

Inspection report for Carr Manor Children's Centre

Local authority	Leeds
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Reporting inspector	Alison Veall HMI

Centre leader	Mrs Jenny Sneideris
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Carr Manor Primary School 107913
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Not applicable

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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 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 representatives from the local authority and the National Health Service, centre staff, representatives from the advisory board, representatives from services that work in partnership with the centre and users of the centre.

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

Information about the centre

Carr Manor Children's Centre is a Phase two centre. It was designated in 2008. The centre is attached to Carr Manor Primary School. The children's centre area is economically diverse. Parts of it are listed as being in the 20% most deprived areas and comprise local authority and privately rented accommodation, whilst others are listed in the 70% and are mainly privately owned accommodation.

The strategic management of the centre is the responsibility of the governing body of Carr Manor Primary School, which is commissioned by Leeds City Council to provide the children's centre service. Support and guidance is provided by a local advisory group, which consists of school governors, partner agencies, staff of the centre and parents and carers.

Twelve per cent of children under five years live in households dependent on workless benefits. Most families are of White British heritage with a minority of Pakistani and Indian heritage families. Most children enter the centre's childcare and play provision with a much narrower range of experiences and skills than that usually expected 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 families

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management

2

Main findings

A key strength of Carr Manor Children's Centre is the small but highly effective staff team who are led and managed very well by an enthusiastic and visionary manager. This enthusiasm and the outstanding commitment to deliver services in partnership has been a significant factor in this centre establishing itself at the heart of the community. The centre has gained the trust of the community and families who use it and who benefit from a range of good quality services. Analysis of the needs of those who use the centre and need crisis support is extremely thorough. This ensures that services are carefully tailored to meet their particular needs. As a result, outcomes are good overall and outstanding in relation to safety.

Further strengths of the centre's provision and leadership and management include very effective partnership working; excellent day-to-day management arrangements and robust implementation of safety and safeguarding procedures. The high priority given to improving parenting skills, particularly of those most in need of support, is having an outstanding impact on the safety of children. One parent commented, 'Parenting classes have helped me to change my focus from the bad things to the good things my child does, our house is loads calmer.' Services are delivered in an inclusive environment where inequalities are swiftly and effectively removed. Most parents and carers are taking an active interest in their children's learning; women are becoming less isolated and male carers are making informed choices in respect of the services in which they wish to be involved.

All of the families, including those most vulnerable as a result of their circumstances, are unequivocal in their praise for the centre. 'Absolutely brilliant, has made such a difference to me and my family.' 'I get really good information, it has been invaluable in helping me to deal with some of the issues I face.' 'We all feel so safe, things are better for my children.' These comments are typical of the views expressed by parents and carers and reflect the very high standard of care, guidance and support that is given. The views of parents and carers are routinely gathered through evaluations and the Families Forum. These views are used very effectively to develop provision. However, there are too few parents and carers consistently involved in key decision making and support and challenge at a strategic level.

The centre manager has developed a highly motivated and skilled team that has earned the respect of users and partners. They work relentlessly and are securing improving outcomes for families. The centre's own evaluation is relatively accurate and takes full account of feedback from families and the wide range of information provided by the local authority. However, systems for summarising this information to justify their evaluation of excellent for some of the centre's provision, and its impact on outcomes for users, is not fully embedded. Nevertheless, there is a clear understanding of the centre's strengths and where further improvement is still required. As a result, the centre's overall effectiveness and capacity to improve are good.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Sharpen the approach to summarising impact data, so that the centre can clearly demonstrate excellence in all important aspects of its work.
- Enhance the involvement of families in the running of the centre by ensuring that more are involved in key decision making.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

An impressive feature of this centre's work is the attention it pays to the emotional health and well-being of families. It is improved by the centre's ongoing support, timely referrals, partnerships with counselling services and effective signposting. These ensure that families receive prompt, high quality, appropriate interventions. 'I was in a bad place, the centre has helped me so much.' 'The centre has helped me to come out of the house – it is amazing.' 'I was so depressed I couldn't look after my children, I know if I have a relapse I can talk openly to them.' These comments evidence how vital the centre has been to them. Families receive good quality health information. Although breastfeeding rates at initiation and continuation show a slight reduction on previous years, they are still above City and national levels as are the numbers of children at risk of obesity in Reception.

Robust procedures ensure that families whose circumstances make them vulnerable are kept extremely safe. Weekly safeguarding discussions ensure that any causes for concern or progress are noted and appropriate action is taken. The whole staff team demonstrate an excellent understanding of the Common Assessment Framework. Parents of children who are subject to this assessment or a child protection plan are seen as a fundamental to the improvement in outcomes. There is a strong belief in parents and carers as partners. Most parents and carers demonstrate an outstanding understanding of their responsibility to keep their children safe and appreciate that the centre will ensure that they are doing so. Family outreach workers visit all homes in the reach area and help families to understand the benefit of installing safety equipment. The centre is a very happy place to be. Behaviour by

all centre families is good. Children play well together and adults are respectful and polite to each other.

The centre's work is contributing well to the improvement in learning outcomes, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal and social emotional development. Effective relationships between the school and the children's centre ensure that appropriate and targeted interventions are made prior to children entering the school's Early Years Foundation Stage unit. This ensures that children who have attended the centre's 'Play to Learn – Learn to Play', 'Mini Movers' and 'Boys Group' are in a better position to learn than those who have not had involvement with the centre. Data held by the school shows that the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and their peers is closing significantly. Adult users develop confidence and the skills required to embark on further education and employment as a result of attendance at a number of training events, including literacy and numeracy. A substantial number complete English for speakers of other languages courses which helps women, particularly those who are new to the country, to break down the barriers to communication and isolation.

Strong commitments are made to seeking the views of users and to the evaluation of all activities. Parents and carers state that their contributions are valued and they feel that their opinions really count. They discuss changes that have been as a result of their comments made to the advisory board via the 'Families Forum'. The views of very young children are collected by a simple visual display with smiley and sad face badges.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

The extent to which children, including those from target 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	1
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, 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 parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment.	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre knows most families in its reach area well and it has excelled in identifying those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. As a consequence, they are often involved in a significant amount of very intensive family support work. It is as a result of the staff's creativity and outstanding partnership working that despite the intensive work they continue to deliver both a targeted and universal range of services. Outreach work plus

effective one-to-one support are making a positive contribution to breaking down barriers, particularly for families from its minority ethnic communities. The centre is aware of the need to engage more families from its hard-to-reach White British community. The positive impact of the outreach service is clearly demonstrated through case studies of their interventions with families most in need of support. The centre is now obtaining more precise information on new births within the area and are registering and engaging families earlier. The centre has engaged and is delivering coordinated services to its teen parents.

The sensitive and highly individualised care, guidance and support provided to families are outstanding. The quality of support for families in crisis is excellent and much preventative work is done to minimise crisis events. The centre's work as part of the extended services cluster is ensuring a holistic approach to service delivery. The centre is an strong advocate of the Common Assessment Framework and is part of a pilot for the development of the Family Common Assessment Framework. This is a development which the centre manager welcomes as a means to reducing the burden of form filling for families and supporting the holistic delivery of services.

The children's centre works closely with the co-located school's Early Years Foundation Stage leader to ensure that play and learning opportunities are of a good quality. The 'Ready for Nursery Group' supports parents, carers and children and enables a seamless transition from the centre's activities into nursery. The centre is also used by the local childminding network once a month. Data held by the school shows that the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and their peers is closing significantly. The headteacher of Carr Manor Primary School is confident that the work of the centre is having an impact on this outcome.

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Leadership and management are consistently good at all levels and outstanding in some aspects. Governance and accountability arrangements are very effective and are clearly understood by staff, users of the centre and partner agencies. Staff are provided with high quality supervision and have access to a wide range of training and development opportunities. Strong leadership and an absolute shared vision generate an enthusiasm within the team and with the centre's partners and, as a result, they all view even the most difficult task as a challenge and not a problem. Their good mix of skills, qualifications and knowledge ensures the provision of a holistic service to centre users. Individual strengths

are recognised and used to develop services further. This commitment leads to high quality, integrated provision.

There is a coherent link between the Children and Young People's Plan and the centre's service delivery plan. As a result, the centre's priorities link effectively to those of the wider area. The local authority and the governing body set and monitor ambitious and challenging targets. Self-evaluation is accurate. However, the centre cannot yet demonstrate through its summarising of the impact data and locally held evaluations that engagement and outcomes for a large majority of families in its reach area are excellent.

Robust financial management systems are in place to monitor day-to-day expenditure and delegation of responsibility for resources is at an appropriate level to ensure timely and effective packages of support. Staff are well deployed and utilised ensuring good value for money, the centre manager and senior leadership team remain aware of the need to ensure the long-term sustainability of the centre.

Inclusion and the accessibility of services provided by the centre are given a high priority. Excellent support is provided for those families whose second language is English. The staff team, including staff from the school, represents the cultural diversity of users of the centre and often act as translators. This leads to improved communication and greater involvement. The 'Multi-Faith Group' which is held weekly at the centre supports the emotional health and well-being of women from a wide range of cultures. The centre provides an effective level of service for the families with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities that are known to them.

A strong commitment to partnership working is the key to this centre's success. They recognise the opportunities and strengths of a wide range of agencies to whom they signpost very effectively. The centre and their partners, particularly those involved in the extended services cluster share a common purpose in their pursuit to deliver an outstanding holistic service to the whole family. Representatives from all partner agencies that inspectors met with were unanimous in the praise. They could clearly evidence through case studies the impact the centre was having on improving the lives of families.

The arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding. All legislative requirements are met or exceeded. Staff are well trained and have access to high levels of support and training. The effective implementation of policies and procedures ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults. The excellent multi-agency working is promoting the swift exchange of information for the most vulnerable children, including those with Common Assessment Frameworks and Child Protection Plans. The recording of this information is very robust. Risk assessment procedures are conducted for all activities in the centre. The procedure for home visits and lone working is an example of good practice. The administrator at the centre is extremely vigilant and monitors visitors to the centre in addition to monitoring staff when they are lone working in the community. Observations of family support worker contact with families in the centre and on home visits show the openness and transparency which the centre adopts in its work with families.

These are the grades for leadership and management:

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	1
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	1
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area 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

The most recent inspection report of Carr Manor Primary School was considered during the inspection.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Carr Manor Children's Centre on 20 and 21 October 2011. We judged the centre as good overall with some aspects that are outstanding.

We really enjoyed talking to you in meetings and during the activities we were able to observe. We read so many of your comments following your involvement with the centre. You expressed your views clearly and they were very helpful to us. You told us that the

centre staff go out of their way to listen and to act upon your views. We have asked the centre to develop this area of their work further and to ensure that more of you are involved in the governance and decision making of the centre. You told us that as a result of coming to the centre you have been given the confidence to go on and make new friends. For some of you these friendships are so supportive that you are not so dependent on the centre. However, you also told us that you still like coming to this friendly, bright and welcoming centre where staff are extremely caring, helpful and friendly. Inspectors agree that this is an accurate picture of the staff team and the environment.

We were very impressed with the outstanding care, guidance and support you receive, particularly during periods in your lives when you are most vulnerable. Led by a very knowledgeable and committed manager, staff at the centre demonstrate an excellent understanding of safety and safeguarding. They work incredibly hard with an exceptionally wide range of partners, such as the health service, social care, community action groups, the safer school's police officer, counselling services and schools to name but a few. They provide a 'team around the child' approach, which supports the improvements you are trying to make to your lives. We know from the information supplied by the centre that for a very large majority, the safety of your children at home and in the community is outstanding. Evidence shows that there have been significant improvements in your confidence and parenting skills.

The centre also works hard to reach out to families from a wide range of backgrounds to make sure they are included in the services and activities. Assessment of need for those of you involved in the centre is exceptional and is undertaken very sensitively. The senior management team have identified the need to continually increase the numbers of you who are consistently using the centre. Inspectors agree with this but have not raised it as an area for improvement as there is evidence that they are making good progress and have plans in place to improve this. The senior management team collect lots of information from you, the local authority and its partners and use this information to make the centre as good as it can be. We have, however, asked them to use this information more effectively so that they can more accurately show how the centre is making a difference to you and your families.

We would like to thank everyone who came to speak with us and who allowed us to visit you in your homes. It was a privilege to be able to talk with you. Your honest and open discussions helped us immensely during the inspection. We thoroughly enjoyed spending time at your centre and we wish you and your families all the best for the future.

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