

# Inspection report for Rising Stars Children's Centre

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Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	383599
Inspection dates	24 - 25 November 2011
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school	Worsbrough Common Primary School 106576
Linked early years and childcare	Rising Stars Children's Centre EY319923

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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 registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

An inspection of the co-located/partner 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, parents and carers and service users and representatives from the local authority. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Rising Stars Children's Centre is a phase one centre and was first designated in March 2006. The centre is linked with a primary school and is under their governance.

The centre provides services from a single main site to a population made up from a broad range of economic and social circumstances. A large majority of families live in areas within the 30% most deprived in the country. The number of children attending schools in the area who are known to be entitled to free school meals is high, as is the proportion of children aged under four years who are living in households where no one is working. The vast majority of families within the area served by the centre are of White British heritage. A scheme of housing redevelopment has resulted in many families relocating temporarily out of the area whilst their homes are refurbished.

The centre provides the full core offer and a wide range of supporting services, incorporating a crèche, drop-in health support, adult courses and workshops. The centre has an advisory board which it shares with two other children's centres. The advisory board is made up of representatives from the local community, professional agencies and parents.

The centre offers full childcare provision and this is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted. Most children enter early years education with a range of literacy, communication and development skills well below those 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**

**3**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**3**

## Main findings

Rising Stars Children's Centre works satisfactorily to improve outcomes for families. The centre has good arrangements to ensure users stay safe. Those in charge are establishing a clear vision and understanding of what needs to be done to improve the centre. The centre is becoming increasingly well established in the community. Staff work effectively with partner organisations to support families who use the centre. The centre provides some good activities and effective care and support. However, the majority of families who live in the area do not use the centre or its services and the total number of those registered is low. The centre promotes the services it offers and the number of families registering with the centre is increasing.

Families attending the interesting range of activities at the centre develop a good understanding of dangers and how to keep themselves and each other safe. Staff have good knowledge and skills which they use effectively to provide a stimulating environment within the centre. Parents and carers who are experiencing change and challenging circumstances in their lives, such as domestic violence, share their concerns with staff because they trust them and know they will receive help.

There are effective arrangements to ensure families attending the centre are encouraged to contribute positively to their community and the life of the centre. This has included active

involvement to raise money for charities and to promote the work undertaken by the community association. Children behave well at the centre and develop positive relationships with each other and adults. Families using the centre are listened to and feel they are included in making decisions about how the centre is run.

Parents and carers, who registered with the centre at a time when they had low confidence and self-esteem, have developed greater confidence and improved their personal well-being. For many this has provided very useful support to increase their skills as parents and broaden their understanding of how children learn and develop. Families attending the centre enjoy the activities on offer and children make good progress preparing for school. However, the centre has an underdeveloped range of opportunities for adults seeking help to find work, undertake training or gain accredited qualifications.

The headteacher and the governing body provide effective leadership, which has helped the centre improve and develop the services it provides for families. The local authority provides the centre with useful data about the population of the area it serves but this is not used effectively enough to help the centre clearly prioritise its work. Not all of the targets set by the local authority are clear or precise enough to help the centre understand exactly what it needs to do to improve.

Arrangements for the operational management of the centre have been disrupted because of vacant posts, absence and sickness. Systems to improve the quality of the centre's work have been slow to increase performance. However, at the time of the inspection it was clear that sufficient progress had been made to ensure the centre has satisfactory capacity to improve. Partnership working is becoming increasingly effective. However, services are not yet integrated well enough to ensure all families who face the greatest challenges are targeted and receive sufficient support, for example, families with children with disabilities.

The centre is contributing effectively to narrowing the achievement gap in the Early Years Foundation Stage and makes sure that arrangements for equality of opportunity and the promotion of diversity are effective. Barriers to attending services are effectively overcome for those who attend the centre.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Increase registration and participation through more effective promotion of the centre's offer and by more effective identification and targeting of those most in need.
- The local authority should provide the centre with clear key performance targets to meet the needs of targeted groups and the local community, and to help the centre staff understand exactly what is required to improve.
- Improve outcomes for families by ensuring the operational management of the centre's activities is more sharply focused on increasing quality and performance.

- Provide a comprehensive range of services and opportunities for adults interested in seeking paid work, training and education.

## How good are outcomes for families?

3

Rising Stars Children's Centre provides a welcoming environment, which helps families respond well to the wide range of activities relating to improving diet, development, exercise and lifestyle. Health outcomes, such as breastfeeding are improving. There is good quality information on immunisation and stopping smoking, which parents and carers use to help them make decisions to improve their family's health. The centre leadership team is aware that more families could be using the centre and are determined to increase the number of those registered so that more people can benefit from its services.

Children's behaviour in the centre is good and parents and carers establish trusting relationships with staff. Children and families feel safe when accessing services at the centre because arrangements to help keep them safe are good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of related issues, which helps them provide good support for families experiencing violence in the home. The building is secure and children settle quickly in the crèche and day care as they have positive relationships with the adults and respond very well to the established routines.

Courses available for adults are valued and generally used well by parents and carers. They help support their children's learning, give them confidence, promote good parenting skills, and for a few, increase educational attainment and prepare them for the world of work. Services for those seeking to improve their educational qualifications, undertake training or find paid work are not fully integrated and are not currently available to the majority of the population who are not registered with the centre.

Family support workers build strong, trusting relationships with users so families feel more confident and able to engage with other professionals to access help and support. This supports the good work that is undertaken through the Common Assessment Framework, those subject to child protection plans and with looked after children. The kinship carer group provides vital support to enable children to remain within their extended family. This support is highly valued by users, for example one parent told us 'I do feel safe here. The centre gives me peace of mind and I feel as though I've got its arms around me'.

The centre has a strong focus on language and communication. This has resulted in positive benefits in improving children's speech and by increasing parents' and carers' understanding of how they can encourage their children's language development. The centre uses structured parenting courses to help families develop and improve their outcomes.

Contact with the centre has enabled children to have a better start to school life. The children's centre has a childminder support worker who works very well to improve the quality and standards of childminding provision and so improve outcomes for children.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>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.</b>	<b>3</b>

## How good is the provision?

**3**

Staff and partners at Rising Stars Children's Centre are experienced and establish effective, supportive relationships with all users. Assessments generally cover the whole range of needs, but more is required to identify and address the needs of those from all target groups. Assessment is used well to plan individual support for users but the majority of the population are unknown to the centre. The centre does not have a complete profile of the needs of the communities it serves.

The centre has strong and effective links with the co-located school and early years setting. Satisfactory partnerships are in place with a range of key organisations including health, speech and language therapy, social care, Early Years Foundation Stage providers and voluntary and private sector organisations. The centre follows clear procedures to involve these partners in services for individual children and families, but services to meet the needs of all groups facing the greatest challenges are not integrated well enough.

Outreach working is at an early stage but is becoming increasingly effective at attracting new members. Current arrangements to support adults seeking education, training and advice to find employment are underdeveloped. The centre recognises the need to do more to widen the range of opportunities and increase access to these services.

Families using the centre and its services in the community receive adequate care, guidance and support. Many families using the centre achieve improved outcomes through the personal and practical support they receive. They have fun at the centre and engage in exciting activities, whilst building their confidence, relationships and parenting skills. One parent told us, 'Meeting other mums who are going through the same kind of things, and learning how to deal with it together is very empowering'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.</b>	<b>3</b>

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

**3**

The centre's leadership team has a positive impact on improving outcomes for centre users. The growing range of interesting and challenging activities is beginning to increase the number of families registered with the centre but progress has been slow. The headteacher provides strong leadership but several changes in the arrangements for operational management have delayed actions for improvement. Staff are unclear about the performance of the centre and do not have specific targets for the work they do. The advisory board and governing body review progress, but do not set targets or clear priorities for the centre.

The local authority has set a clear strategic direction for the centre but key performance targets for the centre are not specific enough to help it improve its performance. The centre leadership team have adequate arrangements to involve staff, partners and centre users in the process of self-evaluation. The centre provides satisfactory value for money.

Arrangements for quality assurance and improvement of the centre are under-developed. The local authority have been slow to recognise that the centre has low registration and participation rates and that work to identify and engage target groups needs to be more effective.

The centre works effectively with individuals but is not yet able to target the needs of groups facing the greatest challenges. For example, there is good evidence of effective individual support for disabled children who use the centre, but no strategic response to identify and assess the needs of the other disabled children who live in the area.

Staff value the challenge and support they receive from their individual line-managers and are improving their skills and knowledge through ongoing training. The centre is committed to inclusion and removing barriers, including those faced by families on very low incomes. It promotes equality satisfactorily in its activities, some of which involve the celebration of different cultures and beliefs. Discrimination, where it occurs, is dealt with promptly and effectively. The centre has contributed well to narrowing the gap between the lowest 20% and the rest in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The centre uses effective arrangements to ensure safeguarding regulations are met. All centre users are protected and their welfare and development are promoted effectively.



Staff have a good level of awareness and know what to do if action needs to be taken. The centre correctly prioritises safeguarding and protection of children.

Partnership working is effective in improving outcomes for those families who attend the centre. Where relationships between key partners are clear the centre is effective at identifying and meeting the needs of more families in the community.

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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</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>3</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>3</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>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.</b>	<b>3</b>

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

The findings from the concurrent inspections of Worsbrough Common Primary School and the centre's co-located early years setting have contributed to this report and judgements.

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 Rising Stars Children's Centre on 24 - 25 November 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We enjoyed our visit to your centre and meeting so many of you. We would like to thank those of you who helped us with our work. We found that the staff work well to provide satisfactory care, guidance and support for all users. We found the staff to be committed and keen to support children's development and to develop adults' confidence and to make being a parent more enjoyable and rewarding. However, we found the centre needs to make sure more people join the centre so that they can benefit too.

We found the staff to be good at providing individual personal support and that they are determined to become even better at supporting families with the greatest needs. Some of you told us that the support of the centre is very important when you are having problems.

The staff have established some satisfactory partnerships with other professionals and organisations to ensure you have access to a full range of support and guidance, such as how to keep families healthy and safe. Staff have placed great efforts on increasing children's development through many of the interesting and exciting activities.

We found that the reception staff are very welcoming and helpful. We noticed that the centre is a safe place for you and your children. Some of you told us how the centre is a bright and attractive place and we agree. The rooms and play equipment are of a very good standard and the staff have lots of experience and skills to make sure your time there is well spent. The children we saw were making good progress and enjoyed what they were doing.

The centre is a very useful place for you to meet other parents and carers and people who can help families. Some of you said that sessions, such as breastfeeding support, are very valuable and we agree. We also think that your centre is good at involving grandparents in supporting families. The centre asks for your views on activities and courses and some of you are involved in helping to manage the centre.

The centre staff listen to your views and uses this information to make improvements. They are aware that more could be done to provide support to those who need it the most. Managers are keen to make the centre more effective and we have asked them to make sure this happens. They also know that it would be very useful if the local authority helped them decide what to do to make the centre even better.

We think the centre needs to provide more courses for adults who want help to find work, undertake training or increase their education.

Thank you again for taking time to talk with us 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).