

Inspection report for Brough Children's Centre

Local authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	365654
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Pepper HMI

Centre governance	Local Authority
Centre leader	Liz Cooper
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Brough Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY366586 Brough Eagles Out of School Club

The inspection of this Sure Start Children's Centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with centre staff and senior managers, health professionals, local community partners, user groups and parents and carers. They spoke to the chair and members of the advisory board. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Brough Children's Centre is situated in a purpose built building based on the site of Brough Primary School. It was designated as a phase two centre in 2008. A range of supporting services, including health and adult training courses, are delivered alongside partner agencies on site or through using local community venues in the reach area. Parents and carers are signposted to a range of universal and specialist services.

The majority of the population in the Brough area is of White British heritage. However, in recent years, there has been a slight increase of other families from minority ethnic groups. The centre serves an urban area of over 8,200 homes. New developments on the outskirts of the reach area mean this number is continually increasing. Most recent figures show that 1,148 children under five years old live in the area. The reach area is mainly within the 10% to 20% least deprived wards in the country. The majority of families are from working households, however, there are a small number of workless and deprived households with a few children known to be entitled to free school meals.

Most children enter early education with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage is delivered through various early years providers and group activities. The centre is closely linked with settings which are privately run. Brough Eagles out-of-school and holiday club rents rooms at the centre and cares for up to 32 children. The early years provisions are subject to separate

early years inspection arrangements. The inspection reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The local authority manages the centre which works as part of the Haltemprice cluster arrangement with three other children centres in the East Riding area; this includes Anlaby, Cottingham and Hessle. The advisory board is made up of representatives from the local community, partners and parents. The centre is open from 8.30am until 5.30pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am until 4.30pm on Fridays, 50 weeks of the year. The centre is also open on occasional evenings or Saturdays as required.

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

Brough Children's Centre is a good centre because it provides high-quality services for young children and their families which promote good outcomes. Users of the centre are unequivocal in their view that, 'staff are very friendly and approachable'. Many reported that the staff are 'simply fantastic' and they described their support as invaluable. They regularly attend the centre because they enjoy the warm welcome, relaxing and meeting other parents and carers. They described their children looking forward to going to the centre because they know they will have fun in the well-resourced and attractive play spaces both indoors and outside. 'It is the centre of the community', was a typical view expressed. The centre is known to the wider community and it has a good reputation. However, the centre is not complacent and leaders acknowledge that there could be families within their reach area who would benefit from its services but who are not yet accessing them. The numbers of families registered at the centre is constantly increasing.

Following a restructure last year within the local authority, the staff team was placed under new leadership, both at a local and a more senior level. Changes to organisation have had a very positive impact on the leadership and management in terms of challenge, support and accountability expectations. The staff team is particularly well motivated and, as a result, staff morale is high. Self-evaluation is accurate and the centre has a clear vision for the future. Several new developments

are beginning to be put in place. Although it was too early to judge the impact of some planned changes, this demonstrates good capacity to improve.

A strength of the centre, which underpins its good work, is the strong links it has developed with key partners maximising the effectiveness of its multi-agency approach through referrals. Partners work extremely well together to respond to needs. Effective partnerships promote good communication and early interventions and preventative work have been beneficial in some difficult situations. Attention to promoting emotional well-being, in particular, is very good. As a result, users of the centre benefit from the good advice and support they receive.

High priority is paid to safeguarding through the successful implementation of good practice guidance. All users that were spoken with stated they felt safe at the centre. This is an inclusive centre. Attention to equality and diversity is well-embedded and diversity is respected. Users enjoy the good range of services provided; they are proud of their achievements and consequently attendance at sessions is good.

The local authority is aware of the limitations of some of the data provided which are sometimes not broken down sufficiently to reflect the reach area of the centre. The centre manager knows how important it is to have reliable information to measure the full impact of the centre's work on improving outcomes for children and families. Staff routinely reflect on their practice and the impact this has on outcomes for children and families. They collate information using a shared electronic database which has enabled them to identify trends more easily. Systems for managing individual performance are well established and supportive. Action plans are detailed but lack clear success targets which can easily be measured.

The centre values the important contribution of parents and carers as the first educators of their children and their views are regularly sought. Parent and carer representatives are on the advisory board and a parents' forum is established but attendance is variable.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the action plan to ensure the centre can track precisely the progress made towards clear targets through measurable success criteria to further demonstrate the centre's effectiveness and its impact on outcomes.
- Strengthen marketing of the centre's services to identify families in need of support and encourage them to access its services.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

All outcomes for children and families are good. Health colleagues inform the centre of prospective parents and this early notification promotes prompt engagement which is often very effective. Many parents reap the benefits of the 'Bump to Babies'

antenatal group where they are provided with opportunities to learn how to bath a baby, changing techniques, sleep positions and much more. This helps prepare them for parenthood and introduces them to the support and advice available at the centre.

Several good strategies promote and encourage mothers to breastfeed at birth. Systems are well established to identify any new baby so that early intervention and support can be provided. 'Bosom Buddies' is the breastfeeding support group which meets regularly at the centre to promote positive parenting and to share basic baby-care advice. The centre has a designated breastfeeding support champion and some parents have undertaken training to become peer support workers. Several mothers were complimentary about the prompt and effective support and encouragement they had received while breastfeeding saying, 'I would have given up without the centre's help'. Consequently, most mothers breastfeed their babies for up six months and others have been successful for even longer. Attendance at the child health clinic is good which has a positive impact on the understanding of child health and development. As a result, the uptake of programmes like immunisation is high and concerns about dental health issues are low.

The 'Infant Massage' course is extremely popular and sought after once babies have had their six-week check. Many described this special time as invaluable and recognised the benefits of bonding with their baby in a relaxed environment. Some found using techniques they were taught at home helped to relax their baby before they settled them down at night for a sleep. Some described how they shared what they had learnt with their partners so that they too could enjoy massaging their baby. A few parents thought the skills learnt helped their baby cope more with colic. Parents described how baby massage can enhance bonding and their relationships with their babies helping them to be more content. This service has resulted in more self-assured and confident parents who are more likely to share their concerns and any health issues with the centre.

Healthy eating is promoted well through cooking and tasting sessions. The 'Weaning Party' is a great opportunity for parents and carers to gain valuable information and tips around weaning babies at the recommended age of six months. Effective partnership working signposts some parents to smoking cessation clinics which have helped some of them to reduce or stop smoking before and after pregnancy. Parents, carers and children are developing a good awareness of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle, such as the benefits of being out in the fresh air and exercising and, as a result, obesity is generally not an issue. Where this is not the case, support is provided on an individual basis. The centre recognises the need to promote good mental health and emotional support which has a positive impact on parents' and carers' feelings of well-being. 'Time for Me' sessions help raise families' self-esteem and confidence so they are more able to manage stressful and challenging situations. The 'House of Light', a charitable organisation, specialises in providing support for those suffering, for example, with postnatal depression. Its counselling work was described as 'superb'.

Although levels of deprivation are low in the reach area, some families experience circumstances which can make them particularly vulnerable. Cases of domestic violence are low but these can fluctuate. When situations arise, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is used effectively to ensure children are well protected. There is good evidence of improved outcomes for children on child protection plans due to effective outreach work and signposting to appropriate courses and support groups. Case studies show regular contact is maintained with some families and relevant agencies are involved as appropriate. A great deal of early intervention work prevents the escalation of some issues. Support and guidance helps parents and carers to cope with difficult situations, reducing risks to children. 'I found their support invaluable' was a typical view of parents and carers. Social care partners stated: 'Without the input of the centre, some children living in vulnerable situations would not be at home but placed in care.'

Users of the centre develop a good understanding of how to keep their children safe through staff modelling good practice and specific safety sessions. Road safety is covered with school-aged children. Children were observed to be engrossed in their chosen activities and their behaviour was extremely good. Staff build close and trusting relationships with parents and carers putting them in a strong position to identify any changes which could indicate a concern. Parents and carers are supported in minimising risks in their homes through free home safety checks and the provision of safety equipment if this is required. Families are referred to the fire service to ensure effective fire prevention is promoted and the dangers of smoke are fully understood. Centre staff follow up this support months later to check its usefulness.

The number of parents and carers who came to the centre eager to speak with the inspectors demonstrated a good commitment to the centre and their sense of ownership of it. A typical comment was, 'it is a good opportunity to socialise for parents and children and get out of the house'. Parents and carers were overwhelming in their appreciation of the wide range of services, resources and activities provided that many said their children did not have at home. Some described not fully understanding the importance of early learning and education until they attended the centre. They now have an improved understanding of what they can provide to interest and stimulate their child to learn and develop new skills.

Children with any additional needs are well supported through partners working well together to develop specific groups like 'Toddler Talk' and 'Talk Time' which provide support for young children who are referred if they have a speech and language development delay. This service is jointly run with a worker who visits children in their home to provide support. The 'Every Child a Talker' (ECAT) programme has been implemented with good effect to develop some children's communication, language and literacy skills. Parents and carers learn effective techniques to help develop and improve their children's language and communication skills through fun activities like telling stories and singing songs using props, and learning sign language. Parents and carers are well informed so they can continue to support their child's learning at home.

'Learning Journeys' are completed for each session which enhances parents' and carers' understanding of the value of early learning through play. The centre has excellent links with the co-located school on the shared site and staff are now actively developing stronger links with other schools in their reach area. They know the benefits of working closely with schools in terms of supporting families and smoothing children's transition into school. Good links with 'Extended Services' partners further enhance the support available for parents and carers by providing them with practical help and guidance to prepare children for the next step in their education. Sensitive outreach work enables some families to recognise issues which can then be supported well.

The centre provides parent craft courses and the take-up rates are good. Many parents and carers in this area pursue a career before starting a family so the centre often responds to the needs of professional working parents and carers. The centre provides opportunities for parents and carers to work as a volunteer and can cite a few examples of volunteers who have successfully worked towards paid employment. The centre has good links with Jobcentre Plus which provides information about job vacancies and signposts users to debt advice and adult training courses. Access to training for volunteers has provided opportunities for some parents and carers to increase their skills which has led to employment.

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 their personal and social development	2
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	2

How good is the provision?

2

The quality of the environment is good and resources are plentiful and of high quality. The building is secure and rooms are all light, airy and welcoming. Displays are attractive and informative and they celebrate achievements and events well. Parents and carers are provided with a good choice of childcare provision including an out-of-school club which operates from the centre. Early years colleagues have a good network of support in place to help keep registered providers well informed. This knowledge helps to secure the quality of the early education and childcare the

centre provides.

Through an extremely well-developed multi-agency approach the centre provides a good range of integrated services. Strong partnership work is based on a thorough analysis of the needs of users which is central to the centre's success. For instance, 'Extended Services' work in partnership to provide courses such as 'Family Links' which help parents and carers who are having difficulty setting boundaries for their children. The CAF ensures effective targeted support is provided for those families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Consequently, assessment of the needs of all those who use the centre is good. Parents and carers know they can turn to the centre and that they will be helped with good-quality care, guidance and support. The 'Family Information Service Hub' provides a free impartial information service for children, young people and families of where to go for support. Locality information officers provide additional support for families who have children with any additional needs.

The range of services provided by the centre is good. 'Babies Playing' offers good opportunities to meet new friends, develop positive parenting skills and an opportunity for babies to learn in a safe stimulating environment. 'Lets Get Playing' and 'Pop in and Play' are both fun sessions geared to different age groups of children which provide an opportunity to meet new people or get together with friends to enjoy a variety of learning opportunities and activities alongside children. These stimulating and enjoyable groups foster physical activity and development of communication and personal and social development. Staff are extremely supportive and offer good guidance and advice when needed. Although a high percentage of mothers attend the centre, extended family members such as grandparents are also welcome at the groups and fathers and grandfathers regularly attend. A specific 'dads' group' runs at the weekends but over time the numbers attending have dwindled. The centre is aware that many parents and carers in their area work and some want to spend 'family time' at home at the weekends with their own children. Consultation in the reach area has identified a need for a young parents' group and plans are in place to develop this.

A childminding drop-in group meets regularly at the centre to share ideas and create a variety of fun learning opportunities. Foster carers and other agencies also use the centre for meetings and training. The centre has formed good links with Wold Prison in order to support the families of offenders. They have facilitated themed family fun days and events at the prison which have been well received. Open days like 'Family Fun Day' which are often themed events are very popular and very much looked forward to by the community. These initiatives are effective in bringing together members of the wider community. This promotes community cohesion very well.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and their parents and carers are signposted to specialist support when required. The number of families who do not speak English at home are extremely low. However, those new to the area are made very welcome and translation support or information can be sought from the local authority if required. Toy library resources are available

with a van to transport toys and equipment to the more rural parts of the centre's reach area.

The needs of adult learners are carefully considered to ensure they are directed to the most appropriate sessions or courses. Users of the centre have access to a good range of free adult training, and childcare can be provided if required. Confidence-building courses are regularly provided and evaluations often show a rise in users' confidence levels. The centre has fixed plans to offer parents and carers training in basic first aid due to the demand.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

Governance and accountability arrangements are clear. Professional supervision is well-established. The relatively new manager is very well supported at a strategic level by a strong leadership team. The confident and enthusiastic manager galvanises the enthusiasm of the staff team and channels their passion for their work to good effect. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and support continuous improvement well. Self-evaluation is accurate. Performance development systems recognise achievements and review outcomes but the centre's action plan lacks sufficient success criteria to enable progress to be evaluated. Staff and partners know the reach area and their determination to find out relevant statistical information ensures the centre is kept well informed. Staff are continually developing their ability to demonstrate the impact they are having on outcomes for children and families. Their enthusiasm for their work is evident in their keenness to attend training, deliver joint sessions and in the interest they show in improving the lifestyles of children and their families. Staff have individual specialisms and some are developing skills which enable them to offer a range of other courses such as delivering smoking cessation sessions. Staff effectively draw on the strengths of one another from within the team.

The centre works extremely closely with the other three centres in the Haltemprice cluster. The cluster shares the advisory board, and the centre's leaders recognise the benefits and drawbacks of this arrangement. This close working arrangement strengthens expertise, develops a good knowledge base, enables resources to be shared and avoids the duplication of services thus supporting the sustainability of existing services. Transport is provided, if required, for users to travel from one centre to another. Each centre manager is responsible for monitoring the cost

efficiency of the services they provide and the positive impact of the cluster arrangement further promotes good value for money.

This inclusive centre actively promotes equality and diversity; clear systems are in place to tackle any discrimination should it occur. The views of users are regularly sought through a variety of methods to ensure no-one is excluded. Systems to evaluate users' views are in place following attendance at groups or on courses. Some methods used for collating the impact of services are more effective than others. Closed questions produce limited responses for analysis but they support high levels of satisfaction. The centre has developed simple strategies to enable users to give a more detailed account of their experiences which more successfully helps develop services to meet changing needs. The centre also seeks and acts on children's views. The centre's response to users' ideas and views shows a strong commitment to work in partnership with them. The 'You said, we did' display board ensures users can see what the centre has done as a result of them sharing their views and ideas. Consequently many users said, 'I feel very happy here'.

Attention to safeguarding is good. All staff have attended safeguarding training and updates on any new research initiatives are shared through discussion with messages re-enforced through activities like a quiz which tests knowledge. The East Riding authority provides a comprehensive safeguarding framework of policies and procedures which the centre uses. The centre manager regularly reviews policies and procedures to ensure they are up to date. Safer recruitment training underpins the rigorous recruitment and selection procedures for both staff and volunteers.

Partnership arrangements are a strength of this centre. Good partnerships were described by the centre's partners. Excellent communication systems ensure all are very well informed and strong relationships have been built up over time, some of which are still developing. Multi-skilled workers effectively blend their different skills and expertise extremely well.

Good knowledge of those living in the reach area enables the centre to plan the development of specific target groups where there is most need and demand from users. The centre is keen to market its services with the help of partners, open evenings and the well-established links they have developed in the community. However, it recognises that some families may feel isolated and they may be hard to reach. It understands that circumstances can change at any time to make some families vulnerable and it is such families that they are always striving to reach. They are eager to ensure any families who would benefit from their services are not missed.

The senior leadership team is confident that work established through government initiatives, such as 'Every Child A Talker' will continue despite cuts in funding. The advisory board includes a range of professional partners and a few parents who fully understand their roles and responsibilities. They have recently attended training and a manual supports any new members. The centre recognises attendance on the advisory board is variable dependent on the availability of members and they are

striving to promote consistent attendance. Consultation has been carried out to seek others' views on how the centre can increase membership. They acknowledge a concerted effort is required to further involve and increase the membership of parents and carers. The centre has an established parents' forum but attendance at meetings is also variable.

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 Brough Children's Centre on the 25 and 26 May 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Those of you we spoke to made us most welcome and it was a pleasure to see and hear how much you appreciate the, 'safe place where you look forward to meeting people and your children enjoy have fun playing'. Many of you described the staff team as, 'all very friendly and approachable' and you said there is 'something for everyone'. You demonstrated your commitment to the centre by your good attendance at the meeting with the inspectors.

The centre has formed good strong partnerships with other services and agencies. It provides a safe place where families can be sure to receive a warm welcome and good-quality care, guidance and support which you said, 'you find really useful'. This is because they want the very best for you and your families. Some of you told us, 'I do not know where I would be without the centre'. You all expressed high levels of satisfaction with the centre and your regular attendance shows how much you value the good-quality provision and resources. We have asked the centre to improve their action plan so that everyone can clearly understand whether the centre has achieved what it set out to do or not.

Home safety schemes, leaflets and displays help you to get practical advice and support which can help reduce accidents in your homes. All the key partners such as social care, health visitors, midwives, early years providers and the centre staff combine their professional experience, knowledge and resources very well to meet your individual needs. They work closely together to assess any difficult situations effectively. They know what support they, or others, can provide for you in times of crisis and they have built trusting relationships with many of you.

We know many of you enjoy the 'Bump to Babies' antenatal group and the popular 'Infant massage' and that you regularly attend the baby clinic. We are confident that many of you are adopting healthy lifestyles which lead to good outcomes. Those who have joined the baby massage groups were positive about the benefits of using massage to improve bonding with your baby. Some even reported improvement with baby's sleeping or colic problems.

You said the 'Lets Get Playing' and 'Pop in and Play' weekly groups were great fun and helped develop your understanding of how children learn. Several of you told us you would like even more sessions. Attendance on courses has helped develop your confidence and self-esteem and taught some of you new skills. You told us how much you look forward to the 'Family Fun Days' which help develop a good community spirit. The centre works in close partnership with the local school on site to aid your child's transition to the next stage of their learning and they are developing links with all schools in the reach area. We have asked the centre to ensure that more of you benefit from the good-quality services on offer.

We would like to thank everyone who was willing to speak to us. We are very grateful for your help and wish you every success in the future.

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