

# Inspection report for Dunkirk, Lenton and Lenton Abbey Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Nottingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	367792
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Dunkirk Primary and Nursery School
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Not applicable

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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 staff and senior managers from the centre. Inspectors also met with parents and representatives from Nottingham local authority as well as a number of partners including those from health, education and employability services.

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

## Information about the centre

Dunkirk, Lenton and Lenton Abbey Children's Centre is a phase two centre that meets its core purpose. It is situated on a site shared with Dunkirk Primary and Nursery School in the central area of Nottingham.

The Lenton Abbey community is located at the edge of the city border, and families living there mostly access services commissioned to a children's centre in neighbouring Nottinghamshire. The centre has outreach provision in Lenton, an area of disadvantage which has some high rise housing estates which are due to be demolished. The centre also serves a large community of International students studying at the university. A large dual carriageway physically divides the centre's reach area.

The centre shares a locality strategic advisory board, made up professional partners, with other centres in the central area of the city. A partnership forum of local professional delivery partners meets with a focus on community and family matters. The Community Family Support Manager who manages the centre, and is new in post, also manages two other children's centres.

The centre provides services from its own premises and in outreach provision in

target areas. The current data provided by the centre indicates that the majority of local families come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. One third of children live in workless households. Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills, knowledge and abilities that are mostly below those expected for their age.

## 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

Dunkirk, Lenton and Lenton Abbey Children’s Centre is satisfactory overall. Policies and procedures for safeguarding, including the recruitment, vetting and training of staff all meet requirements and are given the highest priority. Family workers provide effective support and advice to families and promptly share any concerns with relevant agencies. Parents and carers told inspectors that they and their children feel very well protected at the centre and that the support they receive helps them to stay safe.

Children’s achievements, as demonstrated by their results in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile in 2011, are above national and Nottingham averages with 61.1% of children in Reception Year achieving at least 78+scale points including personal and social, emotional development and communication, language and literacy. This improved from 51.3% in the previous year. The gap between the 20% lowest achieving children and the rest is narrowing overall, particularly in the school that shares the same site as the centre. However, there is little analysis of data by gender or ethnicity, in order to further develop and target the centre’s provision. Tracking data on individual children who access centre activities indicates that their progress and achievement are good.

Adults improve their parenting skills through courses and by staff modelling how to play with children. Partnership working enables some adults to benefit from courses such as English for speakers of other languages and from employability training or specific support. Case studies indicate that some adults gain qualifications and progress to employment or further training although information on the progress and destinations of adults is incomplete. Despite requests from the centre, adult

education providers do not ensure that there are sufficient learning opportunities to fully meet local adult needs.

The centre promotes healthy living through its sessions such as 'Fun with Food' and initiatives such as 'City Smiles'. Although the centre works in purposeful partnership with health professionals to improve health outcomes, the lack of sharing of data by health services, for example about immunisation rates and smoking cessation during pregnancy, limits the centre's ability to analyse the full impact of its provision.

The new manager and centre staff are committed to improving its services and have a broad understanding of the areas needing improvement. Specific targeted actions have led to rapid improvements but some systems of evaluation are not yet fully embedded. Governance is satisfactory. However, monitoring by the local authority and advisory board is not rigorous enough. There is limited analysis of outcomes to inform the setting of precise and measurable targets. The centre encourages families to be involved informally in decision-making and amends its provision in the light of their feedback. The centre has not yet involved parents in the partnership forum although it plans to include representation from the parents group. However, the parent's group is not sufficiently established or attended.

The centre meets the duties that apply to it for equality and diversity. The centre has been slow to develop strategies to engage with all of its different target groups since it became operational but has significantly increased engagement during the last year. The new manager makes effective use of commissioned provision in a neighbouring authority and is developing outreach provision to meet the needs of families in the areas of most deprivation, including those most at risk. In consequence value for money is satisfactory.

Satisfactory leadership and management together with satisfactory and improving outcomes for users and an overall improving trend in performance demonstrate the centre's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

## **What does the centre need to do to improve further?**

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- The centre with the local authority should:
  - ensure that health services share current data on all health outcomes with the centre so that it can shape provision accordingly
  - ensure that adult education partners provide sufficient local learning opportunities to enhance the economic well-being of families.
- Strengthen self-evaluation so that the full impact of the centre's work can be measured by:
  - developing assessment systems for all activities and monitoring the progress of all participants
  - increasing the collation and analysis of all data to inform the setting of

- precise, measurable targets
  - increasing the role of families and stakeholders in monitoring and steering the work of the centre.
- Develop strategies to further increase the registration and participation of key target groups.

## How good are outcomes for families?

<b>3</b>
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The centre provides effective and timely support for families who are vulnerable due to their circumstances. Families benefit greatly from individual advice and the promotion of safety in the home. As a result, they have a good understanding of how to keep their families safe and there is evidence of a reduction in the escalation of child protection issues.

Children and parents enjoy the fun sessions such as 'Getting Ready for Nursery'. Partnerships with local primary schools result in good support and effective transition arrangements for children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage. Typical comments from parents include: 'My child enjoys playing with other children and it has helped him learn to share' and 'I come to the centre because my other child is at the school next door- it really helps prepare children for school.' Careful tracking of children benefitting from funding for the early education of two-year-olds demonstrates the positive impact it has on their achievement. However, the centre's systems to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of all of its activities on outcomes have not yet been fully embedded. Adult learning courses and referral for employment advice are helping to improve the economic well-being of some families. However, a minority of adults gain qualifications or progress to training, education or employment.

Centre staff listen to, and use the feedback of families, to help shape and develop its services. Children behave well and develop useful skills for the future, such as cooperation and independence, and families from a wide cultural and educational background demonstrate respect for each other. Some parents benefit from opportunities to make a positive contribution to the centre through volunteering or via the parents' group but few are directly involved in decision-making at a strategic level.

The centre promotes healthy living through its sessions and families increase their understanding of how to stay healthy. However, the impact on outcomes is limited by the health service's lack of current data sharing. Breastfeeding rates are above those for the city. However, despite the percentage of mothers initiating breastfeeding increasing by 10% in 2011, the percentage sustaining breastfeeding beyond six-weeks reduced by 5%. The centre gives a high priority to promoting physical exercise. For example, a range of activities such as 'Musical Moments' help children keep fit. Childhood obesity rates at 10.3% are in line with the city average.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

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

### **How good is the provision?**

<b>3</b>
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The centre provides a satisfactory range of targeted sessions and activities and is extending opportunities for families to engage with its services through outreach provision and commissioned services. Joint sessions for parents and children are fun and staff effectively model good parenting skills. One parent said: 'It is really good here for the children, and I have attended courses such as First Aid and Parenting, they have really helped me be a parent.'

Effective joint working with local schools helps promote the development of children's communication, literacy, language, personal and social skills as well as their transition to full time education. Support for the most vulnerable families is particularly effective because of the close co-operation and partnership with the co-located school. Some families benefit from courses in English for speakers of other languages and the Arabic classes are well attended by local families. Although the centre works in partnership with local colleges, there are too few learning opportunities provided to fully meet the needs of adults. Adults have adequate access to information, advice and guidance on training, benefits and work.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The centre's close attention to promoting the well-being and safety of families leads to good outcomes, particularly in supporting families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Parents value home visits and individual support. Parents value the centre's help in times of personal crisis. One parent's views reflect this: 'As a result of our domestic situation, my son had problems with his behaviour. As I had missed the parenting course, one of the staff came to where we were living and went through the course individually with me. It was amazing.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>

### **How effective are the leadership and management?**

<b>3</b>
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Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. Staff are effective in their roles and are appropriately supervised. The new centre manager sets high expectations and has taken effective actions to rapidly improve the engagement of families. Governance arrangements are clear and understood but there is insufficient use of data to set precise improvement targets. The current collation and analysis of data does not ensure that the local authority, advisory board and staff have a sufficiently clear understanding of what impact the centre's services have on improving all outcomes and specifically for different target groups. This limits the centre's ability to set precise and challenging targets and prioritise developments.

The use of resources is having a satisfactory impact on outcomes for families and leading to increased engagement. As a result the centre currently provides satisfactory value for money. Action to promote equality has resulted in the increased participation of teenagers, disabled children and parents, workless families and minority ethnic groups and is narrowing the gap in children's achievements. The centre is particularly effective in engaging with the wide range of International families who temporarily live in the area and are often socially isolated.

Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements. The centre has clear systems in place for recording information related to the vetting and recruitment and training of staff. Staff identify and report concerns promptly. Multi-agency co-operation is particularly effective and leads to good interventions that reduce the risk of harm to children and helps keep the most vulnerable families safe.

Services are mostly well integrated and generally deliver cohesive provision leading to satisfactory outcomes for families. Outreach provision in partners' venues and commissioned services effectively extend the opportunities for families to benefit from their contact with the centre. The strong partnership with the co-located school enhances significantly the learning and development opportunities for children and families.

The centre seeks and makes use of feedback from families to develop the range and quality of its provision. Some families participate in shaping the provision, for example a volunteer programme was introduced at the request of parents, but they



have little involvement in strategic decision-making and helping the centre to build for better effectiveness.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>

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

Inspectors used information from the most recent inspection of Dunkirk Primary and Nursery School to help make their judgements.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Dunkirk, Lenton and Lenton Abbey Children's Centre on 20–21 September 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you very much for talking to us and welcoming us into your sessions. A special thank you goes to the large group of parents that came with their children especially to meet us. The information you gave and the stories you shared with us helped us to make our judgements. Some parents told us how the centre has

supported them to improve their lives and how much more confidence as parents they now have.

You enjoy the sessions with your children such as 'Musical Moments' and 'Getting Ready for Nursery', and an increasing number of families attend these sessions. We found that children and adults benefit from accessing services at the centre, but the centre has not fully introduced systems to measure the impact of all its sessions and particularly the progress of adults. We have asked them to improve this.

The centre is becoming increasingly successful at engaging with families that need most support for example, by targeting its outreach provision. It has taken a while for the centre to achieve this and rapid progress has been made since the new manager's appointment. Nevertheless, more work remains and we have asked the centre to continue to develop ways of reaching the families that most need their support. The centre works with adult education providers to give families' access to courses, which help to improve the education and future employment opportunities for some of you. We have asked the local authority to help the centre by asking colleges and other providers to increase and broaden the adult learning opportunities available.

You told us how your involvement with the centre and involvement in courses such as 'First Aid' are improving your ability to keep your children safe. We found that staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and that they are well trained and promptly report any concerns to relevant agencies. This is having a good impact on helping keep families safe. Your children behave well and you learn more about how to stay healthy through advice from staff and sessions such as 'Fun with Food'. We found that health professionals work well with the centre but that the centre does not have access to all of the health data to measure the impact of its services. We have asked the centre to work with the local authority to make sure that health services improve the sharing of up to the minute data, for example on immunisation rates and the number of mothers who stop smoking during pregnancy.

Everyone seems to get on well together at the centre and there are some opportunities for you to volunteer your services at the centre. The centre listens to you and asks you what you think of the services and activities it offers. We have asked the centre to find ways of increasing your involvement in self-evaluation processes and in steering the future work of the centre. Please let staff know if you are willing to get involved.

We found that the centre is keen to promote equality and diversity. Families treat each other with respect. The centre works well for everyone in the community, irrespective of their background or disability and is increasing the participation of those who most need their support. The centre engages well with the wide range of international families who live temporarily in the area. This helps promote community cohesion.

The manager sets high expectations and her strong focus on improving the centre is proving effective. The centre has a satisfactory grasp on its strengths and weaknesses. However, there is incomplete use of data to measure the full impact of its work and set precise improvement targets. We have asked the local authority and the centre to improve the use of data so it can more carefully monitor the full impact of its services on the families and set targets for improvement.

We thoroughly enjoyed spending time at your centre, meeting you and your children, and we wish you and your families all the best for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).