

Inspection report for Jigsaw Children's Centre

Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	376270
Inspection dates	27–28 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Mann HMI

Centre governance	Local authority
Centre leader	Jackie Ridout
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Not applicable

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.

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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 available 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 users, managers and frontline staff. They also met with a number of partners and representatives from the local authority. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Jigsaw Children's Centre shares a site with Barwick and Stoford Community Primary School. The centre is a phase two centre and provides the full core offer. All of its services are delivered through off-site provision held at a range of locations across the centre's reach area. Governance is through a joint advisory board which serves the four centres in the cluster.

The centre was first designated in 2007. It has recently become part of a cluster of four centres that share management and service provision. Families access groups and services from all centres in the cluster. The centre's reach area is one of least deprivation. Within this area, there are some small areas of high social and economic need. The proportion of families who live in workless households in the reach area is below the national average but much higher than the local authority average. Within the community, there are a few families with a minority ethnic background, and these include an increasing number of families from Eastern Europe. The proportion of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage working at the expected levels for their age is slightly below the national and local authority averages.

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

Jigsaw is a good children’s centre. It provides welcoming services which are tailored to meet the needs of the families in its area. It works collaboratively with the other centres in the cluster to provide a wealth of services, providing choice for users. The wide range of provision offered is of good quality and those who use it express great satisfaction and enjoyment. As a consequence, outcomes are good overall. Individual families experiencing challenge in their lives receive a good level of practical and emotional support to enable them to cope and improve life for themselves and their families. The success of this was summed up by one parent who described centre staff as ‘a pillar of support from the outset, displaying very high levels of professionalism with a trusting kindness to which we easily warmed’.

The centre’s capacity for sustained improvement is good. The centre’s management has an accurate overview of the strengths and areas for development. Effective systems of evaluation and improvement planning prioritise the needs of local families, including the most vulnerable. Challenging targets are set by staff and managers, and purposeful striving towards these goals has led to improved outcomes for all groups of users. For example, the needs of teenage parents were identified as a priority issue. These have been met well through support groups and strong and consistent liaison with health services. All at the centre adopt a forward thinking approach to developing the provision and are continually evaluating and developing services to maximise their positive impact. Equality is promoted well. The management team makes effective use of data and local information to identify the groups living in the reach area in order to learn and meet their needs. Groups and meetings are provided at different times of day to enable easier attendance, and crèche facilities are provided when resources are available. Those families from ethnic minority backgrounds are making increasing use of the centre’s services, and translation support is provided when needed.

All outcomes are good apart from those in economic well-being, which are satisfactory. Some users are engaged in education programmes to develop their learning and skills. Some Polish families have improved their use of English through

attendance at a suitable language course; a few parents are using the local college to further their qualifications. The centre has recently begun a partnership with 'Next Steps' and a number of centre users are already involved in using their services to gain advice and practical help to gain employment. The centre recognises the need to provide more opportunities for adult education to enable its families to gain qualifications, most notably in literacy and numeracy, to improve the economic well-being of them and their families.

Governance of the centre by the management team and local authority is good. The advisory board is developing its role well. This has recently been reorganised to reflect the cluster arrangement, and so much of its focus has rightly been on ensuring new terms of reference and operating procedures are robust. However, presently there has been too little time for these processes to become fully embedded.

The centre's practice for safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable is outstanding. Day-to-day practices are extremely robust. Staff demonstrate an exceptional level of training and knowledge. Protecting children's welfare permeates everything they do. In particular, exemplary recording and monitoring systems are highly influential in protecting children. Staff are tenacious in their approach to addressing absence from sessions and liaison with other professionals.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Strengthen the effectiveness of the advisory board so that it makes an even more effective contribution to the governance of the centre.
- Improve the economic well-being of families by:
 - providing opportunities for more adults to access education and qualifications, especially in literacy and numeracy
 - embedding links with relevant partner agencies, most notably 'Next Steps', to provide sustained support for adults to prepare and seek future employment.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Families are deriving great benefit from the groups and services available. As a consequence their outcomes for health are good. Initiatives to promote movement and exercise, such as the 'Little Big Bang' project and 'Mini Move It', have been popular and successful in engaging an increasing number of adults and children in physical activity. The multi-agency early intervention process has a significant impact on the physical and emotional health of children with particular needs. The centre has worked well with its cluster centres and health services to provide antenatal and postnatal support for young parents. Teenagers and their babies engage well with the family support team in the 'Young Parents Group' where they receive emotional support and practical help. This greatly improves outcomes for their children and

themselves.

Parents demonstrate a good level of understanding of how to keep their children and themselves safe through home safety checks and planned activities in sessions such as stay and play. Adults trust staff and are confident to share their personal circumstances and concerns to gain help and support. Women who have been subject to domestic abuse receive sensitive and kind professional support which they value greatly as it enables them to improve circumstances for themselves and their families. Those on child protection plans are well supported by centre and partner staff, and evidence demonstrates this intervention makes a positive impact. The Common Assessment Framework process is used well by the centre to establish some children’s level of need. This detailed assessment enables meticulous action planning and delivery to improve individual outcomes.

Children and adults enjoy their involvement in the centre. Regular groups such as ‘Mini Music’ are very popular and user evaluations indicate there is great benefit to promote early language skills and enhanced interaction between parents and their children. The early years education team has taken effective action to raise levels of children’s skills and knowledge at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing targeted support and monitoring. As a result, levels have steadily improved in the reach area and are now just below the national average. Adult users demonstrate great improvement in their personal development and their parenting skills through attending the ‘Positive Parenting Programme’ (the ‘Triple P Programme’).

Adults receive advice on how to manage and avoid debt through universal and individual services. They are supported in seeking employment by centre and partner staff. The centre has recently begun partnership working with the agency ‘Next Steps’. This relationship is in its early stages but is already having a positive impact in helping adults seek employment. Barriers to work are overcome through individual work with families, such as helping to source quality childcare or supporting a parent with physical disabilities to care for their child in a safe environment. However, there is currently little opportunity for parents to access training that will lead to qualifications to assist them in their search for employment. Parent involvement in the centre is good. A few sit on the advisory board to ensure that parent views are included in discussion and decision making. Avenues for parents to give their views on centre services are well established. As a result, provision is often adapted to suit the needs and interests of users more accurately. This leads to relevant provision which promotes outcomes well. One parent summed up the impact of the centre on her life, saying, ‘It’s amazing.’

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

<p>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</p>	<p>2</p>
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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 and employment	3

How good is the provision?

2

The quality of provision is good and provides a wide choice of opportunities for families living in the Jigsaw reach area. It is significantly enhanced by coordinated services offered at the other centres in the cluster, which widen availability and choice for users. Many have their first contact with the centre through meeting a family support worker at the local health baby clinic, or through an organised promotion event such as an open day. Staff take time to get to know families well so their needs are understood. This local knowledge is complemented by accurate data collection and analysis, which provide a clear picture of those groups living in the centre's area. The centre's management team uses this information well to establish who may need its services the most. Participation rates of these groups are consistently increasing. As a result, services are matched to needs well.

Although the centre building is small, the high quality of its outreach work ensures universal and targeted provision is delivered effectively. The centre makes good use of the centre bus to take services out into the community. Good partnership working supports this well. Family support workers play an effective and valued role in engaging those families who are most hard to reach. Many families say how their engagement with these staff has facilitated their participation in a large number of groups and services, such as debt management advice and the 'Baby Explorer' group, which have a very positive impact on their lives.

The provision within the centre to help children learn and develop is good. Activities such as 'Stay and Play' are planned to meet young children's learning and development needs. Staff use a themed approach to plan these sessions to ensure they promote improvement in outcomes as well as being fun for children and their parents. The current sessions on staying safe have been extended because parents are finding them both very informative and enjoyable. The early years team monitors the quality of local nursery settings to promote high-quality provision for children who live in the reach area.

Staff provide a good level of care for adults and children. Relationships are warm and mutually respectful. This is most evident when families have significant needs. Staff

adopt an organised and well-planned approach to helping these families, whilst prioritising emotional support and a compassionate approach. The action planning for these families ensures ongoing improvements through engagement of relevant partners and services, which has a significant impact on improving their outcomes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The reorganisation of leadership and management to a cluster arrangement has been well managed. There has been no evident adverse impact on the experience of centre users because managers and frontline workers have continued to prioritise their needs. Governance arrangements are effective. The local authority gives a good level of support and challenge to further development. The cluster centre manager, lead centre officer and senior management team are enthusiastic and skilled. They work collaboratively to plan and implement ambitious development to benefit families living in the reach area. As a consequence, staff morale is high and users enjoy a very happy and positive experience at the centre.

Prior to the reorganisation, the advisory board made a sound contribution to governance. The new cluster advisory board is establishing its role well under the lead of a knowledgeable chairperson. Its effectiveness is improving as it becomes more established. For example, clear terms of reference have been agreed and implemented to promote efficient decision making. The advisory board is representative of all partners involved in the centre's work, including parents. This strong partnership working, with many organisations including health and social care, enables all relevant parties to be influential in the evaluation and strategic planning of centre services. Good communication between other centres in the cluster, community organisations, and the wider partner community means that services are not duplicated unnecessarily. The centre provides good value for money.

Safeguarding arrangements are exemplary. Thorough recruitment processes and checking of staff ensure centre and partner suitability to work with children. All staff are trained to a very high level to protect children's welfare. Excellent and highly effective multi-agency working is championed by staff to provide an excellent range of provision for children in need. Staff give a high priority to nurturing emotional

well-being. They adopt a 'whole-family' approach to their care and provision which promotes sustained and significant improvement in outcomes. The inclusion of all families is central to the strategic and everyday practices of the centre. Individual households have benefited from exclusive assessment of need. This includes those parents who have children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who receive good support to attend meetings, apply for benefits, and gain some respite. One parent summarised the views of many about the centre, saying it has been 'a pillar of support from the outset, displaying very high levels of professionalism with a trusting kindness to which we easily warmed'.

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	1
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	2

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

None.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Jigsaw Children's Centre on 27 and 28 July 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to us about your experiences at Jigsaw. It was very enjoyable to meet you and it was very helpful to hear what the centre means to you, and to learn about the difference it has made to many of your lives. It is clear that you enjoy using the groups and services provided by the centre at the different locations around your area, and that you think the staff are doing a very good job.

The centre does many things well. Groups such as 'Baby Explorer' and the 'Triple P' programme have made a big difference to many of you by helping you to understand more about child development and how to enjoy time looking after your children. Those of you who have received individual care and support from the family support workers and other staff are especially well cared for. This is because staff make good assessments with you about the best ways the centre can help. Then other partner agencies work well with the centre to provide the services you need. This means that you and your families receive helpful support.

The centre managers ask you for your opinions about what it does, and they listen to what you have to say, making changes when appropriate. This means the services are useful and enjoyable. There are several ways the centre helps some of you apply for benefits, manage debts better, and apply for employment. We have asked the centre to do more to help you access courses, especially in literacy and numeracy. These will help you to be well prepared for any future employment and will also help you support your own children with their schoolwork.

The centre is well managed and staff are dedicated to their roles. Some of you are already involved in the centre's advisory board. Last April, this board changed to a cluster advisory board for all four cluster centres together. The advisory board is in the early stages of development. We have asked your centre to carry on strengthening this board to make sure it fulfils all of its duties even better.

Finally, we judged the way that centre staff protect children's welfare to be outstanding. Staff give the highest priority to making sure children are protected. They work very well with other organisations to provide the correct services that are needed. Staff genuinely care about the children and families at the centre, and they work very hard with you as parents to make sure children stay safe and happy.

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