

# Inspection report for Knaresborough Children's Centre

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Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	407010
Inspection dates	13 - 14 March 2013
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Manor Early Years Pre-School URN 400393

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

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

## Information about the centre

Knaresborough Children's Centre is a phase two centre which opened in December 2007 and fulfils the core purpose in its services. It is managed by the local authority and based on the same site as the local authority children's social care team, a health visiting team, and the Manor Early Years Pre-School. The linked provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements. The childcare provision was last inspected in February 2013. The report of this inspection is available on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The majority of children live in areas within the 70% least deprived in the country with small pockets of greater deprivation. It provides services from the main centre and through five other locations within the local area.

A total of 1185 children under five years live within the area. The number of children attending school that are known to be eligible for free school meals is low. Approximately 17% of the children in the area are living in households where no-one is working and whose families are in receipt of benefits. A very large majority of families within the area served by the centre are of White British heritage. Typically most children's levels of skill on entry to early years provision is appropriate for their age.

The centre provides a wide range of supporting services, incorporating outreach and home visiting, health clinics and support, parenting courses, volunteering opportunities and workshops. Governance of the centre is overseen by a steering group made up of representatives from the local community, professional agencies and parents. The centre has a team of staff comprising a full-time manager, a reception and administration officer, two parent support advisors and three early years workers, one of whom has a supervisory role.

## 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

A large majority of families use the services provided by Knaresborough Children's Centre. The centre has a strong reputation for meeting needs and providing very effective support. Due to good leadership, the outcomes for families in the area have improved year-on-year as the centre has become increasingly well established. The centre has strong partnerships with other organisations to provide well-integrated services. Families who use the centre's services receive good care and support from the highly motivated and experienced staff. Its capacity for further improvement is good.

Staff and steering group members have a good understanding of the needs of the local communities. They make sure the centre offers a broad and interesting range of services which is matched well to those needs, such as support for families with disabled children. Outreach work and the bespoke support provided for families from different target groups are good. However, the centre leaders have correctly identified a need to increase further the number of families from isolated rural areas using the centre's services. An increasing number of fathers are involved with the centre's activities, but the centre does not routinely receive details from key partners about any Traveller children who might benefit from its services. In contrast, support for mothers experiencing postnatal depression is particularly effective because of the good partnership working with the midwife and health visiting team.

The centre is making a significant contribution to preparing children well for school. Staff promote inclusion well and any barriers to participation in activities are quickly identified and

removed. Support for childminders and childcare settings is good. Staff identify families' needs precisely and at the earliest opportunity. They have high ambition that all families should be empowered to improve their lives. The centre works very effectively with partners and volunteers in the areas of greatest need to deliver well-targeted services. For example, in areas of rural isolation the centre has established 'ambassadors' who volunteer to keep their communities fully informed about the centre's services. Children make good gains in their learning from their starting points.

Safeguarding arrangements are very effective, and users and staff feel safe at the centre. Staff and volunteers are well trained in keeping children and vulnerable adults safe and have a good understanding of how to respond to concerns about safety and welfare. Activities to promote healthy eating and active lifestyles are highly effective and have contributed to the low obesity rates.

Breastfeeding rates are above the national average and improving further. Professionally trained and experienced volunteers work increasingly effectively with health staff to provide good support for mothers. The centre has introduced a variety of initiatives to promote breastfeeding and these are popular with families. The centre has a thorough approach to collecting and acting upon evaluation evidence to help shape services. High quality, accurate information and data about the families who use the centre are collated diligently and are used increasingly effectively by managers to plan delivery and review the effectiveness of the centre's work.

The centre is an attractive and inviting place where families and staff make very good use of the high quality resources. One parent told inspectors, 'The centre staff are very supportive and give me lots of encouragement. I have become much more aware of the importance of talking to my baby.' An increasing number of parents receive active encouragement to attend education and training courses and make good progress. The centre is a hive of purposeful activity. However, at times is so busy that car parking spaces for disabled drivers are inaccessible.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase the number of families who use the centre's services through more effective outreach work, particularly in the isolated rural communities.
- Improve arrangements for identifying and meeting the needs of Traveller communities.
- Ensure blue-badge holders can access the centre by making sure appropriate car parking space remains available for their needs.

## How good are outcomes for families?

2

Learning and development is the central feature of almost all of the activities and services available. The centre has a strong commitment to helping all individuals develop their skills and become successful learners. Staff work very effectively with early years consultants to continually improve the quality of activities to ensure learning and development are successfully promoted. Children make good gains in their learning and this ensures they get off to a positive start at school. The percentage gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest is lower than the national average. An increasing number of parents are improving outcomes for their families by successfully completing parenting courses and learning about the importance of encouraging children's play which promotes physical development and language skills.

Staff give good attention to providing high-quality support and information which families use to help them choose healthier lifestyles. This includes; dental care, smoking cessation, sexual health, dealing with domestic violence, and parenting and general health. A team of speech and language therapists visit the centre each month and promote communication and language successfully. The centre places a strong emphasis on promoting the emotional health and mental well-being of all users including those with circumstances that make them more vulnerable. One parent told inspectors, 'Coming to the centre on Tuesdays is a major part of our week. It gives me a focus and reminds me there are so many enjoyable things to do with my time.'

Staff have a good understanding of how to keep children and adults safe. They have robust awareness of child protection procedures and make a significant contribution through their partnership work and in using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). The needs of the most vulnerable children, such as those previously subject to a child protection plan are quickly assessed and effective packages of support are put in place for the whole family which lead to improved outcomes. Families experiencing domestic violence are supported well because the centre works particularly effectively with key partners to keep them safe.

Parents feel that their views are listened to and acted upon by staff through evaluations of activities and satisfaction surveys. They are encouraged to make a positive contribution to

the centre and the wider community by becoming members of the parents' forum and through their involvement on the steering group. Parents say they feel valued by staff and enjoy attending the centre and having fun as they get involved with the activities available. A special group for fathers is held once a month on Saturdays and has increasing attendance. Young parents receive good support and benefit from the very close links staff have with youth workers and voluntary agencies.

The centre provides effective support to help promote families' economic well-being, for example, through accurate advice about benefits, training, support with job applications, voluntary work or through achieving accredited qualifications. Some gain qualifications and return to work. The centre monitors individual progress well. There are effective partnership arrangements with Jobcentre Plus staff which meets individual needs well. One parent told inspectors, 'I started coming to the centre when my daughter was a baby and soon I became a volunteer helping out in the training kitchen. I am now training to be an early years worker at college and have a placement at the centre.' This has increased my confidence.'

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>2</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>2</b>

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

<b>2</b>
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The centre has a very strong reputation for providing highly effective services and is very popular. It is located centrally in Knaresborough and is easily accessible to the majority of local communities. The centre is becoming increasingly effective in involving families from remote rural areas but this work is not yet fully developed. In times of crisis the centre has arranged transport to enable isolated families to attend the centre. Staff have good experience and understand the needs of local families well. There are clear programmes in place that effectively promote the health and social well-being of users, including a strong

emphasis on encouraging families to find solutions to problems. One parent commented, 'Staff know how to empower you. They listen and understand what you are going through.'

Outreach and casework is given high priority and is increasingly effective because staff receive well-structured professional supervision. They use detailed case records to ensure outcomes for the most vulnerable families improve. The centre's good support for childcare providers and childminders also helps improve outcomes for more families. Parents trust staff and value the way staff are discreet and sensitive to their unique and changing circumstances. The quality of care and personal support for families has good impact because support and advice are precisely targeted to meet individual needs.

The centre promotes and provides opportunities for purposeful learning well. Activities are well planned and located and of good quality. Staff have high ambitions for users, which they reinforce by encouraging families to build on their achievements and by regularly celebrating their success with praise. The centre team works hard to provide accurate assessments, which result in services being well matched to meeting needs. However, the centre does not always receive sufficient information about families from the Traveller communities to enable a full evaluation of their needs.

The CAF process is well established and good partnerships with other agencies ensure that assessments are detailed and effective and are used to make a positive difference to improving the lives of families whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable. The centre provides a wide range of high-quality information, for example, about volunteering, domestic violence, stopping smoking, sexual health, benefits advice and adult training which is presented well and targeted to meeting the various needs of families.

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>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?**

**2**

Leadership, management and governance of the centre are good. The leadership team is dynamic and has a robust understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement for the centre. It receives very good support from the local authority and has made significant investment to develop staff expertise, strong partnerships and improve outcomes for families. The centre has a well-established steering group with good representation from partners and a clear and fast developing remit for providing both challenge and support.



There are effective strategic links between key organisations which ensure services are well-integrated and effective in meeting families' needs.

Leaders and managers have a thorough approach to improvement and this has resulted in the centre becoming more effective and successful at helping and supporting families. The self-evaluation process uses parents' evaluations and feedback very well which highlighted some of the strengths and areas for development identified by inspectors.

Partnerships with key agencies are well established and result in integrated support for local families, especially those most in need. The centre has a positive approach to supporting families with disabilities and there are good examples where this is working effectively. However, car parking arrangements for disabled drivers requires more effective monitoring to ensure access is available. Equality of opportunity and the inclusion of all children and their families are central to the centre's work. Staff are very careful to identify and then remove barriers that might prevent users from benefitting from the centre's activities and services. Everyone using the centre's services is made to feel welcome.

The centre provides good value for money. Well-integrated services ensure the centre works effectively in partnership to protect children and vulnerable adults through early intervention, inclusive practice, close cooperation between all agencies and through the CAF procedures. Families who use the centre remain safe because staff pay close attention to the clear policies and procedures for safeguarding. Local authority procedures and guidance for safe recruitment are followed closely. Managers make sure that all staff and partners have been subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check and are trained appropriately in child-protection procedures.

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

The findings from the most recent inspection of Manor Early Years Pre-School were taken into account in the outcomes section of this report.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected Knaresborough Children's Centre on 13 and 14 March 2013. We judged the centre as good overall.

We enjoyed our visit to your centre and meeting so many of you and your children and hearing your views.

The centre is well led and the manager makes sure the centre is well organised and that staff provide good opportunities for you and your children to enjoy. Many of you told us how much you value the activities provided by the centre. You told us that staff are friendly and hardworking and they give you good support, especially in times of crisis.

We found the centre to be safe and welcoming to all families with lots of interesting and enjoyable things happening. We have asked the centre to tell more families about how good the centre is so they can join the centre and benefit too.

We saw how well the centre works with other professionals, such as health staff and teachers, to make sure you develop healthy lifestyles and become successful. We were very impressed by the positive and supportive relationships you have with one another and with your children. We saw first-hand how well your children are prepared for their move to school and we saw how children confidently explore their learning environment and feel safe and secure. We were particularly impressed at all of the hard work you have put into developing the nature garden.

We found the staff to have a great deal of useful experience which they use well to offer good practical advice and emotional support to families who need it most. The centre does some things especially well, such as providing support to families with disabled children and supporting breastfeeding. We noticed the very busy car park at the centre and have asked the manager to make sure spaces for blue badge holders are used appropriately.

There are many examples of professionals from different agencies working very well together to make sure you receive the right advice and support. However, the centre does not always receive enough information about the needs of families from the Traveller communities so we have asked the centre to improve this.

Staff have a good understanding of your needs and are constantly striving to improve what they do. The centre provides an increasing number of opportunities for you to undertake education and training courses.

Thank you very much for your welcome and openness with inspectors. We enjoyed meeting you and wish you every success in the future.

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