

Inspection report for Hyson Green and New Basford Children's Centre

Local authority	Nottingham City
Inspection number	367817
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Alison Veall HMI

Centre governance	Nottingham City Council
Centre leader	Sandra Fleming
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Bentinck Primary and Nursery URN 122407 Berridge Infant and Nursery URN 122408 Northgate Primary URN 122428 Forest Field Primary URN 122733 St Mary's Catholic Primary URN 122778 Scotholme Primary and Nursery URN 122478
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Educare Nursery URN 254609

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, representatives from professional partnerships, representatives from the advisory board, the local authority, parents and carers.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Hyson Green and New Basford Children's Centre is located in The Mary Potter Multi Access Centre. GP surgeries and a wide range of health and social care agencies are also accommodated within the centre. The children's centre delivers the full core offer including respite childcare, early learning, health services and family support. Services are delivered from the access centre and its satellite settings in local schools, New Basford Community Centre, Forest recreation ground, Hyson Green library and Greenfields Childcare and Training Centre. Educare Nursery provides funded nursery education. The centre also provides an outreach service working with families in their own home if appropriate. The children's centre is run directly by the local authority. A locality advisory board is in place and attended by a range of strategic partner agencies. A partnership board steers the operational service delivery of the centre. There is also a parent's forum.

Hyson Green and New Basford Children's Centre serves Berridge and Arboretum wards which are amongst the 10% most deprived wards within the country. The majority of families using the centre are from Black and minority ethnic groups with a growing number from Eastern European countries. The area is characterised by high levels of unemployment and social deprivation and has a very transient population. Most children enter the children's centre services with skills that are much lower than those expected for their age. The number of children living in

workless households within the wards the children's centre covers is the second highest within Nottingham City with over 40% of workless households being unemployed for six months or more and receiving benefits.

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

Hyson Green and New Basford children's centre provides an outstanding service for all its children and families. The organisation of children's services at local authority level has a significant impact and ensures that families benefit from a wide range of integrated services. The centre is exceptionally well led and managed. The senior leadership team are committed to ensuring the best possible service for children and families. Parents and representatives from partner agencies unequivocally praise the commitment made by everyone involved. Throughout the inspection the only comments read or received were of a positive nature. Examples include, 'welcomed and you know you are', 'very friendly place', 'eased my stress', 'helped me out no matter what the problem was.' The centre adapts quickly to changing needs and ensures that families presenting in crisis receive timely and appropriate help and support. Despite the transience of the population vulnerable families stay within the centre's radar through effective tracking and excellent partnership working.

The centre is very well placed and on several occasions it was referred to as the 'hub of the community' and a 'one stop shop'. Although housed in an access centre with significant numbers of health services it does not feel in any way clinical. The outside of the building is covered in children's drawings of children and inside it is bright and welcoming. The reception which is a hub of activity offers comfortable seating and a wide range of toys, books and information leaflets. These are used well by children when their parents and carers come in either to attend courses, health care sessions or drop in for help and advice. A small comfortable room is available for confidential discussions or for mothers who may want to breast feed in private. Administrators play a vital role in supporting the delivery of services. They provide a very warm welcome and ensure that all requests are dealt with immediately or logged for future action.

Partnership working is an absolute strength of the centre. This ensures that the holistic needs of children and families are met through a 'team around the child' approach. The locality access panel chaired by a senior member of staff from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) ensures that excellent targeted and universal services are delivered by the most appropriate agency. Health visitor and midwifery sessions take place in the children's centre with several taking place throughout the week ensuring that new and prospective parents are able to seek advice and support quickly. Each service engages parents very effectively ensuring they make contact with a wide range of professionals and services. Healthy eating is given high priority through a number of strategies including the delivery of courses aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle.

The children's centre staff team works collectively to ensure that the voices of families within the reach area are heard by as many people as possible. They take part in working groups and very effectively challenge agencies to ensure the best possible service is delivered. They are also proactive in offering the services of the centre in order to improve the well being and opportunities of families in and around the area. One example of this is the vulnerable person's panel where they offer the children's centre services to those families facing the most challenging of circumstances. Safety awareness is given a high priority and promoted extremely well. Robust recruitment procedures and excellent safeguarding arrangements ensure the protection of all users who report that they feel safe in the centre. Good quality risk assessments combined with immediate action if issues arise ensure that the site is very safe.

Overall, the centre makes a good contribution to improving the educational achievement of children and adults. Schools report that children who have attended the children's centre; the 'PEEP' and 'Getting Ready for Nursery' sessions show good progress from their starting points. However, the achievement gap between the lowest achievers and other children is not reducing quickly enough. The centre is aware of this and has identified improvement strategies. Adult learners access a good selection of courses, many delivered in partnership with outside agencies. Users identify how these courses have improved their knowledge and self-esteem. The centre runs a very successful volunteer programme with some attendees going onto gain employment. This is having a good impact of their economic stability. The centre staff make a very concerted effort to signpost users to Jobcentre Plus. However, they are not currently active in the centre and do not provide the centre with sufficient data in relation to the number of referrals received from the centre who then go onto employment.

The committed senior leadership team led by an extremely determined and visionary community service manager provide outstanding leadership and management. The achievements and improvements of the community are central to everything they do. This means that the centre is in an extremely strong position to improve in the future. The local authority provides good data which is being used effectively to monitor and target areas for development. The staff team demonstrate a strong level of commitment. The centre actively seeks and welcomes the views of users and the

wider community, Children are imaginatively involved in evaluation and the centre meaningfully involves parents and carers in shaping the services of the future through the very effective parents' forum. All courses and activities are evaluated to ensure best value for money. Hyson Green's highly inclusive nature means that many of its activities are oversubscribed and in particular its English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course. The centre provides crèche provision for this course which evidences its strong commitment to it. Equality is promoted sensitively and a very effective and robust approach is taken to challenge any form of discrimination at a community and strategic level.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

Reduce further the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the EYFS and others by:

- more development and implementation of strategies which will support children's progress, develop confidence and prepare for future learning.

Jobcentre Plus should become more involved with the centre by:

- supporting adults in accessing training and advice to increase their employment skills and opportunities
- providing the centre with rich data in order for them to assess their success and plan for future development.

How good are outcomes for users?

1

Healthy outcomes for children and families are given exceptionally high priority. As a result health and well-being is improving and for some families this may well be from a very low starting point. Obesity and smoking cessation levels within the centre's reach are lower than those within Nottingham city generally. Breast feeding rates at birth and continuation at six months are higher as is the take up of immunisation which ensures that children are given a healthy start in life. Health visitor and midwifery clinics are held at the centre with some being specifically targeted at non English speaking families. Outcomes for children whose parents may be drug or alcohol dependent are targeted as the centre works effectively with health professionals in the locality to address some of the issues and difficulties they face. Parents who have accessed the cook and eat, weaning and continence clinic comment upon the positive impact this has had on the health of their children.

The children's centre is an extremely safe and secure environment where children's well-being is given the utmost priority. Children subject to a child protection plan or Common Assessment Framework processes are exceptionally well-supported. Parents

and carers benefit from appropriate and timely responses when they drop in to the centre in crisis. The Common Assessment Framework is used well to ensure families are referred quickly to the appropriate agency but form filling does not detract from the immediacy of support. Families subject to domestic violence and abuse receive excellent support and signposting from children's centre workers and partner agencies. As a result children and victims are protected and work to develop victim's self-esteem quickly occurs. In some circumstances mediation work has taken place and families improve and remain as a unit. Children and families safety in their home and community is raised by the joint work between parents and the centre. Comment such as 'made me more aware of safety in the home', 'home feels a safer, child friendly environment' evidence this.

Parents and carers have been very actively involved in the decision making of the centre since its transition from a Sure Start local programme. They contribute their ideas through a variety of mediums including the active children's centre forum. They are involved in the evaluation of all courses and contacts not only with children centre staff but also with partner agencies. Comments such as 'You are welcomed and you know you are welcome', 'my suggestions are important and they are listened to' are just some that inspectors received during their time at the centre. Those parents and carers attending the positive parenting courses report on the effectiveness of these in developing their understanding of appropriate behaviour management techniques.

Parents and carers are learning how to support their children's learning and development actively at home. In the 'Sing Wiggle and Giggle' sessions and the Polish Women's group parent and child interaction was very good. The children's centre teacher and the head teacher from Berridge infant school also comment on the effectiveness of parent and child interaction. Children in the 'Ready for Nursery' group are reported to demonstrate improved outcomes in relation to concentration, routine and independence. The Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes for children in Communication Language and Literacy and Problem Solving Reasoning and Numeracy are below average nationally but improving year on year. All other outcomes are average and given their starting points children are making good progress.

The centre has identified a range of strategies to reduce the achievement gap between children and is targeting it as a priority for the coming year. Adult learners improve their skills through a range of courses and there is evidence that family learning is leading to volunteering opportunities and paid employment for some.

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	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare	1

concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	
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	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 needs of families are assessed thoroughly and sensitively and monitored through the centre's rigorous case management system. This ensures that assessments such as those carried out under the Common Assessment Framework, and assessments of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are robust. Case files are of an excellent quality and clearly identify where further work is needed, by whom and the impact of intervention. As a result intervention is tailored to meet the individual needs of children and families exceptionally well. The centre works collaboratively and extremely effectively with partner agencies. The Common Assessment Framework is embedded throughout the children's centre and discussions with staff evidence their sound understanding of this system.

The staff team have a very good understanding of the community and use this knowledge extremely well in the delivery of services. Locality based groups such as the Locality Access Panel and the Vulnerable Persons Panel also identify community wide strategies to assist the delivery of appropriate services. Partnership working is the absolute strength of this children's centre. There are so many examples of good quality outreach work, including work with Women's Aid and the Freedom project, the Translation group, Schools within the community, community centres, Educare nursery, Greenfields Childcare Centre, the Asian women's centre and Polish Community Centre and health and social care agencies. This level of partnership working ensures a 'team around the child approach to service delivery'.

The exceptional effectiveness of the centre's approach to care, guidance and support is clearly demonstrated by the comments from users. 'Eased my stress, helped me out no matter what the problem was', always honest and open with me', 'given me the opportunity to go out as a dad with my kids'. A wide range of case studies evidence how the centre supports and signposts families. Parents comment upon the home visits made by children's centre workers and how they appreciate these, even when the message was not what they wanted to hear.

A wide range of initiatives have been developed to support children's learning and development. Partnership with parents is seen as crucial to the improvement of children's learning and development. Individuals, groups and agencies receive good levels of support from the children's centre teacher. The centre is working collaboratively with various agencies including local schools to target children with

the lowest 20% achievement level. Courses provided for adults are highly valued and provide good quality learning and development, particularly in the use of English and in childcare. Dads who access the courses delivered in partnership with the centre comment on the effectiveness of these in developing their children's understanding of play. Volunteers are very well supported both during practical sessions and in their search for further employment. Jobcentre Plus are not currently active in the centre and do not provide sufficient data for the centre to assess its impact on referrals to them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	1
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	2
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	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

Significant changes have been made to the management and delivery of services by children's centres in Nottingham City. However, the senior leadership team led by the visionary service manager have ensured a smooth transition and mainly outstanding outcomes for all children and families. The staff whom inspectors talked with confirm their detailed understanding of the governance and accountability arrangements and are positive in their discussions regarding the transition arrangements. The data provided by the local authority has become more sophisticated and now gives a clear picture of the strengths and areas for further development. These are effectively used by the centre and its locality advisory board to plan and evaluate the delivery and impact of its services. During its annual conversation with the service manager the local authority use it to challenge and support her in the development of the priorities for the following year. The partnership board includes a wide representation from its partner agencies and members of the community. There is an enthusiastic two way flow of information from this group to the user's forum and vice versa, this ensures that the views of parents and carers are always taken into account.

The senior leadership team have high expectations of the centre users, the staff team and service partners. There is a genuine sense of commitment amongst the staff and partner agencies and a determination to improve the well-being for all children and their families. On more than one occasion staff made reference to commitment at a city councillor and strategic management group level which generates an enthusiasm in them. This is clearly evident.

The centre is highly inclusive and promotes equality and the celebration of diversity exceptionally well. Speakers of other languages are supported very well. For example, through the ante natal classes for Arabic speaking women which take place in the centre and through the weekly translation group which is delivered by children's centre staff. This group provides a whole range of advice and support from form filling to immigration panel support. The Locality Access Panel ensures all children including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are offered an excellent service. Children, families and local partners are also able to benefit from the onsite multi sensory room.

Early intervention, preventative work and partnership working are key elements to the success of the children's centre's outstanding safeguarding arrangements. Staff are well trained, knowledgeable and confident and they use these skills well in order to identify need and provide a range of appropriate services. They consistently follow the robust policies and procedures that are in place and work exceptionally well with a range of agencies. Throughout their contact with parents they inform them of the centre's policy on protecting children and sharing information. The staff team talk about the families with compassion and concern and their professionalism comes across strongly. Safer recruitment practices are adhered to. Criminal Records Bureau checks are complete and all staff working with children are deemed suitable. Staff supervision is considered to be of an exceptionally high quality with care guidance

and support offered to them as well as to the families. There are effective systems in place to monitor the whereabouts of staff when on outreach work ensuring their safety and protection also.

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	1
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understood	
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

The inspectors looked at the inspection outcomes for the pre-school providers and schools with Early Years Foundations Stage children within the centres reach area.

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 Hyson Green and New Basford Children's Centre on 22–23 June 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

As part of the inspection we visited a number of activities, we looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with several of you and the professionals who work with you. Many of you came in especially to talk to inspectors and to tell us how much the centre had helped you and how you enjoy the activities. Thank you for taking the time to do this. You told us that staff are friendly, hard working and give you excellent support. We agree with you. You told us about the friends you had met as a result of your involvement in the centre's activities. You also told us how it had become easier to ask for help and support as a result of the friendly welcome you receive. It was reassuring that you were able to talk openly during the many activities and meetings when inspectors were present. We also found the centre welcoming, very busy and alive with activity.

The local authority provides very good information to help the centre identify the families it needs to target and the range of support that is required. They also use it to monitor how well they have done against Nottingham City Council and Government targets. There is currently no information provided by Jobcentre Plus on how effective the centre is in enabling you to secure employment and improve your economic stability. We have asked Jobcentre Plus to become more involved in supporting you in your search for employment and training and by providing more data for the children's centre.

Throughout our discussions we heard that the children's centre has made a significant difference to your children's outcomes. You told us that your children are healthier, and safer. You also told us that they are better behaved and you have learnt new ways of dealing with their behaviour. We heard how valuable the home visits made by centre staff are and how helpful you found the various sessions. Your enjoyment of the 'Sing Wiggle and Giggle sessions' has meant that these sessions are always oversubscribed. This has forced the children's centre managers to re think how these are provided. The 'Ready Steady Nursery' group has proved a great success in getting your children ready for nursery groups. They are making good progress. To ensure this gets better we have asked the children's centre managers to ensure that the achievement gap between some of your children and others is narrowed. This will ensure that all children get the best start and will prepare them well for future learning. You also told us how your children's centre has supported you to set and achieve your own goals, and how you now have more self-esteem and confidence. This was very evident when we met with some of you during the inspection. You also told us about the many courses you have been able to access and how easy it is to tell the children's centre staff what things you would like to do in the future. We know that many of you have been supported to access further training, develop your skills and find employment. You should be very proud of yourselves and your children.

An absolute strength of the children's centre is partnership working. They liaise with lots of agencies including health, social care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS), Roshni, Women's Aid, Polish Women's group, Asian Women's group, Platform 51 to name but a few. Excellent systems are in place to assess the needs of your family so that targeted support can be provided to help you with the many challenges facing you. We are sure that by now some of you will be aware of the Common Assessment Framework processes which the children's centre staff use extremely well. These provide a basis for all of the inter agency work that takes place. This ensures that you and your children are very well supported and the centre can signpost you to the best service to meet your needs.

We heard that for many of you who speak English as an additional language the support you get from the centre's translation group and the midwifery sessions for Arabic speaking women has ensured that you feel included. Many of you told us about how you now feel confident to join other groups and to access the more universal services the centre has to offer. In the same way we heard how children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their parents are supported through a range of initiatives and activities. We were impressed by how sensitive the centre is to the different needs and cultures of the communities living within Hyson Green and New Basford. The centre works well for everyone in the wider community and by doing so contributes very strongly to community harmony and cohesion.

Thank you very much for your welcome and openness with inspectors. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you, sharing your stories and learning alongside 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.