

Inspection report for Haven Sure Start Children's Centre

Local authority	Surrey County Council
Inspection number	383557
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Centre leader	Jane Woolger
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Hythe Community Primary School
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 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.

An inspection of the co-located primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior managers from the centre, frontline staff, parents, partners, members of the advisory board and a representative of the local authority linked to the centres.

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

Information about the centre

The centre was established in February 2007 as part of the national Sure Start programme and is co-located with Hythe Community Primary School. The original model included one centre leader managing two separate children's centres just over two miles apart. However, funding constraints have led to recent restructuring by Surrey County Council resulting in the amalgamation of the Haven Sure Start and Englefield Green children's centres. Haven Sure Start now operates as one centre on two sites. This is led by one centre manager with a much larger combined reach area. The centre is governed and managed by the governing body of The Hythe Community Primary School on behalf of Surrey County Council. The advisory board comprises members of the school governing body, key partners, parents and the local authority. The centre's offer includes family support, child and family health services, and employment advice. The centre's main building is on the primary school site.

Both the Egham/Staines Town and Englefield Green sites have high numbers of workless households and a high rate of domestic abuse. The proportion of teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers is close to the national average. Englefield Green

has a high number of students, international students, temporary accommodation, a Women's Refuge and families of Arab heritage working within the Crown Estate. The area is 'split' into the east and west side, the east being the more affluent area and the west mainly made up of social housing which is a key feature of the centre's Super Output Area. People of White British heritage comprise the majority in the centre's reach area. The Haven operates services from three community venues to improve accessibility. Although the centre does not have early years provision on site, it runs joint sessions with some local providers in its reach area for children aged nought to five years. Children in the centre's reach area demonstrate skills below those normally expected on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

Haven Sure Start Children's Centre provides satisfactory support for families and young children. The services it provides are adequately matched to the needs of families, resulting in satisfactory outcomes. The centre is welcoming and runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Its greatest asset is its staff, who are enthusiastic, caring and committed to supporting families. The centre manager has built a team of staff who are confident in their roles. They feel empowered through effective training and well supported in taking significant responsibility for key areas of the centre's work. As a result, the centre's engagement with families has increased significantly over the past few years.

The centre works particularly well with the most vulnerable families. This is because centre staff are skilled in the early identification of needs and they effectively monitor and track the impact of interventions. Target groups, such as fathers and lone parents, are adequately supported. Through case studies, the centre can show clear impact of its work on improving outcomes for families, including some target groups, particularly in promoting family safety and well-being. Data show that the centre is helping children to get off to a better start when they move on to school. However, the centre does not hold up-to-date information about the number of families in each target group in its reach area and the percentage of these that the centre has engaged with. As a result, it is not yet able to demonstrate fully the impact of the

work it is doing. In addition, lack of strategic data from the local authority about the impact of the centre's work in relation to key performance indicators has an impact upon the rigour and depth of the centre's self-evaluation, which is satisfactory.

Centre staff interact well with families and are keen to find out their views about the wide range of programmes and activities offered. Programmes to improve parenting skills have targeted lone parents and adults in workless households, and have been especially successful. Children really enjoy their learning and achieve well by the end of the Reception Year. There have been improvements to the provision in the last three years and partnership work has been effective in bringing about improved outcomes for many vulnerable children and their families. Leaders have successfully ensured the centre's high profile in the local community. This underlines the centre's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- In conjunction with the local authority, strengthen monitoring and evaluation by:
 - improving the quality of management information systems so that trends in key performance indicators in the reach area can be used on a regular basis to inform strategic planning and shape service delivery
 - developing the use of data to demonstrate the impact of services on different target groups in the reach area
 - enhancing the skills of those on the advisory board so that they use data more effectively to set and monitor the priorities in the centre's development plan.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

Centre staff take a proactive approach to promoting healthy outcomes. For example, the knowledge of relatively high childhood obesity rates in Surrey triggered the introduction of the well-attended 'Fit Kids' programme where movement and dance to background music promote stamina and physical fitness. Children enjoy eating healthy fruit snacks with their parents during 'Play and Learn' sessions. A successful 'Come Cook with Me' programme was run last year, targeted at a group of mothers who reported in their evaluations that, as a result, they were now using fresh ingredients in their cooking rather than processed foods. However, the centre has not been supplied with strategic data about health outcomes at the reach area level. Therefore, it is unable to show the impact of its actions to promote healthy outcomes in relation to key performance indicators such as obesity levels by the end of the Reception Year and prevalence of breastfeeding after six to eight weeks.

Promoting the safety of children and families is a strong feature of the centre's work. Case study evidence is meticulously recorded and shows that family support work leads to improved outcomes for children and adults. This is evident for children on

the child protection register and families for whom the Common Assessment Framework is used. Centre staff work effectively with other agencies to identify the needs of families, and these are kept under review. Particularly effective is the way in which the most vulnerable families are closely tracked and monitored. The 'Feeling Safe' course delivered by the centre manager and outreach worker is very effective in exploring feelings and emotions in a very interactive way with young children living in households where there is or has been domestic abuse. This has had a considerable impact on reducing children's sense of isolation and depression.

Children achieve well by the end of Reception across the centre's reach area. This is demonstrated by the fact that the proportion of children achieving 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage has increased and is now slightly above the national average. In relation to children's below average starting points, this is good achievement. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile and the rest has reduced and is part of an improving trend. The centre offers a wide range of opportunities for parents and their children to play and learn together. Evaluations from parents indicate how much they enjoy the sessions and how it has helped their children to develop. As a result of high quality training and support, most parents using the centre are developing their parenting skills well. The good personal development of the large majority of families using the centre, including many dads who have been specifically targeted, is the result of sustained interaction and engagement by the centre staff. Children behave well and show respect for each other as they negotiate access to indoor resources and the play equipment outside.

The centre has run some courses for adults through its partnership with a local college, for example an introductory mathematics course, enabling parents to support their children with homework. There are plans in place to provide more adult learning opportunities at the Englefield Green site where there is a designated information and communication technology suite. Information and guidance, which signpost job opportunities and access to employment, are available at the centre. Some parents made reference to the centre having introduced them to services such as Jobcentre Plus and bespoke advice about benefits. However, the centre has not developed robust procedures for recording its successes in these areas to show how it has helped to improve the outcomes for families.

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	3
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 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	3

positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	
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	3

How good is the provision?

3

Centre staff and partner agencies reach out to those in the area and provide a range of services well targeted to the most vulnerable; this work is tailored to the individual needs of families the centre works with and is increasing steadily. The centre's staff coordinate services and cases are reviewed regularly and frequently, both formally, as part of staff supervision sessions, and informally. In this way, emerging or changing needs are identified early and provision made for these. However, the centre lacks precise data about its target groups and cannot identify trends over time. Although the centre is reaching out effectively to many vulnerable families, it is unable to say with precision how it is adapting its services to meet the specific needs of some of its target groups. This stems from the lack of up-to-date and relevant information about the composition and location of target groups, for example teenage mothers and children aged nought to four who live in workless households.

The centre has a wide range of activities to promote the learning and development of the families who access its services. Good parenting skills are promoted, for example, through parenting programmes where the few parents on the course actively discuss the behaviours they need to stop and those they need to develop in their children. The weekly 'Bumps and Babies' session has good attendance rates and is successful in reducing the sense of isolation and possible depression felt by new mothers. The fortnightly 'Dad's Brunch' has ensured that more fathers in the community play and learn with their children. In the 'Play and Learn' sessions, observed on both sites, parents and children showed excitement and pride at their achievements. However, the centre has not fine-tuned its provision sufficiently well to meet the needs of all target groups in its reach area, for example the small minority of families who speak English as an additional language.

Centre staff are particularly skilful in identifying and supporting families who are experiencing difficult circumstances. This support is triggered after referrals from midwives and health visitors and the centre's own observations of adults and children who access its universal services. Clear records are kept of all the universal and targeted services these families have accessed and evaluations show positive outcomes. Centre leaders have successfully established a caring ethos as a result of which parents and their children feel safe and relaxed, confidently interacting with the centre's very approachable and helpful staff.

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	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

There are sound systems in place for the local authority to hold the centre to account through an 'annual conversation' supplemented by progress checks against the key priorities in the delivery plan. Although the centre's delivery plan is appropriately focused on strategic priorities, some of the success criteria are not linked sharply enough to measurable outcomes for key target groups. The advisory board has been suitably reorganised and meetings are now chaired by an independent chair, rather than the centre manager, as has been the case in the past. There is good multi-agency representation on the board and members receive helpful progress reports from the centre manager. Although the advisory board asks the right questions, for example how the centre can help reduce childhood obesity and increase breastfeeding rates in the reach area, it does not yet use data sharply enough to ask more challenging questions about the impact of the centre's work.

Safeguarding is given high priority, for example through the completion of a comprehensive single central record and rigorous recruitment checks for all permanent and voluntary staff. An informative safeguarding booklet greets every visitor who frequents the centre. All staff have had a range of child protection training and senior managers have received enhanced training in multi-agency procedures. The centre works very effectively with social services and health agencies for meeting the needs of children and families on child protection plans.

Effective partnerships are having a good impact on the personal development of many children with additional needs in the reach area. For example, children with special educational needs from the local private nursery and the co-located primary school access the centre's impressive multi-sensory room for sessions on raising self-esteem. Equality and diversity is promoted satisfactorily, for example through celebrating religious festivals and cultural dance and music like the 'Bolly Kids' programme enjoyed by families last year. The centre successfully includes children and families with special educational needs and/or disabilities in all its activities and programmes.

Some parents and carers contribute well to the centre in a variety of ways, from suggestions about sessions to more formal contributions on the advisory board. However, parent forums are not yet embedded, which means that there is no clear mechanism through which the views of parents and carers are passed on to the

advisory board. Nonetheless, parents and carers are listened to by centre staff and they have an influence on developing the provision made at the centre.

The centre manager is a good role model and works diligently with a committed team. Staff morale is good. As a result, the number of families registered with the centre has increased significantly over the past few years. Although the centre has worked successfully with many adults and children from target groups, the precise proportions in relation to their number in the reach area is not known to the centre. At present, therefore, the centre achieves satisfactory outcomes and provides satisfactory value for money.

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 effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	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 partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	2
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	3

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

The Early Years Foundation Stage at the co-located primary school was also inspected at the time of the Haven Sure Start Children's Centre inspection. Information from this inspection has been taken into account when writing about outcomes for children in the report.

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 Haven Sure Start Children's Centre on 3–4 November 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you for your help and contribution to the inspection. We had the pleasure of speaking to many of you and you all told us how grateful you were for the support you had received from the centre and the difference it had made to your lives. We read your positive comments in the many evaluations about the programmes you have attended and services that you use. Our finding is that Haven Sure Start Children's Centre is an inclusive centre where staff go out of their way to identify families' needs and closely monitor and track families once referrals have been made to the centre. However, the effectiveness of the centre is hampered by the fact that it does not have accurate and up-to-date information about all the target groups in its reach area. The consequence of this is that centre leaders are not able to target their provision more sharply. Although the centre is reaching and engaging with many target groups, for example lone parents and dads, the lack of data means that it is not able to evaluate the impact of its work more fully.

The centre provides you with good quality care, guidance and support because the needs of each individual child and their family are given high importance. Family support and the centre's links with many other agencies are giving you the knowledge and skills to overcome difficulties you are experiencing. Popular sessions such as 'Play and Learn', 'Fit Kids' and 'Come Cook with Me' are effective in promoting healthy lifestyles as well as enjoying learning through play. We were impressed with the centre's focus on keeping children safe, for example through running an engaging 'Feeling Safe' course for children who may be living in households where there has been domestic violence. The multi-sensory room is also used well. The coloured lighting coupled with soft furnishing provides children with a calm, soothing environment in which they can reflect. The centre gives you good opportunities to develop your parenting skills, as we observed on the 'parenting course' during the inspection. Centre leaders are working with Strodes College to provide more opportunities for you to undertake training and educational programmes.

The centre manager has built a successful team who work well together. The local authority regularly checks on progress made against the priorities in the centre's delivery plan. However, there is not enough information on how the centre is performing over time in relation to key performance indicators such as obesity levels of children and how many mothers are breastfeeding in the reach area. Although the advisory board has a sound understanding of its role, the lack of strategic data means that, at the moment, it cannot fully challenge the centre's leadership. Nonetheless, in the absence of more precise and informative data, centre staff continue to work hard and reach out to the community, especially those families

whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. As a result, the engagement of families is now much higher than it was a few years ago.

The centre values its partnership with you fully and respects your ideas. For example, centre leaders regularly review the outcomes of your evaluations of all the programmes and activities, and adjust provision in the light of what you are telling them. In addition, the centre takes great care to ensure that you and your children are safeguarded and that the centre is a safe place to be.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come and speak to us. We are very grateful and we wish you every success for the future.

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