

Inspection report for Cottingley Children's Centre

Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	383660
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2012
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Cottingley Children's Centre Daycare 512404

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: May 2012

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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 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 one additional inspector and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the local authority, centre staff, health professionals, voluntary and statutory partner organisations, parents and the headteacher of the local primary school. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Cottingley Children's Centre is situated in the middle of a housing estate in the 10% most deprived area of South Leeds; the centre's wider reach area is within the 30% most deprived areas within the country. The reach area is predominantly White British heritage with a growing number of families from minority ethnic groups and a transient refugee and asylum seeker population. A permanent site for the Traveller community is situated close by. Unemployment in the reach area is just below the national average. The number of children aged under five years living in households dependent on workless benefits ranges between 22% and 28%. Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills and abilities that are below those typically expected for their age.

In the Cottingley estate, there are high levels of anti-social and drug-related behaviour. Reported crime levels are generally low because residents do not always report crime for fear of reprisals. Domestic violence and alcohol misuse are also issues for concern in this community and within the Upper Beeston and Cottingley Cluster of children's centres. There are 486 children aged under five years in the reach area; of these, 424 are registered at the centre. The centre is based in a single storey building and offers childcare for children from

birth and a range of family services. Self-contained baby and toddler rooms include access to a washroom, outdoor space. An inspection of the registered early years/childcare provision was carried out in October 2011 under Section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of the inspection is available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk. A large family room with an adjoining kitchen and large play area and a meeting room are available to support family services. The centre works closely with Cottingley Primary School to both plan and deliver family services including courses and groups for families in the reach area.

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 overall effectiveness of the centre is good. Both during home visits and at the centre, adults feel at ease and are receptive to the advice and guidance that they are offered by centre staff. The atmosphere at the centre is welcoming, calm and relaxing. Children enjoy the activities provided and quickly establish good relationships and bond well with staff. Activities provide parents with good opportunities to gain beneficial information and support on child development and how to care for their children. This promotes bonding between parents and children and prepares them well for entry to school. Centre staff effectively and creatively reach and engage parents and children, as a result uptake of services offered by the centre is consistently good.

Staff at the centre and local service providers offer good advice and guidance on all aspects of child development and health, and support for employment and financial issues. The centre continually develops its provision and has a good capacity to improve further as it sets realistic and challenging targets which are grounded in an accurate analysis of families' needs. These targets are used effectively to continually improve outcomes for all its users. The centre's very good connections with external agencies and service providers ensure that needs are identified and appropriate support is offered. However, although effective systems are in place to identify how users feel about the centre and what it offers, they are under-represented on the advisory board; a parents' forum is in the process of being established.

The centre has effective policies in place to ensure that users are safeguarded. All staff are well aware of procedures relating to child protection issues and are appropriately trained. Crime statistics in the area are decreasing but there is a culture of complacency within the community in regards to reporting crime. A community police officer visits the centre every six weeks. Although the centre supports and promotes this work well, leaders realise a clearer focus is required to explore more creative ways of improving the trust of the community and relationships with the police service.

The inclusion of all children and families is central to the vision of the centre manager and staff team. The centre is inclusive and engages fathers, ethnic minorities and members of the Traveller community well. English classes are available for those who speak English as an additional language. However, information about the services available at the centre is not always easily available to those who have limited spoken English.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Encourage more user participation on the advisory board and establish a parent's forum to secure more user involvement in the governance of the centre.
- Increase opportunities for children and parents to develop trusting relationships with the local police and services offered in order to support a reduction in crime levels in the area.
- Extend support for adults for whom English is an additional language.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Supporting children's health is central to the purpose of the centre and the focus of the activities and courses that take place. The number of obese children in Reception classes in the area is high and the prevalence of obesity increases as children get older. The centre works tirelessly and conducts activities that have positively contributed to reducing obesity. These include, 'Stay and Play', 'HENRY' (health, exercise and nutrition for the really young), a 'Cooking on a Budget' course delivered at a local college and a 'Fresh and Fruity Stall' that provides reasonably priced fruit and vegetables. Parents and children learn about the importance of exercise through 'Moving Together' which is particularly well-attended and 'HENRY' which is very much enjoyed. One attendee of 'HENRY' commented that 'The course helped me to meet others and talk about positive and negative things. It gave me the encouragement that I can do it.' Another parent affirmed that 'It gave me ideas to try things differently.' Breastfeeding is promoted well through a 'Baby café' and a local parent acts as a 'Bosom Buddy' to offer advice and support to mothers wishing to breastfeed. As a result, the number of mothers who breastfeed their babies is high and well above the national

average. The centre has a named health visitor that advises mothers about all aspects of breastfeeding and weaning. In addition, immunisation rates have increased in the reach area. 'New Lives', a weekly support group for expectant parents and parents with babies up to one year of age, is well attended with a significant percentage of minority ethnic, teenage parents and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families attending. In addition, the distribution of free vitamins and meningitis awareness events are all examples of the centre's drive to promote health for young families.

The centre offers a number of services that are having a positive impact on promoting emotional well-being and resilience among families experiencing crisis. This includes individual support for adults struggling with addictions. For example, one mother was very complimentary about the support that she received while her partner was in rehabilitation. The centre promotes smoking cessation through leaflets and signposting. A counselling service provides valuable support currently for at least four adults and there is a growing waiting list for this service due to its success.

Children at the centre acquire good foundations in literacy, numeracy and social skills in relation to their starting points. They enter the local schools well prepared in relation to their personal, social and emotional development and make accelerated progress once they are in school. Disabled children and those with special educational needs receive good support through a designated special educational needs coordinator that arranges multi-agency meetings and provides valuable guidance and support to parents and teachers. A speech and language therapist assesses children with identified needs and works collaboratively with parents and teachers to ensure consistent support. Effective signposting to other agencies coupled with a well-attended 'Chatterbox' group, aimed at developing children's speech and language skills, leads to very good outcomes.

The centre offers a number of opportunities for parents to enhance their parenting skills. These include regular parenting classes and advice given at play and movement sessions. Babies and toddlers enjoy their time at the centre, behave well and are always carefully supervised by carers and staff. The centre has a 'Baby Boutique' that offers good quality used baby clothes at much reduced prices. It also lends toys and literacy/numeracy activity bags to parents. Many parents view these as essential to assisting them support, educate and entertain their children.

The centre's policies and procedures are robust and ensure that children are safe and protected. During home visits, 'Home Safety' packs are distributed and workers advocate the use of smoke detectors in the home. Domestic Violence awareness is a key priority for all staff. As a result, users know who to turn to and receive the support they need. Similarly, the centre sees the support of vulnerable and looked after children as a priority and staff use the Common Assessment Framework process (CAF) well to support these families.

The centre engages parents well. For example, parents that are not working are introduced to an assigned Jobcentre advisor and offered valuable advice on benefits and work. As a result of attending a varied range of training opportunities, some users have gone on to further education and purposeful employment and are improving their economic stability and independence.

Service users have plenty of opportunities to express their views through a 'Question of the Month', regular satisfaction surveys and informal discussions with staff and providers. The centre is in the process of introducing a parents' forum to give users of the centre more opportunities to contribute to decision making and involvement in the governance of the centre and this has yet to be established.

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	2
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 effectively assesses the needs of children and their parents. Staff work diligently to draw in potential users and are persistent with those that are hard-to-reach. The centre works collaboratively with health sector workers who ensure that families in the area, especially those in need, are aware of the services that the centre has to offer. The centre employs the services of the local authority's language service to interpret and translate for users who speak English as an additional language. However, a full range of strategies has not been fully explored to enable information to be shared more easily about the services available at the centre.

The centre has a good range of well-attended sessions and activities that support children's enjoyment and development. Parents enjoy these activities and acquire the necessary skills to support their children's learning and development. The early years teacher and childcare staff enjoy excellent relationships with children and parents at the centre. The childcare provided effectively supports children's confidence and progress towards the early learning goals. This prepares them well for the next step in their learning.

Sessions provided by the centre are consistently well attended and of good quality. Staff and outreach workers provide one-to-one family support which enhances the quality of care provided even further. The centre's extensive links with statutory and voluntary service providers, such as the Jobcentre and the Citizen's Advice Bureau enable families to access targeted support and advice on housing, benefits and debt. The centre quickly identifies needs and offers a varied range of training opportunities to parents including the delivery of a range of accredited and non-accredited courses. These include Open University 'Taster' courses facilitated at the local primary school; family learning courses run from the centre and an 'English for Speakers of Other Languages' (ESOL) course at the local college. This has led to increased economic stability and independence for some.

The centre provides good support for families in need or in times of crisis. Centre staff take an active role in supporting children subject to child protection plans and those who are looked after. Parents are very positive about the support that they receive. For example, one parent commented, 'Staff have really been there for me, fantastic, brilliant.'

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	2
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

Leadership and management of the centre are good. The centre is good at identifying need and adjusting services accordingly. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and all required policies and procedures are in place. Staff are suitably trained in child protection issues, all are suitable to work with children and arrangements for recruitment are robust. Staff work closely with families both in the centre and at home. As a result, they gain a clear insight into the needs of users and are well placed to identify when early intervention is required. Outreach workers and centre staff have developed very good relationships with other agencies and consequently users are signposted to agencies swiftly and effectively.

The centre promotes equality and an appreciation of diversity effectively. All members of the community feel welcome at the centre and outreach workers work very hard to engage disabled children and families and those with special educational needs, minority ethnic families and members of the Traveller, Roma and Gypsy communities. Family support workers accompany those whose circumstances make them vulnerable or are not fluent in English to centre activities until they are ready to attend on their own. Various cultural displays such as information on Sikhism and Travellers are prominent within the centre. These displays help centre users appreciate cultural diversity and stimulate interest and discussion.

Clear lines of management at the centre ensure that it runs smoothly and that the needs of users are met well. Regular advisory board and staff meetings ensure that provision is of a high standard and that a wide range of needs are met. The centre makes good use of data to evaluate the quality of its provision and to amend its services according to the needs of centre users. It provides good value for money through a good range of services that are very well-attended. It evaluates the services provided and the impact on families in the reach of the centre well. Parental engagement is integral to the services provided and the centre carefully considers the comments and recommendations of those that use the centre to inform their own evaluations of the work of the centre.

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 secures 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 reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision.	2

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

The most recent inspection of the childcare provision at the centre took place on 17 October 2011; provision was graded as good. Inspectors discussed findings regarding the Early Years Foundation Stage with the lead inspector who carried out the inspection of Cottingley Primary School on 30 April – 1 May 2012.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Cottingley Children's Centre on 1 and 2 May 2012. We judged the centre to be good overall.

Much of our time at the centre was spent observing sessions and speaking to centre staff. We also spoke to representatives of agencies connected to your centre about the work that it does and how it signposts families to relevant agencies. We greatly appreciated the opportunity to speak with many of you as this, more than anything else, gave us a keen insight into the workings of the centre.

As you know, the main aim of your centre is to support families with young children. The centre does this well through a good range of activities and by having professional staff. It supports parents well in supporting their children from birth upwards. It is effective in the ways that it promotes health during pregnancy, breastfeeding and child development. Centre staff also work hard to help you ensure that you provide a safe environment for your children at home.

We found that the centre is run well; that you enjoy good relationships with the staff and that you are guided and signposted well to other agencies that can support you. We were especially impressed with the relationships that exist between centre staff and the many agencies that are attached to it. Staff at the centre know exactly which services are

available and how to access them. As a result, they are well placed to support you whenever you need assistance.

We have identified aspects of work that the centre can address to improve the centre further. Although you have plenty of opportunities to express your views and your opinions are valued, we have asked the centre to encourage your participation in the governance of the centre more formally through involvement in the advisory board and a parent's forum. Crime statistics in the area are decreasing but there is still some work to be done and we have asked the centre to increase opportunities for children and parents to form trusting relationships with the police and the services they offer. The centre accesses the services of the local authority's language support team to support those of you who are not fluent in English. Staff communicate as best as they can even when this is difficult. We have asked the centre to explore more ways to improve communication with users that have language barriers so that the many services that the centre has to offer can be accessed more freely.

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