

Inspection report for Denaby Main and Conisbrough Children's Centre

Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	373066
Inspection dates	21 – 22 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Julie Pomone

Centre governance	Doncaster Community Health Care
Centre leader	Vickie Oldroyd
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY413694 Little Einstein's Day Nursery Ltd

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. Inspectors held meetings with parents and carers and service users, members of the advisory board, childcare partners, health, education, training and employment and social care professionals. In addition, representatives from Jobcentre Plus as well as centre management and senior leadership team members including those from the local authority and Doncaster Community Health Care local governance were also interviewed.

Inspectors observed the work at both the Denaby and Conisbrough Children's Centre sites as well as the outreach work. They also looked at a range of documentation related to the work of the centre.

Information about the centre

Denaby Main and Conisbrough Children's Centre is located over two purpose built buildings, one in each town. The main build in Denaby provides full day care provision. Until July 2010 the day nursery and was run by the Children's Centre; from September 2010 it was affiliated to a private provider 'Little Einstein's Ltd'. In July 2010, the centre underwent major refurbishment and the re-deployment of the whole children's centre staff team due to the closure of the nursery and a new staff structure was put in place. The site in Conisbrough housed the 32 place 'Shiny Stars' Day Nursery until July 2009. The building has since been re-developed to become a multi-functional venue, which hosts a variety of services and activities.

The children's centres provide multi-agency services under the remit of the five Every Child Matters outcomes and the core offer. This covers integrated early learning, care, family support, health services, outreach services to children and families not attending the centre and access to training and employment advice. The lead body is Doncaster Community Health Care (formally Doncaster Primary Care trust) who directly employ the staff and also manage two other children's centres in the Doncaster area.

Denaby Main and Conisbrough are former mining villages. The area has suffered long standing deprivation which has been exacerbated by the loss of employment in mining and associated industries. Conisbrough and Denaby Ward has been identified in the Health and Improvement Programme as being one of the most deprived districts in Doncaster, where inequalities in health are the greatest. The reach area of the children’s centre is in the top seven per cent of the most deprived wards in the country.

The population is predominantly of White British heritage with a small minority ethnic population. Long-term unemployment is very high, with large numbers of children living in households with no adult earners and a large number of lone parents. Children’s skills, knowledge and understanding on entry to nursery are well below the expected levels nationally for three- and four-year-olds. Academic achievement is low in schools, with a higher than average rate of teenage pregnancy. Adult literacy levels in the area are also low. There are high levels of smoking across both male and female populations and age ranges and many older local residents suffer from smoking related diseases. Substance misuse is also at levels well above national averages.

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

Denaby Main and Conisbrough Children’s Centre meet the needs of their users well and they are having a positive demonstrable impact on children, parents and carers and families in the locality that they serve. The centre has raised its profile in the local area and has managed significant change due to the changeover of the nursery to a private provider and the subsequent re-deployment of staff. The management and staffing structure is highly effective and staff roles and responsibilities are clear, multi-functional and designed around meeting the needs of its communities. Outstanding assessment of need ensures that support is particularly well targeted and prioritised. As a result, the centre demonstrates a good capacity to further improve the quality of the service that it provides.

‘We feel safe here’ ‘We receive good support to help us manage our children’s

behaviour' are frequent comments expressed by parents and carers. Safeguarding policies and procedures are robust and highly effective and the partnership work with key agencies maximises the opportunity to safeguard children and staff. Assessment of individual need ensures the Common Assessment Framework is successful to ensure support can be put in place quickly. Safeguarding is embedded well in activities and support. Staff training is extensive and there are highly effective supervision arrangements for staff with nominated professionals at a local and senior level in Doncaster Community health Care. Protocols for making referrals are clear and well used by staff, and risk is managed well through effective arrangements and early intervention. The promotion of equality and diversity is good with inclusive practices underpinning all aspects of the work undertaken by the centre.

'Discovering this place has changed my life around'. 'It has helped us move forward as a family'. 'I would be lost without the staff and this centre they are really supportive'. These are some of the highly positive comments expressed by parents and carers and why the Denaby Main and Conisbrough Children's centre is judged to be good.

Staff are highly supportive and the link between work done in the centre and outreach support is coherent and effectively promoting continuity for parents and carers and children. For example, work focussing around providing a healthy diet in the centre is also demonstrated in children's homes through the home support workers.

Activities in the centre are purposeful with children highly engaged, interested and active learners. Parents and children clearly enjoy coming to the centre and users speak of their high levels of enjoyment through extremely well planned play sessions. Activities are linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes and each session requires staff to make observations of children's progress and these are shared with parents and carers. Staff encourage parents and carers to take ownership of monitoring their children's achievements through a range of methods such as 'scrap books' and 'learning ladders'. There is on-going evaluation of all activity and parents' and carers' individual interests are taken into account. The good progress and achievements that children and families make are clearly evident however; the centre does not sufficiently celebrate success as well as it might. The information displayed around the centre is highly useful and there is much promotion of what the centre does for its users, however, opportunities are missed to celebrate the positive impact that the centre has had on individuals or groups.

Centre managers have a good understanding of the areas within the service that could be stronger and further developed. There is good use of a range of reliable data drawn from the health service about the characteristics of its communities. This, together with the highly effective partnership working and sharing of information across health and social care professionals, allows the centre to make some excellent assessment of need and ensure that support and activity is targeted correctly. A well integrated electronic information and reporting system that all key workers can access allows support staff to very effectively track support and progress of the work

undertaken with families. However, the availability of impact data and the negotiation of performance targets at a senior level to enable the centre to measure its performance more effectively are currently underdeveloped.

The centre makes good use of a wide range of local and national data to identify what its priority areas of action are and where to target resources. Resources are used well and to the benefit of users. The accommodation, facilities and resources are excellent and provide a welcoming environment for users. The on-site café is particularly valued by the community and provides a good variety of dishes that focus on healthy options and good nutritional value.

The advisory board has good representation of agencies and partners that help the centre to improve and continue to meet its users and wider community needs but currently there are no fathers on the board.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- In conjunction with the local authority and partners implement more useful performance targets and develop more effective strategies to demonstrate impact of the service of its users and wider communities.
- Increase the celebration of achievement in conjunction with users to raise aspirations and demonstrate to potential users the positive impact that the service has on its communities.
- Increase the involvement of fathers on the advisory board.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Outcomes for children, parents and families are good and improving. The centre is continuing to increase registrations through good promotion and by providing a high quality experience for its users. Those families currently attending the centre provide good recommendations to other potential users.

A strong focus on improving health outcomes is supported by the integrated health team. Staff work intensively with health visiting, school nursing and sexual health partners. There is strong support for user's emotional health needs with staff responsive to providing personalised support for parents and families in times of crisis, for example, when they are depressed, dealing with substance misuse or when their family life becomes chaotic and they struggle to cope. One parent commented 'Staff are friendly, approachable and I can open up and talk to them about the things that are affecting me and dragging me down.'

As part of the health service, staff expertise is well utilised and they have a good understanding of wider aspects of health related issues and how to support vulnerable groups. There is good promotion of healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating, good hygiene, and participation in outdoor pursuits for parents and families with access to an excellent outdoor learning environment. Parents and carers understanding of health matters is improving and they are able to transfer this to the home environment.

The centre uses data well, for example, to identify that breastfeeding in Denaby and Conisbrough is low compared to other areas in Doncaster. As a result, very effective action is undertaken to improve this issue by providing an antenatal clinic on site and through promoting breastfeeding at an early stage.

The centre provides good support to parents and carers by providing a well run crèche so that they are then able to access learning and development opportunities. A small proportion of parents and carers attend courses on site delivered by partner organisations to extend their academic skills and successfully gain qualifications to help them access further education and training. There is some successful signposting to and from Jobcentre Plus with some successes into training and employment. However, overall the most positive outcome is the success in engaging adults for in the first steps to education and training. The centre has a successful volunteering programme. However, it has recently been disrupted due to delays accessing criminal records bureau (CRB) checks.

Children are successfully developing skills for the future through their play sessions. The centre provides a safe, well resourced welcoming environment at both centres. Children's social skills are improved, for example, children learn how to use a knife and fork, and to sit and eat appropriately at a table. Parents and carers are also encouraged through home visits to carry this on and help families find affordable furniture, such as tables and chairs. Housekeeping is outstanding and the centre disseminates information regarding safety in the home well through effective communication and safety alert.

Attendance of children at activities is well monitored and any absence is quickly followed up. Children are actively inquisitive and independent learners. Their behaviour is good and the older children have a good understand of the consequences of poor behaviour and that it is not acceptable.

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	2

their personal and social development	
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	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre meets its core offer well. Provision is of a good quality and is explicitly linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage and Every Child Matter outcomes. Learning is, therefore, purposeful as each activity or session has clearly identified and recorded outcomes which are used as the basis for planning, evaluation and improvement. Reflective practice is encouraged for every planned activity or session.

Assessment of the needs of children and parents and carers is outstanding with particularly effective procedures to identify individual issues at an early stage and respond with a clearly planned and individualised improvement strategy. The centre has strong partnerships with a range of support agencies and positive relationships with the community it serves. It provides a wide range of flexible services to meet the needs of users, including high quality learning and play activities to effectively engage parents and their children. One parent's comment was typical of many when she said, 'I was feeling lost and alone but this centre has given me hope'.

The quality of care for children and parents and carers is good with a wide variety of flexible and personalised advice and support to meet the diverse needs of families within the area. For example, the centre provides support with transport and the centre 'people carrier' used to transport families to activities and medical appointments. This is particularly useful and important for those with a physical disability that where independent travel is difficult. A community garden area is being developed which has generated significant local involvement and other environmental activities such as recycling plastic has been very successful. Interest has also been created with the introduction of a chicken run and the production of fresh eggs, which is particularly popular and educative for the children. Good support is provided for the high number of young mums in the reach area to help ensure that they do not feel isolated and vulnerable.

The centre uses the views of its user's well collecting information through a variety of methods. Parents and carers quote how things have changed as a result of their feedback and how things have improved. For example, the number of fathers accessing services has increased as a result of feedback regarding the need to change the times of sessions. The centre is currently gathering the views of non-users to establish the reasons why they do not attend and to consider further adapting the service to meet the need of potential new families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	1
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	2
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	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Management decision making is based on an in-depth knowledge of the needs of the communities which the centre serves. At a strategic and local level managers engage well with partners who are able to help them drive forward the engagement and improvement agenda for the centre.

The management structure is well organised to deliver a 'fit for purpose' service that can continue to improve its quality of provision. Roles and responsibilities are clear and there is good senior management support for the deputy centre manager who manages the operational day-to-day activities. The management team are highly experienced and carry out their responsibilities well. Staff work enthusiastically and communication within the centre team is highly effective particularly around the sharing of information to benefit the users and ensure that risk is well managed. The centre provides good value for money.

There is good promotion of equality and diversity and this is implicit in all the work that the centre performs. The centre has a clear understanding of the number of children aged nought to five years in the reach area who are currently not registered at the centre. Centre management respond well to exploring the reasons why families are not involved and look at ways to further adapt the service. Some positive work is being carried out to develop greater cultural awareness in an area that is traditionally of White British heritage. The centre is making good improvements in narrowing the achievement gap through its individualised approach to working with children and parents.

There is regular individual supervision and observation of staff performance and a planned approach to developing individual members of staff understanding of safeguarding. Staff development is good and well prioritised to improve both the skills of staff and improve the service to users. Good procedures are in place to safeguard staff and all users of the centre. Safe recruitment procedures are well established and all staff are subject to enhanced CRB checks.

The advisory board has good representation of agencies and partners that help the centre to improve and continue to meet its users and wider community needs. The elected parent chair has a wealth of knowledge of the demography of the

communities that the centre serves. The board has insufficient representation of fathers.

The centre uses a wide range of evaluation and feedback to support quality improvement. The self-evaluation process is inclusive and the centre uses effective strategies to gather the views of staff and users. The local authority carries out an 'annual conversation' with the centre, which results in a realistic action plan for improvement.

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	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
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 the Denaby and Conisbrogh Children's Centre on 21 – 22 March 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

We observed a number of sessions and saw your children playing and learning. We had the opportunity to speak with you, your children, members of staff and other professionals who work with the centre. We looked at plans and records of your children's work and were able to see how you and your families are making progress and benefiting from the services that your children's centre provides.

You told us how friendly and welcoming the staff are and how supportive they are when you are experiencing times of difficulty. You told us about how the centre has improved significantly over the last year and how many more parents and carers are now attending the centre activities. You appreciate the access to transport for you and your children and you told us about how helpful this has been in helping you access services and visit appointments.

The café is excellent and it provides a wide range of good value nutritional meals and snacks for you and your children. It is also available for the wider community and we saw it being well used. We were impressed with the development of the community garden and thought that introducing chickens into the area is both fun and educational for your children. We hope you and your families enjoy contributing to its development.

The centre provides a good range of services for you and your children from birth to school age and it helps to prepare them well for school and future life. Staff are continually looking at ways to improve the service for you.

The centre is well managed and all the staff we met are keen to make a positive difference to you and improve the lives of the local community. They know that there are many people who have not registered at the centre and some who have registered and don't attend. They are trying to find out the reason why and looking at ways to improve this and increase registration and ensure families do not miss out.

The centre provides good support to you in your homes and the staff work hard to ensure both you and your children are safe and protected from harm.

We would like to see more examples throughout the centre of how the activities that are organised have made a difference to you and improved your lives. We also feel it

would be useful to have fathers represented on the centre advisory board. We have asked the management team to consider these points.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to speak with us. We wish you every success for the future.

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