

Inspection report for Trinity Children's Centre

Local authority	Norfolk
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Reporting inspector	Julie Winyard HMI

Centre leader	Julie Church
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Centre address	Martham Primary and Nursery School Black Street Norfolk NR29 4PR
Telephone number	01493 740242
Fax number	01493 740350
Email address	all@trinitychildrenscentre.org

Linked school if applicable	Martham Primary School Academy Trust
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Trinity Day 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.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

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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.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the chair of the advisory board, the Chair of the Governing Body, the centre coordinator, the headteacher of the lead partner school, family support workers and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors also met with users of services, health professionals, a representative from North Walsham Jobcentre Plus, the area manager for Child Minding Matters, a childminder, a representative from Norfolk Library Services and the nursery teacher.

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

Information about the centre

Trinity Children's Centre is a purpose-built phase two centre in the grounds of Martham Primary School Academy Trust which is its lead partner. It was designated in March 2008 and serves a rural area north of Great Yarmouth. The school nursery is co-located with the Trinity Day Nursery and there are out-of-school-hours clubs providing integrated childcare and learning for 0–11-year-olds. The centre acts as a hub, and venues across the reach area have been established to deliver services. These venues include local schools and village halls, social clubs and youth clubs. There are seven local primary schools, eight pre-schools, one high school and network and non-network childminders within the reach area. The centre fulfils its core purpose by offering a range of services for families, including all-year-round childcare, by working with other partner organisations and by referring parents and children to other specialist providers.

The reach area covers 11 lower layer super output areas in the four electoral wards of East Flegg, West Flegg, Fleggburgh and Ormesby. Eighteen per cent of children live in the 30% most disadvantaged area. There are 674 children aged under five

within the reach area. The very large majority of children are of White British heritage.

Across the reach area, children enter early years provision with skills, knowledge and abilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Data indicate that 15% of children live in workless households receiving working tax credits and that 9% of parents in the area are lone parents.

Following the 2012 reorganisation of children’s centres in Norfolk, Martham Primary School Academy Trust was awarded a four-year contract to continue as lead partner of and to govern the children’s centre. The advisory board consists of partner agencies and representatives from the governing body of the lead school.

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 Trinity Children’s Centre makes good provision for the needs of families with children under five in the reach area which results in good outcomes for all users engaged with the centre. The centre reaches the large majority of those eligible for services across a very rural area where transport can be a barrier to accessing provision. When the centre was designated in 2008, there were virtually no additional activities for young children prior to starting nursery or school; now there are opportunities in most of the villages within the reach area for children to ‘play to learn’. This is due to the good leadership of the centre coordinator who is determined to ensure children and their families get the best possible opportunities to learn, grow and thrive within their communities. In the words of one user, ‘Without the help given by the staff at Trinity, I am sure we would still be searching for help.

An outstanding feature is the centre’s commitment to provide bespoke services to those who are unable to attend at the centre. This results in outstanding safety for the most vulnerable users who feel they can confide freely in the well-trained family support worker designated to them. Users also receive outstanding care, guidance and support through this service. Safeguarding processes and procedures within the centre and at all satellite venues are also outstanding. Risk assessments are

extensive and thorough.

The centre has a good capacity to make further improvement. The centre coordinator provides good leadership. The governors of the lead partner school have provided good oversight of the development and work of the centre, and the headteacher takes a very active role in monitoring the day-to-day work of the centre and the centre coordinator. The finance committee of the governing body ensures that resources are used well and that best value principles are adhered to at all times. As a result, the centre provides good value for money. There is a good range of partners on the advisory board. However, partners do not attend meetings regularly and appear unclear about their role and responsibilities towards the centre and how these relate to those of the school's governing body. Although health professionals deliver a range of successful and well-thought-of services at the centre, there is a lack of clarity from a strategic level about what information they can share with the centre. Although welcome packs are given to families by health visitors on the post-birth visit, registration forms for the centre are not completed. Childminders have access to the centre's services but are not always encouraged to make best use of what is on offer.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve partnerships across the reach area by ensuring that:
 - all partners understand the role, responsibilities and powers of the advisory board and its relationship to the governing body of the lead partner school
 - the health service is fully engaged with the children's centre at a strategic level so that health professionals have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in sharing information and registering all families in the children's centre's reach area
 - childminders are fully involved with the children's centre and supported through the centre's services.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Due to the good courses offered by the centre, families in the reach area have good health outcomes. For example, the baby café offers outstanding support for mothers with breastfeeding. This has resulted in a rising trend in those breastfeeding from birth and continuing beyond the first six weeks. Although the percentage of obese children in Reception classes is above the Norfolk and national levels, this is reducing due to specific courses run at the centre and on-going discussion with users during groups that emphasise the need for a healthy diet. The children's centre has also been instrumental in promoting exercise and outdoor activity, for example, through the refurbishment of community play areas. Good support is given to those users who wish to give up smoking. Users referred to the children's centre with postnatal

depression say that the support is very effective and that courses like baby massage have helped them to build emotional bonds with their children. There are outstanding outcomes for children's health in the day nursery.

Users of children's centre services say they feel exceptionally safe within the building and when they attend groups at satellite centres because everyone is so welcoming and there is no bullying of any kind. The centre uses its hardship fund to support families who need new and safer equipment in their homes. There are low rates of admissions of children under five to accident and emergency departments because all staff are highly trained and vigilant in identifying children who could be at risk and in using support systems to ensure children are safeguarded. There is excellent knowledge and understanding of what level of support is most appropriate for children whose circumstances make them vulnerable and, as a result, no cases de-escalated from child protection or child in need have had to be referred back to social care. Family support workers are confident in using the Common Assessment Framework, and users find this brings the support they need from a range of professionals. Disabled children and those with special educational needs feel safe at the centre. They make good progress due to the trained portage worker and interventions by special educational needs coordinators.

Outcomes for children in the reach area at the end of Reception are above those for the rest of Norfolk, representing good progress from their starting points. There has been a rising trend in achievement thanks to the good support for early years teachers and professionals through the children's centre network. The gap between the achievement of vulnerable and higher-achieving children has narrowed and is smaller than the Norfolk average. In most cases, children who have attended the children's centre achieve better than their peers. Fathers feel much more confident in their parenting skills through attending the 'Saturdads' group. For one father, it was the first time he had taken lone responsibility for his baby. All adult users who engage in courses complete the course and their achievements are celebrated through regular newsletters, the local press and at the end of a course. Improving reading is a priority, and the 'Bookstart' programme has had a significant impact on increasing the use of local libraries. For example, at the summer holiday reading challenge, 300 children registered for the challenge. Prior to this children's centre initiative, there were usually 100 registrations. Parenting courses have had a positive impact on children's behaviour at the centre, its satellite venues and at home. The centre's focus on bespoke programmes has successfully brokered specialist behaviour support for families which has enabled effective diagnosis of, and action plans to improve behaviour. All users say they are confident to give their views and the centre takes notice of these. Users who adopt self-evaluation systems say how useful these are in helping them to diagnose, face up to and address problems in their lives by making positive choices.

The children's centre encourages volunteering as a way back into work, and this has a positive impact on adult users' confidence and ability to plan their future. For example, one parent has been enabled to go back to full-time teaching following a 12-year break. Bespoke courses organised in partnership with the local further

education college have successful outcomes for those who need this approach. Some users have gone on to full-time employment after they have completed their training. There is good use of the centre's community computers for job searches, and Jobcentre Plus always has clients at its weekly drop-in sessions. Users say good advice is available regarding benefits and for managing their family finances.

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	1
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 children's centre is persistent in reaching out to families within the reach area and carries out a regular programme of cold calling. This enables family support workers to contact a wide range of potential users, helping them to access services in their part of the reach area. The hardship grant is used to support families particularly with transport. It is also used effectively in situations of crisis like domestic violence. Users' evaluations indicate that there is good support for families to improve their children's behaviour, sleep and eating patterns, and the children's centre is very supportive in helping parents apply for funding for two-year-olds to attend nursery. The pre- and postnatal fathers' groups are very well attended. One father explained how this enabled him to support his partner following a difficult birth. The children's centre adjusts its opening hours on weekends and in the evening to accommodate target groups, including fathers. The children's centre knows its reach area very well and makes good use of voluntary organisations, such as Home-Start, to support outreach to users. The children's centre and lead partner school have influenced improvement in early years practice across the reach area through courses for early years practitioners. However, the centre recognises there is more to do to encourage childminders to engage with its services. Start-up funding has been used successfully to support schools in setting up early years activity groups. This has improved access to services in a rural area. Users are involved in making story sacks which are shared with other users. These are proving very popular.

There is excellent quality childcare at the children’s centre day nursery. The family support coordinator is highly skilled at the assessment process. This ensures that families receive the most appropriate guidance and interventions so the needs of the most vulnerable families are met. For example, parenting programmes are delivered one-to-one by family support workers in users’ homes where this is the most appropriate approach. Family support workers also model how to play with children and support parents in engaging with their children during home visits. Welcome packs are tailored to the needs of each family. Excellent assessment systems are used to empower users to evaluate their own progress towards the goals they have set for themselves supported by well-trained and well-informed family support workers. As a result, users are confident to approach the children’s centre when they need support and guidance. Users are beginning to develop their own networks for self-help supported by the children’s 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	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	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

There is good and regular professional supervision for all children’s centre staff. There is good governance by the lead-partner board of governors in particular in financial support. The governing body has recently reviewed its terms of reference for all committees, and the children’s centre is included as a key monitoring focus in all committee meetings. The headteacher of the lead partner school meets with the children’s centre coordinator weekly to discuss progress with current priorities including the centre development plan.

The centre’s self-evaluation provides an accurate analysis of the centre’s strengths and areas of development and identifies five appropriate priorities which reflect the needs of the reach area. Evaluations from users indicate that their needs are fully met and they feel able to contribute to further developments. Although there is no formal parents’ forum, (one is being set up from September) the centre takes every opportunity to consult users to find out what their needs are. For example, users’ views have influenced the formation of a music group which is to start in September. Family support workers always ask parents what services they would like and this has resulted in a number of play-to-learn sessions being set up across the area.

The centre coordinator is passionate about meeting the needs of users and has high

expectations of all staff. Resources are used well to meet the needs of families, and the centre coordinator is creative and innovative in her use of a range of funding and expertise within the community to support services. There is a clear vision for the centre which is communicated effectively and understood by all.

The centre has developed good partnerships at grass-roots level with all key partners. However, not all partners are fully engaged at a strategic level and this is reflected in inconsistencies in information sharing and in the lack of clarity about the role and responsibilities of the advisory board.

There is no discrimination of any kind at the children's centre and the high commitment to inclusive practice is demonstrated by resources that reflect the different cultures within the community. Equality impact assessments are used well in planning and evaluation, and the centre welcomes volunteers with disabilities and special educational needs who make a good contribution to their work. The Christmas event held at the centre brings the whole community together to celebrate children's centre services.

Highly robust safeguarding systems and procedures underpin the safety of all users including children in the day nursery. For example, staff are trained in conflict management and peer coaching. All staff and users know whom to approach if there is a safeguarding concern. The weekly briefing for staff starts with a focus on safeguarding. There are outstanding and highly robust systems for ensuring data are held securely, and chronologies and case summaries mirror best social care practice. There are excellent protocols for sharing information with social care services.

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	1
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	2

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

Inspectors took into account the inspection report for the day nursery run by the children's centre which judged this provision to be outstanding in all aspects.

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 Trinity Children's Centre on 8–9 August 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

My colleague and I very much enjoyed our visit to your children's centre and would like to thank all of you who very kindly gave your time to come and speak to us so that we could get a clear picture of how well your centre recognises and caters for your needs.

We enjoyed working with the centre coordinator and think that she provides a good lead for the centre. She is passionate about ensuring that the services provided by the centre meet your needs and has good systems in place to find out what you think works well and what needs to be changed.

It is wonderful to see how well professionals from all agencies work together to ensure the best outcomes for everyone. The outstanding collaboration between all those who ensure you are kept safe is highly effective at ensuring you receive help in a sensitive as well as a supportive manner. We were very impressed with how you work towards goals that you set for yourselves with the help of the family support workers. You told us how much you enjoy the baby café and how pleased you are that the midwife is there to carry out checks so you do not have to make additional journeys from home. You also appreciate the health visitor drop-in sessions. However, we were disappointed that midwives and health visitors are not working with the centre as effectively as they could. This is due to lack of clear guidance from managers within the health authority and we have asked the centre to work with the health service to improve this aspect of their work. We think it will help the centre to reach even more people in the area. We think the centre could also strengthen the role of the advisory board so that all the partner agencies who belong to this group know exactly what is expected of them and how they can help the centre become even better.

You are very fortunate to have good nursery and early years provision across the area. It is particularly good that, through the groups for very young children and the parenting courses, the centre is contributing successfully to closing the gap between those whose circumstances make them vulnerable and other children. The headteacher at Martham has found out that the children of families who receive support from the children's centre achieve better at school than other children. We would like to see childminders across the area using the centre more, getting together for courses and sharing planning and activities that help children develop and learn well.

You told us that you like all the courses and groups the children's centre runs and that you are very pleased you can also attend groups nearer to home. The centre has worked very hard to help schools across the area set up their own group with support from the family support workers.

The centre ensures that you and your children are very safe and has good procedures to ensure that any concerns are dealt with effectively.

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