

Inspection report for Riversley Park Children's Centre

Local authority	Warwickshire
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Reporting inspector	Susan Crawford HMI

Centre leader	Naomi Bradley
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	The Riversley Centre Clinic Drive Warwickshire CV11 5TY
Telephone number	02476 378600
Fax number	02476 378600
Email address	Graeme.clark@actionforchildren.org.uk

Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY291606 Riversley Park Sure Start Crèche

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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 senior leaders, members of staff and representatives from the local authority, partner organisations and other agencies. Discussions were held with members of the advisory board and parents.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the centre's action plans, evaluations, key policies and the centre's equality and safeguarding procedures.

Information about the centre

Riversley Park Children's Centre opened in 2001 as a Sure Start Local programme and then in April 2006 it was designated as a Phase one Children's Centre. The centre is co-located with health services. Activities are held at other sites such as the Riversley Park Early Years Unit and Hadley Mews Supported Housing. The centre operates in an area where there is diversity in terms of language, ethnicity and economic status. It serves the south east and the centre of Nuneaton town. The children's centre serves a community which is in one of the 20% most deprived areas in the country. Just over a quarter of the population are in workless families and dependent on benefits, which is above the Nuneaton average. The majority of children enter early years settings with skills, development and knowledge below those expected for their age.

Action for Children restructured the management of all children's centres in the area in September 2012. Governance of the centre lies with Action for Children and the centre's advisory board, which comprises representatives from a number of partner agencies and parents who use the centre.

The centre fulfils its core purpose by providing a range of services. Health staff deliver services from the centre including teenage midwifery clinics, health visitor support, breastfeeding support, and a well baby clinic. The centre provides parenting advice, adult training and early years advice and guidance. Specialist support for children with a wide range of disabilities is provided by speech and language specialists, occupational therapists, audiologists, school nurses and paediatricians.

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

The overall effectiveness of the centre is good. Children and families access good-quality services and support. Outcomes for users are good overall; parents say how much they enjoy their time at the centre and are highly satisfied with the provision and services delivered. Parents and carers describe the centre staff as 'friendly and approachable'. They told inspectors that they appreciate the time staff take to get to know them as individuals and how much they feel valued. Users participate enthusiastically in the large majority of activities provided. Parents' views are taken into account when planning and delivering services; most parents raise realistic suggestions for improvement and offer creative ideas for activities.

Children are extremely well safeguarded, and very robust safe working practices are employed by staff and partners who work with the centre. All users say they feel completely secure and view the centre as an extremely safe haven. This absolute trust in the centre staff ensures that families, particularly those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, benefit from a range of good-quality services that are carefully tailored to meet their particular needs. Provision for children is of high quality and well planned, and activities cover all areas of learning. As a consequence, children are well prepared to start nursery where they continue to make good progress in their learning. The centre ensures that parents have access to employment and training advice and accredited adult learning. There is historical evidence that the centre has provided some people with volunteering opportunities which have led to employment and had a positive impact on their economic and social well-being. There are, however, currently limited opportunities for parents to take on volunteer roles at the centre.

The centre is very successful in engaging families when intensive support is most needed, and the effective provision provides emotional support in times of crisis. Leaders and staff demonstrate a clear commitment to equality and the levels of user engagement reflect the demographics of the area. The centre places great importance on listening to both adults and children. As a result, groups and activities are refined to ensure that they meet their needs.

All staff share the leaders' enthusiasm, commitment and ambition for the future. Staff morale is high. As a consequence, leadership and management are good and there is good capacity for sustained improvement. Management and supervision arrangements are effective, and leaders have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development. However, these are not always challenging, well identified, specific or measurable in the centre's action plan. All leaders and managers work well together and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. While all staff have ownership of evaluating and planning their services, evaluation is often inconsistent and does not always capture the impact the activities have on improving outcomes and any long-term impact. The centre collects a wide range of data and information from courses, events, sessions and visitors to the centre. They use this information to inform the self-evaluation process and to shape services. However, some of the data are not being analysed precisely enough to fully demonstrate the effectiveness of services on improving outcomes.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve outcomes by:
 - providing opportunities for users to engage in volunteering roles in the centre.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that evaluation of activities is consistent and captures more evidence of impact upon improving outcomes in the area and over the long term
 - analysing data more precisely in order to monitor the improvement in outcomes for users
 - ensuring that targets in the action plan are specific, challenging, measurable and focused on improving outcomes.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Parents' understanding of how to keep themselves and their families healthy is improving through well-attended midwifery sessions, popular baby massage courses and informative postnatal groups. The 'Cot Gossip' sessions, led by the health visitors and family support workers for parents and babies under 12 months, are popular and offer a good level of support, information and guidance to new and young parents. The support to lead a healthy lifestyle continues when the children reach one year of

age as they move on to 'Twinkle Tots'. Here, parents and their children learn and develop new physical skills and enjoy creative play and movement to music and rhymes. Good encouraging outcomes from specific programmes for promoting parenting skills show that most parents feel more able to manage their children's behaviour appropriately and have a better understanding of child development and how to keep their children safe and free from harm as a result of their attendance. One parent said, 'I found the course very useful and interesting and will be using the strategies at home.' Many also said they had increased confidence in their parenting skills following the completion of the programme. Advice and support in relation to breastfeeding in all groups have had a good effect on mothers as the rate of sustained breastfeeding has increased by 10% in the last quarter. Data show that the proportion of mothers smoking at delivery has decreased.

Children are exceptionally well safeguarded within the centre. Staff act as excellent and highly positive role models, and children are encouraged to be safe. For example, they are gently reminded to be aware of others' space during busy activities such as 'Stay and Play'. Family support workers make referrals to the fire service and 'Healthy Living Safe at Home Project', both of which provide families with free safety visits and equipment. The family support team is an integral part of the local authority's early intervention and prevention strategy. Action for Children's safeguarding policy and the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board's interagency child protection procedures are implemented very well. Individualised support is available to meet families' needs appropriately, particularly for those subject to a child protection plan and for looked after children. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is used exceptionally well to support families and prevent the escalation of problems and the need for specialist services.

Children and parents participate enthusiastically and take-up is high for a good range of play and learning opportunities provided at the centre. Early years staff work closely together to plan sessions that meet children's individual needs and cover all areas of learning. Children's progress is recorded and shared with parents. For those children who attended the centre, data show that the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest has narrowed overall across the area from 28% in 2009 to 26% in 2011. Children behave well, and parents, staff and children treat each other with respect. Parents have good opportunities to share their ideas and influence the design and delivery of services. The parental involvement outreach worker has been instrumental in establishing a family forum which feeds into the advisory board and puts forward suggestions and requests from other parents attending groups in the community.

The extent to which parents are encouraged to access training and employment and thereby improve their families' economic well-being is good. Parents are given informative information which enables them to self-assess their learning needs which ensures that they are directed on to the most suitable courses. The centre promotes accredited courses such as 'English for speakers of other languages', ICT, literacy and numeracy courses that are run from the centre and supported by a crèche. A good proportion of parents take up these opportunities. In addition, parents are keen

to take up volunteering roles but, currently, have very few chances to develop skills and gain experience that could help them to enter the workforce.

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	1
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

How good is the provision?

2

The centre makes good use of assessment across all aspects of the staff's work with children and their families. The family support and early years teams use a range of assessment methods exceptionally well to identify needs at an early stage. Warwickshire's 'Time to Talk' strategy has been adopted by the centre, and staff have been trained to use an assessment tool to assess children's speech and language development. Good levels of supervision and safe systems ensure that staff are well supported and children's needs are closely monitored through the centre's electronic system for collating information and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). The centre has good links with the health and social care services which enable family support workers to engage with families immediately; this helps families in crisis to be safe.

The centre promotes learning and celebrates achievement well. Effective links with local schools across the area ensure consistent planning and collaborative work to improve identified outcomes for children, such as the need to develop communication, language and literacy. Activities provided are popular and highly valued by parents. For example, over a six-month period, over 4500 attendances were recorded at the various 'Stay and Play' sessions including the 'Sunshine Group' for children with disabilities. Centre staff and the special educational needs coordinator work well in partnership with other agencies to enable effective early identification of additional needs and appropriate support. The quality of the activities provided at the centre is consistently good. Informal learning within the centre is improving users' personal development.

The centre continues to learn more about the reach area and the families that it

needs to attract. Some data from the local authority and health partners are helping to move this work forward, although the centre has only recently started to focus its work on the increasing number of Eastern European families moving to the area.

Parents praise the good level of care, guidance and support received from the staff at the centre. They state that staff are approachable and friendly and that they make everyone feel welcome. Effective signposting to other services takes place frequently, and staff are beginning to record this so that they can better demonstrate improved outcomes in the long term. The quality of information, advice and guidance for parents on accessing appropriate learning programmes, and for those seeking work or help with debt and finance management is good.

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

High expectations are shared by all staff. The centre management team is highly respected by professionals, parents and across the community. The performance management of staff is rigorous, and arrangements for supervision meetings and appraisals are thorough. As a result, the effectiveness of governance and accountability arrangements is good. Regular meetings with staff have helped to identify the key strengths and weaknesses of the centre's services. Teamwork among all staff at the centre, including health professionals, is good and contributes well to the positive ethos and welcoming environment in the centre. Action plans are in place, but they do not provide a clear strategic approach as to how the centre is going to continue to tackle the needs of some target groups such as those in the most disadvantaged areas or provide opportunities for volunteering. Some data are not clear and do not always help the centre to monitor its impact on outcomes as effectively as it could. In addition, while evaluation of activities takes place, it is inconsistent and fails to capture fully the effectiveness of the programmes on offer. The centre has developed some good partnerships, in particular with services for health and social care, local schools, Hadley Mews Supported Housing, portage and Warwickshire Welfare Rights Advice Service. As a result, the centre provides good value for money.

The centre's comprehensive range of policies and procedures is embedded well and applied routinely. The centre promotes diversity which is celebrated through resources and information which reflect different faiths, cultures and backgrounds. The centre provides a good level of service for families with disabled children and

those with special educational needs who are known to them through specific groups.

Safeguarding users is a clear priority at the centre, and keeping children and families safe is at the forefront of their work. The premises are fully risk-assessed and secure. Case studies and supporting evidence from family support workers clearly show that families have received extremely well-integrated and sensitive support in times of crisis. One parent said, 'The staff here are non-judgemental, they are just here to help us.' Safeguarding arrangements comply with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board requirements. Excellent procedures for reporting child protection issues are fully understood and followed by all staff and key partners. All areas of the centre are protected by keypad systems.

User engagement is good although at the moment volunteers are not fully engaged. The centre has sought the views of parents and children through regular questionnaires and surveys. Outcomes are shared at the advisory board with all partners. The centre has good, consistent and productive partnerships with users, and users share their satisfaction of the centre's work. They feel well supported and welcomed.

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 secure improvement in outcomes	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
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

Riversley Park Sure Start Crèche is registered on the voluntary childcare register only. It was inspected on 15 June 2012 and met all of the legal requirements. The inspection of the children's centre was informed by the findings of this inspection.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Riversley Park Children's Centre on 14–15 November 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you to those of you who spoke to us to give us your views on your centre. Your views were very useful in helping us make our judgements. Like you, we found your centre to be very welcoming and friendly. It gives a high priority to safety and welfare for you and your children. Professionals work well together to make sure that they understand what you need. This is having a positive impact on your lives and those of your children.

The wide range of activities the centre provides in relation to health ensures that most of you are developing healthier lifestyles and are learning about the importance of a healthy diet. You and your families are developing an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves and your community safe, through the advice and guidance provided by the centre. The centre wants you and your children's first experience of the centre to be a positive one and works with partners to ensure that any additional support you need is individualised. This is one of the reasons why this centre is so successful in engaging with families whose circumstances make them vulnerable and in need of help and support.

The centre's activities are very good at helping your children to make progress in their learning and development, and you are learning how to support them through parenting courses and guidance. We were impressed by how much the centre has done to raise your children's knowledge and skills as they enter their first year in school. We found that some of you have been supported to obtain qualifications and gone on to gain employment. Those of you who have volunteered get good support and gain valuable skills that have enabled you to gain employment. However, currently, there are few opportunities for you to take on volunteer roles in the centre; therefore, we have asked the centre to look more closely at this aspect of its service. Centre leaders provide many opportunities for you to tell them what you think about the services provided. They ask you to evaluate the activities you attend and use your feedback to plan what activities and services the centre needs to provide you with. However, staff do not always capture how well the activities you attend are helping to improve outcomes for your families and whether they have helped you over time. We have asked the centre to improve this.

Many of you told us how well your centre has supported you in times of crisis. Those of you we spoke to thought highly of the staff at the centre. More than one of you told us how the family support workers and early years workers have supported you in many ways, both at the centre and in your home. We agree that the quality of support provided by the centre to safeguard you and your children is excellent. Centre staff and other professionals, with whom they work closely, care passionately about you and are fully committed to improving your lives.

The centre is led and managed well. An effective leadership team is supported by dedicated and knowledgeable staff. Leaders are very ambitious but do not always set clear and challenging targets regarding the issues that they need to address. We have asked leaders to look more closely at this aspect of their service. The reason that we have asked the centre to address this issue is that, once this is in place, the centre will be in a stronger position to see how well it is doing to meet all of your needs.

We are very grateful for your input to the inspection and wish you all every success in the future.

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