

# Inspection report for Park End Children's Centre

Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	365714
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Judith Elderfield

Centre governance	Local authority
Centre leader	Jenny James
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	URN 111632Park End Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY317086 Poppets Day 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.

An inspection of the maintained nursery was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior managers, members of the governance board and representatives from parents and carers, volunteers and the local authority. They also met a number of professionals including health, education, and family and community involvement workers. Inspectors observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including key policies and safeguarding procedures. They examined partnerships to meet the needs of the users, the effectiveness of the local authority support, challenge for the centre and the impact of the leadership and management on the provision and outcomes for users.

## Information about the centre

The Park End Children's Centre is located in the east of Middlesbrough, along with three further children's centres under the leadership of one management team and four children's centre governance boards. The children's centre and the linked privately run Poppets Daycare Nursery, are situated next to Park End Primary school and is a purpose built centre. Outreach services are provided by a mobile play bus and the local community centre. The children's centre has been fully operational since December 2005. A new centre was designated in 2009 in Berwick Hills to provide for the growing number of children in the reach area. Due to the close proximity of the two centres, parents and carers from Park End use both centres. Park End provides the full core offer and is a phase one centre.

The majority of the area served by the centre falls within the 20% of most deprived wards in the country. The reach population of the centre is 506 and the centre has registered 76% of this number. Unemployment in this area is twice the national average. Recent figures show that approximately 50% of children are living in households in receipt of child tax credit, income support or job seekers allowance. No data are available for children living with one parent receiving the same allowances.

The majority of local families are of White British heritage. The area suffers from high crime rates, anti-social behaviour and drug misuse. Middlesbrough has higher than the national average numbers of teenage mothers and east Middlesbrough is the highest at 80%. Most children enter Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills below expectations for their age. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below the national average. Adult qualification levels are low.

Governance of the centre is by the local authority that employs the leadership team.

## 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

Park End Children's Centre provides good support to children and families who live within its locality. Strengths include a good range of integrated child and family health services to promote children's and families physical and emotional well-being and their understanding of how to adopt healthy lifestyles. The centre's approach to safeguarding, safe recruitment and child protection is good and meets statutory requirements. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is mainly good across the area; outcomes are just below the national average and are improving in children's combined personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy skills.

A range of partners successfully work together to support the health and emotional well-being of children and their families. 'Healthy Eating' sessions, including 'Tasty Treats' Weaning course and 'Little Chefs', have proved very popular with children,

parents and carers. In partnership with Jobcentre Plus and the School Gates initiative scheme, the centre has worked successfully to encourage parents and carers onto courses and into training. The parents and carers recruited all completed the courses and received advice and guidance to advance to the next levels. Working in partnership with the Adult Education services, the centre has run a series of courses designed to develop skills for life. Parents and carers attending these commented that it had helped them to 'develop their confidence and take steps to get more out of life for their children'. This combined with a volunteering programme has helped to raise aspirations among some local families, thus addressing one of the most significant barriers within the locality. The appointment of a 'Dad's' worker in 2010 has increased participation of fathers and male carers. A town-wide initiative, introduced in April to reduce teenage conception rates, has been introduced in the centre. However, it is too early to assess the impact of this strategy and the centre has recognised that more work needs to be done in this area.

The vision for the centre is shared well between partners, particularly the shared actions to support, involve and improve outcomes for parents and carers and their children. Centre staff are responsive to the requests of parents and carers and the majority of the services have been developed and changed to meet these expressed needs. Parents and carers take part in governance meetings and have an active parents' forum. Parents and carers are also invited to complete a comments book throughout the programmes. The senior management team, together with staff and partners, have developed a clear and focused vision to make a real difference to the community, based securely on their needs and wants. The centre ensures good equality of opportunity overall. The whole family is at the heart of what everyone does and this is evidenced in the range of activities that families, and increasingly the potentially most vulnerable, can access. However, the centre recognises that it will have to strengthen its coordination of services with the new Berwick Hills Children's Centre which is nearby to enable parents and carers to better access activities at both centres.

The governance board for the centre is well established. Members who spoke with inspectors are fully supportive of the centre and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Assessment tools have been introduced over the past year to improve the quality of monitoring and self-evaluation and the centre is proactive in using these to inform the future planning of provision. While these systems are now embedded, the centre finds it difficult to fully evaluate the longer term impact of its work and is held back by the lack of accurate and current data, specific to the centre and not town wide, that the local authority and Primary Care Trust provide.

Taking into account the good outcomes and provision, the centre's overall effectiveness is good. Leaders' determined focus on improvement, and their proven ability to successfully identify and meet users' needs indicate that the centre has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Continue to strengthen the quality of the coordination of services with the closely located new children's centre, to ensure that both centres offer more access to opportunities for families and children.
- Further target services to improve outcomes for families, particularly with regard to decreasing teenage pregnancy rates and increasing the number of mothers who breastfeed for a longer period of time.
- Work more closely with the local Primary Care Trust and the local authority to ensure that there is more precise and relevant data about the specific reach area the centre serves.

## How good are outcomes for users?

2
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Children enjoy their learning and play and achieve well. They are eager to join in activities and interact well with others, both indoors and outside. Well-planned sessions and groups allow parents and carers to have fun and learn together in this very busy centre. Many parents and carers commented on the huge difference the centre has made to their child's development. They said the staff are, 'like friends', and make everyone feel welcome. Parents and carers have good access to training in a range of accredited courses run by the centre and there is a 100% success rates on recent courses. Many go onto higher levels or another course. The successful involvement of fathers and male carers in the centre's activities is testament to how well the centre has worked to include all users in its activities. Many fathers and male carers have commented on how included they now feel and how much more confidence they have in their very important paternal role.

Evidence through case studies, discussion with partners and parents and carers all reflect the positive impact of the overall good partnership working to promote children's and families' emotional well-being and their physical health. This includes the good work and dedication of health visitors, outreach workers and services commissioned by the centre. The Baby and Health clinic offers breastfeeding guidance. However, despite the best efforts of health visitors and midwives, this is not an area in which many mothers embrace the idea of sustained breastfeeding. Recent town-wide data show that 27% of babies in Middlesbrough are breastfed for six to eight weeks. This is well below the national average. There are no data available for the centre's specific reach area. The centre signposts women who smoke during pregnancy to specialist smoking cessation drop-in units around the area which has proved successful.

Good procedures ensure children are safe. All parents and carers say they feel safe in the centre and have confidence that, if there were concerns, they would come to the centre as they have confidence in the staff. Good multi-agency support for families referred to the centre in times of acute crisis is helping to minimise the

number of children entering care or moving onto child protection plans. However, no data are available for children who have come off the register and are being looked after. Parenting programmes are very successful in providing parents and carers with the skills and knowledge to promote safety and their children's sensible behaviour by implementing consistent routines and setting boundaries for their children. Parents and carers comment on feeling at ease during the sessions. All participants said how much they had gained from the sessions and from each other and they value the crèche facilities provided.

A number of parents and carers who spoke with inspectors, including young mothers, commented on how their confidence as parents has improved, as a result of their participation in a number of the very popular activities offered by the centre. Children are at the heart of all that the centre does. Parents and carers feel that they have a voice within the centre. Through the parents' forum their views are represented to the governance board and the governing body effectively. Parents and carers said that services provided meet their specific needs and for some the centre is a lifeline.

*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>
<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?

**2**

All staff provide a good range of services for the centre's users and partners and the local authority share a very good understanding of the issues and challenges facing the community. This ensures effective support for local children and families, helping them to make the best of those opportunities available. The centre can identify numerous examples where families have been supported, helping them to re-engage in everyday life and to enjoy their children again. Safety equipment has been provided to those most in need through the referral process and a home safety assessment is carried out by trained children centre staff and recommendations given, including the use of stair gates and plug covers. The centre engages with the fire service and the community police in a way which is child friendly and informative. As a result, families have a better understanding of how to keep safe.

The work of the centre with families, whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable, is a key strength, a good reflection of its caring yet aspirational ethos. The dedication and commitment of all involved in the centre ensure a keen focus on engaging with the community and on its development.

The centre's assessment of users' different needs effectively ensures that those with the greatest need are prioritised. Referrals from other agencies are responded to quickly by the teams. Local knowledge is helping to identify more hard-to-reach groups and there has been a big increase in the proportion of single parent families in the last year using the centre. The data available from the local authority are town wide and the Primary Care Trust does not readily supply the centre with up-to date information, therefore, the centre is unable to fully identify how well the needs of all potential users and those who could benefit best from their work are met.

A range of training opportunities are available to support parents and carers towards further training and education. Many of the courses on offer are accredited. The staff in the centre and Jobcentre Plus are very aware of the limited opportunities in this area for paid employment. However, the centre and other agencies work hard to provide courses to enhance parents' and carers' lives. The mobile play bus is very popular with both parents and children and provides a good range of activities. The team produce a clear play plan for each individual child, with a focus on their learning and skills for the future. Children were seen using electronic cash register tills, counting money and planting seeds. Good links with the local library have been forged and the young parents' librarian runs sessions at the centre to encourage parents and carers to use books more. Parents' and carers' responses to these sessions are very positive, with most families reading to their children more frequently. As a result of the support received through the centre, many parents and carers have increased their aspirations for themselves and their children.

As a result of effective provision, children develop a good range of early learning skills. For example, they learn to listen carefully to story-telling and nursery rhymes, through this, also developing their language skills. They develop observational skills and practice these skills through observational drawing and other art work. The outdoor area does much to promote development of their skills. As a result of parent consultation, the centre has now developed a more coordinated approach to timetabling with the new centre to allow more access to different activities for the families.

*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>3</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?

2
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Strong partnerships with parents and carers, and other services contribute to good outcomes for users and the good communication and liaison with most partners provides highly effective support. The centre is effective in encouraging the community to engage with services and makes good use of users' feedback to develop the range of provision. The governance board members understand their responsibilities well with good representation and attendance by parents, carers and community members. Members who met with inspectors articulated their close involvement with the centre and have a good understanding of the needs of the community. Careful planning and resource management extends and develops the services offered so that as many families as possible benefit from the centre. The centre leaders set ambitious targets based on good self-evaluation. The centre manager also recognises that more could be achieved with more up-to date data from the local Primary Care Trust and the local authority.

The centre is at the heart of the local community and runs efficiently on a daily basis. Staff and partners are very motivated and committed to improving their work with families, whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. They have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. High expectations, led by the example of the centre manager and senior staff, mean that the whole team is ambitious in raising aspirations and improving achievement. One parent said, 'They made me believe in myself and that my family could have a better life.'

Safeguarding arrangements to share concerns and record information are well developed. Procedures to ensure the protection of users as they move around the building are effectively implemented. Staff have a clear understanding about their role in identifying and reporting concerns and do so promptly. The centre has clear systems in place for recording information related to the vetting and recruitment of staff. Policies are appropriate and regularly updated. All activities are risk assessed.

Centre staff and partnership agencies are committed to promoting the inclusion of all children and their families. Inclusive practices are promoted for children and parents with disabilities. Targeted work with lone parents, fathers, male carers and teenage parents, is improving outcomes for these groups. The centre is aware that even more work needs to be carried out on promoting breastfeeding and providing more teenage parenting programmes, and these have been included in the service improvement plan. Staff are well deployed and utilised, ensuring good value for money. The centre's approach to sustainable development through locality working with the new centre is effective. As a result, it is increasing its activities and users' participation. The services of the centre are supporting good outcomes for users. Therefore, the centre provides good value for money.



*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>
<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>2</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>2</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 Park End Children's Centre on the 11 and 12 May. We judged the centre as good overall.

We looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with a number of you and the professionals who work with you. Many of you went out of your way to tell us how much you enjoy the activities provided through the centre. The centre does many things well. You told us staff are friendly, hard working and give good support. We agree with you. We found the centre to be welcoming to all families and buzzing with activity and children's happy laughter. The staff have a high level of expertise and offer good practical and emotional support to families who need it. Families who are facing complex or difficult times receive good support. Staff provide good care, guidance and support for all centre users. Their highly inclusive approach means that families from different parts of the community are all welcome.

All the professionals from the different agencies work well together to make sure you receive the right advice and support. The centre makes a good contribution to improving families' health and children's educational achievement. You told us you feel safe at the centre. This reflects the good work the centre does to promote safety and welfare and the secure safeguarding arrangements. Children are well behaved and explore confidently. You play a part too. We were very impressed by the positive and supportive relationships you have with one another and with your children.

The senior management team provide strong and highly effective leadership. They are well supported by the local authority and the governance board. All staff have high ambitions for everyone in the community. They all work hard with great enthusiasm. They have a really good understanding of your needs and are constantly striving to improve the quality of provision. There are three things we have asked the leadership team to work on in the immediate future:

- Continue to strengthen the quality of the coordination of services with the closely located new children's centre to ensure that both centres offer more opportunities for families and children to access.
- Further target services to improve outcomes for families, particularly with regard to decreasing teenage pregnancy rates and increasing the number of mums who breastfeed for longer.
- Work more closely with the local Primary Care Trust and the local authority to ensure that there are more precise and relevant data about the specific reach area the centre serves.

Thank you very much for your welcome and openness with inspectors. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you. We wish you every success in the future.

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