

Inspection report for Clifton Children's Centre

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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Clifton Children's Centre EY375094 Busy Bees Day at Milford Primary School EY288008

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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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior managers, centre staff, parents, members of the advisory board and a number of partners, including health, education and children's social care professionals. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Clifton Children's Centre was designated in 2006 as a phase two, purpose-built centre situated within the grounds of Dovecote Primary and Nursery School in Nottingham. It offers a range of services which include health services, social care, family play sessions, parenting programmes, family outreach services and adult education. Services are also provided at other community venues across the locality. In addition a crèche facility is offered for parents accessing services or courses at the centre.

The centre's reach includes the Clifton estate and covers a large geographical area with marked differences in deprivation between North and South Clifton. South Clifton and the Nobel Road area are markedly more deprived. Nobel Road is in the top national 10% of deprived areas; the majority of the remaining estate is in the top 20% and 30% of deprivation. Housing is mostly social or privately rented with some small areas of high affluence and privately owned housing. Clifton has physical barriers such as the ring road and River Trent between it and the rest of the city. The reach area itself also has busy roads dividing it. The centre also provides services for some areas of Wilford and Silverdale.

There are 1691 children aged nought to five years old in the reach area with 48% accessing services in the centre. Within the reach of the centre there are significant issues surrounding low income, high unemployment, teen pregnancy, obesity, domestic violence and low levels of literacy and numeracy. At 96.3% the vast

majority of families living in the area of from White British backgrounds with smaller percentages of other ethnic groups, some of whom speak English as an additional language. Levels of unemployment are high with 30.9% of children living in households dependent upon workless benefits and many of the existing jobs are low paid. Most children enter early education with skills, knowledge and abilities that are well below the levels expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development.

Governance of the centre is provided by Nottingham City Council under the Children and Families Directorate, in conjunction with an advisory board that includes providers, delivery partners and members of the local community and users that attend the centre. There has been recent restructuring and the day-to-day management of the centre is now provided by the Community Family Support Manager.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for families

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management

3

Main findings

Satisfactory leadership and provision promote satisfactory outcomes for children and families. Staff have worked hard to ensure that centre activities and family support services have not been affected by the restructure to the team in the last eight months. Parents who attend the centre value the support extended to them, particularly in times of crisis. Attention to safeguarding is a clear priority of all staff. Parents spoken to by inspectors said that they feel safe at the centre and welcomed by staff who are very approachable and friendly.

The centre encourages families to be more physically active and eat healthily and this leads to satisfactory health outcomes. However, despite the percentage of mothers initiating breastfeeding increasing over the last three years the number, who continue to breastfeed at six to eight weeks, is well below the national average. Staff are working closely with health partners to bring improvement with new initiatives such as the 'Baby Friendly' programme and the setting up of a breastfeeding support group. As a result of this close partnership, data show that 80 to 96% of families in the area are now engaging well with the appropriate health services such as health

visiting contact. In addition, rates of immunisations have risen from 93.2% in 2010-11 to 95.3% in 2011-12. Despite this work, the percentage of children in the Reception Year who are obese has shown no signs of reducing, and this figure remains stubbornly above the national average.

There has been an increase in the proportion of children achieving 78+ scale points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile which reflects a good level of development. However, the gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and the rest is not narrowing quickly enough. Some adults who attend the centre are encouraged and supported in their learning through courses such as first aid, how to make scrapbooks, extending parenting and the development of literacy skills. Others successfully run groups such as the 'Special Moments' and parent-led 'PEEPs' groups. Achievements are recognised and well celebrated. However, only a minority of adults gain relevant qualifications to help improve their economic well-being. Case studies indicate that some adults who become volunteers subsequently return to work or training but the centre does not have complete records of all users' progress or destinations.

The centre regularly seeks the views of families using the centre and uses these appropriately to shape services, including users' evaluations of activity sessions. However, the centre only has a small minority of parents contributing to its decision-making and governance through attending advisory board meetings and parent forums. This centre promotes equality and diversity satisfactorily. It is an inclusive centre and all users feel welcome and valued. Systems to assess the needs of those children and their families whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable, such as coping with poverty and domestic violence, are good.

The centre manager has appropriately identified the strengths and areas for development of the centre's work. Several new initiatives have been developed recently and the centre manager has a clear, pragmatic vision of where future improvements are required. Satisfactory systems are in place for development planning, but the sharing and use of all available data, in conjunction with partners, to set challenging targets is not fully effective. This makes it difficult for the centre to demonstrate the full impact of its work on improving outcomes for families. The priorities being pursued are focused on the need to increase both the registration and participation rates of all families and children engaging in the centre's services and activities, particularly disabled children, minority ethnic groups and fathers. However, these improvements have yet to have an impact, therefore, capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve outcomes by working with key partners to:
 - increase the number of mothers initiating and sustaining breastfeeding
 - reduce the number of children in Reception Year who are obese
 - narrow the gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest
 - increase participation rates in adult learning programmes, progression into further education and employment and further develop procedures to track and measure the centre's effectiveness in this area.

- Increase the registration and participation rates of families and children engaging in the centre's services and activities, particularly disabled children, minority ethnic groups and fathers.

- Improve leadership and management further by:
 - encouraging more families, particularly those from target groups, to make a greater contribution to the decision making and governance of the centre through membership on the advisory board and parent forum
 - strengthening self-evaluation processes and development planning by working with partners to share and make full use of all available data to set challenging targets that will help the centre to demonstrate the full impact of its work on improving outcomes over time.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

The centre has built sound links with health colleagues and, consequently, the number of children accessing mainstream health services and the number being immunised, have increased. There is satisfactory health promotion through leaflets, group activities, displays and during home visits. However, the number of mothers initiating breastfeeding in the last three years has only increased slightly from 44.6% to a figure of 46.2% which is lower than the national average. In addition, the percentage of mothers continuing to breastfeed at six to eight weeks has reduced rather than increased over the last three years from 18.6% down to 14.2% which is much below the national average. Courses such as 'Tiny Cooks' and weaning sessions, are beginning to develop parents' understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle for their whole family. However, data show that the percentage of reception-age children who are obese has slightly increased in the last three years and currently stands at 12.4%, which is higher than the national average of 9.4%.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is used effectively to target specific tailored support for looked after children and those subject to a child protection plan. Early intervention work helps prevent some complex situations from accelerating for families. A typical comment from a parent regarding the impact of individual support was, 'without the support of the centre I wouldn't be able to feed my children, the whole family has benefited from the services they provide'. Some parents are confident to turn to the centre in times of crisis, or for general help and support because they know and trust the centre staff. Staff provide parents with appropriate

safety advice to help them gain a better understanding of how to keep their children safe, although they recognise that more work needs to be done with families to reduce the rate of emergency hospital admissions for children. The centre is already actively working effectively to strengthen initiatives with health colleagues to address this issue.

The centre works closely with local schools to offer 'G-Rea-T' (Getting Ready Together) groups which are designed to help parents and their children prepare for nursery. Headteachers identify that these groups, run as a joint partnership, are having a significant impact on children's personal, social and emotional skills and eases their transition to school. Data show that the percentage of children gaining at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile with at least six points in each of the scales for personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy increased from 58.3% in 2009 to 62.4% in 2011, which was higher than the national average of 56%. However, the achievement gap between the lowest 20% and the rest is not narrowing quickly enough and has widened in the last two years, from 29.7% to 31.1%.

Families using the centre and the wider community treat each other with respect. Most families using the centre regularly express their views following specific sessions and some contribute to shaping services. However, only a small minority of parents are engaged in bringing a positive contribution to the governance and decision making of the centre through membership on the parents' forum and advisory board.

Adults have access to a satisfactory range of courses which can help develop their basic knowledge and skills such as parenting programmes, literacy and numeracy classes. There are satisfactory and developing programmes to encourage parents to progress into volunteering at the centre. The centre is aware that some users return to work or progress to education or training. However, there is limited evidence of increased participation rates in adult learning programmes and progression into further education and employment. In addition, the procedures to track and measure the centre's effectiveness in this area, particularly when signposted to other providers, are limited.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

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

contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	3

How good is the provision?

3

The centre offers a satisfactory range of activities which support users who attend to socialise with others in the community. For example, parents enjoy attending the 'Wiggle and Jiggle' groups and 'Sing, Sign and Story Time' sessions which promote good early learning through fun and active play sessions. Registration at the centre is slowly increasing with just under half of local families currently engaged with services. However, the number of disabled children, minority ethnic groups and fathers participating are lower than other groups.

The midwife and baby clinic sessions are well used and the midwife team and family support workers work together cooperatively to offer families appropriate advice and support to help with their young children's needs. Young parents are well supported through the established 'Young Parents Group' and 'Bumps 2 Babies' sessions. Resources throughout the centre are of good quality. A satisfactory range of literature, some in different languages, provides parents with valuable information about sexual health and domestic violence help lines. A newly launched food bank initiative is helping to support some particularly vulnerable families and prevent food poverty and waste.

Parents who attend the centre told the inspectors that activities are interesting, give them confidence, help support their children's learning and appropriately promote their parenting skills. A Jobcentre drop-in session is held bi-weekly and users can sometimes view job vacancies on the information boards in reception. A programme of family learning courses is tailored to meet some users' needs and attendance is satisfactorily monitored but the systems in place to track their progression into further education or employment are under-developed.

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	3

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

The centre manager and her skilled and experienced team are optimistic about the

future despite the challenges they have faced due to recent changes. They are committed to extending services and providing the best life chances for local children and their families. Governance is supportive and the advisory board is keen to act as a critical friend in challenging and holding the centre to account for improving its work. Day-to-day management arrangements are understood and effective.

There are sound links between the centre's evaluation of its services and the priorities set out in its development plan. However, more work remains to be done to work with partners to share and make full use of all available data to set challenging targets that will help the centre to demonstrate the full impact of its work on improving outcomes overtime.

Recruitment and vetting procedures for all staff and partner agencies are robust and security at the centre is good. Early intervention and support for the emotional health and well-being of families is effective. Staff attend regular safeguarding training and there is multi-agency cooperation which results in children and families being well protected. Good support is provided for some families experiencing domestic violence or mental health issues. However only a minority are accessing these beneficial services.

Partnerships with parents are developing and their evaluations of services are sometimes used to improve services. Childminders have their own drop-in session and strong links have been made with local schools that effectively support young children's learning and development. The sharing of resources, provision and some joint training with partners, together with the satisfactory level of engagement, result in satisfactory value for money.

Equality issues are promoted satisfactorily and the centre's procedures meet all requirements. Most staff speak confidently about families' differing cultures and appreciate the rich diversity of the community they serve. Families with disabled children and those with special educational needs are encouraged to attend the 'Special Moments' support group. Crèche facilities enable those with young children to attend training.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	3
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3

The effectiveness of the centre’s policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	3
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	3
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	3

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

The centres childcare provision is delivered by Clifton Children’s Centre and Busy Bees Day at Milford Primary School. The provisions are subject to separate inspection arrangements. The school was last inspected in June 2010 and the childcare provisions were last inspected in July 2009 and November 2008 respectively. The reports of these inspections are available at: www.ofsted.gov.uk. These inspection reports have been taken into account to inform the judgements made by this inspection.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Clifton Children's Centre on 26–27 September 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you very much for talking to us, letting us come into your sessions and visiting you in your homes. The information you gave and the stories you shared with us helped us to make our judgements. We also looked at the comments you made on feedback sheets and evaluations.

This established centre has undergone a great deal of change in the last eight months. However, despite this it has continued to provide a safe place for those of you who access the centre where you can be sure of a warm and friendly welcome. The centre provides you with satisfactory opportunities to engage in enjoyable and purposeful learning experiences. Those of you we spoke to told us how much you enjoy attending the centre. You trust the centre staff and find them very helpful. However, we noted that only a small percentage of families are registered and attend from the reach area. Therefore, we have asked the centre to look at ways it can encourage more local families to access activities and benefit from the services that it provides for you.

You were positive about the impact of the parenting courses some of you have attended. Some of you told us how you now encourage more positive behaviour in your children by ignoring inappropriate behaviour and encouraging good behaviour with praise and attention. We know some of you are confident to lead a group. Several of you are interested in having important roles as volunteers which will further strengthen the work of the centre. We were impressed with 'G-Rea-T' groups which help to prepare you and your children for the transfer to nursery. We have asked the centre to continue to work with its partners to particularly improve the achievement of the lowest achieving children's skills and abilities. We have also asked the centre to find ways to increase the number of adults who gain qualifications to help families go on to further training or employment and to become financially secure.

The number of mothers choosing to breastfeed babies is low. We have asked the centre to work closely with their health partners to ensure those of you who choose to breastfeed are given effective support. You told us you particularly enjoy the 'Wiggle and Jiggle' sessions and groups such as 'Baby PEEP' which encourages bonding with your babies and enables you to be more active. Despite these opportunities to increase your physical activity, the number of children in the Reception Year who are obese is high. Therefore, we have asked the centre to work closely with their partners to further encourage more healthy lifestyles to help reduce obesity and promote children's healthy weight.

The centre has begun to prioritise improvement in their development plans. However, the sharing and use of all available data, in conjunction with partners, to set challenging targets is less effective so we have asked the centre to improve this. This will enable them to monitor where they are making a difference and where more work needs to be done. Some parents are asked to share their views about the centre activities but not enough of you are encouraged to contribute to the decision making and governance of the centre through attending advisory board meetings and parent forums. Your centre has been asked to improve this and we hope that some of you will be interested in getting involved.

We would like to thank everyone who was willing to speak to us. We are very grateful for your help and wish you every success in the future.

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