having a satisfactory impact on outcomes. Children show they enjoy the sessions through their enthusiasm and good behaviour. They are developing useful skills for the future such as co-operation and independence.

The centre maintains links with Jobcentre Plus and a notice board keeps users informed of local job vacancies. Some users have had training to become volunteers and are developing skills to improve their economic well-being. However, engagement with adult learning or training and progression into employment is low.

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
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	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

Assessment of adults' and children's needs is used effectively as a basis to plan learning and develop the provision. Adults enjoy stay and play sessions and improve their parenting skills. However, attendance on adult learning courses is low. Early identification of children with learning difficulties enables timely intervention. As a result, parents and children receive good support, advice and guidance. The CAF is used effectively and has a good impact on outcomes for children. Centre staff are well trained in the promotion of children's speech and language development. Early interventions to accelerate progress in communication, literacy and language development are having a satisfactory impact on children's learning.

The flexible range of services provided by the centre meets the needs of most users who access it. Good use is made of parents' views to inform future events and adapt sessions to meet their needs. For example, parents' views are used to inform their children's learning and such things, as menus, holiday activities and special events. Participation is satisfactory overall and has increased during the last year two years. A small number of fathers attend the monthly, area wide, 'Dads R Us' group. There are waiting lists for day-care and the activity crèche sessions. Some parents interviewed were unaware of some of the services and activities of the centre. For example, one parent did not know how they could access volunteer training and some parents were unaware of the 'Dads R Us' group.

Case studies show that good support from the centre is making a difference to vulnerable families. Parents and carers told inspectors how their involvement with the centre has helped them. 'They have been my rock; it's helped my child with behaviour issues' said one parent. Parents particularly appreciate the prompt and practical support they receive at times of crisis. Good specialist support helps empower victims of domestic abuse. Parents in crisis value the free respite places provided for their children in the day care. One parent said 'If it wasn't for the support worker and the counselling sessions my children would be in care'. Low income families take up a high number of childcare places.

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	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

Strong partnerships with other services contribute to the improving outcomes for users. The supportive and approachable style of the centre manager has been instrumental in creating good relationships with a range of partners. Close working with Ling Bob Primary and other local schools supports children's smooth transition into school. The centre is becoming established in the community and is making good use of feedback from parents and partners to develop its services. However, local authority, advisory board and centre management meetings sometimes lack sufficient focus on the evaluation of outcomes. There is increasing access to data but its use to set improvement targets is in its early stages.

Staff and partners are motivated to improve their work with vulnerable families. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The centre knows its strengths and the local community and appropriately prioritises areas for improvement. Partners contributed well to the self-evaluation through a consultation process. The advisory board understand their responsibilities. However, the centre recognises that parent and community representation on the board is low.

Safeguarding is good. Procedures to ensure the protection of users in the building are effectively implemented. Staff have a clear understanding about their role in identifying and reporting concerns and do so promptly. The centre has clear systems in place for recording information related to the vetting and recruitment of staff. Policies are appropriate and regularly updated. Activities are risk assessed and include the views of users.

Centre staff and partners are committed to promoting the inclusion of all children and their families. Inclusive practices are promoted particularly well for children with disabilities. Children identified with learning difficulties start school with an individual education plan already in place and effective liaison aids their transition. Health visitors provide support for teenage parents. However, only one of the ten identified young parents attends the teenage group, which is based at another centre in the locality. The centre recognises this as an area for improvement and is planning to establish a group at the centre.

The services of the centre are increasingly reaching the most vulnerable learners and supporting satisfactory outcomes for users. Careful planning and resource management across the locality extends the services offered so that services are sustainable. 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	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	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	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 the Creations Community Children's Centre on 10 and 11 March 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you for making us so welcome, 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 and that it meets your needs. You told us that you get many opportunities to tell the staff what services you want and that they listen to you. You said that you 'don't know what you would do if it ever closed'.

The centre offers good support to all of you who use it. You said that family support workers 'give good support and advice on anything you need help with' and quickly respond if any families are in crisis. They offer you practical help such as providing safety equipment and offering advice on parenting which you appreciate. We found that staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and that they are well trained. You said that you feel your children are well cared for and that they are safe at the centre. Some of you told us how the support you have received at the centre has helped keep families together. You particularly value the counselling for adults and play therapy for children.

The children enjoy day care and you appreciate the good communication with key workers. We found that not many parents join the adult learning classes. We think the centre needs to find out what learning and training opportunities you would like provided locally to help you into employment. The centre is working with Jobcentre Plus to make sure you have access to information and support to gain employment. Some fathers attend the 'Dads R Us' group and enjoy having fun with their children. Your children behave well and you all learn more about how to stay healthy and be safe. The centre is supporting your children to help improve their speech and language skills and their progress is satisfactory.

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. Some of you are involved in making decisions about your centre through the parents' forum. The centre needs to encourage you to be on the advisory board. We have suggested that the advisory board, local authority and centre staff monitor the outcomes more closely and set targets to challenge the centre to improve further.

We found that equality is promoted well at the centre. Calderdale local authority helps the centre to know 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 have been 'knocking on doors' to tell people about the centre and find out what they want. They need to continue to find ways to encourage teenage parents, black and minority ethnic families and those in the most deprived areas to engage with the centre. The centre is fully accessible to families and children with disabilities.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enjoy the sensory room and receive good support to help them prepare for school.

The local authority, advisory board and the centre staff are keen to further improve the centre with you and they already know most of the things they need to do. The centre has continually been improving over the past two years and knows what needs to improve further, we are, therefore, confident that it will continue to do so.

A special thank you to those of you who took the time to come in to talk with us and to share your views. We wish you the best of luck for the future.

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