

Inspection report for Hawtonville Children's Centre

Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	365679
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	David Speakman AI

Centre governance	Nottinghamshire County Council
Centre leader	Katie Brown
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Hawtonville Junior School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Little Angels Neighbourhood Nursery [EY 396404]

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. The inspectors held meetings with the district coordinator, the centre's teacher and staff, the local advisory group, and representatives from the focus groups and the local authority. Inspectors met with a number of representatives of services who work through the children's centre, including health visitors, outreach workers, instructors and nursery staff. Inspectors spoke to groups of parents and carers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Hawtonville Children's Centre is a phase one children's centre that provides the full core offer. No childcare is available on site, but the centre has links with all local childcare providers and a named linked day-care provider, Little Angels Neighbourhood Nursery. The core offer includes early play learning, family support, outreach to parents, and child and family health services. Most of the services take place at other venues, including Bowbridge Primary School, Oliver Quibell Infants School and Newark Family Centre. Hawtonville Children's Centre currently operates from the Hawtonville Junior School site, but there is a planned move with Newark Family Centre scheduled for September into accommodation at the Oliver Quibell School site. This will provide an integrated centre including bespoke space for social care contacts.

Governance of the centre is the direct responsibility of Nottinghamshire County Council. There is a local advisory group, with membership consisting of representatives from all schools within the Hawtonville Learning Community, extended services and health services, as well as locally elected members, parents and other relevant stakeholders. The local advisory group supports both the

children's centre and extended services offer. There are five focus groups, one for each of the Every Child Matters outcomes, consisting of relevant professionals who meet monthly to support the centre's services.

The centre's reach area covers a wide area, providing services for children and families living in the Devon, Farndon and Magnus wards and parts of Elston, Castle and Beacon wards. However, the centre's outreach is mainly focused on the Hawtonville Estate. These wards have 1194 children from birth to four years of age. These are areas of disadvantage. For example, Devon ward is ranked 17th most deprived area in Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City. The wards served by the centre have 12% of children subject to a child protection plan. Thirty six per cent of children are known to be eligible for free school meals and almost half of all households have no car. The children's centre also covers parts of the Castle and Magnus wards, which are not as disadvantaged as Devon itself. Overall, 31% of children who use the centre come from homes which are dependent on benefits and where nobody is in work. Thirty two per cent of children live in poverty. Seven per cent of the residents originated outside of the United Kingdom. The area has many settled traveller families. The levels of skill shown by children when they start the nursery are below those typical for children of their age.

The centre opens on weekdays from 8am to 6pm for 52 weeks a year and occasionally at weekends to meet local needs. The range of activities offered by the centre includes adult learning and parenting courses, local community baby clinics, child development checks, breastfeeding support and outreach family support. Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families includes a sensory group, an autism support group and links to the Inclusion Support Service, supporting local private, voluntary and independent childcare settings. The centre is part of the Hawtonville Learning Community which links local infant, junior and primary schools and extended schools services. The centre has links with health visitors, midwives and an extended schools worker. A range of adult education courses and activities designed to support parents and carers back into employment is provided by the centre's partner providers, including Jobcentre Plus, Futures, the Council for Voluntary Services and Lincoln College.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

1

Main findings

Hawtonville Children's Centre makes an outstanding contribution to improving the lives of the children and their families who use the centre's services. Outcomes are excellent. The extent to which children are safe and protected is exceptionally high. The achievement of both adults and children is excellent, and all thoroughly enjoy the activities in which they engage. One parent reported, 'Stay and Play has helped my daughter learn her colours. She can't do all these things at home.' The most recent inspection report for Little Angels, the designated childcare, states, 'Children make rapid progress in all areas of learning.' Children are very well behaved and show high levels of trust in the adults with whom they come into contact, and thus readily engage in all that is on offer at these learning-through-play sessions. Not only do children learn new skills, but parents and carers learn how to play effectively with their children.

The centre makes the safety of vulnerable children and adults a high priority. Excellent support for users' emotional health and their safety is achieved by very effectively coordinated multi-agency working. Staff have developed a culture within which adults feel confident and trust the centre. A parent spoke of one of the family support workers: 'She was fantastic. She gave me support and enabled me to feel I didn't need support for everything. She was a real enabler; got all the services working together and sorted out contact with the health visitor.' Many mothers say they feel confident to disclose to staff any issues they are worried about. Very secure recruitment procedures for all adults working and volunteering through the centre, and comprehensive policies translated into highly effective practice, result in an outstanding level of safeguarding. This overarching attention extends to a wide range of users. The centre recognises that male parents and carers may also be subject to domestic abuse. Posters around the centre direct any potential victim to available support. This depth of thought reflects the centre's approach to equality of opportunity for all.

A strong sense of teamwork pervades all aspects of the centre's high-quality

provision. Excellent communication between the local advisory group, the focus groups and the parents' forum means that the centre is very effective in assessing individual and community needs and in providing services that address these needs exceptionally well. The centre has an outstanding capacity to sustain the excellent level of improvement already seen. However, targets against which the centre's performance is monitored are often too challenging and not always realistic in relation to local circumstances. This is because the centre uses data from the local authority which relates to a wider area and not directly to the centre's reach area which experiences a greater degree of social disadvantage than many nearby areas and in the county.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Refine the process for measuring the impact of the centre's services on the community by establishing a set of achievable and measurable targets based on local information and statistical data.

How good are outcomes for users?

1

The centre is effective in encouraging parents and carers to adopt healthy lifestyles. The centre has had some success in encouraging new mothers to start breastfeeding their babies, but the number sustaining breastfeeding is less than the centre would like. Adults gain useful information on feeding their families a healthy diet. Healthy snacks are promoted at all groups and outreach sessions. Parents and carers engage well in adult education relating to food and hygiene, and healthy eating on a budget. Some see the value of growing their own food as they work on and run the garden allotment. A growing number of adults eat '5-a-day' and this is having a positive effect on their children's diet as well. Groups, such as the antenatal group, are well attended, and expectant mothers become knowledgeable in regard to adopting a healthy lifestyle so that babies stand a better chance of being born healthy. Outcomes for children in the linked childcare provision are outstanding. They eat plenty of fresh fruit and take exercise. The centre has not yet had a significant impact on helping adults, including pregnant mothers, to give up smoking or to deal with any substance abuse. The centre is successful in addressing issues surrounding child obesity and there has been a decrease in obesity rates in the Reception Year. Parents and carers have a clear understanding of the procedures for administering medication and first aid.

The centre is particularly effective in supporting the mental and emotional health of parents and carers, adults with a range of different needs and children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The emotional and mental health of vulnerable parents, carers and children is improving rapidly where the centre staff are aware of their needs and adults adopt the centre's proposals. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit greatly from their time in the sensory room or from personalised programmes of support designed to

meet their specific needs as a result of initial assessments. Children, parents and carers are kept exceptionally safe. Case studies of vulnerable mothers and children who are on child protection plans show a high level of success, even though some cases are on-going due to their severity. The centre's 'think family' approach ensures that highly coordinated, multi-agency support meets needs exceptionally well. Assessments are reliable and judged against established Common Assessment Framework criteria. Centre staff monitor the progress of families very carefully. Depending on the severity of the case, progress may be monitored through a Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference, or a Joint Access Team. Whichever the monitoring and support programme, the children's centre is at the hub of the provision. On-going evaluation ensures the most appropriate support at any time is given.

Children make excellent progress in the childcare and nursery provisions, although children's attainment is still below the national and local authority averages. Children are prepared for entering school and nursery through excellent personal, social and emotional development. Assessment data show the gap is closing between the lowest 20% and the rest through targeted support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the promotion of language for communication skills. Children enjoy exploring and investigating the learning environment. The attention given to parents and carers communicating effectively with their children at 'Stay and Play' sessions has a positive impact on children's and babies' learning through play. Adults who engage in opportunities to further their own education achieve very well. The centre has seen significant success in courses such as chairing meeting skills, cooking for life, food hygiene crafts for Newark carnival, money management, paediatric first aid, thinking of working with children and volunteer training. Courses such as these provide adults with important skills on which to build in the future and a basis for possible further work with Lincoln College.

Parents and carers make a meaningful and significant contribution to the centre's success. There are clear and secure pathways via the parents' forum for parents' and carers views to be presented to and considered by the local advisory group. This link is to be further enhanced by the imminent inclusion of two parents from the forum as members of the advisory group. They have been fully prepared to make this move and it is envisaged that this will further enhance the contribution of parents and carers. There are many voluntary workers supporting the centre. Fathers' Activity Club, 'Stay & Play' sessions, and breastfeeding and weaning groups all benefit from volunteer support. There is a volunteer working in the sensory room and others help with administration.

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	1

The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	1
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	1
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?

1

The assessment of the needs of adults and children is a strong feature of the centre's work and one of the reasons why its work in meeting the needs of individuals and the community is so effective. Outreach work to support children and their families is well thought out and matches needs very well. Family support workers create effective action plans for families which lead to positive outcomes. They involve parents and carers in in-depth discussions during which the families' needs are assessed very carefully and issues are summarised so that all are very clear about the purpose of the centre's involvement. Focused support is offered and the package has to be agreed by both parties. Because the family takes ownership of the support plan, they fully engage in its implementation. As one parent commented: 'They're open and honest. You have a voice and you are heard.'

Children's personal and learning needs are considered very carefully and assessed continuously. 'All about me' files record outcomes of planned activities appropriate to each child's needs. Their progress is monitored throughout their involvement with the centre so that provision can be adjusted if needed. Tracking children's achievement continues beyond the centre into school and contributes to each child's Early Years Foundation Stage profile.

Planning for all sessions involves assessing the needs of service users and planning towards meeting identified needs. Through the use of profile data and the involvement of the parents' forum and the different focus groups, suitable activities are set up and carefully tailored to meet the needs of the community. These result in the provision of purposeful and relevant adult education, such as training linked to basic skills in the use of computers, literacy, numeracy and confidence building. The centre also provides courses, such as those for health and beauty or the development of parenting skills. To ensure that all are able to attend, high-quality crèches that are very well planned and linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage, ease learning for parents and carers and support children's developmental needs. The centre is in advanced stages of developing a 'Parent's Passport', a portfolio that records their achievements and successes and which will be a useful document to support any future job interviews.

The centre management makes sure that its workers have very well developed

specific skills and a broad general idea about the work of other staff to enable them to discharge their duties exceptionally well. Supervisions and appraisals of staff, students and volunteers identify training needs to meet the needs of the community and support the centre's service plans. A full weekly timetable spread across the area ensures families have accessible services that are built on the needs of the community. The wide range of services at community venues and facilities support families with children under the age of five years. Through partnership with the strong linked learning community, services extend to cater for children over the age of five. The centre goes out of its way to ensure that all community groups benefit from its services. A good number of fathers and their children are supported over the year. Traveller children and their parents and carers attend 'Stay and Play' sessions.

Care, guidance and support are of a high quality because they are very well targeted and closely monitored. The centre uses the Nottinghamshire County Council Toolkit to ensure high-quality care, guidance and support is provided to families in need of targeted support. Through working around the Common Assessment Framework principles, services meet the assessed needs of individuals very well. High-quality support is provided for parents and carers wanting to volunteer. They have regular one-to-one meetings with designated staff and are supported through regular professional development reviews.

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	1
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	1
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?

1

Highly developed structures are in place to ensure very effective communication between the different levels of leadership and management. Centre leaders, staff, service providers and users are all represented on leadership groups and contribute to highly effective monitoring and evaluation of services provided. This wide spectrum of consultation ensures high-quality monitoring and evaluation. Leaders are very ambitious and the targets they set are sometimes too challenging to be realistic and achievable. The local authority is instrumental in supervising the centre's operation through regular meetings and a formal annual conversation which sets the centre's priorities for improvement.

Staff are fully enabled to use their skills, and teamwork is exceptionally strong.

Centre managers give staff opportunities to gain experience and knowledge in their own specific areas of work. Staff show a great deal of initiative and high levels of commitment in their work, resulting in an excellent quality of leadership in different areas of the centre's work and at many different levels. Focus groups draw on the specialist knowledge of their members. For example, the 'Achieve and Enjoy' focus group benefits from a number of early years specialists from different settings.

The centre has exceptionally strong links with a wide range of professional partners to ensure service provision meets needs. Strongly linked community working with extended services supports exceptionally well-integrated service delivery. Provision for equality of opportunity is excellent. Minority groups are valued and fully provided for in the centre's services. Celebration of culturally diverse festivals and events are planned for. Resources are purchased that reflect a multicultural community. Timetables and registration forms are translated into other languages which are used in the area. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well provided for. Groups of children are supported in the sensory room and there is a group that focuses on children with autism. Family support workers support children and their families exceptionally well if there are behavioural issues.

The centre operates very secure recruitment procedures for the centre staff, volunteers and service providers. All required checks are made and the centre records all details to confirm identity, qualification, rights to work in the United Kingdom and suitability to work with children. The initial assessment process is an integral part of the centre's high-quality practice for safeguarding. All staff are trained in child protection to an appropriate level and are fully aware of the centre's practice and the policy adopted. Relevant staff have had specialist training, such as use of the Common Assessment Framework and how to deal with cases of domestic violence.

Resources are used very efficiently. The centre welcomes unregistered users from other areas so that they are not disadvantaged if there is no appropriate provision in their area. The centre has very efficient arrangements to monitor the highly effective use of available funds. Excellent value for money is achieved because the centre's services and sustained support for families are highly targeted and have an excellent impact on improving their outcomes. The centre has a creditable record in relation to the proportion of households registered and making use of the centre's services.

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	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	1
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	1
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	1

Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

An inspection of the linked day care, Little Angels Neighbourhood Nursery [EY 396404], was carried out in April 2010 under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk. The findings of this report were used in making judgements about the children's centre. All judgements made in relation to outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were outstanding.

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 Hawtonville Children's Centre on 25–26 May 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Thank you to those of you who spoke to us to give us your views on this children's centre. Your views were very useful in helping us make our judgements. Like you, we found your children's centre to be very welcoming and friendly. It gives high priority to the safety and welfare of you and your children. Professionals work very well together to make sure that they understand what you need and that you get the right support quickly. This is having a very positive impact on your lives and those of your children.

You are developing healthier lifestyles through learning about how to provide a healthy diet for your families. It was interesting that a growing number of you are

now eating 'five-a-day'. A good number of you now understand the importance of healthy eating for your families, and statistics show this is having a positive impact on child obesity. The centre is concerned about the number of people in its area still smoking, particularly young pregnant mothers. You and your families are developing a very good understanding of how to keep yourselves and your community safe, through the advice and guidance provided by the centre.

Your centre is helping your children prepare for school. Your children are making excellent progress and inspectors could see that you all enjoy your time at the centre. Some of you told us how the centre has helped you to develop personally and educationally. Those of you who volunteer get good support and gain valuable skills that will be useful to you in the future. Many of you are making use of opportunities to improve your education and skills, so that your future prospects of employment are improved.

Centre leaders provide many opportunities for you to tell them what you think about the services provided. Through initial assessments you are involved in deciding what activities and services the centre needs to provide you with. Staff support many families who are vulnerable and need help. It also works hard to reach out to families from a wide range of backgrounds to make sure they are included in the services and activities.

Many of you told us how well your centre has supported you in times of crisis. Those of you we spoke to thought very highly of the family support workers. One parent said: 'She was fantastic. She gave me support and enabled me to feel I didn't need support for everything. She was a real enabler; got all the services working together and sorted out contact with the health visitor.' We agree that the quality of support provided by the centre is excellent. Centre staff and other professionals, with whom they work closely, care a great deal about you and are committed to improving your lives.

The centre is exceptionally well led and managed. An extremely effective network of management groups operates at all levels. All views, including those from a wide range of professionals, parents and carers are carefully considered and contribute to the centre's excellent overall effectiveness. This arrangement reflects the outstanding ambitions and the high expectations that centre leaders have of themselves and the impact of the work of the centre on users' lives. Leaders are very ambitious and the targets they set are sometimes too challenging to be realistic and achievable. We have asked the leaders to make use of local data, rather than that representing a wider community, to ensure that their targets truly reflect your community.

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