

Inspection report for Morley North Children's Centre

Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	365701
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Mary Dudley

Centre governance	Leeds City Council
Centre leader	Louise Walker
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Asquith Primary School Horsfall Street Morley Leeds LS27 9QY
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Linked school if applicable	Asquith Primary school
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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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the Children's Centre Services Manager responsible for managing the children's centre, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with members of the parent's forum, the advisory board, parents, carers and representatives from the local authority. The inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Morley North Children's Centre is a phase two children's centre designated in February 2008. Protracted building work meant the centre did not provide the full range of services until May 2010. The main building, known as the hub, is based on the Asquith Primary school site. Provision is offered at a range of venues across the area. The centre meets the core offer as appropriate for a phase two centre and provision includes; family support and outreach services, stay, play and learn sessions and links to Jobcentre Plus.

The local authority is responsible for all aspects of the governance and management of the centre. The Children's Centre Services Manager has responsibility for a small staff team and the day-to-day running of the centre, she is line managed by the headteacher of Asquith primary school.

The children's centre is situated in the historic market town of Morley which lies within the metropolitan borough of the city of Leeds and is approximately eight kilometres south west of Leeds city centre. The area is well served by public transport with good motorway access. Housing is a mixture of privately owned,

privately rented and council owned properties, including many back to back properties.

The area covered by the children's centre has identified pockets of deprivation as well as contrasting areas of affluence. The majority of local families are of White British heritage (91.8%), although there are a small number of Black and Asian heritage families in the area. Numbers claiming unemployment benefit and Job Seekers Allowance have fallen in the last 18 months and are below the average for the city. Children enter early years provision at the centre with skills and knowledge below those found typically for their age.

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

Morley North Children's Centre is a good and improving centre; some of its features are outstanding such as the care, guidance and support it provides to its users. The centre's manager, together with the centre's staff, advisory board and professional partners has ensured the centre offers good quality provision and services. The centre has a highly cohesive, enthusiastic and dedicated staff team who work well together to improve the lives of families within the reach area. The centre's inclusive approach ensures that families from different backgrounds feel welcome and able to enjoy the range of provision on offer. Many centre users went out of their way to tell the inspectors how much they enjoy activities and about the excellent care and emotional support they have received and one parent said, 'The support I have had is immense and in such a happy environment'.

Outcomes for users are good overall and are rapidly improving. The centre makes a good contribution to improving the health of families and the educational achievement of children and adults. Centre staff and health professionals promote healthy lifestyles through play sessions, outreach sessions, home visits and specific support groups. Health outcomes are improving for most, although there is insufficient evidence of the centre's impact on reducing obesity rates of children starting school. Young children are well prepared to attend nursery provision. They

actively engage in the range of exciting and stimulating learning opportunities available to them and are becoming confident in their learning and development. Adults accessing learning provision have shown real improvement, learnt new skills and have had a good time in the process.

The centre is particularly effective in keeping users safe and protected. Comprehensive risk assessments of all areas ensure high levels of safety in the centre. All centre staff and key agencies have a shared understanding of how to keep children and adults safe and children are effectively learning how to behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. Users actively engage in the decision making and governance of the centre and feel that their views are listened to, although they are not fully engaged in the formal annual review and planning process. The centre makes a good contribution to the economic stability and independence of families, and centre staff have supported a number of families to claim the appropriate benefits thereby reducing inequality and making a real difference to their economic stability.

Effective assessment of need and appropriate target-setting ensures families, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, benefit from a range of good quality services that are carefully tailored to meet their particular needs. However, evaluation systems to accurately review the long-term impact of provision on outcomes for all users are not sufficiently embedded. The centre gives the utmost priority to safeguarding all children and their families and the quality of care, guidance and support provided is excellent. The success of the centre is further enhanced by outstanding partnership working with staff from organisations such as the health services, Jobcentre Plus, the voluntary sector and local primary schools. Partners hold the centre in very high regard and value its contribution to the community and particularly the commitment of staff to improving outcomes for vulnerable families.

The centre is fully inclusive to all members of the community and staff show great understanding and respect, valuing difference and celebrating diversity. The advisory board which includes parents, partner agency representatives and a local councillor plays an active role in challenging the centre to ensure it provides high quality provision to meet local need. This, together with effective partnership working and good leadership and management means the centre has good capacity to improve further.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Implement plans quickly and effectively to provide good quality services to help reduce children's levels of obesity.
- Increase the involvement of users in the annual review and planning cycle.
- Embed evaluation systems to accurately review the long-term impact of provision on outcomes for all users.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Overall outcomes for users are good. The health of families, particularly their emotional health, has improved significantly as a direct result of engagement with the centre. There is good support from health visitors and the counselling provision available through the centre is particularly valued by users. The post-natal depression group has a significant impact on those attending and a typical view is, 'It's turned my life round, I feel like I am on an even keel now'. There is evidence of improving outcomes in reducing teenage conception rates and in the percentage of infants being breastfed beyond six to eight weeks. The centre actively promotes healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating and good hygiene, but tackling children's obesity is not currently addressed within the centre. Users are signposted to smoking cessation clinics run from local GP surgeries.

Users feel safe at the centre. Relationships between staff, children and families are very trusting and staff know them very well. Consequently, early identification and prevention of potential risks play a key role in reducing harm to children. Children are safe and protected as good steps are taken to address their individual needs. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe and have regard for others. For example, one child explained how they have to hold hands when crossing the road and wait for the green man or, 'you'll get squashed'. Well-structured parenting programmes have a marked impact on outcomes for users experiencing difficulties with children's behaviour. The lives of a number of women and children have been significantly improved by the support given by the centre to address issues of domestic violence. Safeguarding is actively promoted through posters on display and there is constant reinforcement of safety policies. There is clear evidence of improved outcomes for children identified as potentially vulnerable and subject to child protection plans.

There are many opportunities for parents and children to play and learn together and a range of high quality information and advice is given on all aspects of child development. Support from the early years teacher at the planning stage has meant all activities are planned with children's learning and development in mind and staff have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The teachers' input to the childminder support group run by the centre has led to more effective planning for children's learning and a shared understanding of effective assessment. As one childminder said, 'I'm planning now and it's a real help when setting up in the morning'. The accredited family learning course is very effective and much valued by parents and carers. One parent told inspectors, 'It's great, I dropped out of school and never did anything but I've really got into this, I even work at home on stuff now'. Users enjoy the courses offered and are keen to do more.

Children who have accessed services engage in positive behaviour and show high levels of respect, care and concern for others. There are good opportunities for parents and carers to express their views through regular evaluations of activities, and through involvement in the parent forum and the advisory board. Adults report

that their opinions are listened to, valued and in many cases acted upon. As a result, the centre is significantly influenced by centre users and the families in the reach area. One parent member of the advisory board said, 'It's really exciting as parents feel we are taking more control'. However, they are not yet formally or sufficiently engaged in the centre's annual review and planning process.

As a result of their engagement with the centre, children and adults improve their economic and social well-being. Children develop excellent social and personal skills through participating in activities at the centre with other children and with their parents. The centre works closely with the Jobcentre Plus outreach advisor, encouraging users to attend appointments then following up with extra offers of support. A job vacancy noticeboard is maintained in the centre and updated daily, and there is good signposting of users to local training courses and advice on budgeting and benefits. A volunteer training programme has recently begun at the centre and has been greeted enthusiastically by 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 provision is good. The centre knows its users well and is extremely effective in assessing users' needs and promoting purposeful learning. User's needs are assessed sensitively and appropriately to ensure services are tailored to suit individual circumstances. For families facing complex difficulties, the assessment of need is effective, and supported through good inter-agency working and communication. Assessments inform programme and course development; one example being the introduction of the post-natal depression support group following the recognition of high levels of post-natal depression in the area. However, systems to evaluate the longer-term impact of provision are not yet fully embedded throughout the work of the centre.

The centre raises the aspirations and expectations of families and children by supporting their personal and educational development, with many users accessing

adult learning for the first time. Activities are designed around planned outcomes and promote purposeful learning and development. Accredited courses in topics such as family learning and behaviour management of children are offered to ensure users benefit from good quality teaching and learning and have the opportunity to gain qualifications.

The centre provides a good range of services and activities that are responsive to users' needs. Users are regularly consulted on the centre's range of courses and programme content. There are good examples of programmes being changed to meet the needs of individuals and changing circumstances such as moving the time of the parents' forum meetings to allow more parents to attend. The family outreach workers promote the centre to the wider community and engage users in centre activities using leafleting, outreach, group activities, individual support and courses. The outreach workers also work very effectively with other partners to deliver direct support for targeted families through joint home visits and other activities at the centre. Partners and users talk very highly of the positive impact of the outreach workers in the area. Parents and carers are supported to access programmes by the provision of crèche facilities and through delivery of programmes at other venues in the area.

The quality of care, guidance and support offered by the centre is outstanding. There is a strong emphasis on providing effective emotional support to boost users' confidence and raise their self-esteem. This has a significant impact on improving the lives of families, particularly those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. Sensitive, individualised support is provided to help promote outcomes and in times of crisis families feel extremely well supported. One parent said, 'I got so much more, I got friendly people who really cared, listened. They were there for the hardest time of my life'.

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

Leadership and management are consistently good at all levels and are exceptional in relation to partnership working and value for money. Senior leaders have a clear vision, set the tone, communicate high expectations and have the drive and commitment to ensure that the centre is effective in improving the life chances of all users. All staff demonstrate admirable commitment to the centre and the community

it serves. Governance and accountability arrangements are clear and well understood and financial oversight is good. Effective arrangements for performance management and accountability are in place, ensuring centre staff are all working towards appropriate targets and the common purpose of improving outcomes for all families in the area. However, the system for the long-term evaluation of impact is not yet embedded throughout the centre.

There is an excellent use of resources; services are very well used and have a wide reach to the most vulnerable groups in the area. Provision is offered in a range of shared accommodation within the locality, ensuring delivery at the point of need. The children's centre building is small, but attractively decorated and well used. Attendance rates at activities are monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure good retention rates of users so that they benefit well from sessions. Staff expertise and knowledge are appropriately deployed and some staffing resources are shared with the primary school to ensure good value for money and good outcomes for all users. Users report that they are very satisfied with the services provided. The management team is effective in ensuring the centre focuses on activities that are sustainable, building upon existing provision and involving users in giving consideration to reducing costs without reducing the quality of provision.

The inclusion of all children and their families is central to the work of the centre. Staff ensure that all children and adults, regardless of background, aptitudes or other differences, have access to the full range of experiences on offer. All information displayed promotes equality and diversity well and there is a varied range of resources that reflect equality and diversity of the reach area. Support is arranged appropriately for users who speak English as an additional language through bilingual interpreters to ensure communication channels are open to all. A small number of fathers participate in activities such as stay, play and learn. Diversity is actively celebrated and the centre itself is a highly cohesive community where positive relationships flourish.

Safeguarding is very well promoted at the centre and is a clear priority of the local authority. A wide range of safeguarding policies and procedures inform practice and there is a strong commitment from staff to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The local authority plays an active role in ensuring that the procedures for vetting staff are extremely robust and a rolling programme of training ensures relevant training is up to date. Staff supervision is explicitly linked to safeguarding and reviews of staff performance routinely monitor this. The centre is proactive and collaborates effectively with other key agencies, to reduce the risk of harm to children.

Centre managers have a good understanding of the centre's strengths and where further improvements can be made. The centre has a clear process for evaluating impact. Users' views are collated and discussed at the parents' forum which has resulted in changes to provision. Parents and carers also help to identify priorities by their involvement in the active advisory board. Systems to evaluate the long-term impact on improving outcomes are not yet embedded.

The centre has excellent partnership arrangements which ensure almost all users' needs are met. Staff report that relationships with key agencies are excellent, morale is very high and that everyone pulls together to improve outcomes for users. Partner agencies have identified the effectiveness of joint working on outcomes for children and families, and those families whose circumstances make them most vulnerable are supported well by a wide range of agencies through a coordinated approach.

Users express high levels of satisfaction and confidence in the centre and this is also reflected in good attendance at sessions. There are good opportunities for users to be involved in the work of the centre through representation on the advisory board and parents' forum. Users are regularly asked for their views and these are used to inform decisions, but they are not yet formally engaged in the annual review and planning process. The centre, through its family outreach workers, is increasingly effective in reaching out to engage members of the community who are not accessing services in order to identify and meet their needs.

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	1
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	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	2

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

Outcomes from Asquith Primary school inspection which was carried out on 5–6 May 2011 were taken into consideration.

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 Morley North Children's Centre on 24 and 25 May 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you for making us so welcome when we recently inspected your children's centre. During our visit we looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with a number of you as well as the professionals that work with you. Many of you went out of your way to tell us how important the centre is to you, what a difference going there has made to you and how much you enjoy the activities provided. You told us that the staff are friendly, good listeners and give you excellent support. 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. The outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the centre have helped many of you improve in self-esteem and confidence. All the professionals from the different agencies work exceptionally well together to make sure you receive the very best advice and support, and the centre provides excellent value for money.

We were particularly impressed with the enthusiasm of those of you involved in the parents' forum and on the advisory board. You are committed to making things at the centre even better and seem to have a really good time doing it. It was very clear that you see the centre as a safe place for all the family and we were very impressed by the positive and supportive relationships you have with one another and your children. Many of you have a say in deciding the range of courses on offer at the centre and lots of you have taken the opportunity to learn new skills. You also told us how you were able to use your new skills to help your own children.

The children's centre services manager inspires confidence among staff and is well supported by the local authority, the headteacher and the advisory board. All staff have high ambitions for everyone in the community. They all work hard with great

enthusiasm. They are constantly striving to improve the quality of the services they provide and have a good capacity to bring about further improvements. To help them improve further we have suggested they involve you more in the planning which they do each year, to keep checking that the difference they are making continues and offer activities and support to help prevent children become overweight.

Thank you very much for your welcome and willingness to speak to inspectors. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and sampling the centre's work. We wish you every success in the future.

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