

Inspection report for Redcar Children's Centre

Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	366331
Inspection dates	17 – 18 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Rachael Flesher HMI

Centre governance	Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Centre leader	Mrs Linda Bulmer
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Greengates Primary School 111607
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Little Waves Daycare EY281723

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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with parents and carers, centre staff and representatives from professional partnerships, the advisory board and the local authority.

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

Information about the centre

Redcar Children's Centre is situated on a shared site with Green Gates Primary School, in a residential area of Redcar on the north east coast. It serves a community where 30% live within the 1% to 5% most disadvantaged areas in the country and 25% live in workless households. In one of the two wards within the catchment area, the percentage of families claiming income support is almost twice the national average. Families also face issues of poor housing, drug and alcohol misuse, crime, domestic violence and low levels of skills. The large majority of families in the centre's reach area are predominantly White British with 2.5% of the community from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. A very small number of families who have been granted refugee status also reside in the community. The area is currently benefiting from a regeneration initiative providing residential housing both for sale and for rent.

The full day care element of the provision is provided on site by Little Waves Daycare. Children enter the early years provision with skills that are much lower than those typically expected for their age.

Redcar Children's Centre shares an advisory board with three other children's centres in the locality, which is made up of representatives from various professional partnerships and the local community, parents and carers and centre staff. The

children's centre is governed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council. The children's centre provides the full core offer.

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

Outcomes, quality of provision and leadership and management, are all good overall, with some areas judged outstanding. The centre's capacity for sustained improvement is also good leading to good overall effectiveness. Equality and diversity is actively promoted and the centre fulfils its statutory duties. Effective arrangements exist to ensure the safety and health of children and other users. Systems to ensure users are safeguarded are robust and effective. Healthy lifestyle outcomes for young children and parents and carers are excellent due to the high quality provision and services provided by highly skilled and committed health and children centre professionals. Users engage well in training and adult education programmes and take up rates are excellent. The exemplary support provided by Jobcentre Plus ensures users are developing economic stability and independence and gaining much needed confidence to return to the learning environment and seek employment. This is leading to demonstrable improvements in outcomes for families. The centre promotes individualised, purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users extremely well with a strong emphasis placed on celebrating achievements. Activities are of high quality. Provision to help children learn and develop is outstanding as is the quality of the care, guidance and support offered to users, particularly during the times when they most need it. As one parent stated 'I felt a huge weight lifted being able to talk to someone'.

The centre is managed in a way which ensures the best use of resources. The centre meets the needs of users and the wider community very well and contributes significantly to improving outcomes. The range of users greatly reflects the community it serves and the activities and services are very well used. More significantly, a large number of the centre's most vulnerable families are accessing services and activities. Provision is planned to ensure it is accessible to all and the range, coordination and accessibility of services for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is extremely good. Staff skills and expertise are deployed

very effectively to ensure high quality services and provision.

Self-evaluation meaningfully involves all staff, partners and users and is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge. It provides the centre with an accurate understanding of users' needs and the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Plans for the future are extremely well targeted and action to overcome weaknesses, gaps in provision and improve outcomes, have been concerted and highly effective. An example of this is the success of the recent initiatives to engage more children and their families in the centre services and activities. The centre has yet to build on this success to ensure even more children and families in the community benefit from the centre services. This includes developing partnerships and information sharing between the children's centre, health professionals and maternity services to identify all expectant parents.

Those working in the centre are committed to bringing about sustainable, but ambitious, improvements and have great confidence in the leaders and managers to provide effective leadership. Morale is very high and belief in the centre's success runs through all levels of staff, who 'strive to achieve the best'. Based on good consultation the new centre manager has instigated many changes to the centre and services in order to promote good and better outcomes for users. These changes have been seen as positive developments with staff stating 'the changes are for the better', 'the centre has been transformed' and 'it feels so different here'. Staff development and training is very effective and appropriate in order to meet current and future needs. The centre has the ability to improve outcomes and provision based on what it has accomplished so far.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Build on the successful, recently implemented strategies designed to support and encourage more of the community who are not accessing services to engage with the centre, in order to identify and support the needs and views of even more children and their families.
- Develop partnerships and information sharing systems between the children centre, health visitors and maternity services to identify all expectant parents in the reach area.
- Engage expectant parents with services to secure early intervention and implement prevention strategies in order to promote good outcomes for themselves and their children.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Overall outcomes for users are good, with the centre achieving outstanding outcomes for being healthy and economic and social well-being. There is an extremely high uptake of those accessing universal and targeted health services. Users report a significantly increased understanding of, and improvement in, the take up of healthy lifestyles. Following a searching analysis of data and information sources, the centre identified a high number of expectant and new parents and provision was adapted to meet these needs accordingly. This provision includes the highly attended and valued 'Bumps to babies' group, parenthood programmes, health visitor led 'drop-ins' and infant massage sessions. Excellent breastfeeding and weaning support is provided to parents through health visitors and highly trained and skilled centre staff. This has had a significant impact on breastfeeding initiation. There are high quality services in place to support families with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Users clearly benefit from excellent integrated services to support all families.

Children using services at the centre are effectively safeguarded. Users state they 'feel safe and supported' and that the centre is a 'safe haven'. Families are confident to turn to the centre in times of crisis and the centre has effectively supported many vulnerable families. Case studies show the positive impact the centre has on outcomes for children subject to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process, looked after children and children subject to a child protection plan. It is reducing the number of those needing child protection plans, and preventing situations reaching crisis point, due to the early intervention and support provided. Parents and carers and children are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Family and parenting support is having a positive impact on improving parenting skills and reducing incidents of harm. The 'Safe Start' scheme is reducing the risk of accidents, improving parent and carers' understanding and ensuring children are safer in their homes. Children engage in positive behaviour and are developing positive relationships.

Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make extremely good progress from their starting points in developing their skills for the future. Schools report the centre 'provides children with a good starting point for them to build on'. The high quality early years provision and two-year-old pilot programme is beginning to demonstrate long-term impact on narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile and the rest. Strong transition arrangements are in place to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning and development as they move on to school. Parents and children enjoy extensive opportunities to play, have fun and learn together.

Parents and carers and their children are achieving excellent economic and social well-being due to the exemplary support and guidance provided by the centre, in particular through Jobcentre Plus and the 'Pathways to prospects' programme. The centre is strongly committed to ensuring all users achieve their full potential and to

removing the barriers that prevent users from accessing training and employment. Parents report they want to go to work because they want to set an example to their children.

All children and families using the centre treat each other with respect and develop positive relationships. The centre is welcoming to all and has established itself at the heart of the community. Users have good opportunities to participate in the governance of the centre and their views are regularly sought through annual surveys and on a daily basis. In May, the centre is taking part in 'Have Your Say in May', a consultation exercise designed to gather views of the wider community through a variety of events and activities. Users' views are used to shape the services of the children centre and ensure they are meeting the needs of the community.

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	1
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	1

How good is the provision?

2

The needs of families are assessed sensitively and services are tailored to individual needs. The centre works very well in partnerships with other agencies to ensure that assessments, such as those carried out under the CAF process and assessments of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are robust, well informed and secure early intervention. The centre ensures parents and carers are involved at every stage when assessing, planning for and supporting the individual needs of children resulting in a coherent and consistent approach.

The quality of care for young children, parents and carers and other users provided by the centre is outstanding. Excellent provision enables children to learn and develop in a personally appropriate environment where they can develop their skills across all areas of learning through high quality activities and resources that interest and engage them. The centre successfully raises aspirations and expectations of

children and their families. Individual users are exceptionally well supported to improve their educational and personal development and progress to further employment, education and training with great success rates. One user explained, 'I would not have had confidence to go for interviews without the group and training'. Users are genuinely proud of their achievements and empowered to improve individual and family outcomes and well-being.

Users value the excellent care, guidance and support provided by the children's centre. They recognise the impact it has had on their lives. For example users commented 'I would not have moved forward without the children centre support', 'I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the children's centre' and 'if it was not for the centre I'd be lost'. Users state that staff are welcoming, approachable and friendly and they 'get the support they need from staff who are not judgemental'.

The quality and range of services offered by the centre, or on their behalf, are good and meet the needs of users, including target groups, well. This is due to the centre and partner services sharing an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the changing needs of the community and adapting services and provision accordingly. The centre ensures equality of access for all users by providing childcare places and considering the times of the sessions to suit their needs. Participation rates and attendance levels are good. The centre is effectively reaching the community and engaging many of the most vulnerable families partly because of its outreach and engagement work.

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	1
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	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Governance and accountability arrangements and clear roles and responsibilities at all levels of leadership and management are very well established and understood by all. Safer recruitment procedures are followed and all relevant checks are made to ensure that all staff are suitable and safe to work with children. All staff receive appropriate, good quality child protection training and are confident in their role to safeguard children. Risks are thoroughly assessed and minimised. Staff are very

effectively deployed. Good professional supervision and management arrangements are in place to monitor the performance of staff and ensure ongoing professional development. Staff state they feel 'empowered' and 'trusted', leaders 'welcome our input', 'trust our decision making' and are 'enthusiastic about our ideas'.

The local authority asks challenging questions of managers to improve provision and outcomes. Staff and leaders routinely reflect on their practice and provision to secure continuous improvement. Staff stated 'we thrive on the success we have' and 'we are not complacent; we want to be the best'. The local authority provides regular reports and data analysis to the centre using information gathered by the children's centre and their own data sources. This provides valuable evidence of impact of the services and activities on outcomes for children and their families, and also helps the centre to identify the needs of the reach area. This is fully utilised by the centre leadership team in their evaluation and monitoring processes to ensure they can hold themselves accountable.

The inclusion of all children and families is promoted very effectively and the centre is proactive in removing barriers to access. The centre has taken significant steps to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged and the rest and outcomes for key target groups are improving at a good pace.

Strong partnership working and information sharing systems ensures a fully integrated approach to service delivery. The centre actively encourages partners to deliver their services on site, which has greatly improved partnership working, particularly in relation to early intervention and prevention work. However, a strong partnership is not developed with maternity services to enable the children centre to identify and support all expectant parents.

The centre uses and manages its available resources extremely well to meet the needs of users and the wider community thereby providing excellent value for money. Resources are of high quality and space is extremely well utilised by a variety of partners who greatly value the high quality provision and facilities. Partners all state they feel part of the centre team, and are supported extremely well and feel welcome and safe.

The strong links with key partners, users and the wider community help to involve them in the work and governance of the centre. Their views are sought and used to shape services. The centre is increasingly effective in reaching out to engage with members of the community who are not accessing services in order to identify and meet their needs. However, despite the engagement figure rising significantly in the last three months, progress has, until recently, been slow. The centre has yet to build on this recent success to ensure even more children and families are accessing the support and services they need.

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	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	1
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 Redcar Children's Centre on 17-18 March 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you to those of you who contributed to the inspection. Like you, we found your children's centre to be very welcoming and friendly. You told us you feel safe and supported. High priority is given to safeguarding your children and staff are skilled and knowledgeable in making sure your children are safe and protected. The staff at the centre and partner services work very well together, sharing information and resources to make sure you get the right support when you need it.

Healthy lifestyle outcomes for you and your children are excellent due to the high quality provision and services provided by highly skilled and committed health and children centre professionals. You can access a wide range of groups designed to support those of you who are expecting babies and those of you who are new parents. You told us you have taken up healthy lifestyles and your children are developing a very good understanding of how to be healthy.

Many of you engage well in training and adult education programmes and take up rates are excellent. The exemplary support provided by Jobcentre Plus ensures you are developing economic stability and independence and gaining much needed confidence to return to learning and seek employment. This is leading to demonstrable improvements in outcomes for your families. As one of you told us 'I would not have had confidence to go for interviews without the group and training'. The centre promotes individualised, purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for you all extremely well with a strong emphasis on celebrating your achievements. Activities are of high quality. Provision to help your children learn and develop is outstanding as is the quality of the care, guidance and support you are offered, particularly during the times when you most need it. As some of you told us 'I felt a huge weight lifted being able to talk to someone'. 'I would not have moved forward without the children centre support', 'I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the children's centre' and 'if it was not for the centre I'd be lost'. You told us you find staff welcoming, approachable and friendly and you 'get the support you need from staff who are not judgemental'. We agree.

The centre meets your needs and those of your children and the wider community very well. The services and activities provided are well used by the community. More significantly, a large number of the most vulnerable families are accessing services and activities. Provision is planned to ensure it is accessible to all and the services for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is extremely good.

Your children's centre highly values your opinion and provides good opportunities for all of you to contribute your views and be involved in the decision making of the centre and in developing the range of provision and services. The centre has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and plans for the future are extremely well targeted to secure improvement. An example of this is the success of the recent initiatives to engage more children and their families in the centre services

and activities. We have asked the centre to build upon this success to ensure even more children and families in the community benefit from the centre services. This includes developing partnerships and information sharing between the children centre, health professionals and maternity services to identify all expectant parents.

Staff morale is very high and belief in the centre's success runs through all levels of staff, who 'strive to achieve the best'. Based on good consultation the new centre manager has instigated many changes to the centre and services in order to promote good and better outcomes for you and your children. These changes have been seen as positive developments with staff stating 'the changes are for the better', 'the centre has been transformed' and 'it feels so different here'. Your children's centre has good capacity to further improve your family's outcomes and narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged and the rest. It does so with great determination and dedication. We wish you all the very best for the future.

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