

Inspection report for Priory, Ainthorpe and Bricknell Children's Centre

Local authority	Kingston upon Hull, City of
Inspection number	407113
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Date of previous inspection	12 May 2011
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Linked school if applicable	Priory Primary School 117810 Ainthorpe Primary School 117712 Bricknell Primary School 117717
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Butterflies Pre-School & Priory Kids EY374255 Teeny Tots EY282342 Roundabout EY280773 School's Out EY153023

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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 two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two early years inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, centre staff and representatives from professional partnerships, the advisory board and the local authority. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Priory Children's Centre, Ainthorpe Children's Centre and Bricknell Children's Centre merged in April 2012 to create the new Priory, Ainthorpe and Bricknell Children's Centre. The centre has one overall centre leader who was previously the centre leader for Bricknell Children's Centre. Priory Children's Centre was previously inspected in May 2011 as a phase two stand-alone centre and was judged to be inadequate. The three centres are located in a geographical triangle and are all situated in the grounds of primary schools in the west area of Hull, close to the city centre. A wide range of services are provided to families in the area from all three sites to meet all elements of the core purpose for children's centres. The area has good transport links to and from the city centre.

There are 2120 children under five years of age living in the reach area and 16.3% of these children are living in households dependent on workless benefits. The area is made up of a range of rented council housing, privately rented homes and privately owned homes. Approximately 28.3% of children under five years of age are living in one of the 12-30% most deprived areas in the county with the remaining majority living in one of the 70% least deprived areas in the country. The vast majority of families are of White British heritage with approximately 13.5% of families from minority ethnic groups including Polish communities. For some of these families English is an additional language. The majority of families living in the area are in employment; however, some families face issues of unemployment, debt, drug and alcohol misuse, domestic violence and crime.

Some children enter early years provision with skills below those typically expected particularly in relation to communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. On average, 92% of all three- and four-year-old children are accessing their early education entitlement. The linked early years provisions and primary schools are subject to separate inspection arrangements. The reports of these inspections are available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The centre is governed by the local authority and has an established advisory board made up of representatives from the local community, parents and partner professionals and a parents forum.

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

2

Main findings

Priory, Ainthorpe and Bricknell Children's Centre is satisfactory overall with good leadership and management and good capacity for sustained improvement. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection of Priory Children's Centre, prior to the three centres amalgamating, when it was judged to be inadequate. The action plan devised was thorough and ensured the centre and strategic managers addressed all the identified issues. The decision taken by the local authority to merge the three centres is recent and the centre leader has only been in post for four months. As a result, it is too early for the centre to fully demonstrate the long term impact of provision on all outcomes for children and families across the entire reach area. However, evaluation of all the centre services is now firmly embedded among all staff and partners. User views and data are thoroughly collated and analysed. Consequently, the centre leader has swiftly identified the centre's areas for development and with the robust support and challenge of parents, staff, partners and the advisory board, is successfully addressing these with vigour. The centre has a sufficient understanding of the needs of families in the community. In addition, the range of services provided generally matches their needs and is of sound quality. The centre has successfully engaged with the majority of families from key target groups and those with

circumstances that make them most vulnerable. Services are well used and sustainable ensuring good value for money.

Families using the centre receive good tailored support and guidance particularly in times of crisis from caring, approachable and dedicated staff. Policies and procedures to ensure children and their families are safeguarded and their welfare promoted are highly effective. The centre adequately promotes equality and diversity and the inclusion of children and families. Most families using the centre express their views and contribute to the decision making and governance of the centre well. Attendance and course completion rates in services vary between areas but are at present satisfactory and improving. However, currently only a minority of families are accessing training, adult learning and further education. Despite a range of services provided to promote healthy outcomes in families, breastfeeding rates, the number of children who are obese and the number of parents who continue to smoke during pregnancy and when their baby is born are higher than the national average.

Almost all three- and four-year-olds are accessing the generally good quality early years provision in the area and the majority of children achieve a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Despite this, for some children the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest is widening as not enough of these children are achieving a good level of development. Knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage is not consistently embedded across the centre's staff and in all play and learning opportunities. In addition, children's and adults' learning and progress are not always rigorously monitored to fully demonstrate their achievement and improved outcomes.

Due to the strong leadership and management, the determination and tenacity of centre staff and the advisory board, effective partnership working and the combined ownership and responsibility for improving the service the centre's capacity to improve is good. This leads to satisfactory and rapidly improving provision and outcomes.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Implement strategies to contribute to reducing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest and ensure more children are ready for school by:
 - improving staff's knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure all children's centre provision is of a good quality
 - better informing and enabling parents to support their children's learning at home
 - rigorously monitoring and supporting children's progress.

- In partnership with other agencies contribute to improving the health of more children and families and build on best practice to further improve outcomes in relation to

increasing breastfeeding rates and decreasing the number of parents smoking at birth and the number of children who are obese.

- Enable more families, particularly those from key target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support, to improve their economic and social well-being by:
 - providing more opportunities for them to be involved in training, adult learning and further education and ensure their progress is rigorously monitored.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

Staff work well with other partners to support those who are subject to a child protection plan, those involved with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes, and looked after children following any referrals to the centre services. There is good evidence to demonstrate improved outcomes for these children. Parents are learning how to keep their families safer and prevent fires and accidents in the home and children behave safely.

The centre successfully supports and encourages families to make a positive contribution to shaping provision and improving outcomes for families. This is achieved through regular and meaningful evaluations, feedback exercises and their membership on the advisory board and parents group. The centre also has a strong and developing volunteer programme which provides good training and development opportunities to those on the programme to improve their economic and social well-being. However, only a minority of adults are accessing adult learning and further education opportunities and processes for monitoring and demonstrating their progress are not yet fully developed.

Despite a good range of services and professional support provided by centre staff and partners to expectant and new mothers, the number of mothers who breastfeed their babies fluctuates but is at present lower than the national average of 47% at approximately 30%. In addition, the number of mothers smoking during pregnancy is higher than the national average of 13.4% at approximately 22%. The centre appropriately promotes healthy lifestyles to families and some families are accessing this provision and their outcomes are improving. However, obesity levels in children at Reception Year remain high, fluctuating across the area from 8.5% to 12.1% compared to the national average of 9.4%. There is a good uptake of childhood immunisations and the majority of families are engaged with appropriate health services. Parents state they are improving their parenting skills through services provided, for example 'Baby Massage', 'Babbling Babies' and 'Chuckling Cherubs'.

Some centre staff are still in the early stages of embedding their understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has an impact on the quality of the provision for children and the support that staff are able to provide to parents to improve their child's learning at home. Arrangements are in place with early years providers and some schools to support children and their families during times of transitions and ensure the continuity of their care,

learning and development. As a result, some children are well prepared for school and some make good progress from their starting points. However, some children achieve less well than others, particularly those with circumstances that make them most vulnerable and this gap is widening.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	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

Families using the centre state they feel safe and welcome and are satisfied with the services and activities on offer. As one parent summarised, 'It's a safe place to be and welcoming. They are always pleased to see you'. Families particularly value the programme of activities provided during the school holidays as their older children are also welcome to attend. For example, the 'Family Fun Days' and 'Teddy Bears Picnic', all of which are well attended by a good range of families from the community.

The centre is developing as the hub of an extremely large community. Evidence shows that many more families are comfortable to drop into their local centres. They access a wide range of good quality information, advice and guidance which is appropriately tailored to their individual needs. Those facing times of crisis and extremely stressful situations are particularly well supported by able, caring and dedicated staff. Home visits and ongoing one-to-one support are provided to those families identified by the centre as in most need of intervention and support. This is supported by the following comments from parents; 'The centres have been a lifesaver'; 'The centre is brilliant and has done me the world of good', and, 'I would recommend the children's centre, it helps change lives. I would not want to go back to where I was a few years ago'.

Assessment is used to ensure that activities and services generally meet the needs of the community and the quality and range of services offered are satisfactory overall. Outreach work is undertaken to promote the engagement of the wider community who are not

currently accessing centre services. The centre provides crèche facilities wherever possible to enable more families to access their services which are valued by users.

The centre is raising the aspirations of those families in the area who are accessing adult learning, training and the volunteer programme to develop their employability skills. However, their progress is not rigorously monitored to demonstrate accomplishment, particularly in the long term. In addition, too few are accessing learning and development opportunities to enable them to achieve personally and educationally. Provision to help children to learn and develop is at least satisfactory. Children are engaged in their play and learning and behave well.

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?

2

Staff and partners value the strong leadership and direction provided by the new centre leader. They consider that they are extremely well supported. They state they 'feel valued', 'are part of team', and that 'the centre leader motivates staff'. The centre leader is committed to the professional development of the team and staff morale is high. The centre leader and advisory board have a thorough understanding of the centre's performance and what it needs to do to improve. Self-evaluation correctly identified strengths, area for development and sets clear priorities that link back to strategic planning. Regular evaluations and data analysis are embedded among all staff and many partners. Leaders are appropriately challenged and held to account by the local authority and dedicated and passionate advisory board members who also provide the centre with good support.

Strong partnerships are established with a good range of agencies and this is developing best practice and ensuring services are cohesive. Very effective joint working between the centre, partners and families ensures that children with circumstances that make them vulnerable swiftly receive the intervention and support they need. Members of the parents group and families in general feel their views are listened to and acted on and they contribute positively to shaping services and improving the centre's performance.

Good safeguarding arrangements are in place. The centre ensures that all those who may have unsupervised access to children are safe and suitable. Staff receive good quality up-to-date training and professional supervision to enable them to carry out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and their families. The good health and

safety of users and staff is a key priority for the centre and risks are thoroughly assessed and minimised accordingly.

Those accessing services reflect the diverse community the centre serves although this is not always reflected in the resources such as signage and posters. The centre promotes inclusive practice well and a sound proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs are accessing services and receiving support through the centre. However, the achievement gap between some of the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest is currently widening. The centre fulfils its statutory duties for equality and diversity.

The centre is well utilised by a good proportion of families and a wide range of partners leading to rapidly improving outcomes for many families. Staff are well deployed and resources and services are adapted to meet the changing needs of families. The centre ensures services are sustainable and is generating income from private providers to subsidise their targeted services. In addition, the centre effectively accesses funding streams and works with voluntary organisations to further meet the needs of users. This ensures good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management:

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	2
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which 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	3
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 findings of the most recent inspections of Priory Children's Centre, all linked early years provision and co-located primary schools for all three sites were used to inform the judgements made during this inspection.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the newly merged Priory, Ainthorpe and Bricknell Children's Centre on 8 and 9 August 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall. It has made significant improvements since the previous inspection of Priory Children's Centre in May 2011 when it was judged inadequate. Your centre has robust leadership and management and good capacity for sustained improvement leading to satisfactory but rapidly improving provision and outcomes.

Thank you to those of you who gave your time to share your views of the centre with us. Many of you told us you feel welcome and safe at the centre. As one of you summarised, 'it's a safe place to be and welcoming. They are always pleased to see you'. Like you, we found your centre to be welcoming and friendly.

You are satisfied with the services and enjoy your time at the centre. Overall, a good proportion of you are engaged in the centre although this does vary across areas and regular attendance and course completion rates do fluctuate. You particularly value the programme of activities provided during the school holidays where your older children are also welcome to attend. For example, the fun days which are well attended by families from the community. You also value the crèche facilities that enable you to attend some services and courses.

Many of your children are achieving a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, some of the lowest achieving children are in comparison performing less well. Your centre has been asked to address this through improving their activities for children, developing staff's understanding and also helping you as parents to fully support your child's learning and development at home. Those of you who are volunteers at the centre and those accessing adult education and training are developing your employability skills appropriately. However, not enough of you are accessing these opportunities and your centre has been asked to improve this.

A good proportion of you are accessing a range of appropriate health services and activities and some of your families are taking up healthier lifestyles. However, the number of mothers in your area breastfeeding their babies has decreased recently and is much lower than the national average and too many parents smoke during pregnancy and when baby is born. In addition, obesity levels in children in Reception Year at school are also high. Your centre and partners have been asked to address this by building on best practice.

You are well supported when facing times of crisis and stressful situations. Those of you with circumstances that make you most vulnerable receive home visits and one-to-one support which you value. As some of you told us; 'The centres have been a lifesaver'; 'the centre is brilliant and has done me the world of good', and, 'I would recommend the children's centre, it helps change lives. I would not want to go back to where I was a few years ago'.

You stated that you feel listened to and have a good range of opportunities to contribute your views, including through the parents group and parent chair and vice-chair of the advisory board. Your views are used effectively by the centre to make sure services and activities provided are what families in your community need and want most.

The new centre leader who was appointed in April this year to lead the three merged children's centres, has a very good understanding of how your centre can be even better. With the support of parents, the very capable advisory board, local authority managers and centre staff significant improvements have already been made. Plans for the future are well-targeted and your centre has a good ability to improve the provision and outcomes overall based on what it has accomplished so far. We wish you all the very best for the future.

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