

# Inspection report for Kirkby East Children's Centre

Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	373025
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

Centre governance	Nottinghamshire Community Health
Centre leader	Tina Hancock
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Sunny Days Sure Start Nursery

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 and volunteers, parents and carers, a wide range of partner providers, members of the community, and representatives of Nottinghamshire Community Health and the local authority. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

The centre is a phase one Sure Start Children's Centre that was designated in 2007. It has an administrative base at the Summit Centre in Kirkby in Ashfield. The building is owned by Kirkby Miners Welfare Trust. The centre provides the full core offer and various activities at a range of other venues across its reach area, some of which are delivered by partner agencies. It incorporates the Sunny Days Sure Start Nursery which provides day care; the nursery is subject to its own inspection and the report can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). The centre is governed by Nottinghamshire Community Health commissioned by the local authority.

The reach area contains a well-populated urban district which faces considerable economic and social challenge, including a much higher than average percentage of unemployment and families living on benefits in workless households. The Kirkby ward, in which the centre is sited, is among the 20% most deprived in England. The proportion of potential users who come from minority ethnic groups is low. Children begin the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment that is much lower than that expected for their age.

The centre leader also manages the Kirkby Central and West Children's Centre.

## 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**

**1**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**1**

## Main findings

Kirkby East Children’s Centre provides an outstanding service in every aspect of its work and is held in high regard by parents, carers and other users. One parent reflected the views of many when she said: ‘I love this centre. It is a real home from home.’ The services it provides are enhanced by a dedicated team of staff who have a deep understanding of every facet of the centre’s reach. Each of the workers possesses a high level of expertise, underpinned by thorough training and high levels of personal and professional skill. Individual members of the team and partner contributors work together very effectively to ensure that the needs of users are recognised at an early stage and are met very effectively. An outcome of this high quality work is the significant levels of uptake and participation in all the activities provided at the Summit Centre and at a wide range of outreach venues. The impact of each activity and course is constantly evaluated and the centre provides compelling statistical evidence to affirm the success of its work. No stone is left unturned to ensure that everyone who needs help receives it. Everyone is made to feel welcome and valued when they either visit one of the centre’s venues or receive a visit at home. Ensuring equality for all and celebrating the diversity of the community is central to all aspects of provision.

Centre users are consulted fully at all stages of planning for activities and evaluating their effectiveness. The support for adults who are planning to begin or return to the world of work is excellent. Within a range of activities adults are trained to act as mentors for their friends and other users, for example as breastfeeding mentors. The centre has also created an outstanding range of opportunities for users to work as volunteers. They embrace these opportunities with great enthusiasm and expertise, based on excellent training provision.

Ensuring the safety and well-being of users is also paramount. In this respect, the centre’s work is exemplary, including the policy and practices that underpin all aspects of safeguarding. Above all, the centre and the community it serves benefit greatly from the authoritative and calm approach of the centre’s leader, who is at the heart of everything it does.

A strong track record of ongoing improvement is in place. Against a background of clear policies, highly sophisticated data gathering and target driven self-evaluation the centre is always looking to improve the level of response to identified need. This serves to illustrate the centre's outstanding capacity for improvement. No one is complacent. For example, the shortly to be opened new meeting rooms at the Summit Centre are viewed as an opportunity to provide even more activities on the main site. The centre aims to compliment the highly successful provision already operating at the Summit Centre and at the wide range of outreach venues.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Build on the already outstanding work of the centre by using the new accommodation at the Summit Centre for activities and meetings to further enhance the existing range of onsite and outreach provision.

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

<b>1</b>
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The centre is highly successful in encouraging healthy lifestyles, covering all aspects of emotional, mental and physical health. For example, the quality of food served at the Summit Centre for children and adult users embodies all the desirable aspects of healthy eating. This is about to be supplemented by the opening of an allotment on the Summit site where centre users can grow their own vegetables. In partnership with the community health workers, the centre does an exceptional job in promoting the benefits of breastfeeding. The promotion of outdoor exercise is also encouraged with great success, with regular 'buggy' and walking trips to local parks and woodland.

All staff are constantly vigilant and very well-informed with regard to the protection and safety of children and adults. This applies especially to those who, because of their circumstances are, at times, vulnerable or might be potentially at risk. In this respect, partnership liaison and cooperation is exemplary, with staff always prepared to 'go the extra mile' to ensure the safety and well-being of all clients. The centre's work on behalf of children who have a child protection plan or are in the care of the local authority or other agency falls firmly into this category. Similarly partnership liaison when contributing to the Common Assessment Framework is exemplary.

In every activity observed during the inspection enjoyment was evident. Users, whether children or adults achieve well educationally and particularly well in their personal, emotional and social development. This is mainly because of the expertise of staff in giving children and adults the confidence that they can succeed. This is particularly so in the promotion of children's early speaking and listening skills and supporting adults in preparing to access or return to employment. Centre staff provide an ideal balance between enabling users to become independent and keeping a watching eye to ensure they have all the support they need. Users develop excellent patterns of behaviour and very positive relationships. They also contribute

very well to the work of the centre, through volunteering, helping to plan and evaluate activities and playing their part in governance. Skills for the future are developed exceptionally well. Children receive the help and preparation they need to ensure they are ready for school and the centre works very effectively to help adults to access work opportunities.

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>

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

<b>1</b>
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The needs and progress of all users are assessed promptly, accurately and frequently. As with other elements of the centre's work, partnership liaison is exemplary. As a result, assessments and their outcomes are closely tailored to users' needs. Outreach services are similarly highly effective. Thorough identification procedures mean that no one slips through the network of support. Midwives play an invaluable role in alerting the centre and partner services to the arrival of new-born babies. Centre staff then work with care and sensitivity to make potential users aware of the guidance and support that is available to them. Everyone is welcomed at the centre and at its outreach sites. Consequently attendance and participation levels are high.

The centre provides an excellent range of enjoyable activities that are very well matched to users' needs and engage their interest. This is because users are involved at all stages in planning and evaluating activities. The new activity rooms, outdoor play provision and allotment will soon be ready for use. All these features are based at the Summit Centre and operate alongside an outstanding range of outreach activities. The centre is constantly looking for ways to enhance this range of activities. For example, users are looking forward to participating in 'Sixty Minute Makeovers' and 'Come Dine with Me' cookery sessions. Careful planning helps to ensure that all activities are suitable targeted at the interests and needs of users. An excellent example of this is the well attended and greatly enjoyed 'Ready Teddy Go' sessions. The success of these sessions is attributable to the excellent partnerships that exist between volunteers and staff. On a wider front, there are very effective

outreach links with, among others, the Sunny Days Sure Start partner nursery, local voluntary toddler groups, which are vibrant and well attended, and the local health centre.

Care, guidance and support are excellent and very well managed, particularly for those who might, at times, be potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances. Record keeping is very efficient and well managed, with staff constantly liaising and sharing information. Centre staff also work very effectively to involve users who are relatively hard to reach or who, because of their circumstances, are unable to leave their homes to participate in activities. This includes children or adults who have disabilities. In such cases, wherever possible, home visits are arranged.

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>

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

**1**

This is a centre in which everyone works together to help overcome any barriers or challenges that users and the community might face. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding, including meeting the needs of those who have disabilities. Excellent governance ensures all partner providers and users, including parents and carers, are represented and their views heard. Strong and effective consultation with parents and carers is also evident through governance, the local advisory group and a parent's forum. Governance is very effective in holding the centre to account for the quality of its work and ensuring that available resources are used wisely. This enables the centre to give excellent value for money. The centre leader is particularly adept at accessing funding from a wide variety of sources and every possible opportunity is fully explored. This enables the centre to continue to expand its range of activities and to maintain the high quality of provision. The centre plans and evaluates all aspects of its work with great care, involving all user groups and parents and carers in the process. There are sophisticated arrangements that involve all staff in constantly gathering accurate data and information about the success and quality of the centre's work. This data is analysed carefully by the centre manager and shared with the advisory board. This process enables the staff to set challenging targets for improvement. In turn, these targets are evaluated rigorously as part of an ongoing cycle of evaluation and improvement.

Day-to-day management and organisation, including the supervision and training of

staff enable the centre to operate very effectively in every respect. The mutual support that staff provide for each other mean that no one is isolated or left to struggle. The staff greatly appreciate the recognition and appreciation they receive for the high quality of their work. The centre leader provides calm and assured leadership, whilst keeping a handle on everything that goes on.

The policies that underpin the safeguarding of children and adults are exemplary. Child protection procedures are rigorous and arrangements to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and potentially vulnerable adults are effective. In respect of safeguarding, the work of staff and volunteers is backed up by excellent training arrangements and inter-agency liaison. Staff are constantly alert and do everything they can as they strive to combat and minimise all types of abuse and violence.

Cooperation between partnership agencies is outstanding, giving a 'seamless robe' of high quality provision. The wider community is very aware of the excellent work of the centre and so it commands a high profile. Excellent marketing and 'user friendly' advertising materials are very effective in drawing the attention of the community to the work of the centre and in promoting participation.

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>1</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>1</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>1</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>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>1</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>1</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>1</b>

## **Any other information used to inform the judgements made**

## **during this inspection**

Inspectors took into account the findings of the most recent report on the Sunny Days Sure Start Nursery, which judged the setting to be good.

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 Kirkby East Children's Centre on 17–18 March 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

The inspectors would like to thank all the children, parents and carers and centre users and staff who so kindly gave their time to share their views about the centre and its work. It is clear that you hold the centre and its staff in high regard and greatly appreciate the activities and support and guidance that the staff provide.

More than anything else it is the dedication of the centre leader and the staff that enables them to provide such excellent services. Each of the workers has a very high level of expertise and is trained well. They are also extremely good at making sure that you know what is going on at the centre and the other sites where activities take place. When you attend activities, the care and sensitivity of staff mean that you can feel welcome and confident. The staff are so successful at this that many of you go on to act as volunteer helpers and, in some cases, to work at the centre. We were most impressed by the ways in which the centre supports those of you who are planning to begin or return to the world of work. We also like the ways in which you are trained to act as mentors for friends and other users, for example, as breastfeeding mentors. We were also delighted to see how you embrace these opportunities with such enthusiasm and expertise, based on the excellent training you receive.

It is good that if for any reason you are not able to get to the centre the staff will come out and see you. If you find yourself in difficulties or facing a particular challenge the staff are always ready to provide help and advice. Indeed, no stone is left unturned to ensure that everyone who needs help receives it. The staff are also extremely good at ensuring that you and your children are able to feel as safe as possible.

Above all, with its strong leadership and dedicated staff, the centre is always trying to make what it does even better. This means that you will shortly be able to use the



new activity and meeting rooms at the Summit Centre, along with the allotment and, for the children, new outdoor play equipment. Other activities are being planned which the staff will be able to bring out to your homes. There are going to be opportunities to have toy parties in your gardens, a 'Sixty Minute Makeover' for your house and an opportunity to host Kirkby East's version of 'Come Dine with Me'. With this in mind, we are asking the centre to make the best possible use of the shortly to be opened new accommodation and facilities so that the provision remains as good as it can be.

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