

Inspection report for Selby South Children's Centre

Local authority	North Yorkshire
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Inspection dates	19–20 September 2012
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	121444 Barwic Parade 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.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with parents and users of the service, centre staff, managers, local authority representatives and partner agencies. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Selby South Children's Centre is a phase one centre designated for the full core offer in 2009. The centre is located on a large housing estate and is based on the same site as Barwic Parade Primary School on the eastern edge of Selby. Bright Start Day Nursery based at Selby College provides designated off-site day-care provision. The centre offers targeted and universal services to children from birth to four years-of-age and their families within the reach area that includes 11 primary schools.

The centre is managed by the local authority through the Integrated Services Manager who manages five other children's centres. The day-to-day management is provided by a dedicated Service Centre Manager who is assisted by two Parent Support Advisors, two early years workers and two administrators. Governance arrangements are the responsibility of the local authority supported by a steering group with representatives from parents, partner agencies including health, social care, education and local voluntary and community groups.

By September 2012 Selby South Children's centre reach area had 1,295 children. The centre serves a community where most families live in an area ranked in the middle of the deprivation indicators. The reach area includes 220 children living in workless households. The main income for the reach area is from retail and business opportunities in Selby, Leeds, Wakefield and York. The area also encompasses a number of villages and remote hamlets where farming provides the main employment. The ethnicity of the area is predominately White British. A small number of parents from other nationalities access the centre.

Evidence indicates that the skills and knowledge with which children enter early years provision are in line with those expected for their age and with local authority averages. The centre's core purpose includes services delivered from the centre and outreach locations by the children's-centre workers and other partners including health services, family support, parent and child activities, targeted support for vulnerable families and support for adult learning and employability.

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

Selby South Children's Centre is a good centre with good services and provision. It has built good partnerships with a wide range of settings and these are now well established and are effectively meeting the needs of families in the area including the most isolated and vulnerable. It promotes the learning, development and enjoyment of all its users.

Families feel very safe in the centre and contribute well to their own safety by effective risk assessments. The centre staff know the families and the area very well, and in the areas of highest deprivation the centre is accessed by the majority of eligible families.

The centre works effectively with its health partners to promote healthy life styles. However, some challenges remain in ensuring up to date health data support the planning and delivery of services to improve health outcomes for all users, particularly for the more disadvantaged.

Families thoroughly enjoy the activities offered by the centre, especially the good opportunities to play, learn and have fun together. Children make good progress with their speech and language.

Families are being well supported to improve their economic well-being through regular debt, housing and financial advice. The involvement of volunteers is developing and well supported by the centre. Volunteers go onto engage in further training and some have gone on to find employment. Users have a good range of learning opportunities to enhance their employment prospects and economic well-being.

The steering group provides effective governance. It is currently being reorganised to ensure best use of expertise across the wider Selby area. The good leadership and management of the centre ensure staff work very well together and deliver high quality activities and support to families. Parents are fully involved through the parent forum.

The centre provides good value for money and encourages all users to consider the sustainable use of resources. Safeguarding has a high priority and staff are well trained and experienced in recognising signs of abuse. All relevant checks on staff and volunteers are appropriately recorded. Good partnership working ensures information is effectively shared between agencies and services are well integrated to promote good health, education and financial management.

The centre has good capacity for sustained improvement. Self-assessment is comprehensive but does not provide sufficient evidence of the impact of intervention. The local authority provides robust scrutiny and challenge. Good quality-assurance arrangements help ensure that the centre is meeting local need. Accurate local data is well used by managers to set challenging targets.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the collection and use of health data to ensure that needs-analysis targets services appropriately and narrows the gap for the more disadvantaged families in the reach area.
- Improve self-assessment by better evaluating the impact of services on improving outcomes for families.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Children make good progress. The number of children gaining at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage has risen steadily and is currently 64.8% which is above the local authority average of 61.9%. Good targeting of intervention ensures children from the most disadvantaged areas in the reach area show improvement to at least expected levels for their age. Very effective links to a speech and language specialist ensures children improve their communication skills. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% is closing steadily. Good and effective transition arrangements are improving outcomes for children who access the centre. Adults improve their parenting skills as well as their personal and employability skills. The centre offers a good range of opportunities for parents and children to play and learn together, including sensory play, messy play, music and movement. Evaluations from parents indicate how much they enjoy the sessions and attendance is good.

Health outcomes are improving as more families engage with the services of the centre, with particularly good attendance at the weekly health visitor drop in clinic. A well established breastfeeding cafe, supported by volunteer breast feeding peer supporters, effectively encourages mothers to start breastfeeding and supports them to continue. Obesity rates for young children are low and continue to decline. Selby South Ward is amongst the highest 20% of wards in England for teenage pregnancy with recent figures suggesting that Selby South Ward is the seventh highest ward for teenage pregnancy in the county of North Yorkshire. The centre has correctly identified working with teenage parents as one of their key priority areas. The centre effectively offers a coordinated multi-agency package of support via a 12 week antenatal course called 'Yorbabe' which includes one to one support. Young parents say how helpful this support has been and how their confidence and self-esteem has improved. However, health data are not always timely or accurate; for example, the centre is not being informed about live births in the area and has no accurate information regarding hospital admissions of children in the reach.

Parents receive free resources and safety checks in their homes. This is improving their safety and awareness of risks and hazards in the home. Parents say they feel very safe in the centre and show good awareness of keeping their children safe including an understanding of e-safety and internet safety. Parents display high levels of involvement in child-led activities and have a good understanding and confidence in dealing with their children's behaviour, which supports appropriate behaviour patterns. Staff confidently use the Common Assessment Framework and effectively support families with complex needs.

The very friendly, positive and professional approach by centre staff helps encourage mutual respect between parents. Parents are active in the parent forum and two parents are involved in the steering group. Parents give their views in a variety of ways and the views of children are canvassed regularly through posters and bright displays. Opportunities for both accredited and informal learning are offered through good partnerships with family learning. Good advice and guidance on budgeting and finance is available through regular input from the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Jobcentre. Some parents have gone on to become volunteers and have been successful in gaining employment.

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
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How good is the provision?

2

The centre offers a good range of services, responding well to the needs of families, particularly those in target groups. The centre staff know their families well and registrations have increased significantly over the last year to 58%. One-to-one support offered by the Parent Support Advisors has also increased significantly over the last year. In the most deprived areas of the reach area registrations have increased to 80%. The centre has completed research regarding grandparents as sole carers and found there are significant numbers in the reach. As a result the centre now offers a wide range of activities to support this group. Ten sole carer grandparents are now registered with the centre, helping to improve the emotional well-being and support for these families. The centre provides good opportunities for fathers to interact with their children with a recent gardening session proving very popular.

Staff work well to assess the needs of families and effective use is made by Parent Support Advisors of the vulnerability measure, helping them identify when families with complex needs require additional support. The centre is well resourced and offers a welcoming friendly environment that encourages the take-up of services. All activities are carefully planned and are of good quality. Parents comment how much they and their children enjoy participating. However, evaluations from parents tend to be positive and not enough scope is given for parents to comment about how the centre could improve. The Early Years Foundation Stage principles are embedded in all learning activities, and parents are encouraged to celebrate their children's progress.

The quality of care, guidance and support is particularly good and is well coordinated between partners. Support is most effective for those families in crisis and with circumstances that make them vulnerable, and for some families has literally been a life saver. Parents also say that the team-around-the-child approach has helped turn their lives around.

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

A dedicated and focused manager successfully leads a small highly committed staff team. Clear priorities and targets are set by senior managers and well understood by staff. Self-assessment is comprehensive but is not sharp enough in its analysis of how intervention from the centre is improving the lives of children and families in the reach area. The centre has missed opportunities to accurately measure the impact of its activities with parents and children. For example, anecdotally the centre knows that the progress of children once they attend school is as good if not better than their peers; however, this is not yet being accurately measured. Good local data help to inform planning and raise ambition for families. Managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities for governance and secure oversight of the centre. This includes quality assurance, performance management and sound financial accountability.

Sound policies and procedures ensure the centre meets its legal and statutory requirements in relation to promoting equality and diversity and ensuring appropriate actions are taken to prevent discrimination of any kind. Outreach provision is improving access for the more disadvantaged, isolated and vulnerable. Opportunities to celebrate diversity are well embedded into the curriculum. Good and secure safeguarding arrangements ensure all users enjoy a safe and confidential environment.

Resources are used very well to secure value for money. The centre offers local community groups good opportunities to provide additional activities during evenings and in the holidays for families in the reach area. A commitment to using resources sustainably is evident through the multiple uses of rooms, recycling policies and deployment of staff.

A good range of partnerships effectively support the delivery of services. Partners speak well of the centre and the services offered. Good partnerships with local schools are helping children make easier transitions.

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	3
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 Ofsted report from the designated nursery, Bright Stay Day Nursery, based at Selby College was used during the inspection.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Selby South Children's Centre on 19–20 September 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We should like to thank those of you who came to speak to inspectors. We read some of the things you said when you have been on courses. We found that many of you who use the centre enjoy the courses and activities you attend. The centre places a high priority on helping you and your children learn new skills and this is helping you become more confident as parents and your children to be better prepared when starting school.

Lots of you told us that the centre gives you helpful information about being healthy, and we know many of you find the drop-in session and clinic run by the health visitors very useful. We know that mums are encouraged to take up breastfeeding and the centre supports and guides parents on healthy ways to feed their babies. We know that the staff at the centre are working with you to make sure your children are not overweight and provide lots of opportunities for you and your children to exercise and enjoy outside play. There are some things health staff could not give us enough details about, for example, how many of you have recently given birth or if your children have had an admission to hospital. We have asked the centre to ensure there is more accurate data on health issues to help them plan and target services better.

You told us you feel the centre takes your views seriously, particularly of those of you who attend the parents' forum. We are pleased that some of you are being supported to

participate in the steering group. However, we are not sure the centre always knows when it has made a difference to the lives of children and families they work with. We have asked staff to undertake better and more focused evaluation to inform self-assessment so the centre can make sure it provides the services and activities that you need.

Many of you have undertaken training courses at the centre and some of you have had help with finding employment. You told us that you really value the advice given to you by the Citizen's Advice Bureau, particularly in relation to managing debt. The centre offers a number of different services, which are helpful to families. These include drop-in health clinics, play activities and parenting classes. We found there is lots of helpful information for you in the centre and many of you are making good use of this information to find out about what is on and what help you can get for your families.

The centre is good at making sure that families receive the right sort of support when they need it. Many of you told us that you feel valued when you come to the centre and you like the fact that nobody judges you. Thank you once again to those of you who came to speak to us. We wish you all the best for the future and every success.

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