

Inspection report for Keystone Morice Town Children's Centre

Local authority	Plymouth
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Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Keystone Morice Town School URN 113307
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Keystone Child Care Daycare URN EY374928

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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager and staff, senior leaders of the school and nursery, representatives from the local authority, the trustees and the advisory board. They also spoke to partner agencies, such as the health services, parents and carers and other users of the centre.

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

Information about the centre

Keystone Morice Children's Centre was established as a Sure Start centre in 2005 and offers the full core purpose delivering health, education, family support and childcare. It is located in the dockland area of Plymouth next to Morice Town Primary School and Nursery. It is surrounded by estate-based housing and serves the geographical areas of Keyham, Ford, and Morice Town. It is one of two Keystone children's centres, the other being Manor Children's Centre, with whom some staff and resources are shared. The area has high levels of social need with the proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals much higher than average. Children's ability levels on entry to early years provision are below those expected for their age. An above average number of families have low incomes and depend on workless benefits.

The ethnic make up of the area is mainly White British families. The number of children under the age of five in the reach area is 959 and increasing. A high proportion of children served by the centre are identified as experiencing difficulties in their lives and a high proportion has special educational needs. The area has a high teenage conception rate and high numbers of lone parents. Keyham Community Partnership (KCP) is a charitable organisation that manages the centre on behalf of

Plymouth City Council. Governance is through KCP Board of Trustees and a multiagency advisory board that links to a parents' stakeholder group. The centre is open every weekday and services offered include breastfeeding support, baby massage, baby and toddler groups, toddler play and learn sessions, parenting courses, outreach family support and health clinics.

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 and improving. Highly committed staff are working well to provide good quality support for those who most need it. Although improvements have been made in the collection and use of locality data, these are not yet fully analysed and used rigorously to evaluate the centre's impact and plan services.

The centre is safe, welcoming and friendly. Families enjoy coming and reap benefits in their lives. Many have developed greater confidence in parenting and extended their knowledge of healthy lifestyles. Some have gained qualifications and moved into employment, others have attended well-planned training courses and become volunteers. Families trust the staff and know who to go to for help. Many have benefited from help in crisis situations, including emotional and practical support with safety issues, housing and claiming benefits. Families also value support with breastfeeding and weaning and advice about managing children's behaviour.

A good range of high quality activities are provided, such as baby massage, parent and toddler groups and short courses giving top tips for parenting. Families are well signposted to other centres nearby where further activities are available. Staff are well trained and they use the accommodation well, keeping it bright and welcoming. A good number of local families attend the centre and all are supported with services. However, the centre is not fully advertised and promoted to the most vulnerable groups.

The centre is well led on a daily basis and there are clear plans to increase

community links. Most relationships and partnerships are good but some, including the school and community groups, are not fully developed to ensure services are fully integrated to benefit the most vulnerable. Self-evaluation is good and the views of families are regularly sought and promptly acted upon. Parents and carers are involved in the advisory group and regularly have their say in the running of the centre.

Well-targeted provision, designed to meet the needs of the community, such as increasing access to learning, promotion of healthy lifestyles and practical support with finances, is having an increasingly positive impact on the outcomes for families. The improving outcomes and the strong commitment that leaders, managers and staff demonstrate, together with clear plans for the future, mean the centre has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Develop the promotion of equality and diversity to outstanding levels by:
 - increasing the promotion of services, especially to vulnerable groups
 - making increasingly effective use of diverse images in visual displays, including wider promotion of different cultures.
- Sharpen the analysis and use of data to fully monitor outcomes for the most vulnerable groups and inform the planning of future services.
- Develop partnerships with the school and community groups to an even higher level so that services are fully integrated and all partners are highly engaged with the work of the centre.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Child obesity levels in the area are high, but families are learning about healthy eating and improving their lifestyles through good health promotion displays and a wide range of activities that promote lifestyle changes. These include 'Henry' courses, active sessions for toddlers, and a recipe challenge that promotes healthy eating. Support for breastfeeding is good and breastfeeding rates are improving. Most families engage well with health services and many mums-to-be attend antenatal sessions at the centre. Families report their mental health has improved.

Families and children say they feel safe at the centre. Systems for safeguarding are well managed and good standards of safety are observed in monitoring who comes to the building. Safeguarding children is a priority and families learn how to keep themselves safe. Parents appreciate the safety workshops on accidents within the home and firework safety. Children are kept safe through the home safety assessment visits by family support workers. Of the 62 parents who have received assessments, there are 40 that have resulted in equipment installations. Children are safeguarded well by the centre's involvement in child protection plans, and with the

Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process that has led to increased sharing and recording of information between agencies. For example, children in one family were helped to return home to a safe environment.

The centre has a good focus on learning. Children and families enjoy coming to the centre, develop resilience and learn new skills. They become confident and independent learners and increase their self-esteem. One parent said, 'I have learnt a lot about parenting and I met new friends, I don't feel so alone now.' The centre is successfully contributing to increasing the numbers of children achieving well at school, and the achievement gap between the lowest 20% and the rest is closing.

Parents and volunteers become more self-assured and take an active role in running groups that model and promote positive behaviour. Families attending the centre learn the importance of respect for one another and are supported in becoming positive role models for their children. Parents become confident to share their views on the running of the centre through a range of methods, including use of the suggestion box, and through attending stakeholder groups and the advisory board.

A small, but increasing, number of parents have been supported well to access further education, gain skills and move into employment. One mum has gained employment at the nursery and two student social workers have gained employment as family support workers. Staff encourage parents to take up training programmes that promote literacy and numeracy. Parents' needs are assessed carefully and the training is adapted to meet their needs. Families have improved their housing situation and economic stability through help with completing forms and understanding benefits available. One mum said, 'The advice about money and housing has been brilliant.'

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre is increasingly responsive to the needs of the community and involves the community well in determining future activities. Although registrations have increased from vulnerable groups, there is still room for improvement in the way services are advertised and promoted to these families. Staff have been instrumental in initiating sensitive assessments of those families in most need and in providing and locating vital help. The breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs meet the needs of families well and enhance the nursery and school provision. Bespoke support programmes are provided where a need is identified, for example the Branching Out course for those experiencing domestic abuse. All parents are very enthusiastic about the centre and range of activities. One parent reported, 'I really enjoy seeing my child play with other children, it gets us out of the house and we learn new things to do together.'

Opportunities to learn and develop are good. Sessions are structured well and enable both parents and children to learn and grow in confidence. Each child is allocated a key worker and parents appreciate the pictorial learning journals of their children's learning and development. Parents are actively encouraged to volunteer and currently three are being supported through a well-established training programme. Volunteers grow in confidence and their achievements are celebrated well so that the centre is developing a skilled volunteer workforce. Parents benefit from the training on curriculum vitae writing, use of computers, interview skills and budgeting techniques. One mum commented, 'I never thought I would be able to get qualifications but the staff make it all in my reach and I enjoy it.'

Families value the supportive outreach service that makes a real difference to their lives. Clear advice and guidance are readily available to all who come to the centre and drop-in sessions are offered so that no one has to wait for the help they need. Good support is provided for families who have experienced domestic abuse and for those with parents who suffer from agoraphobia. Staff have a 'can do' attitude and find out what they need to know to support families well. Families have benefited from the arrangement of crisis loans and access to food banks in times of need. Family support workers are able to provide practical and emotional support for families attending clinics and health appointments and also guidance for those who struggle with completion of forms.

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

Governance of the centre is complex, but well understood. Contractual arrangements are clear, with the outcomes monitored by the local authority through regular meetings. The chief executive of Keyham Community Partnership provides strong oversight and support for the staff. Managers have a good understanding of the community and strategic links with the school are good. The advisory board meets regularly, is well managed and produces clear reports for the board of trustees. The level of challenge is good and all involved are committed to continuous improvement. Day-to-day oversight of the centre is led by the centre manager and is good. The centre is welcoming and safe and its resources are used efficiently and effectively to provide good value for money and improve outcomes.

Self-evaluation involves families and staff well. It is accurate and inspectors agree with the centre's view of its own effectiveness. Activities are evaluated regularly and good quality reports are provided which are accessible to the public. There is a good development plan that contains actions planned on a timescale to make further improvements. Although better quality data are being collected, the analysis and use of this information are not as sharp as they could be in monitoring the impact of the centre's work on outcomes for the most vulnerable groups and in planning future services to meet their needs even more closely.

The centre is inclusive and welcoming to all. Great Start, for new parents, is held in the evening and weekends and some sessions have been made available to dads. Visits are made in the community when needed and different cultures are regularly celebrated. Staff work hard to ensure children and parents with disabilities have their needs met. Increasing numbers of teenage parents, fathers and lone parents attend the centre. However, there is room to extend even further the centre's role in promoting equality and diversity, including making vulnerable groups more aware of the services on offer.

Safeguarding and early intervention are given a high priority throughout the work of the centre. The designated person for safeguarding is a qualified and registered social worker. Staff are well trained and appropriate procedures are in place to manage safeguarding concerns. A comprehensive training pack is issued to all new staff and recruitment procedures and criminal record checks comply with government requirements. Safeguarding conferences are held regularly at the centre and staff contribute well to these and work closely with social care workers. A weekly Team Around The Family meeting supports families well and encourages multi-agency working. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly and any actions required are addressed promptly.

Relationships between partners are generally good, well understood and effectively managed. Close links with many partners including the nursery, health professionals, other children's centres, University of Plymouth, Plymouth women's refuge and adult

education providers bring many benefits to the services offered. Where partnership working is close it produces improved outcomes, and community events such as Fun Days and Play in the Park promote social cohesion well. The partnership with the university is particularly good and learning placements are provided for the student social workers, who work well with the families. The centre now employs several students and one has been promoted. However, partnerships with the school and community groups are not yet fully developed so that partners are fully engaged and services fully integrated.

Families are put at the core of the centre's work. Opportunities for families to get involved have increased and more of them feel able to have their say, evaluate the effectiveness of services and partake fully in discussions, as well as contributing to comment books, monthly forum groups, and activity evaluations. The majority of families are very satisfied with the services. The centre strives to involve parents in each part of its work and is increasingly reaching out to engage those that have not previously been involved. Parents have the opportunity to take part in decision-making processes, for example 10 parents assisted with the recent recruitment process for a community champion.

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	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	2

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

Not applicable

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Keyham Morice Town Centre on 14 and 15 of February 2013. We judged the centre as good overall.

Staff are working well to ensure services are provided that meet your needs. There is a strong commitment to improving the centre and providing good quality support for those who most need it, especially in times of crisis.

During our visit, we inspected your centre's plans for the future and many documents, including your evaluations of activities. We spoke to a wide range of agencies that work with the centre, as well as staff, members of the advisory board, trustees of Keyham Community Partnership, school staff and representatives from the local authority and health service. We visited activities including the volunteer programme, Tumbly Tots, a parent group, breastfeeding support, Caterpillars, and spoke to many families using the centre.

Thank you for your participation in the inspection. It was really helpful to have your views and hear how positive you feel about the quality of the services offered and how supportive and friendly the staff are. You have told us that you feel safe at the centre and how the strong promotion of safety, both at the centre and in your homes, helps you to keep your children safe.

You have told us the centre is welcoming and friendly and that you enjoy your involvement and see the benefits. For example, many of you have developed greater confidence in parenting and extended your knowledge of healthy eating. Some of you have gained qualifications and others have become volunteers through helpful training courses. You trust the staff and know who to go to for help. A number of you has benefited from help with training, employment and practical support with housing and claiming benefits. You also value the support with breastfeeding, weaning and advice about managing children's behaviour.

A good range of high quality activities are provided, such as baby massage, parent and toddler groups, and short courses giving top tips for parenting. Families are well signposted to other centres nearby. Staff are well trained and they use the accommodation well, keeping it bright and welcoming. A good number of local

families do attend the centre, but to ensure the services are reaching those most in need we have asked the centre to promote its services more widely and ensure the most vulnerable families know it is a welcoming centre for them.

The centre is well led on a daily basis and there are clear plans being acted upon to develop community links. Many partnerships are already good but to fully bring together services to benefit you we have asked that partnerships with the school and local community groups are further strengthened. The centre evaluates its services well and is keen to continue to ask your views to help them improve further.

The local authority has provided some useful statistical information to enable the centre to plan its activities; however, there is always room for improvement and so we have asked that more effective use is made of data so that the centre can check how well it is doing.

The strong commitment that leaders, managers and staff demonstrate, the impact they have already had on many families, together with good plans for the future, mean the centre is in a good position to continue to improve. We hope that in the future even more parents and children will attend and benefit from the services.

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