

# Inspection report for Estcourt Children's Centre

<b>Local authority</b>	Hull City Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	365778
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30-31 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan Cawdron

<b>Centre governance</b>	Governing body of Estcourt Primary School and Children's Centre
<b>Centre leader</b>	Mr David Waterson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Centre address</b>	Estcourt Street, Hull, HU9 2RP
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Estcourt Primary School
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	EY381603 Tillymints Day Care

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.

**Published:** April 2011

## 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 one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with a range of users, staff, partners, local headteachers and representatives from the parents' forum and the local authority. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTRE

Estcourt Children's Centre is a phase two children's centre established in 2008 on the site of Estcourt Primary School. It is located in the Southcoates West area of the city. The centre serves the entire geographical area of Southcoates West ward and 59% of Holderness ward, near to Hull city centre and a major port.

The community served by the centre experiences relatively high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Currently, there are 606 birth to five year-old children in the bottom 30% of deprivation and a further 410 children in the bottom 70%. Forty-four per cent of households in the centre's reach area are from within 10% of the most deprived households nationally. Forty-two per cent of pupils in the primary school are eligible for free meals, which is significantly higher than the national and local authority's averages of 16.7% and 18.5% respectively. There is a high concentration of social-rented households in the area. Approximately half of the families served are lone parent households and households with dependent children. This area has a high concentration of people claiming workless benefits.

The centre provides the full core offer for phase two centres, including childcare and early learning, health advice, family support and outreach support. Jobcentre Plus staff work out of the centre, offering general advice and support with benefit calculations. Day care is provided by a private nursery located close to the centre which is open each weekday from 07.30am to 6pm except for public holidays. Foundation-stage learning is also located within the school and these settings have

separate inspections. Most children enter early years provision with knowledge and skills that are below or considerably below expectations for their age.

The governing body of the school provides governance for the centre. It is responsible for providing advice and assistance for the purpose of supporting the effective operation of the centre to meet the needs of the community. An advisory board is made up of parents and representatives of local organisations, and a parents' forum contributes to the quality of delivery in the centre. The centre is managed by the headteacher of Estcourt Primary School supported by a centre coordinator.

The majority of local residents served by the centre are of White British heritage but there is also a small number of families from other minority-ethnic groups within the reach area

## 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**

**3**

### Main findings

Estcourt Children’s Centre provides good services for young children and their families. Strong leadership from the governing body and the headteacher promotes a highly aspirational approach to learning and development, and to the enjoyment of all its users. It builds outstanding partnerships with a wide range of professional, voluntary and community agencies to meet needs, especially of the more vulnerable families.

Centre staff know the families intimately and they liaise effectively across professional-role boundaries to work in the best interests of the families and children. The centre provides good support through access to specific courses for adults, strongly focused on building confidence. Progression onto programmes such as literacy and numeracy is good with 116 adults accessing learning. These learning programmes make an effective contribution to adults’ development because teaching is good and courses are very closely matched to their needs. The skills parents acquire provide them with the confidence and ability to support their children’s learning in school.

Adults and children enjoy the good range of activities that the centre offers. These activities support the deeper understanding of how to play, learn and have fun together. Excellent support is provided through the qualified teacher who works with the childminder group and the link day-nursery staff to develop their teaching and observational skills. These interventions have helped children to settle easily in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the linked schools because of their improved levels of confidence and readiness to share and learn.

The headteacher of the school, the governing body and the advisory board provide strong support and are working effectively with the centre team to continue to reach those families in the area who may benefit most from their services. Support for the continuing professional development of staff is good. There is a good range of policies and procedures to support staff in their work, however these are not in a well-organised system, some are duplicated and undated which makes it difficult to

see which is the current version.

The centre provides good value for money. Resources are effectively used to meet the needs of users in the reach area. The centre has a good atmosphere; it is warm, friendly and welcoming. The number of users is increasing. Attendance at activities and learning sessions has increased significantly during the life of the centre. Users have made good progress on their developmental journey.

Users are safe and the centre currently meets all legal requirements for health and safety and safeguarding very effectively. Staff are fully trained and are vigilant in recognising signs of abuse. Where any form of abuse is noted actions are taken quickly. All relevant checks on staff, other agencies and volunteers are made and recorded. All visitors are presented with a safeguarding summary and they sign to agree that they will work with the centre staff to ensure safeguarding is prioritised. However, as the centre begins to use more volunteers to lead some sessions through the restructured locality programme, additional training of these volunteers is needed to ensure they have a good understanding of wider safeguarding issues and learning frameworks.

The centre satisfactorily evaluates all its activities both formally through questionnaires and through face-to-face discussions with all stakeholders. It has not yet summarised the outcomes of this feedback to inform its planning for the next financial year. Management information and data from the local authority are used satisfactorily. However, with the current funding cuts and the restructuring of the provision within the local authority, the management team in the centre has been unable to outline clearly the centre's development plan in the short- medium- and long-term. This makes the centre's capacity to improve satisfactory.

The centre actively promotes equality and diversity and staff act quickly if any discrimination is identified. Diversity is satisfactorily celebrated through different faith festivals. Good progress has been made in preparing all children through the transition stages into the nursery and foundation year at school.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Ensure volunteers who may be engaged in leading some activity sessions with children receive sufficient information on the wider implications of safeguarding. Also ensure they have the skills required to be able to carry out observations and encourage the development of children's communication, language, health and well-being.
- Ensure a delivery plan is created to meet the short, medium and long-term goals of the centre, taking into consideration the changing structures that the local authority is currently planning.

## How good are outcomes for users?

<b>2</b>
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Promotion of healthy lifestyles is good. There is a strong emphasis for families to adopt healthy lifestyles, using a variety of interventions to raise their awareness of the long term benefits. These include training programmes, discussions, posters and sessions where children under three years old are encouraged to have fun and exercise. The support by a dietician is having a positive impact on attitudes to food and exercise. The centre has become a member of the 'free green' initiative giving families the opportunity to buy surplus fruit and vegetables at very low cost. The number of families accessing this service is increasing weekly. The 'eat well do well' team approach is also contributing to improvements in children's diets and increasing their physical activity and decreasing the amount of time they spend watching television or playing computer games.

The centre is a focal point within the community, providing a range of professional services through health-visitor checks on children's development and midwifery services to engage parents prior to birth. Breastfeeding is encouraged by centre staff with good success in supporting mothers to maintain this for at least six weeks after the birth of their baby, some for much longer. Teenage parents receive good support through the centre and also through monthly meetings in the teenage toddler group in the city. Support is provided for those children over five years old with mental health needs, this develops their confidence and concentration to be able to access further learning. Parents clearly appreciate this support, a typical comment being, 'I am so pleased to have these sessions running close to where I live.' Health issues are discussed through baby-health checks and ante-natal clinics in the centre. Cross-referrals are effective and these ensure fast and coherent support for families.

Parents commented on the, 'support and friendliness of staff'. Fathers who brought their children to sessions were also very relaxed. Vulnerable families are fully integrated into all the provision provided by the centre. General health information is good. Encouragement for better dental hygiene is given through the 'bus brush' initiative and appointments are made with local dentists, which is providing access to information to prevent further tooth decay. A good range of leaflets on dental hygiene, healthy eating, birth control and sexual health is prominently displayed.

The centre is a safe and welcoming environment. Families comment positively on the care and safety provided and children who attend are relaxed, well-behaved and enjoy their time at the centre. Enhanced criminal records bureau checks are in place. Risk assessments and safe practices are adopted both in the centre and when working in other locations or out on trips. Children accessing provision are fully supported through safeguarding procedures and safe working practices. A good range of safety advice is provided for families and is supported through safe family initiatives through The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the Fire Service. These contacts ensure the centre has access to safety equipment for families in need. Response times are exemplary and 100% of identified needs have

been supported, which is the highest in the local authority. Feedback from health professionals recognises that there are fewer accidents in the home. Parents are developing their knowledge to help them ensure the safety of their children and those children from other families with whom they come into contact. Staff have a good knowledge of the centre’s policies and procedures and demonstrate effective use of the Common Assessment Framework system.

Children fully participate in activities and enjoy themselves. Achievement rates of children who have accessed services provided or commissioned by the centre are good. Those children who have significant contact with the centre gained at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage profile scales with at least six points in each of the scales for personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy. The rate at which the gap between the lowest 20% achievement rate in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile and the remainder of the children at this stage is being reduced.

Children and families are fully engaged and enjoy the activities at the centre and those that take place in the local community. Positive behaviours are observed through activities supported by centre staff. Children are encouraged to make choices about their activities and some parents have commented that they ask to visit the centre to engage in fun-learning activities. Staff encourage parents to observe children and to support their communication skills. Families describe strong aspects of community cohesion. They comment that the centre feels as if it is, ‘their family’ and provides them with a ‘purpose to get up’.

Children are engaging fully in many learning activities, including trips out to local fun and informative attractions. This planned development supports them on their learning journey. Parents have good access to learning and development activities and to child-care provision. Over 100 adults have accessed learning, including literacy and numeracy awards. The improvements they have achieved through nationally accredited programmes in their literacy and numeracy skills have developed confidence and skills to enable them to access further learning. They are now more able to help with their children’s learning. Their needs are assessed when they begin their courses and progress, relative to their entry level, is good. They are punctual and attend when required. Support has been provided through Jobcentre Plus to encourage parents to seek work and 64 have found and maintained work over the last two-and-a-half years. These achievements are very good for people in this area of high deprivation. Welfare and benefits advice is provided where needed, with access to specialist knowledge and information to meet families’ individual needs. However, the funding for this particular level of support has just ended.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for users*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
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<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>	<b>2</b>

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

<b>2</b>
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Staff have a good understanding of users' needs because of sensitive personal contact and local information. Assessments of users' needs allow staff to deliver effective learning strategies for children based on their assessed needs. Formal sessions are good, with staff observing and assessing children's progress. These sessions are also supported through home visits covering all aspects of children's development needs. Services are tailored to meet these needs and they ensure that assessments carried out under the Common Assessment Framework, including assessments of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are robust and well-informed.

All interventions are child-centred. Staff have a strong focus on supporting families in the best interests of the children. Learning and development are good. Support provided to staff and families by the qualified teacher confirms the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how using the framework is significant in providing positive experiences in all six areas to enable children to make progress. The vision about children's learning and development and the importance of transition to school is shared..

Families describe the centre as being a welcoming environment where staff are supportive. They refer to the network of friends they have acquired through the centre. The whole ethos of the centre raises the aspirations and expectations of children and their families. Fathers are well represented at activities as they were in parent discussion groups during the inspection. The fathers' group is strong. Fathers value the meetings and the opportunities and support they receive for developing their roles as fathers. They are eager to encourage other fathers to participate. Families enjoy all the activities and would like them to continue.

There is a good range of high-quality provision which is supported through highly effective partnerships with health professionals and local community and voluntary agencies. Thoughtful arrangements provide families with additional services that allow easier access to professional advice and guidance. For example, through the



provision of a crèche and other activities during the routine health checks so that other siblings who accompany their parents are engaged in play activities, allowing parents or carers to fully concentrate on the discussions with the health professionals. Childminder groups meet regularly and they receive good support from the qualified teacher. Professional updating sessions, which include safeguarding as well as guidance on activities that support learning and development, are provided by the centre and school staff to those working in children’s services across the area. Feedback from schools includes comments on the higher-levels of confidence and abilities of children and their families who have accessed learning and development through the centre. Schools would like their families to continue to access these activities.

Care, guidance and support are good. Support is well managed and coordinated and improves family outcomes significantly. Information, advice and guidance are timely, of good quality and relevant to centre users’ needs. In times of crisis, families describe the support they have received as being, ‘a life line’. Information about safety in the home has been effectively delivered. Smoking cessation sessions are offered in the centre and parents can text to make or change appointments, thus ensuring support is available as and when it is needed. Signposting to health professionals for drug and alcohol misuse is good. Information on local work opportunities is displayed prominently.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

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

<b>2</b>
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Leadership and management are good. Governance is highly effective and managed through the governing body. Multi-agency working is strong and staff are supported through regular one-to-one supervision and daily contact with the centre coordinator. Performance management through vision, strategy and target-setting is clearly defined and it makes a good contribution to the integrated service provision. Effective cross-professional boundary working enables contact to be made quickly between colleagues who may be able to provide more effective support when a need is identified.

Senior leaders communicate high expectations and are determined to ensure that the centre is effective in improving the lives of all users. High expectations are

demonstrated and a good range of high-quality early childhood services are provided. Local needs have been identified and services are clearly targeted to meet the priorities and changing needs within the community.

Resources are used very effectively in supporting families in the reach area. Staff are knowledgeable and supportive in their work with families, many having a range of needs. Those who access support make good progress in their personal and educational development. Many who access support have not previously taken full advantage of educational opportunities and some have low levels of knowledge and skills.

Inclusion is a strong feature of the work of the centre. Aspects of equality and diversity underpin all learning activities, with staff providing information to children about different nationalities and cultures. Good engagement with families from the minority ethnic community has been demonstrated. Currently 49 minority ethnic families access facilities at the centre and receive tailored support to meet their specific needs. Information has been translated into a range of different languages. Good support is also provided for Travelling families and those who have more recently taken up residence in the area from other European countries.

The centre provides good support to transitional groups, made possible by its nearness to a major port. A 'learning English group' has been provided since 2010 to support language development for families who speak English as an additional language. Uptake of this support fluctuates according to the changing nationalities of groups who arrive at the port. Staff respond quickly to the needs of families who move into the area. Displays promote positive aspects of equality and diversity. Everyone who enters the centre is required to read and sign a form to agree to work collaboratively and supportively. The form makes clear that no aspect of discrimination is acceptable. If discrimination arises, it is dealt with immediately and effectively. Staff promote good modelling of positive communication with all families. Family learning days focus on exploring other cultures and traditions with good levels of attendance and enjoyment.

The centre has good arrangements for safeguarding all users. Safeguarding has a high priority and all staff are checked with the Criminal Records Bureau. They are aware of the comprehensive range of policies and procedures and operate effectively within them. Most staff have been employed at the centre since it was commissioned and use their knowledge effectively to support their work in the centre. They are also vigilant in identifying and responding to any potential dangers that users may encounter. Staff are effective in ensuring the ongoing safety, emotional health and well-being of children and their families. All staff understand their duty to safeguard every child. The centre has a strong focus on early interventions to avoid crisis situations. Childcare providers and workers have continual access to child protection training through a qualified trainer on the school staff. Recruitment policies and guidance that meet the requirements of employment law are provided by the local authority.

Evaluation of the centre’s services is satisfactory. It is a continuous process based on users’ responses to provision and input from staff, parents, advisory group members and local headteachers. Different approaches, such as questionnaires, feedback through parent forums, one-to-one discussions with parents, carers and children, have been used to gain detailed information on those activities that consistently meet the needs of users, as well as seeking ideas for new activities. Prompt action is taken when feedback highlights the need for improvements. Staff are effectively performance managed through target-setting and feedback on their performance in all aspects of their job roles. While improvements are made from one session to the next, the centre has not yet produced summary information from the evaluations. Before doing so, it is waiting for information about the model of delivery that the local authority can fund under the restructured service.

Partnership working with other settings and services is outstanding. All partners understand how their contribution fits with the work of the other partners in meeting the needs of the users. The centre and its partners are highly effective in bringing together advice about health, education, jobs and money which is improving lives. Its support in debt management for some families is regarded as a life saver. The partnership with the neighbouring school is highly beneficial to both centre and school through good sharing of information and for the way in which it demonstrates a detailed understanding of families’ needs during children’s transition stages through the Early Years Foundation Stage and into the school. Nursery provision, which is accessed through a private nursery near to the centre, is seen to be very effective. Other support through childminders and sessions delivered in a local community centre is well integrated with families who also access the centre. Each provider understands this model of service and this ensures delivery of cohesive provision across the area.

Staff and parents are passionate about the centre and its services. Effective team working between health professionals and the centre staff is highly energetic and enthusiastic, which empowers staff from across the professions to ensure that all children, parents and carers, regardless of differences, have access to, and are able to achieve through, a range of different activities. All users are provided with good opportunities to contribute to the development of services through formal and informal feedback. The centre strives hard to identify and meet the needs of hard-to-reach families. They are effectively supported in this challenging task through partnership working that is highly effective in meeting the needs of children and their families and through the good quality services that are delivered in the centre as well as in the community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>2</b>
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<b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>3</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>2</b>

### **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](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 Estcourt Children's centre on 30 and 31 March 2011. We judged the centre as good overall. Leadership from the governing body and the headteacher promotes high standards of learning and development and contributes to the enjoyment of all its users.

During our visit, we talked with a number of you and met the staff who work in the centre. We also visited some of the sessions and looked at the centre's documentation. Thank you to those of you who contributed to the inspection.

Those of you who spoke to us said that you feel the centre is, 'part of your family' and provides you with a, 'purpose to get up'. Most importantly, you said it helps improve your lives, particularly those of you who are facing difficult challenges. You told us how much you have gained from some of the centre's activities and how effective these are in developing your confidence and improving your relationships with your children. We also found that the centre and its professional partners are working very well to combine advice about health, education, jobs and money.

Safety for you and your children is a high priority at the centre. We found that the centre currently meets all its legal requirements very effectively. Staff are fully trained and are vigilant in ensuring that all children are safe and well looked after. All relevant checks on staff, other agencies and volunteers are made and recorded. A good range of safety advice is provided for you, which is supported through work with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and the Fire Service. These contacts ensure the centre has access to safety equipment for those of you who need it. Centre staff respond very quickly to your requests; this has been noted as the fastest in the local authority area.

Particularly effective are the strong relationships between the centre, its linked schools and other early years' providers. All partners contribute very well to providing services that meet your needs. The partnership with the neighbouring school is a great advantage in helping centre staff to develop a detailed understanding of your needs and those of your children during children's movements between the different stages. Nursery provision, work with childminders and sessions delivered in a local community centre are well integrated, offering access across the area. The centre staff know you very well and work closely with other services to meet your needs. You were passionate about the centre and its services.

You also told us how keen you are to develop healthier lifestyles for your families. Headteachers of the local schools said that children who have participated in activities provided by the centre are confident and show signs of good development in the early days at school. You also said that you feel very safe in the centre and appreciate the help of staff to stay safe at home. We have asked the centre to create a development plan to ensure that this provision continues to meet your needs.

We saw how much you and your children enjoy everything the centre offers, especially the excellent opportunities to play, learn and have fun together. As one of you said, 'My child asks to come to the centre even on days when I haven't planned to visit the centre.' We found that the work of the children's centre teacher is making a great difference to your children's communication and language skills, especially their knowledge of letters and sounds. To develop further the work of the centre, we have asked staff to improve the support and provide further training for those of you who may be involved in volunteering in the centre as a result of the current changes brought about by cut-backs in local authority funding.

Your commitment to the range of learning activities is very good with many of you achieving qualifications, particularly in English and mathematics. It is particularly

pleasing to know that some of you have been able to find work through the support Jobcentre Plus provides at the centre.

Evaluation of the centre's services is satisfactory. Feedback is regularly obtained from you following the wide range of activities in which you are involved. This process also includes collecting responses from staff, the parents' forum, members of the advisory group and local headteachers. Prompt actions have been taken where feedback suggested the need for improvements.

Due to the reorganisation of services through cut-backs in funding, the centre now needs to create its plan for next year. We have also asked the centre to summarise the information from the session evaluations to include any necessary changes in this plan for services and activities in the coming year.

We would like to thank everyone who came to speak with us. It was a privilege to talk with you. Your honest and open discussions helped us immensely during the inspection. We thoroughly enjoyed spending time at your centre and we wish you and your families all the best for the future.

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