

# Inspection report for Sure Start Children's Centre Howden

Local authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	383969
Inspection dates	16 - 17 August 2011
Reporting inspector	Rachael Flesher HMI

Centre governance	East Riding of Yorkshire
Centre leader	Mrs Joanna Brady
Date of previous inspection	Not Previously Inspected
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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.

**Published:** August 2011

## Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

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

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

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with parents and carers, centre staff and representatives from professional partnerships, the advisory board and the local authority.

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

## Information about the centre

Sure Start Children's Centre Howden is situated on the ground floor of a new build apartment block in the centre of Howden. It has a reception area which is open to the general public with ramp access which is suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. The centre is an office base for centre staff and partners with no provision for in-house services; thus all activities and services are provided using community venues.

The centre serves an area covering 64 square miles with families living in the 50% least deprived areas nationally with some pockets of significant social disadvantage. Due to the rural nature of the area and lack of transport, many families face issues of social isolation. The majority of families are from working households; however, some families claim benefits and face issues of worklessness and poverty. The vast majority of families are White British with a small but increasing number of migrant workers from Eastern Europe. The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills generally expected for their age.

The centre is governed by the local authority and has an advisory board made up of

representatives from the local community, including parents and carers and professionals, which it shares with two other children's centres. The centre has its own parents' forum.

## 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

Outcomes, quality of provision, and leadership and management are all good. The centre's capacity for sustained improvement is also good, leading to good overall effectiveness. The centre gives the highest priority to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and other users, and extremely robust, effective arrangements exist to ensure their safety and health. Equality and diversity are actively promoted and the centre fulfils its statutory duties well. The centre and its partners have developed positive relationships with the community it serves. Diversity is celebrated and the centre has engaged some families from the minority ethnic groups it serves. Those who speak English as an additional language are supported to ensure effective communications and they have good access to training to develop their English language skills.

Partnerships and information-sharing systems with a range of key partner professionals are extremely strong in many respects. These effective partnerships ensure the needs of families are rigorously assessed and swiftly addressed to fully promote their safety and welfare. They also ensure the delivery of a cohesive range of provision and services that meet the needs of users and the wider community very well. However, information sharing between health partners and the centre is not fully developed to enable the centre to intervene early and encourage the engagement of those in the pre-natal stages of pregnancy in centre services and activities. Users are engaged in the governance and decision making of the centre, contributing to high levels of user satisfaction. Users' views are meaningfully sought and actively used to shape services and to ensure they are correctly matched to the needs of the community. A large proportion of families within the reach area are registered with the centre. A good number of these are engaged and accessing services and are very often the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach, and their attendance is very good. The care, guidance and personalised support families receive, particularly in times of

crisis is exceptional, promoting the well-being of families across all outcomes. As a result, the centre provides excellent value for money.

Self-evaluation is embedded amongst centre staff and partners, which ensure that all those involved have a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and the needs of the community. Plans for the future are also well targeted to secure continuous improvement. However, the centre's use of all available data and local intelligence to monitor and analyse user engagement in order to encourage more families to access services and activities is not fully established. Governance and accountability arrangements are excellent at all levels and exemplary supervision and management arrangements for all managers and staff are in place. This ensures all concerned are fully informed and can hold themselves fully accountable for their work. Partners and those working at the centre have confidence in the centre leader to provide effective leadership. The recently appointed centre leader is instilling enthusiasm and motivation amongst the team. As a result, morale is high and staff feel valued.

## **What does the centre need to do to improve further?**

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

Improve outcomes for more children and their families in the centre's reach area by:

- fully utilising available data and local intelligence to monitor and analyse the engagement of children and their families with centre services and activities, both as individual families and as target groups
- using this information to identify and target more vulnerable groups and families and encourage their engagement in the centre services and activities
- working with the children's trust to develop information-sharing systems with health partners to enable the centre to intervene early and encourage the engagement of those in the pre-natal stages of pregnancy in centre services and activities.

## **How good are outcomes for users?**

<b>2</b>
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Outcomes for users are good. Children are extremely well safeguarded. Very good partnership working and the excellent systems in place for assessing needs are having a positive impact on outcomes for children, including those subject to Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes, looked after children and children subject to a child protection plan. The centre is reducing the number of those needing child protection plans, and preventing situations from reaching crisis point, due to the early intervention and support provided. Users feel extremely safe, stating their 'children are always safe' and the 'safety of children is never compromised'. Children play and work in ways that are safe for themselves and those around them. Their behaviour is excellent. Through the services provided children, parents and carers are developing an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and their family safe. All professionals involved with a family are vigilant to any

issues that may prevent children and their families staying safe in their homes and ensure precautions are put in place to help prevent any accidents and incidents occurring.

The centre has successfully established very strong partnership working with front-line health professionals and a good range of child and family health services, closely targeted to the families' needs, are delivered from the centre. These are well matched to the needs of the reach area and are well used by the community. As a result, healthy outcomes are good and improving for many families. For example, a good proportion of mothers are supported to successfully sustain breastfeeding their babies, and parents and carers are providing healthier meals and snacks for their families and are serving the correct portion sizes to their children.

Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points in developing their skills for the future and are well prepared for school. Strong transition arrangements and partnership working are in place to ensure consistency and the continuity of care, learning and development of children. The Early Years Foundation Stage is securely embedded across all provision. The centre ensures a strong focus on the areas of development identified where children are achieving less well. Almost all three- and four-year-old children are accessing their free nursery education entitlement. In addition, the early education for disadvantaged two-year-olds project has also secured good outcomes for those families selected to take part. As a result, the majority of children achieve 78 points in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the gap between the lowest-achieving 20% and the rest is narrowing. There are a wide range of opportunities for parents and carers to play, have fun and learn together, for example, the 'let's get playing' sessions in the summer holidays in the park, where children enjoy exploring the outdoor environment. As one parent stated, 'The children love it, especially digging in the compost for worms and insects'. Parents and carers are supported well by skilled professionals promoting children's development and parents' and carers' parenting skills.

The centre effectively seeks the views of users and the wider community and this enables them to make a positive contribution to the development of community cohesion and service delivery. As one parent stated, staff 'listen to our views'. Users are actively encouraged to become engaged in the governance and decision making of the centre and in shaping services, for example by taking part in parent and carer forums. Their views are also sought regularly through ongoing evaluations and questionnaires. The centre shares with users how their views have shaped services, for example through the 'You said, we did' board. The centre plays a significant role in the life of the vast rural community, breaking down barriers to access by gaining the trust of local families and building relationships. The services provided out in the community provide valuable opportunities for friendships to develop, which helps to reduce the social isolation many families face by living in a rural community.

The majority of children living in the centre's reach area are from professional working households, with a small minority living in social disadvantage. Parents and carers have access to advice and guidance regarding benefits and money management to help them improve their economic stability and independence. One professional stated that 'the staff

enable users to feel confident to move on to gain qualifications or employment'. Indeed, many have achieved successful outcomes, for example becoming volunteers, gaining qualifications and securing employment, and have great pride in their achievements.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for users*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

<b>2</b>
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Staff are skilled at identifying the needs of families and swiftly and sensitively intervene to ensure they receive the personalised support they need to improve their outcomes. The centre works very well in partnership with other services to ensure assessments, such as those carried out under the CAF process and for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are robust, well-informed and lead to early intervention.

All partners take an active role in promoting high-quality, integrated provision which is responsive to local needs. Provision is based on thorough analysis of need, using meaningful consultation and evaluation processes. This ensures the range of services and activities, including the much-needed outreach services, meet the needs of users well. The centre has developed creative ways of enabling users living across the vast centre reach area, many in isolated villages and hamlets, to access services and activities: for example, using vans to take services and resources out to community venues and providing a minibus to transport users to services, for example to access training. As a result, participation and attendance rates are good and users are generally representative of the community that the centre serves.

The quality of the early years provision is good for young children, parents and carers and other users, enabling children to learn and develop across all areas of learning through quality activities and resources that interest and engage them. The centre has good evidence of how it has enabled users to take on roles and responsibilities and develop their skills for the future, for example becoming volunteers and empowering a group of parents and carers to run their own toddler group. Some users are supported to improve their educational and personal development and to progress to further employment, education

and training. Users enjoy learning, achieve well and their achievements are meaningfully celebrated.

The environment is warm and inviting. Staff and partners at all levels are friendly and extremely welcoming and the centre places great importance on encouraging the community to access the centre and services. Centre staff provide highly effective personalised support for families in crisis, offering exceptional levels of care and guidance across a wide remit. Parents stated staff are 'there when you need them' and 'happy to help' and 'they will visit you at home to help'. Another stated that the centre 'was a lifesaver' during their personal crisis.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

**2**

Governance and accountability arrangements, as well as clear roles and responsibilities at all levels of leadership and management, are very well established and understood by all. The local authority stringently monitors the performance of the centre and its representatives ask challenging questions of leaders to improve provision and outcomes. Safer recruitment procedures are meticulously followed and all relevant checks are made to ensure that all staff are suitable and safe to work with children. All staff, including volunteers, receive ongoing, high-quality child protection training and are extremely confident in their role to safeguard children. Risks are thoroughly assessed and minimised. Staff are effectively deployed. Excellent professional supervision and management arrangements are in place to monitor the performance of staff and ensure their safety and well-being and ongoing professional development. Staff development and training are very effective and appropriate in order to meet the current and future needs of children and families in the reach area. The centre staff and partners are committed to bringing about sustainable improvement. Staff state they are very well supported in their roles and receive strong leadership and direction. The centre leader and staff are passionate about their work in improving outcomes for their community and motivation and morale are high.

Staff, leaders and partners routinely reflect on their practice and provision to secure continuous improvement. Users' views are thoroughly sought and used to contribute to good self-evaluation and in shaping services. Self-evaluation provides the centre with a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development and is used to inform planning. The centre's development plan sets out priorities and challenging targets, how these will be

achieved and by when. However, data and local intelligence are not currently used to analyse the engagement of families and vulnerable groups.

Strong partnerships with other agencies are in place, ensuring a cohesive range of services are delivered through the centre. Information-sharing systems are generally very strong, ensuring families swiftly receive the support they need to improve their outcomes. However, systems for health partners to share information with the centre regarding all those in the pre-natal stages of pregnancy are not fully developed. An extremely wide range of partners sit on the advisory board and partners are committed to partnership working. The advisory board and parents’ forum challenge the centre leaders and hold them accountable. They share their ideas, information and the views of the community and are influential in shaping services and activities to ensure these are matched to needs and therefore sustainable.

The inclusion of all children and families, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is promoted very effectively and the centre is breaking down barriers to access and developing community cohesion. This has resulted in the centre successfully engaging with many of its most vulnerable and hard-to-reach families, many living in rural isolation, through targeted support.

The centre uses and manages its available resources exceptionally well to meet the needs of users and the wider community. Staff skills, knowledge and expertise, resources and services are all fully utilised to ensure services have as wide a reach as possible across the rural community. Leaders have a firm handle on the finances and services, and activities are closely monitored to ensure they are sustainable and cost-effective, thereby providing excellent value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>2</b>



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

None

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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Sure Start Children's Centre Howden on 16 and 17 August 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you to those of you who contributed to the inspection. Like you we found your children's centre to be very welcoming and friendly. You told us you feel extremely safe, stating your 'children are always safe' and the 'safety of children is never compromised'. Utmost priority is given to safeguarding your children. Staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable in making sure you and your children are safe and protected. The staff at your centre work very well together with its partner services, sharing information and resources to make sure you and your families get the right support when you need it. However, health partners are not currently sharing information with your centre to enable it to offer support to all those in the pre-natal stages of pregnancy. Your children's trust has been asked to improve this.

Your centre is helping families in your community to achieve good outcomes. For example, a good proportion of mothers are supported to successfully sustain breastfeeding their babies and you are providing healthier meals and snacks for your families and are serving the correct portion sizes to your children. There are a wide range of opportunities for you and your children to play, have fun, and learn together, for example, the 'let's get playing' sessions in the summer holidays in the park, where your children enjoy exploring the outdoor environment. As one of you told us, 'The children love it, especially digging in the compost for worms and insects'. You are supported well by skilled professionals promoting your children's development and your parenting skills, and your children's behaviour is excellent. Your children are well prepared for school and are achieving well and making good progress. You have good support to help you manage your finances and access the right benefits in order to support your families. Your centre also supports many of you into training and employment and you have great pride in your achievements.

You told us you have good relationships with the staff, stating staff are 'there when you need them' and 'happy to help' and 'they will visit you at home to help'. Indeed, staff provide highly effective personalised support for you in times of crisis, offering exceptional

levels of care and guidance across a wide remit. As one of you told us, the centre 'was a lifesaver' during your personal crisis. You also told us staff 'listen to our views'. Great importance is placed on seeking your views, and they are used to shape services to ensure they are providing what you need.

Your centre has excellent systems in place to ensure your needs are assessed accurately and swiftly, and meets your needs well. You have access to a good range of services provided by a number of partners who work very well together to support your families. Your centre has developed creative ways of enabling those of you living in isolated villages and hamlets to access services and activities, for example, using vans to take services and resources out to community venues and providing a minibus to transport you to services, for example to access training. As a result, the services and activities are well used by your community. Your centre makes excellent use of its resources, making sure you fully benefit from all it has to offer, and provides outstanding value for money.

Your centre strives to be better and is always looking for ways to improve to ensure it is having the biggest impact on improving outcomes for you and your families. However, your centre is not currently closely monitoring which families and groups are engaging with the centre in order to help it reach more families. Your centre has been asked to improve this. Your children's centre has a good capacity to improve further the outcomes for families living in your community and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged and the rest. It does so with great determination and dedication. We wish you all the very best for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).