

# Inspection report for Thrybergh/Dalton Centre

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| Local authority     | Rotherham            |
| Inspection number   | 404509               |
| Inspection dates    | 10 - 11 October 2012 |
| Reporting inspector | Parm Sansoyer        |

|                             |                                                                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Centre leader               | Robin Linkens                                                                 |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable                                                                |
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|                                                 |                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Linked school if applicable                     | Thrybergh Primary School 130920                |
| Linked early years and childcare, if applicable | The Rainbow Centre (Thrybergh Dalton) EY341119 |

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 additional inspector and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the representative of the local authority, the head of centre, centre staff, advisory board members and a number of partners including Early Years Foundation Stage and childcare partners, 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

Thrybergh Rainbow Centre and Dalton Willow Tree Centre opened separately in November 2006 as independent designated children's centres on adjacent school sites. In September 2010 the two centres merged to form one children's centre, serving two small reach areas, with Thrybergh Rainbow Centre as the main children's centre base and Dalton Willow Tree as a satellite centre. In January 2012 an additional venue at High Greave Junior and Infant Schools was developed to provide a satellite community room for the East Herringthorpe North and East reach area families. The reach areas include East Herringthorpe North, Thrybergh South, Dalton, East Herringthorpe East, Thrybergh East, Thrybergh North/Hooton Roberts.

The centre provides the full core offer and the range of services includes health services, social care, family play sessions, parenting programmes, adult education and outreach services. Services at the Thrybergh/Dalton Centre also include full childcare on site, for up to 25 children aged under-five years. The provision is open each weekday from 7.45am to 5.45pm, Monday to Friday. At the Dalton Willow Tree Centre, sessional care is available for up to 16 children aged from two years. Sessions run from 9.00am to 12.00pm and 1.00pm to 4.00pm Monday to Friday during term time only.

The centre covers a compact geographical area and serves a community which experiences high levels of social and economic disadvantage. There are 630 children under five years in the reach area. Levels of deprivation are high throughout the reach, with all areas being in the 30% most deprived areas in the country and some being within the 5% most deprived areas. Within the reach of the centre there are significant alcohol and substance misuse, domestic violence and adult mental health issues. The population is mostly of White British heritage with a small percentage of minority ethnic groups, some of whom speak English as an additional language. Levels of unemployment are high with 45% of children living in households dependent upon workless benefits, and many of the existing jobs are low paid. Housing is mostly social or private rental with a small pocket of privately owned housing. The great majority of children who live within the reach area of the centre enter early years provision with knowledge and skills that are significantly below expectations for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. There are links to the six local primary schools.

Governance of the centre is provided by the school governing body on behalf of Rotherham local authority, in conjunction with the advisory board. Advisory board members include the head of the school, who is also the head of centre, staff at the centre, delivery partners and parents.

## 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

Thrybergh/Dalton Centre is a good children's centre. The strong sense of unity between the children's centre and Thrybergh Primary School provides a seamless and integrated approach to supporting the needs of children and families. The leadership of the centre is intent on improving life-chances for its community, regardless of where they live in the reach.

Provision is good overall due to careful mapping of services on site and those delivered at the satellite venues. As a result, outcomes are mostly good and there is evidence of increasing engagement across all target groups. The promotion of families' health outcomes is satisfactory overall due to the low numbers who start breastfeeding, the small percentage

of children being breastfed at six-to-eight weeks and the above-average percentage of obese children in the Reception Year, which are all clear priorities for the centre.

The care, guidance and support for families are good. Outreach and family support interventions, alongside well-established inter-agency work, ensure that those families most in need of support are targeted well and make positive changes in their lives. Safeguarding arrangements are good as families feel, and are, safe. Significant gains have been made in raising children's achievement from their very low starting points. Adult learning is supporting many adults to improve their parenting skills and some users have successfully obtained accredited qualifications. The centre recognises that it does not yet provide a wide enough range of courses to engage more workless families and fathers to help further improve their economic well-being.

The management team and the advisory board members demonstrate a clear vision and a very strong commitment to supporting and making a real difference to the lives of families in the reach. The advisory board includes many of the key partners and two very active parents who play a key role in decision making and offering challenge. However, there are not enough opportunities for a wider range of parents and partners, such as adult learning and community groups, to contribute to the decision-making process.

The capacity for sustained improvement is good due to the centre's impact on improving outcomes, the increased registrations of new families, the good quality of provision and effective leadership and management.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Continue to work with health partners to:
  - increase breastfeeding initiation rates and the percentage of children being breastfed at six-to-eight weeks
  - reduce the percentage of obese children in Reception Year.
- Increase the economic well-being of families by providing a broader range of courses, including accredited courses, to engage workless families and fathers.
- Increase opportunities for more parents and centre partners to contribute to decision making and help shape services.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

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The good quality play and learning sessions make a positive contribution to children's enjoyment and achievement. The centre places a strong focus on raising children's achievement. The percentage of children gaining at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scales with at least six points in each of the scales for personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy shows an

improving trend from 36.9% in 2010 to 49.2% in 2012. This represents very good progress overall taking into account children's very low starting points. The achievement gap between the lowest 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest is narrowing from 38.6% in 2010 to 25.4% in 2012. Data from the local schools clearly show that children who attend the centre's early years education and childcare provision, enter Reception Year with increased knowledge and skills and settle more easily than their peers. There are good, clear plans and strategies in place to further raise children's achievement through a holistic approach of combining nutrition, exercise and well-being to aid learning.

Regular safety advice and home safety checks help parents to have a better understanding of how to keep their families safe. Parents describe how much more confident they are now in dealing with hazards. For example, one parent described how the home-safety check and information from the children's centre was pivotal in how she swiftly responded to and handled an electrical fault in her home. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process is used well to support families experiencing a range of difficulties, including looked-after children. The impact of sensitive, tailored early intervention work helps to prevent complex situations accelerating. Parents are confident to come to the centre for help because they know and trust the centre staff. One parent explained how she felt about the services, 'The children's centre saved me, staff are fabulous and give really good support.'

Breastfeeding is well promoted in the centre. Most of the mothers attending who choose to breastfeed continue to do so for several months and beyond as they are effectively assisted by breastfeeding peer supporters. However, breastfeeding initiation rates for the reach although increasing to 58.1% in 2011-2012 remain below the local average of 60.2% and significantly lower than the national average of 74.5%. In addition, the percentage of children being breastfed at six-to-eight weeks remains well below the national average of 47.1%, at 21.6% in 2010-2011. Consistent messages about how to lead healthier lifestyles are beginning to increase the take-up of immunisation, promote good sexual health for teens, and promote healthy cooking for the family including healthy weaning of babies. However, the prevalence of obesity remains a key priority as the percentage of obese children in Reception Year is well above the national average of 9.4%, at 18.9% in 2010-2011.

There are good programmes to encourage parents to progress into volunteering at the centre and some of these parents have made good, positive contributions to the life of the centre. Some parent volunteers have progressed on to gain an accredited qualification in childcare and successfully gained employment. These opportunities have increased their self-esteem and confidence as one user explained, 'If I had never done volunteering I would not have probably done my maths and English and childcare courses.' Some adults have benefited from literacy, numeracy and paediatric first aid courses. However, as acknowledged by the centre, it does not yet offer a broad enough range of courses, including accredited courses, to further engage more workless families and fathers to help increase their economic stability.

The centre provides a good range of opportunities for users to make a positive contribution through evaluations on activities, classes and services, and a comments box. Any

suggestions are acted upon and displayed on the 'You said, we did' board to keep them fully up-to-date and aware of how their views have helped to shape the centre's work.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <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>2</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>2</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?**

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The centre is placed firmly at the heart of the community and provides good care, guidance and support. The warm welcome and attractive environment create a comfortable space for users to meet, share their stories, seek help at times of crisis and spend quality time with their children. Participation rates of users across the range of services have increased well over the last year. The centre's provision is well matched to the needs of its users through a varied range of activities and services that are effectively targeted, adapted and changed according to need. Users appreciate the good, purposeful learning opportunities which enhance, in particular, their parenting skills. One parent reported, 'It's helped build my confidence as a mum; you read all the books but the reality is different.'

Close monitoring and analysis ensure the centre can confirm growing engagement across all target groups and can also identify gaps in areas where further work is required, such as engaging more fathers and workless families.

A good range of literature and signposting to relevant agencies provide parents with valuable information and support for sexual health, domestic violence, and alcohol and drug misuse. Effective signposting to Jobcentre Plus, visits from the housing officer, and the on-site 'Workclub' and touch screen kiosk offer good information and support on employment, education, housing, tax credits and benefits.

The centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families through a range of well received groups, such as baby massage, weaning parties, 'Toddler Time' and 'Feet-up'. One parent stated, 'Services are 10 out of 10 all the time.' Another

reported, 'Having someone to talk to about my child's social skills and behaviour has made life so much easier.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>      | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.</b>                                          | <b>2</b> |

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

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The enthusiastic head of centre leads a well-experienced, dedicated team and offers secure day-to-day leadership. Governance and accountability arrangements are secure with a well-established advisory board linking securely to the governing body of the school. Representation on the advisory board also includes two parents and many of the key partners and this is beginning to have an impact on the role they play in shaping services for the future and in decision making. However, there is not an established parents' forum to involve parents in less formal channels of communication. This means that they, along with partners such as adult learning and community groups, do not have as many opportunities to have their say or to have as great an influence as they could on the direction of the centre.

Development plans with challenging targets are well informed by quarterly data provided by the local authority and are used well at all levels to target engagement levels and provision. Staff are well supported through robust supervision arrangements and continuous professional development ensures that all staff are well equipped for their particular roles.

The good quality and good use of resources have a positive impact on outcomes for users and consequently, the centre provides good value for money. The outreach work and the family support are targeted effectively to meet the needs of families whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those children subject to child protection plans. The centre has effective systems in place for recording information related to the vetting and recruitment of staff. Staff and partners have a clear understanding of policies and procedures to ensure the protection of users. They understand their role in identifying and reporting concerns, and collaborate effectively with other key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children.

Partnerships with services such as social care and education providers contribute to good outcomes for users, particularly in safeguarding and learning and development. Transition arrangements with the host school are excellent and are very well established with other local schools to support children's care and education. Partnerships with health



professionals, due to recent re-structuring of health services and staff shortages, are an ongoing area for further development.

Inclusion, narrowing of the achievement gap and meeting the needs of the hard-to-engage groups, including disabled children and those with special educational needs, are good. The centre's work in the engagement of families that are isolated or reluctant to engage is good due to the caring and nurturing intervention and support they receive and the trusting relationships they develop with the staff team. One parent explained, 'We are all able to mix and socialise. They are very supportive of children with different physical needs.'

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>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes</b>                                                    | <b>2</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>2</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>2</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>2</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>2</b> |

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

The Ofsted report relating to the linked childcare setting was used to make judgements.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Thrybergh/Dalton Centre on 10 October 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

As part of our inspection we visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with a number of you, staff and centre partners who work with you. We also looked at the comments you made on feedback sheets and evaluations. We found that the centre provides a safe and welcoming place for you and your children. Those of you we spoke with said that the centre had helped you to make some significant changes in your lives. Those of you who receive support from outreach and family support workers informed us of the gains you have made in your lives and how you can cope better. Others told us that they feel more confident after completing parenting courses to help improve their home life. In addition, a number of you spoke very highly of the volunteering scheme and how it has given some you the confidence to go on to college and even get a job. We have asked the centre to increase this further by providing more fathers and workless families with a broader range of courses that may lead to an accredited qualification and work.

We were impressed by the good care, guidance and support you receive from the centre staff. You told us the centre provides you with wonderful opportunities to form friendships and gain advice and support in a friendly and safe place. Similarly, your children are making significant progress by attending the sessions at the centre and childcare provisions. As a result, children's progress reports show that your children are far better prepared for entry into school.

Health outcomes are satisfactory. This is due to the low numbers of mothers who start breastfeeding, the small percentage of children being breastfed at six-to-eight weeks, and the well-above average percentage of children who are obese in Reception Year. The centre has responded well to tackle the high obesity levels in the area by putting on a number of activities such as weight-loss programmes, 'healthy eating on a budget' classes and weaning parties. In addition, physical exercise classes for adults and children such as 'Zumba' classes, 'Mini Millers' and pram walks are included in the programme. Despite this, obesity levels for children in Reception Year remain high. Some of you told us how the weaning parties and cooking classes are encouraging you to cook fresh food at home. We therefore

encourage many more of you to become more involved in these activities. Breastfeeding is well promoted in the centre. Those of you who choose to breastfeed continue to do so for several months and beyond, and are grateful for the advice the breastfeeding peer supporters offer. Nevertheless, breastfeeding rates for the area remain low. We have, therefore, asked the centre to work better with health professionals to increase breastfeeding rates and reduce obesity further.

We found that the centre works hard to provide you with a good range of services that meet your needs. The numbers of people using the services and activities are good and continuing to increase. Your centre is led by a committed and enthusiastic management team and staff that are well experienced and work extremely well together. The centre staff value your opinions and use your feedback, from courses and activity evaluations, well to plan future services. The advisory board includes many of the key partners and two very active parents who play a key role in decision making and offering challenge. We have asked the centre to encourage more of you to have your say and broaden the range of partners to further strengthen the advisory board and contribution to the decision-making process.

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.

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