

Inspection report for Marshlands Old Goole Children's Centre

Local authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	365697
Inspection dates	5-6 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Daniel Grant

Centre governance	Local authority
Centre leader	Sue Edson
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	117937 Marshlands Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY356338 Marshlands Children's Centre Creche and Pre-school

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

Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

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

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

An inspection of the registered early years and childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

An inspection of the maintained primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

The inspectors held meetings with senior managers from the centre and the local authority, front-line professionals, parents and carers, volunteers, and the chair of the advisory board.

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

Information about the centre

Marshlands Old Goole Children's Centre is a Phase one centre. It provides the full core offer. The centre is located on the same site as Marshlands Primary School. The centre has its own crèche and pre-school, which are registered by Ofsted and were last inspected in April 2008.

The area served by the centre is in 20% of the most deprived areas nationally and has pockets of significant social disadvantage surrounded by areas with less need. The vast majority of families are of White British heritage with a small but increasing number of migrant workers from Eastern Europe. The proportion of children who live in households without paid employment or in families in receipt of benefits is above average.

A large number of children in the area enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a significantly lower range of skills than those expected for their age.

The centre is governed and managed by the local authority and an advisory board made up of representatives from the local community, including parents and carers and professionals.

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

Families who use Marshlands Children's Centre receive outstanding care and support from highly motivated and experienced staff who work in very close and effective partnership with other organisations to provide well-integrated services. Outcomes for users are improving year-on-year as the centre becomes increasingly more effective; for this reason the capacity for further improvement is good.

The centre provides a good range of services, which is very well matched to the needs of families in the area. Staff understand the different communities well. They have high ambition for all users and precisely identify users' needs at the earliest opportunity. The centre is a bright and attractive place for all users, where good use is made of the high quality toys, equipment and learning resources to improve outcomes. Staff promote inclusion well and barriers to participation are quickly identified and removed. Safeguarding arrangements are very effective and users and staff feel safe at the centre.

The centre leadership team work very effectively to ensure all users receive consistent, high quality services. Wherever possible, they plan contingencies for disruption to services and, where required, encourage and support partners in planning and improving services delivered from the centre. For example, recently Jobcentre Plus withdrew delivery of support from the centre for users seeking help to find paid work, training or in need of benefits advice, so staff at the centre now work harder to find local solutions to reduce the impact on users. Also, the centre's leadership team is effectively addressing the partnership arrangements at a strategic

level through the Children's Trust.

The centre is well established in Old Goole, where many families have a high level of need. Registration and participation of users from this area is very high. However, the centre recognises registration and participation rates are low in several smaller communities in villages and hamlets across the large rural area covered by the centre. Accordingly, the centre is effectively extending its reach through the recent appointment of three community nursery nurses who, with family support workers, are attached to local schools and provide good outreach services from an increasing number of locations including users' homes. Support for childminders, private and voluntary childcare settings is increasing, but remains low because arrangements are at an early stage. The centre also has its own minibuss, which is used effectively to transport families to and from activities. Overall, this means that contacts and engagement with all groups are increasing and outcomes are improving.

Staff and partner organisations identify children's speech and language difficulties at a very early stage and recognise this as a significant problem for many children in the area. This is a high priority for the centre and many of the activities help to improve speech and language development. However, the centre recognises that even more needs to be done to provide specialist support to ensure children make more progress so they can enter school even better prepared for success. One parent commented 'I never realised how easy it is to help my son to learn new words, the staff have shown us games we can play at home which make a real difference.'

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Continue to develop outreach services in remote areas to ensure potential users, including childminders and private and voluntary childcare settings benefit from the centre's offer.
- For Jobcentre Plus to provide improved access to advice, guidance and specialist support for users seeking paid employment, training and information relating to benefits.
- Increase early identification and specialist speech and language support to improve communication and language development for all children.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Good attention is given to providing high quality information to promote a healthy lifestyle. These include: dental hygiene, breastfeeding and weaning, smoking cessation, domestic violence, parenting and general health and child development. The centre places a strong emphasis on promoting the emotional health and mental well-being of all users including those most vulnerable due to their circumstances

and works very effectively to support families with children who have additional needs. The centre offers a very popular 'Let's Cook' course, which is delivered by volunteers from the Women's Institute. This is very well attended and successfully prepares adults to make better choices when planning and preparing meals. One graduate from the course told us 'The recipes are very tasty; we are having banana cheesecake tonight.'

There are many examples where parents and carers are given opportunities to make a positive contribution to the centre and the wider community by becoming members of the parents' forum and through their involvement on the advisory board. They feel that their views are listened to and acted upon by staff through face-to-face meetings, evaluations of activities and satisfaction surveys. Good support is provided to promote users' economic stability, for example, in accessing local training courses, opportunities to gain experience through voluntary work, gaining qualifications and returning to work. However, users are no longer able to meet with staff from Jobcentre Plus at the centre because this service has been withdrawn.

The centre works effectively in ensuring that parents and carers and children keep themselves safe and free from harm. This is demonstrated by a wide range of preventative measures and advice, including the home safety scheme, where families can gain access to stair gates, fireguards, socket covers and safety harnesses. The most vulnerable children are quickly recognised and effective packages of support are put in place for the whole family. The centre staff work very effectively with social workers to support children and their families who are subject to child protection plans and those who are looked after by the local authority, including intensive support for those with a planned return home. Staff have a very good understanding of child protection procedures and are experienced in using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

Children get off to a positive start in the pre-school and crèche and make good gains in their learning, given their varied starting points. A much higher proportion of children from this centre reach higher levels in their early learning goals than other children locally. However, the majority remain below what is expected for their age group. Of particular concern in the area is the slow progress made by many children in developing speech and language. Support for these children is a high priority and although staff work determinedly to improve outcomes, there is a need for earlier and more specialist assessment and intervention.

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

Staff at the centre demonstrate good knowledge of local families and the communities they serve. The centre team work hard to ensure that services successfully meet the needs of users. There is a wide range of good services and the centre meets its core offer well. Assessment is increasingly used effectively by staff to determine the needs of children, parents and carers and users. Assessment of adult learners is detailed and used well to plan progression routes. The CAF is well-embedded and strong partnerships with other agencies ensure that assessments of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are robust.

There are clear programmes in place to promote the health and social well-being of users, including a strong emphasis on providing emotional support to boost their confidence and raise their self-esteem. Staff and partnership organisations have high ambitions for users. They provide and promote opportunities for purposeful learning well and activities are of good quality. This is reinforced through staff raising the aspirations of users by encouraging them to build on their achievements and by regularly celebrating their success with certificates and praise. One parent commented 'I never thought I'd enjoy being a parent quite so much. I expected to fail but the staff here convinced me I could do it.'

The centre provides a very popular, high quality crèche and pre-school, which is used well to allow parents and carers an opportunity to participate in sessions and activities for their own needs. Outreach work is becoming increasingly effective with newly appointed staff delivering a number of well-attended sessions in several locations within the reach area. This work is becoming established and has already started to improve participation rates in many remote rural areas and helped to engage childminders and private and voluntary childcare providers through an increasing network of information sharing and support. Outreach services are very well resourced and are becoming increasingly effective because the centre's leaders have identified this as an area they wish to strengthen.

The quality of care and personal support for children and parents and carers is outstanding. This is because support and advice is precisely targeted to meet individual needs and is highly personalised. Users are very appreciative of the way staff are discreet and sensitive to their unique and changing circumstances. One parent commented, 'The centre staff have helped me during some very difficult periods. This has helped keep my family together.' In addition, the centre provides a

comprehensive range of high quality information, which is very well matched to the needs of many users, for example, smoking cessation, drug and alcohol abuse, volunteering, sexual health, adult training and breastfeeding. Many users make regular and effective use of the centre's computers and 'warm-phone' to search for information and book appointments relating to health, employment and training. Case studies and users' evaluations demonstrate the high levels of progress and improved outcomes, which have resulted because of the very effective support.

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	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Over the last year the centre's leadership team have made significant investment to improve the work of the centre, most noticeably in strategic planning, reorganisation of staffing, engagement with families and in the range of activities provided. This is because of the drive and commitment of senior leaders to improve outcomes for users. Leaders receive very good support from the local authority and the centre staff team. Together, and in consultation with centre users, they set the tone and work with energy and enthusiasm to ensure that the centre is effective in improving the life chances of all users. Members of the advisory board play an increasingly effective role in supporting the centre. Governance and accountability arrangements are clear and understood.

The centre provides good value for money. The staff team are innovative and motivational. They model good parenting skills, and inspire many parents and carers. There is clear commitment to equality of opportunity and the inclusion of all children and their families is central to the centre's work. For example, staff are very careful to remove barriers for all users to the activities and services on offer by varying the time and venues of courses and providing good crèche facilities.

The self-evaluation process is particularly thorough and there is clear agreement on what the centre does well and where further improvements can be made. For example, senior leaders are well aware that at present there is a significant need to

increase services to support speech and language development and they are working with partner organisations to achieve this.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Local authority procedures and guidance for safe recruitment are followed closely. All staff employed by the centre have been subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check and are trained appropriately in child-protection procedures. They work effectively in partnership to protect children and vulnerable adults through well-integrated services, early intervention, close cooperation between all agencies and through the CAF procedures.

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

Information from the concurrent inspections of Marshland Primary School and the centre's crèche and pre-school have been taken into account in the judgements of this inspection and the preparation of this report.

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 Marshlands Old Goole Children's Centre on 5 and 6 July 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

During our visit we looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with a number of you and the professionals who work with you. Many of you told us how much you enjoy the activities provided through the centre. You told us that staff are friendly, hard working and give you excellent support. We agree with you. We found the centre to be welcoming to all families with lots happening.

The staff have a high level of expertise and offer excellent practical and emotional support to families who need it. The centre does some things especially well. There are many examples of professionals from different agencies working very well together to make sure you receive the right advice and support. Staff provide excellent care, guidance and support for all centre users.

The crèche and pre-school sessions are good. The centre makes a good contribution to improving families' health and children's development. It does this through the outreach work and through the exciting range of sessions and activities on offer. This means that your children are better prepared for school.

You told us that you feel safe at the centre. This reflects the good work the centre does to promote safety and welfare and the good safeguarding arrangements. Children are well behaved and confidently explore their learning environment. We were very impressed by the positive and supportive relationships you have with one another and with your children.

A few of you told us that you would welcome more opportunities to develop your skills, for example by doing voluntary work or training for a job.

The centre leaders provide strong and effective management. The centre is very well supported by the local authority and the advisory board.

We found that staff have a really good understanding of your needs and are constantly striving to improve what they do. There are three things that we have asked centre leaders to work on in the immediate future:

- to do more to help children develop speech and language

- for Jobcentre Plus to provide more support for those of you seeking paid employment, training and information relating to benefits
- to provide more services for families living in the villages near Old Goole.

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

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