

Inspection report for Butterfly Children's Centre

Local authority	Cambridgeshire
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Winhills 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/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, the local authority, the children's centre manager and members of the advisory board. They met with a number of representatives of services who work through the children's centre, including health visitors and the outreach workers. Inspectors spoke to groups of parents. 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.

Information about the centre

The Butterfly Children's Centre is a phase two children's centre that was established in 2009. It operates in the Eynesbury and Priory Park wards and is based on the same site as Winhills Primary School.

The centre manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre. The advisory board reports to the local authority which is responsible for the governance of the centre. The board consists of representatives from the local authority, partner organisations, key stakeholders that work with the children's centre, and parents.

The majority of the families who use the centre are White British. A growing number of families using the centre are of mixed White Asian heritage. Data for the reach area place the user base in the bottom 40% nationally for deprivation. The children's centre has 1041 children under five in its reach area. About 10% of children and adults 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 have skills, knowledge and abilities that are in line with those expected for their age.

The centre fulfils its core purpose by offering a range of activities which include support at the local community baby clinic, an antenatal birth clinic, breastfeeding support and baby massage. The centre has links with health visitors, community midwives and speech therapists. It signposts families to a range of providers that offer adult education, volunteering opportunities and activities designed to support parents back into employment and training. The centre opens 48 weeks each year from 8.45am until 4.45pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am until 1pm on a Friday.

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

Satisfactory provision results in positive outcomes for children and families. The centre manager conveys a strong sense of purpose and direction. She demonstrates effective organisational and communication skills, valuing the work of everyone. Consequently, on a day-to-day basis, activities run smoothly. The centre is doing good work with individual families. It ensures that the various services operating from the centre are brought together to support families and their children in a timely manner. Parents feel comfortable in the centre and know they will get a warm welcome from staff. These are two examples of what families said to inspectors: 'I have a wonderful time sharing experiences with other mothers,' and, 'This is a very friendly place to be.'

Suitable procedures are in place to safeguard families, who say they feel safe at the centre and that their children are well cared for. The quality of care for families provided by the centre is good. In times of crisis, families feel well supported by the centre. The centre offers a satisfactory range of services, activities and opportunities, which meet the needs of the majority of users in the area. The parents' forum makes a positive contribution to the governance of the centre. Families using the centre and centre staff treat each other with respect and consideration. Learning and development opportunities are satisfactory. Because assessment of children's starting points in their learning and development are insufficiently clear, it is hard to measure

their progress and target resources to improve their skills.

Partnerships with the local community and other agencies are generally effective. However, links with social care services and midwives are not yet developed to deliver fully integrated provision for users. While the centre is making progress in developing its systems to collect and use centre-specific data, families' evaluations of activities and other local information are not yet used systematically to assess the needs of some target groups.

Self-evaluation accurately identifies the key priorities for improvement. The number of families accessing the centre's provision has increased during the last year. However, not enough lone parents and families from workless households use the centre's facilities.

Governance and leadership are satisfactory. Managers and staff form a committed team that is determined to improve provision and extend services to the wider community. They are appropriately focused on improving areas of weakness and gaps in provision and outcomes. The local authority is keen to support developments and monitor the outcomes for users, and there have been recent improvements in the centre's overall performance. This provides the centre with satisfactory capacity to further improve outcomes for families and children.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Collect and use available data and other local information to:
 - accurately assess the needs of those not yet engaged with the centre
 - develop the centre's provision to ensure it is well matched to the needs of all groups and the wider community.

- Engage more effectively with lone parents and families dependent on workless benefits to encourage them to use the centre's services.

- Improve the procedures for assessing the starting points of children, including those from different ethnic backgrounds and targeted groups, in order to measure their progress.

- Create stronger partnerships with social care services and midwives to enhance opportunities to improve users' outcomes.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

Health outcomes for families are satisfactory and are beginning to improve. Data supplied by the centre indicate that an average proportion of mothers, including those from targeted groups, continue to breastfeed their children until they are six to eight weeks old. This is having a positive impact and is giving babies an excellent start to life. Obesity rates in the reach area remain above average. The weekly 'Bouncers' session for children encourages physical activity at the centre and home.

A parent commented, 'Great physical activities give my child plenty of exercise.' Families, especially those referred for early intervention, benefit from appropriately integrated services to promote their well-being.

Early Years Foundation Stage data from local schools indicate that children make expected progress from their starting points in developing the skills that will help them in the future. The centre has contributed to the reduction in the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest. Playroom facilities are varied, and children enjoy their time using the many good resources available at the centre. Activities offered by the centre are popular. A parent attending the 'Mucky Pups' sessions said, 'It's a great way for my son to come and experience new art activities that I wouldn't have thought of doing at home.' Families using the centre make satisfactory progress in developing their parenting skills and demonstrate improvement in their educational and personal development.

Staff supervise children appropriately throughout the day. They ensure that parents develop sound observation skills in supervising their children. A parent attending the 'First Time Mums Group' commented, 'The safety in the home session has made me more aware of little things in order to make my house safer for me and my baby.' Regular meetings and effective communication between centre staff and partner agencies mean that some families who may be at risk of harm and children assessed under the Common Assessment Framework are closely monitored and kept safe. Case studies show positive impact and improved well-being and welfare for children on child protection plans and looked after children.

Families in workless households are very appreciative of the financial advice and guidance provided by the centre, in particular, the advice given on managing family budgets. Information on Child and Working Tax credits, as well as help provided to assist with the increasing housing needs of families, are helping improve families' economic well-being. Satisfactory numbers of adults are completing basic skills courses. A parent who successfully completed the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) course said, 'I am now able to communicate with other mothers at the centre and help my child improve his language skills.'

The centre has established its role in the community. Families make regular donations to the local children's hospice and actively participate in a broad range of fund-raising events for charities. Children's behaviour is good and they form positive relationships with each other. The parents' forum is increasing its influence and shaping services offered by the centre. For example, the 'Baby Mucky Pups' session was introduced as a result of parents' requests for an activity to develop the interaction and socialisation of babies. Young parents representation on the forum has been particularly influential in establishing of a weekly young parents drop in-group at the centre. Families using the centre including those in target groups treat each other with respect. A number of parents have progressed into volunteer work as a result of initiatives carried out by the centre.

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	3
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and 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	3

How good is the provision?

3

The centre works appropriately with other agencies to ensure assessments, such as those carried out for disabled children and those with special educational needs are robust and well informed. The use of the Common Assessment Framework is well established and effective in highlighting users who are at risk and in need of support. It offers a variety of services and activities that appropriately meet the needs of users. They include a 'Young Parents Group' and 'Pop-in and Play' sessions that provide fun and learning opportunities. A typical view expressed by parents is, 'My child is really benefiting from the social interaction with other children.'

The centre's Saturday 'Men Behaving Dadly' activities for fathers is increasing their engagement. However, the provision is not yet fully adapted to increase participation rates of target groups such as lone parents. Outreach services are suitable and targeting identified needs in the wider community. However, the centre's engagement with workless families is not yet well enough developed to sufficiently involve them in the centre's activities.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the centre meets their needs appropriately. Children behave well and follow staff instructions. They are provided with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities from birth that aptly support their development. Appropriate resources that are age-related and interesting encourage children's engagement and promote purposeful learning. For example, a parent said, 'My daughter loves the music and is now recognising songs we can sing at home.' The centre does not currently have a system to assess and measure children's progress against the developmental stages in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The centre recognises families' personal development and achievements well through celebrations of work produced by children and families.

Well-tailored support effectively improves families' well-being. Families express high levels of satisfaction with the level of care, guidance and support offered by the

centre. The open-door policy provides a listening ear to support children and families all year round. A parent, who was feeling isolated and has benefited greatly from the support and socialising at the centre, said: 'My lasting memories of the support I received are the helpful lovely people who were there for me and my family.' Speech and language specialist support provided at the centre has been effective in consistently moving referrals off support. Case studies clearly show that the centre is making a noticeable difference to vulnerable children and their families.

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

Governance and accountability arrangements provide appropriate supervision of the centre's activities. Links between strategic planning and service provision are clear. Morale is high and belief in the centre's success is evident at all levels. The centre manager consistently communicates high expectations to staff about securing improvement. Self-evaluation accurately identifies the centre's strengths and weaknesses. It has an appropriate development plan which identifies clear improvement plans. Evaluation has resulted in changes to the provision that meets the needs of most families.

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 adequate in removing barriers, and effective for children and families with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Action is now being taken to gather the data required to develop provision and increase participation of all groups. However, these actions are too recent to have had significant impact on target groups that are hard to reach.

There is a secure system to maintain and update the appropriate safeguarding arrangements. The centre's staff are suitably trained in safeguarding, and for dealing with domestic violence and working with children or adults with disabilities. 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. Appropriate vetting procedures safeguard children and adults. They ensure that only suitable people work with children and families. Criminal Record Bureau checks are accurately recorded and maintained.

Services generally deliver coordinated provision for families, which has a positive impact on their lives. Staff work effectively in different aspects of the centre's

provision, such as in reception and the playroom. Relationships between most statutory partners are increasingly clear and understood. The centre's relationship with social care services, while appropriate, is insufficiently established. Its link with midwives is not fully developed. Satisfactory outcomes and provision that engage increasing numbers of families indicate that the centre's resources are adequately managed. This represents 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	3
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	3
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

None

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Butterfly Children's Centre on 25 and 26 April 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We are very grateful to all the parents and representatives from the centre and their professional partners who took the trouble to come and tell us about the work they do. You gave us a positive picture of the centre, and what you said was very useful in helping us make our final judgements.

Sound leadership provided by the centre's leaders, coordinated teamwork of the centre's staff and professional relationship with partners are at the core of the centre's work. The workers at the centre communicate well with each other and their feedback provides a sound knowledge and understanding of the community's needs.

The centre is an inclusive and welcoming place, which is run by dedicated adults who want to serve you well. You speak highly of the centre as being a place where you feel safe, secure, supported, included and listened to. You comment on the difference that the centre has made to your confidence and achievements as well as your children's progress, development and behaviour. Comments such as: 'The centre is a great place for the children to play and develop,' and 'The staff are brilliant,' are typical of the views you communicated to us.

You and your children benefit from the satisfactory services provided by the centre. Children enjoy the physical activities as they take part in sessions such as the 'Bouncers' active indoor play sessions. You learn how to prepare nutritious meals on a budget through the healthy eating cooking groups. However, obesity in Reception-aged children remains a concern. You are supported in making your homes safe and attending training in paediatric first aid to help you gain the necessary skills in the event of your children having an accident. Those of you who are feeling isolated or finding it hard to cope report positively on how the centre has improved your confidence, self-esteem and social skills. Others of you report on how your parenting skills have improved and how you have made positive relationships. The family workers offer you good support and build positive relationships with you and your families.

Good-quality displays and resources promote children's learning well. Staff provide a suitable range of activities, which are linked to children's interests and support their social and emotional development, and communication skills. 'Pop-in and play' sessions are well attended and appreciated by you and your children. Comments such as, 'It's a great place for my son to come and experience new activities,' and 'It made me realise that healthy eating can be fun,' confirm some of the benefits you gain from attending the centre.

We have found a few areas that require improvement, and the centre's leaders are already aware of these. We are recommending that managers collect more data about different groups and develop provision to meet their needs. We have recommended that the centre makes assessments of children's starting points to show and increase the progress they make in developing new skills. We have asked managers to increase the number of lone parents and families in workless households who use the centre's services. We are also asking managers to work

more closely with midwives and social care services, to involve them more in the work of the centre.

We wish you every success for the future.

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