

Inspection report for Hillsborough Children's Centre

Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	383452
Inspection dates	13 - 14 March 2012
Reporting inspector	Daniel Grant

Centre leader	Theresa Thomas
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Hillsborough Primary School Parkside Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S6 2AA
Telephone number	0114 233 5108
Fax number	0114 231 3879
Email address	childrenscentre@hillsborough.sheffield.sch.uk

Linked school if applicable	Hillsborough Primary School URN 107082
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.

Report Published: March 2012

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

No.100080

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

The inspection covers 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 one Early Years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with staff from the centre, parents and representatives from Sheffield City Council. Inspectors also met with members of the partnership advisory board and a number of partners including those from education and health.

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

Information about the centre

Hillsborough Children's Centre is a phase two centre which opened in February 2008. It is managed by the local authority and is on a site shared with Hillsborough Primary School. Governance is through a partnership advisory group which oversees two other children's centres in the area. The centre leader has responsibility for the day-to-day management of four centres.

The centre serves a population which lives within the 80% least deprived areas in the country, with pockets of relative deprivation.

Hillsborough is on the north-western edge of Sheffield. The proportion of children aged under four years who are living in workless households is low. The large majority of families within the area served by the centre are of White British heritage.

The centre provides a range of supporting services, incorporating midwifery clinics, crèche, parenting courses, breastfeeding and weaning support, baby massage and information-

giving. It does not offer outreach services or childcare. Most children enter early years provision with a range of skills higher than 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

4

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

4

Main findings

The overall effectiveness of Hillsborough Children's Centre in meeting the needs of users and in demonstrating the capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate. The centre's work has been disrupted by the reorganisation of services in May 2011, which has reduced its effectiveness. The impact of changes in service delivery, limited management capacity, staff absences and reduced support from the health visiting team mean that the centre is not meeting the needs of users. Leadership and management are inadequate and are failing to secure improvements to the provision.

Safeguarding arrangements are inadequate. The local authority provides clear policies, procedures and training for safeguarding. However, staff are unclear about fire evacuation procedures; the outdoor play area is unsafe; and the entrance gate is not secure. Key partners, including health visitors and the multi-agency support team do not routinely share information with the centre about possible safety risks and families with the greatest needs. Consequently, the centre does not sufficiently monitor the assessment of, and support for, children and families whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable.

The centre is not effective in targeting and promoting its provision to those families and groups most in need of early intervention and support. The number of families registered with the centre is low and too few are engaged with centre activities. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process is not used effectively to help the centre identify target groups. Health visitors do not fully recognise the advantages of integrated working with the centre and have a reluctance to share important information, such as the details of families with disabled children and those subject to child protection plans and the CAF. Care, guidance and support are insufficiently focused on the children and families in the target groups. Provision for equality and diversity are inadequate.

The centre's self-evaluation, including the support it receives from the local authority to measure performance, has accurately identified many of its weaknesses. However, this information has failed to sufficiently improve provision or outcomes for families. Leaders analyse management information related to outcomes such as the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile in order to set targets for improvement. However, these targets are not realistic because the centre does not have sufficient resources or influence to reach them. The centre is no longer able to offer outreach services because a key post has remained vacant for too long.

Families who do engage with the centre enjoy good-quality services from the midwives and breastfeeding support worker. However, health outcomes are inadequate overall because too few families benefit from the centre's activities. The centre is working towards establishing a network of support for adults seeking to improve their education and job prospects. At the current time however, there is no coherent strategy for the provision of such support and the number of users benefiting from the centre is low. There are no tracking arrangements in place to monitor progress.

The centre does not sufficiently seek the views of users in order to develop the provision. The centre does not have a parents' forum and there are currently no parents from the centre's own reach area on the partnership advisory group. As a consequence, families are insufficiently involved in decision-making about shaping the centre's services. Resources are not deployed effectively and efficiently to meet families' needs and are having little impact on improving outcomes. The centre does not provide adequate value for money.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve safeguarding arrangements immediately and ensure they are given the highest priority by:
 - making sure that all staff understand fire evacuation procedures and explain these clearly to users and visitors
 - ensuring that the entrance gate closes securely, has an effective safety catch and closing mechanism and clear notices about the importance of closing it
 - making sure that the outdoor play area is kept clean and free of sharp objects, drain covers are in place and the gate to the cellar steps remains locked
 - reminding key partners of the central role and purpose of the centre in providing early intervention, and the importance of sharing information with the centre about the needs of children and families who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances, including those subject to child protection plans and the CAF.
- Improve equality and diversity by actively promoting the engagement of key target groups, including those families in most need of intervention and support.

- Ensure that families are more involved in decision-making about the centre by establishing a parents' forum and making sure that parents from the reach area are included in the partnership advisory group.
- Increase the number of families registered with the centre to ensure that more people benefit from the services available.
- Provide outreach services to identify and support families facing the greatest challenges and those who are hardest to reach.
- The local authority should support the centre to improve by:
 - clarifying the roles of the centre and the multi-agency support team so that prevention and early support and intervention are defined
 - ensuring adequate staffing arrangements both to manage and deliver services
 - increasing the rigour, challenge and frequency of the monitoring, quality assurance and quality improvement arrangements for the centre
 - improving collaborative working arrangements between strategic health leaders to ensure that health visitors understand their professional responsibilities appreciate the role and purpose of the children's centre and work more effectively to integrate services better and to improve outcomes for families.

How good are outcomes for families?

4

Outcomes overall are inadequate. However, midwifery services, breastfeeding support and weaning groups are well attended and help to improve outcomes for those who attend. Breastfeeding rates are high. One parent told us, 'Breastfeeding support is fantastic. The amazing, gentle nature of the worker makes you feel valued.' The centre offers appropriate advice to families about diet and exercise, but the narrow range of services directly available from the centre itself does not adequately help to improve outcomes for the vast majority of families within the reach area.

Safeguarding outcomes are inadequate. Staff employ poor working practices and as a consequence, fail to secure users' safety. The centre does not receive information about children who are subject to child protection plans or those in care. Poor sharing of information and weak monitoring mean that very few families are receiving support. However, parents and children who met with inspectors feel safe at the centre and a few families benefit from structured parenting programmes.

Data indicate the obesity rate is high at 17% for children entering the Reception Year at school. This is lower than the Sheffield average, but almost twice as high as the national average. The number of pregnant mothers who smoke is almost half the national average. Children in sessions behave well and families demonstrate respect for each other.

Data from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile indicate children's achievements in the reach area are good and above national and local averages. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest is narrowing slightly. However, there is little evidence that the centre is making a contribution to this improvement. The centre does not set targets for, or monitor the progress of users. Adult education and support for those seeking training or paid work is underdeveloped.

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	4
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	4
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	4
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	4
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.	4

How good is the provision?

4

The range of services, activities and opportunities is inadequate because it does not meet the needs of families, including those in target groups. The centre does not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the population to help it plan provision to meet its needs. For example, only 4% of the lone parents in the area are registered with the centre. The centre is insufficiently involved in supporting children's transition into school.

The centre is negotiating with community and voluntary organisations to help build capacity and increase the range of services on offer to families. However, it is too soon to see the benefits of this for a sufficient number of families. The children's centre consultant works satisfactorily with childminders and other childcare providers and provides useful support and training to improve the quality of early years provision offered by them.

The centre does not have the capacity to undertake early intervention work within the community, such as one-to-one support or home visiting because of staff shortages. Individual needs are not recognised because key partners do not routinely share important information with the centre. Health visitors informed inspectors that they see very little point in giving information to the centre because the centre does not have sufficient staff available to provide support for families. Care, guidance and support provided by the centre are inadequate and not sufficiently focused on target groups. Users have access to a satisfactory range of information displayed at the centre.

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	4
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	4
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.	4

How effective are the leadership and management?

4

Governance and accountability arrangements are inadequate. The centre manager has wide-ranging responsibilities for other services and the enormity of the task to develop and improve the centre is overwhelming. There is insufficient management capacity to build key partnerships; clarify protocols with the multi-agency support team and health visitors; develop an outreach service; and focus on improvement. Accommodation is scheduled for complete refurbishment. In a few places the centre is affected by damp and staining to paintwork. However, the staff have made the accommodation attractive and welcoming. The centre does not provide value for money because too few people benefit from the services it offers, outcomes are inadequate and the quality of provision is poor.

Self-evaluation does not lead to improvement. Management information and data provided by the local authority are accurate but have not been analysed effectively to plan realistic actions to increase performance. The local authority does not have effective arrangements to improve the quality of the centre's work because there is no critical challenge or rigorous assessment of the impact of the centre's work.

Partnership arrangements with the midwifery service are very well-established and effective. One parent told us, 'Coming here and seeing the midwife in the centre is much better than a formal clinical setting because it makes you feel more relaxed and able to ask questions'. However, partnerships with other key organisations are generally poor and are not having sufficient impact on improving outcomes for users. Recent changes designed to improve and co-ordinate service delivery has not yet resulted in cohesive provision for users. For example, the centre is no longer able to provide outreach or early intervention services and opportunities to promote the centre are reduced. Users and partners are not sufficiently involved in evaluating and developing the provision.

Equality and diversity are inadequate because although the centre fulfils its statutory duties, it does not have relevant insight into the needs of different groups of users. The centre does not actively promote the engagement of some target groups, such as lone parents, those from minority ethnic groups and families with disabled children. The centre does not measure its impact on community cohesion.

Safeguarding is not being given a sufficiently high priority and therefore families are not adequately safe. Risk assessments are insufficiently thorough and have failed to identify significant hazards and risks in the outdoor areas. Inspectors found that families are placed at risk because the entrance gate is not secure, procedures for fire evacuation are not understood by staff and visitors to the centre are not routinely informed of what to do in the event of a fire. The outdoor play area has a drain cover missing and sharp objects are scattered on the ground. Systems for recording information related to the vetting and recruitment of staff are effective. Security arrangements, such as a record of visitors to the centre, are implemented to protect users in the building.

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	4
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes	4
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	4
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	4
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	4
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	4
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.	4

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

Not applicable

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 Hillsborough Children's Centre on 13 and 14 March 2012. We judged the centre as inadequate overall.

Those of you who attend the centre for appointments with the midwife and breastfeeding, weaning and baby massage groups receive valuable support because the centre works effectively to make sure your needs are met. We saw how effectively the sessions were run and how you enjoyed and benefited from learning new ways of feeding and comforting your baby.

The services offered by the centre have been disrupted and reduced because of recent changes made by the local authority. There have been staff changes and absences which have led to the centre not meeting the needs of all families in the area.

Those of you we met enjoy coming to the centre. It offers you an opportunity to enjoy time with your children and you receive practical advice that you appreciate.

You told us that you feel safe at the centre but we found that staff did not have a clear understanding of the fire evacuation procedures, and that the entry gate and outdoor play area are unsafe. We have asked the centre to immediately tackle these issues.

The centre is not yet working effectively enough to support those of you who are interested in seeking paid work or who wish to attend training or education.

The centre is not providing enough opportunities to involve families in making decisions about the way the centre is run. There are no parents from Hillsborough on the partnership advisory group and there are no formal groups such as a parents' forum for you to get involved with. We have asked the centre to improve this so that you are given more opportunities to have your say.

We found that although the centre has all the appropriate policies in place and is keen to promote equality and diversity, it is not actively targeting the families who most need support.

The staff who work with you are dedicated to making the experience of families a good one. However, because of the staff shortages there is not enough care, guidance and support available for families. We have asked the local authority to make sure that there are enough staff so that families in most need are identified and offered the one-to-one support that they might need.

The local authority and the centre staff want to improve the work of the centre but currently we are not confident that it will be able to do so. We have recommended that the local authority monitors the work of the centre more closely and provides resources to help the centre reach realistic targets for improvement. We have also asked the local authority and health visitors to share more information with the centre and to be clear about the importance of working together.

A special 'thank you' to those of you who took the time to come in and talk to us and for letting us join you in some of your sessions. We wish you all the best for the future.

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