

Inspection report for Moor Park New York Children's Centre

Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	367840
Inspection dates	28-29 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Jayne Utting

Centre governance	Governing Body of Moor Park New York Primary School
Centre leader	Lesley Colthart
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	New York Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY375207 - Little Apple 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.

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector. The inspectors visited a range of provision across the centre. They also held meetings with senior managers from the centre, parents and carers, members of the governing body and a number of partners including Early Years Foundation Stage and childcare partners; health, education and children's social care professionals and representatives from Working Homes, Family Learning and Jobcentre Plus. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Moor Park New York Children's Centre (known locally as New York Children's Centre) is located in the south east of North Tyneside. It falls within the top 2% of deprived wards in the country. The reach population of the centre is just over 700. Recent figures show that over 35% of households are lone parents with dependent children. Estimated weekly income is significantly lower than the North Tyneside average, and the percentage of children aged nought to four living in households dependent on workless benefits is 54.6%. The majority of local families are of White British heritage. The proportion of children attending schools in the area who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average, as is the proportion of children aged under four who are living in households where no one is working. Most children enter childcare and early education with a much narrower range of experiences and skills than that expected for their age. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.

The centre is co-located on the site of Moor Park New York primary school, and operates as a 'one-stop-shop' model, providing the full core offer. The centre has been operational since 2008. It hosts a full time day care provision for children from three months to school age and this is managed by a private provider. The team and head of centre work with the Riverside Children's Centre, which has permanent

facilities for pre- and postnatal screening. Governance of the centre is through the school's governing body.

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

'I would recommend this centre to everyone. It has changed my life,' is how one parent described the impact New York Children's Centre has had on his life. This outstanding centre sits at the heart of the community and has worked relentlessly to achieve an exceptional level of trust, acceptance and respect amongst local families. The unfaltering dedication and commitment of all centre staff has ensured that outcomes for many people living within this locality have greatly improved, often in the face of the most challenging of circumstances. Multi-agency partnerships are outstanding and provide the foundation stone from which to deliver individualised, integrated support, which is responsive to the diverse needs of the local community.

The centre has a genuine inclusive ethos and challenging targets have been set to support the most vulnerable families through highly effective multi-agency working and well-targeted outreach provision. As a result, gaps in both achievement and engagement for target groups of families are narrowing significantly. Fathers are particularly well supported and motivated through a well-established Saturday dad's group. The positive impact of this work is reflected in the increasing number of men who attend activities, many of whom commented on how included they now feel. Increasing numbers of parents and carers are encouraged to participate in adult learning through a range of courses offered by the centre. However, there is more work to be done to improve participation rates further. Staff are particularly effective in listening to the voice of the community, whether through evaluations or more formally through the parents' group. There is however, scope to empower more parents and carers to contribute to decision making at a strategic, governance level.

The centre has a strong and dynamic leadership team. All have a clear, shared vision to make a real, lasting difference to this community. A rigorous cycle of monitoring and evaluation means that the management team are always striving to improve the quality and impact of the services and activities provided. This demonstrates an

exemplary capacity for improvement. The recent development of the centre's database system ensures swift access to a wealth of information. This has already greatly enhanced the depth of the centre's data analysis, and is to be used as a model of best practice within other centres across North Tyneside.

Safeguarding is given the utmost priority, with highly effective, robust policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety and protection of both families and staff. All staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of child protection policies and procedures and are adept at identifying vital signs, referring quickly and appropriately when necessary. This combined with exemplary partnerships, ensures a seamless and coordinated approach to safeguarding children.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Continue to develop work around participation to ensure parents and carers are empowered to contribute meaningfully to the governance of the centre.
- Build upon existing excellent partnerships and provision to further improve participation rates, particularly in relation to adult training opportunities.

How good are outcomes for users?

1

New York Children's Centre has effected genuine lasting change; improving outcomes for many of its local parents and carers and children. 'There was nothing here for us before the centre' stated one parent, whilst another commented on how much more respect families now have for each other and their community.

The promotion of healthy lifestyles is regarded as a priority, and this theme threads seamlessly through all activities. For example, dieticians attend stay and play groups to demonstrate how easy it is to prepare healthy snacks for children. Without exception, parents and carers showed an increased awareness of the importance of staying fit and healthy. One mum who had attended the popular 'Fakeaways' course said 'the recipe I made tasted much better and cost half as much, so I don't buy takeaways now'. The centre has been at the forefront of a national project to reduce obesity levels in school age children. The impact of this work is reflected in a significant reduction in obesity levels amongst children living in the most deprived wards within the authority. This gap has narrowed significantly from 2.6 % to 0.52 % since 2006. The centre recognises that in order to effect lasting change, a whole-family commitment to leading a healthier lifestyle is necessary. In response to this, the centre has worked closely with the health and well-being champion to develop the successful, family focussed 'Fit4life' programme. The work of the teenage pregnancy team, in partnership with the centre, ensures there is excellent support in place for young parents. At the same time, recent figures show a significant reduction in teenage pregnancy rates of 25.6%.

There is an ongoing commitment to the promotion of issues around child safety. Accident prevention training and one-to-one support offered through the centre's family support team has resulted in an increase in the number of parents and carers requesting safety equipment for their homes. The head of centre has also been part of a working group which has developed an effective authority wide accident prevention strategy. The family support worker is proactive in supporting parents and carers to develop a better understanding of issues which impact on their ability to 'stay safe'. One parent who had attended the 'Freedom' program, a course designed to support those who have experienced domestic violence stated, 'I am now more aware of what to look out for in relationships and I feel more able to keep myself and my children safe'.

The centre manager has noticed that parents and carers now have the confidence not only to ask for help, but to recognise their need for it; increasingly before they reach a point of crisis. Exemplary multi-agency support ensures that children subject to a child protection plan or Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes are extremely well supported. The 'Request for Services' meetings ensure that appropriate information is shared between professionals, with care packages identified to meet individual need in a consistent and rigorous manner.

The centre's ongoing involvement in the 'Every Child a Talker' project has had a significant impact on the achievement of children, particularly in relation to their personal, social and emotional development as well as their communication, language and literacy skills. The work of the speech and language therapist has empowered staff with the knowledge to consistently apply best practice in the development of all children's communication skills, securing accelerated progress in this key area. The centre has achieved the gold 'Communication friendly' award, a reflection of the very high standards they maintain. The enthusiasm and dedication of the early years team and the centre's qualified teacher ensures the provision of outstanding education and learning experiences for all children. The integrated model adopted by the centre ensures this best practice is shared with the on-site private childcare provider as well as local childminders.

Most parents and carers feel that they have a voice within the centre which is listened to and as a result, services provided meet their specific needs. For example, dads were consulted about the kinds of activities they would like to take part in during their Saturday group. This is reinforced further through the 'You said, we did' displays within the centre. However, there is less opportunity for parents and carers to engage meaningfully in the governance of the centre and to participate in key decision making.

There are some good examples of how the centre has helped parents and carers into learning, training and employment. Some parents and carers, having undertaken the centre's 'softer' informal training opportunities, felt empowered to pursue formal qualifications. One mother talked about how these courses had given her the confidence to get back into employment, looking for jobs away from the comfort of the estate in which she had grown up. In partnership with local training providers,

including Tyneside Metropolitan College and Family Learning, the centre also runs other accredited courses, including first aid, basic numeracy and literacy. However, there is scope for the centre to further improve participation rates, enabling more families locally to take advantage of the excellent training opportunities available.

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 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	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?

1

The provision of high quality learning experiences is raising both the achievements and aspirations of local parents, carers and children. Individual learning journeys are completed for all children who access the centre; this tracks their progress and achievements and provides an excellent picture of a child's stage of development at the point they enter school, thus aiding transition. The provision of training to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills, has enabled many parents and carers to better support their child's learning at home. The 'Riddles and rhymes' workshops have helped promote the importance of parents and carers and children reading together. Parents and carers proudly showed the rhyme and story books they had created on this course and were excited at the prospect of sharing these with their children. The excellent and often innovative work of the early years team, in partnership with the day care provision and local childminders, has ensured the integration and promotion of the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage in all aspects of their work.

Everyone involved in the centre is passionate about securing the very best outcomes for families locally. Their in-depth understanding of the issues and challenges facing the community ensures the provision of very well-targeted support, enabling families to make the best of those opportunities available. The expertise and breadth of knowledge demonstrated by every staff member within the centre is impressive. This is reflected in the high quality support and guidance received by families. One parent described how she had no aspirations when she first went to the centre. She explained how the coordination of support she experienced enabled her to take steps

to change the direction of her life. This mother went on to gain qualifications and found employment as a classroom assistant.

The shared actions taken to involve and improve outcomes for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are excellent. A close working partnership has been established between relevant external agencies and the centre's family support team and the special educational needs coordinator. This has enabled individualised packages of support to be put in place at the earliest opportunity. One parent spoke of the invaluable support she had received; 'Our grandchild would not have had the opportunity to stay in mainstream school without the support of the headteacher and this centre'. The sensitivity with which practitioners engage with parents and carers ensures that they are increasingly empowered to make informed decisions, alongside professionals, regarding the packages of care put in place for their children.

An excellent range of services and activities are designed and delivered through the centre, and these reflect the specific needs of the community. For example, the centre has designed a specialised range of one-off workshops based on feedback from parents and carers, including some on bedtime routines, temper tantrums and faddy eaters. However, the centre is aware that there is scope to further improve participation rates in some of its activities. Home visits from the family support worker have been hugely successful in engaging harder to reach families, identifying need and supporting them to access a range of services. These visits encompass a whole range of issues, including safety checks and parenting support. The level of personal support received by families has been greatly appreciated and this has contributed to the genuine sense of trust and respect displayed by local parents and carers towards all staff within the centre.

These are the grades for 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	2
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

The centre manager, ably supported by her senior team and the governing body is relentless in her drive for improvement. Together, they are adept at drawing upon their substantial knowledge and understanding of the local community to identify future priorities. This combined with robust data and excellent local intelligence has ensured the provision of high quality and coherent delivery and improvement plans.

Key to the centre's success has been its ethos of 'working with' rather than 'doing to' its community. This is reflected in the good and improving participation rates in the activities it provides. The views of parents and users are routinely collected through evaluations of individual activities and interventions. These rigorous procedures ensure that all staff and partners continually seek to improve their practice. The centre has further developed systems that will enable the longer term evaluation of the impact of its work. For example, through tracking the progress of its children to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. These systems also enable staff to monitor the progress of specific target groups including; young parents, dads and those living in the most deprived wards. This helps to ensure equality of opportunity and to identify potential barriers to access.

Hugely knowledgeable about the specific needs and challenges of their community, the governing body are resolute in their drive to raise the expectations and aspirations of local families. They encompass a wide range of skills and professional expertise which complements the work of the centre. This has proved invaluable in relation to setting appropriate challenges for centre staff, particularly in relation to maximising the efficiency of partnership working. The governing body plays a key role in the well-embedded processes of self-evaluation and reflective practice. The resulting information is used exceptionally well to set challenging targets, which perpetuate a cycle of continuous improvement, narrowing the achievement gap for those most disadvantaged.

The enthusiasm of all staff and partners within the centre permeates through every aspect of its work. Without exception, everyone demonstrates high levels of dedication and commitment as well as a determination to effect sustainable improved outcomes for the community. The inclusion of all children and families is exemplary. This is as a consequence of a genuine understanding of the community in which the centre is based. Staff are extremely motivated and committed in all aspects of their professional development. The eclectic mix of skills, qualifications and knowledge that exist amongst the centre's team ensures the provision of a holistic service to centre users. Individual strengths are recognised and used to develop services further. For example, one governing body member has volunteered their time to work with parents and carers in developing Curriculum Vitae writing and interview skills.

All staff and partners have the confidence and skills to identify needs and issues facing families at the earliest opportunity. The 'Request for Services' panel is a first-rate example of how agencies are able to work together in order to effect swift and effective early intervention and support for families experiencing difficulties and challenges. The development of the Integrated Children's System ensures that all families accessing a service are recorded onto a single shared system. This tool has proved invaluable in terms of sharing information across agencies, as well as for informing assessment and safeguarding. Excellent procedures are in place to ensure that all individuals working with children are suitable to do so.

Resources are used and managed effectively to meet the needs of families and

children in the community. The governing body works closely with the local authority, ensuring budget allocations are aligned to ongoing priorities and remains responsive to the changing priorities and needs within the local community. Staff are extremely well deployed and utilised ensuring excellent value for money.

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

New York Children's Centre hosts full-time day care provision for children aged birth to school age and this is managed by a private provider; Little Apple Nursery. Five local primary schools, New York, Preston Grange, Langley First, Star of the Sea and Whitehouse, with Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children over three years, are also part of the centre's remit. Information from their most recent Ofsted inspections has been taken into account when writing about early years provision and outcomes for children in the report.

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copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected New York Children's Centre on 28 and 29 June 2011. We visited activities, looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with you and professionals. Following this work, we have judged the centre as providing outstanding support to you and your families.

The children's centre provides a wealth of excellent activities, which are aimed at helping families improve their lives. Your views strongly support this as you tell us that you are happy with the activities you use because they have helped you in lots of different ways. For example, some of you have received excellent support as young mums, whilst others have found the opportunities to undertake training or learn about healthy eating to be 'fantastic' and 'life changing.' In particular, activities and provision for children before they start school has improved greatly and many of your children are making outstanding progress as a result, especially in regard to making friends and developing speaking, listening and reading skills.

We found that the children's centre offers lots of high quality activities aimed at improving the health of people in your local community. In particular it has done really well in reducing the number of overweight children, as well as helping people to live healthier lifestyles by quitting smoking and through the provision of activities to encourage healthy eating and exercise. Whilst there is still more work to do to increase the number of new mums who choose to breastfeed their babies, we were impressed by the progress made so far.

Most importantly, you tell us that you feel safe at the centre, and can trust the staff to help you when you most need it. You particularly appreciate the advice and help of the family support worker and have welcomed home visits and the opportunity to go with someone to a group until you build your confidence and make new friends. We found that action to support families was taken quickly and that different people and organisations worked exceptionally well together.

The centre is working extremely well with other partners, such as health visitors, midwives, speech and language therapists and local training providers. You tell us that it is good to go to the many groups and workshops available. You also appreciate the opportunity to talk to the health visitor or the family support worker in a relaxed, informal environment. A lot of parents and carers, especially those who are bringing up children on their own, told us that they felt really happy on the days when they have an activity to go to and have valued friendships made through the centre. There is exemplary support for children with disabilities and parents and carers are encouraged to take an active role in meetings with professionals, ensuring they are involved in making important decisions about their children's future.

We found that those people in charge of the children's centre are doing an outstanding job. Their hard work and commitment is inspirational and continues to make a real, genuine and lasting difference to the area in which you live. We have asked them to continue to encourage even more of you to take part in the excellent activities on offer, particularly training opportunities. We know the centre is very good at asking for your opinion on the activities and services you use and many of you have been involved in influencing and developing the way some services are delivered. However, the centre needs to further increase the involvement and influence you have as parents and carers in their work. We hope that this is something you might be interested in becoming involved in.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come and speak to us, we are very grateful and we wish you every success for the future.

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