

Inspection report for Flutterbies Children's Centre, Holbrooks

Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	362480
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

Centre governance	Coventry Local Authority
Centre leader	Tracy Wright
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Flutterbies Children's Centre Flutterbies Family Centre
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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 one of Her Majesty's inspectors and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with staff, the senior leadership team, local authority representatives, the directors of Tommies Childcare Limited and partner agencies, including representatives from the health service. They also had discussions with users. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Flutterbies Children Centre was designated in March 2006. The centre is a phase one children's centre providing the full core offer of services. It is situated in a residential area in the north east of Coventry. The centre uses Holbrooks Community Centre, St Lukes Hall, Holbrooks Health Centre and Longford Union Baptist Church to deliver some of its services. Three quarters of the local population is White British. The remainder are from other groups including Asian, Black and Polish. The centre serves the Holbrook area which is in one of the 29% most deprived areas in the country. It also serves the Longford area which is in one of the 21% most deprived areas in the country. Around 21% of children are from households where no one is working and adults are claiming benefits. Children's levels of attainment on entry to the early year's provision are broadly similar to those expected for their age.

A new children's centre manager was appointed in August 2009. In July 2010 Tommies Childcare Limited took responsibility for overseeing the work of the centre. They manage the centre on behalf of the local authority. The centre manager and the directors of Tommies Childcare Limited monitor and evaluate the work of the centre and report their findings to the local authority. Arrangements for a new advisory board have recently been established. Parent and user representatives and local professionals who work with Flutterbies will join Tommies Partnership Board meetings from December 2010.

The centre is housed in two converted buildings on Hen Lane. Privately owned day nursery provision is available at both sites. Flutterbies Children’s Centre Day Nursery and Flutterbies Family Centre were both inspected in 2009. The inspection reports can be found on the Ofsted website www.Ofsted.gov.uk.

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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

Flutterbies children’s centre provides satisfactorily for the needs of children and families. Parents and users told inspectors they appreciate the warm welcome they receive. ‘A great team,’ and ‘caring and enthusiastic staff’ were just some of the comments made by parents. The centre has good arrangements in place for safeguarding children. Staff are particularly effective at ensuring children and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive relevant and timely support.

Outcomes for users including the most vulnerable are satisfactory. For instance, through sessions such as ‘Healthy Footsteps’ parents develop a secure understanding of healthy eating by focusing on making mealtimes fun. Information from case studies and feedback from users indicates that there are aspects of the centre’s provision which are having a strong impact on some children and adults. For example, services provided by the speech and language team are contributing to improvements in children’s language and helping parents to support their children’s learning effectively. ‘Chatter Box has given me a wider range of songs to sing with my child’ wrote one parent.

The centre’s promotion of equality is satisfactory. Leaders have identified the proportion of users from its target groups, such as teenage parents and those from workless households, who are attending the centre. This information shows that participation rates are variable. One reason for this is that the centre does not have systems in place to assess the needs of its users accurately before they begin planning sessions or programmes. As a result, the activities on offer do not always meet users’ specific needs. Some parents told inspectors they would like the centre to arrange sessions that give them the chance to learn through practical activities. The centre has yet to devise strategies for engaging more users from its target groups.

The centre manager has successfully maintained high staff morale during a period of change. Staff are keen to work with leaders to further improve outcomes. Through evaluations of individual activities and case studies, leaders and managers have a sound understanding of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. The local authority and centre leaders are aware that systems for monitoring and evaluation are not sufficiently rigorous. This is because data is not yet used to measure impact. In addition, some partner agencies are not providing the centre with evaluations of the impact they make. This makes it difficult for staff to evaluate all aspects of the centre's work accurately. The opportunities users have to make a contribution to the evaluation and development of the centre are currently limited. Given the outcomes and improvements required with monitoring and evaluation, the centre has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve outcomes by accurately assessing the needs of all users and devising strategies to further engage those from the target groups.
- In consultation with users establish ways in which they can make a greater contribution to the evaluation and development of the centre.
- Work with the local authority and key partners to develop strategies to measure impact and to improve systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the centre's work.

How good are outcomes for users?

3

Through events such as the 'Healthy Day,' which included representatives from the British Heart Foundation, the centre helps users to learn about the impact of eating and exercise on their bodies and of their families. Personal accounts and observations show that events such as this are gradually increasing users' awareness of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle.

Children's and adult's understanding of staying safe is satisfactorily promoted through activities such as road safety awareness. 'I am learning to cross the road' said one child while waiting for the 'traffic' to stop. As a result of the Early Years Life Check project, some families have received free household safety equipment, such as safety socket covers. Centre staff effectively ensure that users are safe while on the premises. During fortnightly 'Raise, Share and Review' meetings, staff closely monitor children subject to the common assessment framework and families in challenging circumstances. Consequently the most vulnerable children and their families are receiving the support they need and their outcomes are steadily improving. Representatives from partner agencies, such as health, sometimes attend these meetings.

When planning activities, staff miss opportunities to develop children's language and

mathematical development. As a result, the progress children make in these areas is satisfactory. Through 'Stay and Play' and 'Tatty Bumpkins' sessions children make good progress in their personal development. Consequently, they behave well, cooperate with others and take part in activities with enthusiasm. Opportunities for users to contribute to the governance of the centre are underdeveloped. The centre responds well to individual requests for information and signposts users to local education and training providers. Senior leaders have recently established links with Job Centre Plus in order to help more adults in the area gain qualifications and find employment.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	3
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	3
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	3

How good is the provision?

3

Activities, including outreach services, are adequately matched to the needs of users and the wider community. The centre has successfully increased the number of fathers attending the centre. 'Gives me quality time to spend with my daughter' and 'it gives me the chance to interact with other dads' were just some of the responses to the evaluation of the 'Top Dads' group at St Lukes Hall. Further work is required to increase the engagement of other target groups such as teenage parents and those seeking employment.

Following participation in different sessions and programmes, the centre asks adults to provide feedback on what they have learnt. While the majority of feedback is positive, sometimes adults indicate that they already knew the specific skills or knowledge being promoted. The reason for this is the centre does not always find out what the adults already know.

The centre satisfactorily promotes learning and development. Staff are in the process of introducing a 'Learning Journey' so that they can keep a closer check on the children's development in the centre. During a stay and play session, parents told

inspectors that they especially enjoy using the play equipment with their children and helping their children make things out of everyday items. Case studies show that the centre is beginning to encourage individuals to use their skills to contribute to the centre's work. Two parents with medical backgrounds are currently assisting in the running of the breastfeeding café as a result of the support and training they received from the midwife.

Individual case studies show that the work of the Family Support team and the Portage team is valued by families in challenging circumstances and those with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A few parents told inspectors that the way in which written information is presented does not always make it easy for them to gain a clear view of what is happening in the centre or which activities would be most appropriate for them to attend.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	3
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	3

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

Leaders and staff work well as a team. They ensure the centre runs well on a daily basis. The directors of Tommies Childcare Limited have strengthened leadership of the centre. Together with the centre manager they are reviewing the way in which the centre works and engages with users and partner agencies. They have already identified that the centre's systems for monitoring and evaluating are not as rigorous as they should be. The centre development plan uses findings from case studies and feedback from users to identify most of the areas where further improvement is required. However, the plan does not always identify the precise actions that will be taken to improve outcomes. Users' views have led to some changes in provision. For instance, following feedback from parents, the centre introduced a new 'Explorers and Developers' group for children aged up to 18 months.

The newly formed Partnership Board is in its infancy. Consequently users and partners are not fully engaged in the strategic development of the centre. The local authority is providing a suitable level of challenge and support through its meetings with the centre manager and the directors of Tommies Childcare Limited. The impact of leaders on users' outcomes is satisfactory and so the centre provides satisfactory

value for money.

Leaders and staff promote the diversity represented in the community well through days which celebrate different festivals and through participation in local events. Staff are sensitive to the individual needs of users with disabilities and provide an appropriate level of support to enable them to take part in the centre activities. The centre has yet to devise strategies to engage with a greater number of users from its target groups.

A key strength of the centre is its approach to safeguarding. Procedures for ensuring staff are suitable to work with children are robust. All checks on the suitability of staff and the centre's records meet requirements. Staff work effectively with other agencies to ensure vulnerable children and families who attend the centre quickly receive the support they need.

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	3
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
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	3
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	3
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	3

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

Inspectors looked at the inspection reports for Flutterbies Children's Centre Day Nursery and Flutterbies Family Centre. They were both inspected in 2009. The reports indicate that children in these settings make good progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected the Flutterbies Children's Centre, Holbrooks on 24–25 November 2010. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we recently visited your centre. We would like to thank you for talking with us about the centre and the outreach services. Those of you we spoke to told us that the staff at the centre are caring and enthusiastic. Flutterbies Children's Centre is a safe place. Staff work effectively with other agencies to support children and their families experiencing challenging circumstances. Children who use the centre make satisfactory progress in their learning and development. When they take part in 'stay and play' and 'Tatty Bumpkins' sessions, they make good progress in their personal development.

We read some of the feedback written by parents and other adults who use your centre. Many appreciate the activities offered at the centre. In your feedback to centre staff, you wrote comments such as, 'Chatter Box has given me a wider range of songs to sing with my child,' and the Top Dads group 'gives me quality time to spend with my daughter.' A few of you wrote that you already knew how to do the things that you were being shown. We have asked centre staff to check carefully what you already know before they plan activities. We have also asked the centre to look at ways of increasing the number of families who come to the centre, so that more families can get access to any support and advice they might need.

The centre has set up a Parents' Forum to give parents and other adults the opportunity to share their views about the centre. We know that some of you have attended the meetings and shared your ideas. In August 2010, Tommies Childcare Limited took over responsibility for the centre. A new Partnership Board has been set up so that parents and other adults who use your centre can be represented at board meetings. We have asked the centre manager and the directors of Tommie Childcare limited to also find other ways for you to contribute to discussions about the effectiveness of your centre and how it can be further developed. We hope you will be interested in doing this.

Staff are keen to continue improving the centre so that they can help more families in the community. To do this, we have also asked them to work with the local authority and partners, such as health, to check carefully if the sessions and

programmes on offer are making a real difference to those who attend the centre. We have also asked them find ways of demonstrating the impact they are having in the community.

We would like to thank everyone who spoke with us during the inspection. We were grateful that you shared your thoughts about the centre. We would like to wish you and your families the very best for the future.

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