

Inspection report for Tudor Way Children's Centre

Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	383563
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2011
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Centre leader	Alison Nicholas
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Dines Green Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Magic Moments Nursery

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.

Report published: December 2011



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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/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.

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

The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, local authority managers, the children's centre leader, cluster manager and advisory board members. They met with the headteacher of Dines Green Primary School, a number of representatives of from services which work through the children's centre, including health visitors and the outreach workers. Inspectors spoke to parents and carers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's self-evaluation, development plan, user evaluations and case study information.

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Information about the centre

The Tudor Way Children's Centre is a phase one children's centre that provides a range of services. These include: early education integrated with childcare, family support and outreach to parents, child and family health services and adult education. It operates from a lead site located on a campus with the Dines Green Primary School and a private day nursery. Provision is also offered at the community centre, local library and youth centre within the reach. The outreach areas cover the Dines Green and St Johns areas of Worcester City.

The centre leader is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre and has a full role in strategic planning. The local authority funds the centre. The city-wide advisory board consists of partner agencies, parents, centre managers and a representative from the local authority.

The majority of the families who use the centre are from White British backgrounds. A growing number of families using the centre are from minority ethnic groups. Data for the reach area place the user base in the 60% least deprived nationally, but the Dines Green and Tudor Way areas are in the bottom 20% and 30% deprived areas respectively. The children's centre has 1018 children under five in its reach area. About 14% of children who use the centre come from homes that are dependent on benefits and where no-one is in work. When they start early years provision the majority of children's have skills, knowledge and abilities that are below those expected for their age.

The centre opens 52 weeks each year on weekdays from 7.30 until 6 pm.

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

The Tudor Way Children's Centre is a welcoming place and serves the families well that live in their reach area. One user expressed a view that was typical of many others, 'The centre is a great place, with lovely caring staff who will go that extra mile to help families and children.'

Staff are very welcoming and are always there to help. The centre leader provides effective leadership. Leadership is characterised by good organisational and communication skills and values the work of everyone. As a result, the centre runs effectively on a day-to-day basis. Outcomes for users are good. Families using the centre enjoy activities. Parent volunteers make effective contributions to the centre's activities. Staff morale is high. Their relationships with parents and carers are excellent. Many parents were keen to speak to inspectors about how the centre has helped them. They mentioned developing parenting skills, assisting them in moments of crisis and accessing support they might need through services, such as Relate, in particular.

The centre staff have a clear sense of drive and passion and a good understanding of the difficulties they face in the reach area they serve. As a result, users are

supported well. Partnerships with the local community and other agencies are effective. Regular partnership meetings are arranged, which ensure services are well integrated to deliver cohesive provision for users that impacts positively on their lives.

The centre offers a broad range of services and activities that meets the needs of the majority of users throughout the reach. However, it has not expanded its services sufficiently to help users develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and the use of computers. The centre works particularly well with speech and language therapists. A parent said: 'I can't thank the centre enough. In a short space of time my son has stopped stammering.'

The advisory board provides effective supervision and support for leaders and managers to improve provision. Rigorous self-evaluation takes account of the views of centre users and partners. This leads to an accurate identification of priorities for improvement. Good prioritisation of safeguarding ensures all users are safe. The number of users accessing the centre's good- quality provision has consistently increased. However, targeted outreach work, particularly with minority ethnic families, is not developed sufficiently to encourage these and more hard to reach groups to make more use of the centre's facilities. The strong teamwork of staff and high levels of commitment by all stakeholders contribute effectively to improved outcomes for users. The local authority and advisory board support developments well and have good systems to monitor the outcomes for users. This demonstrates the centre's good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Extend the range of services to provide opportunities for adults to develop their language, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills by developing stronger links with training providers
- Increase the centre's outreach work to engage more effectively with minority ethnic families and groups who are hard to reach, to encourage them to use the centre's services.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Families with young children show that they develop a satisfactory understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy. Appropriate individual counselling services help adults cope with anxiety and isolation. One parent said, 'Coming to this group I do not feel so lonely.' Data supplied by the centre indicate that increasing numbers of mothers are continuing to breastfeed. Children in the activity room develop suitable hygiene habits through clear routines, with regular reminders about not putting toys in their mouth. Obesity rates are average for the area. The smoking cessation clinic is helping adults to give up smoking. One parent said, 'I am pleased with myself for giving up smoking.' Case studies indicate that targeted support has a

positive impact on the emotional well-being of vulnerable parents and children, for example, those experiencing family breakdown and those with child protection plans.

The centre ensures that all children and their families are safe and protected through its own good safeguarding procedures. Children behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. For example, they help tidy away toys in the play areas. They show an increasing awareness of the importance of being safe in all situations and using equipment safely. Staff supervise children well throughout the day. They ensure that parents develop good observation skills in this respect. A parent who attended the first aid course said: 'I feel more confident about how to look after my eight-month-old daughter. Thank you, I would definitely recommend the course.' The use of the Common Assessment Framework is well established and effective in highlighting users that are at risk and in need of support. Case studies show very effective impact and improved well-being and welfare for children on child protection plans. Robust assessments and safeguarding systems support and ensure the safety of vulnerable children and any adult in need. Early intervention ensures families are effectively supported and, where necessary, gain access to vital services.

Children make good progress from their starting points in developing the skills that will help them in the future. Their behaviour is good and, as a result, they form positive relationships within the centre. The centre is taking effective action to identify and narrow the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest. Services offered by the centre are popular and groups have high levels of attendance. Families enjoy the 'Stay and Play' activities, that provide structured opportunities for parents, carers and children to play have fun and learn together. A parent said: 'I am so happy with the play sessions. Most of all, my son is happy and loves going.' Most families using the centre develop their skills, including their parenting skills, well and demonstrate good personal, social and educational development. The 'Books Together, Enjoy Forever' sessions are particularly effective in improving children's speech and reading skills. Volunteer assistants are well qualified and they know their key group of children well. They identify gaps in children's learning and achievement and take appropriate steps to narrow them. Children are well prepared for transition into nursery.

Families make positive contributions to the community. Users express verbally and through their written evaluations that they enjoy the activities offered. They actively participate in the advisory and decision-making progress. For example, a parent volunteer suggested and then set-up the 'Stay and Play Little Hands' group. Parents participated in fund-raising events to build the outdoor classroom. They are very appreciative of the financial advice guidance provided by the centre, in particular, for budgeting and saving money over the winter months. Information on child and working tax credits, as well as help provided to the increasing housing needs of families, is effective in improving their well-being. Case studies show how the centre has helped unemployed parents negotiate a working tax credit and move into flexible part-time employment. A growing number of adults have progressed on to paid work.

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 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 works effectively with other agencies to ensure assessments, such as those carried out for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are robust and well informed. Families gain access to a range of focused services through these services. A parent who attended the 'Family Links Nurturing Programme' that included behaviour management techniques said, 'I gained more knowledge and confidence on how to deal with my child's behaviour'. The variety of services and activities include the 'Little Hands Arts and Crafts' that provide, fun and learning opportunities. The 'Shake, Rattle and Groove' sessions are popular. One parent commented: 'My child is learning rhyme and rhythm from an early age. It is developing his social interaction with other children and reading skills well.' The centre engages well with fathers with increasing numbers attending the monthly Saturday morning 'Dad's Group' sessions. The monthly 'Childminders Group' has sporadic attendance, although the centre continues to advertise it and maintains contact with the childminders co-ordinator. However, the centre's provision does not provide enough opportunities for adults to develop their language, numeracy and ICT skills.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the centre is good. Children are provided with a good range of activities and learning opportunities from birth that supports their development effectively. Staff make effective use of assessments of children's achievements to plan the next steps in learning. High-quality resources that are age-appropriate and interesting encourage children's engagement. The centre promotes purposeful learning well. For example, a parent attending one of the cooking courses said: 'I have begun to look at the foods that I am buying and, rather than going to the supermarket to buy a cheesecake, I made one for the children.' Health and well-being courses are particularly well received. One parent commented: 'The course was very beneficial and I learnt plenty of tips

on natural beauty and nail art. I would love to do more'. The centre is good at recognising users' personal development and achievements through celebrations of work produced by children and families.

Care, guidance and support arrangements are effective. Good tailored support develops families' well-being. Families express high levels of satisfaction with the level of care, guidance and support offered by centre. The open-door policy provides a listening ear to support children and families all year round. The counselling service has had a positive impact on families' lives. A parent who was feeling depressed told the inspectors that they benefitted greatly from the counselling at the centre and said, 'I have had tremendous support, advice and help when I needed it so desperately.' The centre works well with the speech and language therapy team. It has been effective in consistently moving referrals off support. The centre is also good at supporting and integrating children and families with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The centre works productively with the specialist family support services to help vulnerable children and their families and ensure that their particular needs are met. Good-quality information, advice and guidance mean that families are signposted effectively to the appropriate support services.

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	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Governance and accountability arrangements are clear. The Advisory Board and Local Authority provide appropriate supervision of the centre's activities. Links between strategic planning and service provision are effective. Morale is high and belief in the centre's success is evident at all levels. The cluster manager and centre leader communicates high expectations consistently to staff about securing improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and supported by evidence of the impact on outcomes for users. The evaluation has resulted in changes to the provision, which is increasingly successful in meeting the needs of all users. The inclusion of all children and their families is central to the centre's vision. Its actions to promote greater equality for different groups are effective in removing barriers, especially for children and families with special education needs and/or disabilities. The centre has identified where further improvements can be made to overcome any variations in outcomes and has good strategies to overcome them.

Good safeguarding arrangements are effective and there is a system to maintain and

update them. The training of all staff, particularly in relation to ensuring child protection, reducing domestic violence and for protecting those working with children or adults with disabilities, is of good quality. The centre is proactive and collaborates effectively with other key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children. Agencies working in the centre understand the implications of the wider safeguarding agenda. Robust vetting procedures safeguard children and adults and ensure that only suitable people are able to work with children and families. Criminal Record Bureau checks are recorded accurately and maintained. The premises and environment are safe. The risk assessments of the environment are effective in minimising risks and are monitored to ensure that this remains the case. They are acted upon to make effective improvements to the safeguarding systems.

Services generally deliver cohesive provision for users, which has a positive impact on their lives. Volunteers work effectively in different aspects of the centre's provision, such as in supporting activity-based courses and in helping to deliver outreach sessions. Relationships between statutory partners are increasingly clear and understood and are being more effectively managed. Users have regular opportunities to be involved in shaping services and evaluating the effectiveness of provision. Outreach services are improving and targeting identified needs in the wider community. The centre's engagement with the increasing number of minority ethnic minority and hard to reach groups is not fully developed to sufficiently involve them in the centre's activities. The improvement in the centre's impact on the community in consistently increasing outcomes and its good-quality provision that engages the majority of families means that the centre's resources are managed effectively. It represents good 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	2
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	2
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	3

reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	
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Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The inspection findings of Dines Green Primary School and Magic moments Nursery.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Tudor Way Children's Centre on 6–7 December 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

We are very grateful to all the parents, carers, professional partners and representatives from the centre who took the time to come and speak to us. You gave us a positive picture of the centre, and what you said was useful in making our final judgments.

At the core of the centre's success is the strong leadership provided by the centre leader and the good teamwork of the staff. The centre also has effective relationships with professional partners. This means that the workers at the centre communicate well with each other and their feedback provides good knowledge and understanding of the community's needs.

Those of you who use the centre are much better now at staying safe and looking after your families. We know this because many of you told us of what you had learnt. We judge that the centre is a welcoming place to come. Staff have worked hard to make it safe for you and your children. The centre works effectively with other agencies, such as the health service and social services, in particular to help vulnerable children and families.

Parents and children are benefiting from the good provision provided by the children's centre. Some of you are keen to attend classes to improve your skills. These must be enjoyable because we noticed that attendance on these courses is high. Good-quality sessions are prepared for you to improve your parenting skills and for your children to develop their basic skills. This means that you gain more confidence and expertise and your children are well prepared when they start nursery school.

We have found a few areas for improvement and the centre's leaders are already aware of these. We are recommending that they extend the range of adult courses to help you develop your basic skills in literacy, numeracy and use of computers. We

are also asking leaders to increase the number of people the centre's services from ethnic minority groups and those who are hard to reach.

We wish you every success for the future.

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