

Netherfield Children's Centre

143 Victoria Road, Nottinghamshire, NG4 2HT

Inspection date

17–18 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:		
Access to services by young children and families		Outstanding	1
The quality of practice and services		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is an outstanding centre.

- Parents and children benefit enormously from the extensive range of activities, workshops and services provided by a committed and highly skilled team of staff and volunteers.
- High quality and well-managed resources are used to maximise the number of families who can access and benefit from the centre's services. This is helping to continually support the very large majority of families in the centre's target groups. Participation numbers accessing services are rising very well year-on-year.
- The centre has well-established and strong partnerships with other agencies, organisations, social care and health care professionals, schools and pre-school settings. Multi-agency working is a core strength. Integrated services such as these make a significant contribution to developing harmonious relationships amongst and within families, and to the social integration of the locality, as well as increasing the potential of families to secure employment.
- Families pay tribute to the staff team and the centre's coordinator. They are extremely positive about the quality of their experiences and the benefits to them and their lives, including particularly those parents and carers whose circumstances deem them most vulnerable.
- There are excellent systems and information sharing procedures and routines in place that enable staff to monitor and check the impact of services and activities on families and children.
- Centre staff are very clear about their roles and responsibilities and there are excellent procedures in place to protect the safety and welfare of children. The staff are diligent and effective in ensuring that children and parents are safe, which is a particular focus for this centre as one of its core priorities is to support families experiencing domestic violence as well as workless households and families from Black or ethnic minority backgrounds.
- There are excellent transition procedures that help young children prepare for school or the next stage of their early education. Assessments are robust and used to identify and address gaps in children's early learning or development. The centre is very effective in helping families to register and access the free entitlement for an early education for two-year-olds.
- Access to adult learning courses related to literacy are relatively lower compared with other programmes and is now, rightly, a focus for the centres next priority for improvement.
- The centre's coordinator provides strong and highly effective leadership and is supported exceptionally well by the local advisory group with clear accountability and governance provided by the Nottinghamshire Children and Families Partnership.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children’s centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors and an additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre coordinator, the local authority’s early years locality manager and the integrated services district manager. Meetings were also held with members of staff that form part of the centre’s integrated services and focus groups, members of the Nottinghamshire Children and Families Partnership and representatives of the local advisory group. Inspectors also spoke to some parents attending the centre with their children and members of the parent forum to seek their views about the impact that the centre is having on families.

The inspectors visited some activities based at the children’s centre, including some run by parent volunteers. They observed the centre’s work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Charalambos Loizou, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Megan Dauksta	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Netherfield Children's Centre is located in the Gedling district of Nottinghamshire and is approximately three miles east of Nottingham. The centre serves the Netherfield and Colwick areas and is one of eight children's centres in the Gedling district. It is a phase one centre that received its registered designation in 2006, and is located in an area that has a mixture of owner occupied, rented and local authority households. The centre serves areas of significant disadvantage and are also designated as super output areas with very high levels of social and economic deprivation and unemployment. An index of income deprivation affecting children under five shows that the large majority of children under five in the centre's reach areas are living in poverty. The income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) also shows that one in four older children under 20 years of age is living in poverty. The target areas served by the centre also include high levels of lone parents, workless households and domestic violence. The areas consist of predominantly White British families and approximately one in ten is from a range of Black and minority ethnic groups. There is also an increasing proportion of families of Eastern European heritage, the largest group mainly consisting of families of Polish heritage. In January 2013, the Nottinghamshire Children and Families Partnership (NCFP) was awarded the contract for the delivery of children's centres across Nottinghamshire and this contract commenced in June 2013. The NCFP is comprised of a consortium of three organisations; North Nottinghamshire College, Family Action and the Nottinghamshire Healthcare National Health Service Trust. A local advisory group meets to analyse and challenge the centre on its outcomes, taking into account feedback and the views of families as part of the governance of the centre.

Services are delivered mainly at the centre and there are a range of partners and volunteers that provide other services at various locations for families. The centre's coordinator is full time and has been managing the centre since April 2013. The centre is open all year and, except for bank holidays, is open for five days a week. This is the centre's first inspection.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities for parents and adults to access further education, and particularly that which focuses on basic skills to contribute towards improving adult literacy levels in the areas served by the centre.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Outstanding

- The centre provides a wide range of services that promote outstanding outcomes for children and families. The involvement of highly skilled family support workers, supported by health and midwifery professionals, provide an excellent range of ante-natal clinics, breast-feeding programmes and access to specialised social work or multi-agency safeguarding and child protection support.
- Very effective and accessible speech and language programmes and workshops, such as 'Toddler Talk', 'Every Child a Talker' and 'Home Talk', are successful in enabling parents to support their children's language development.
- The centre uses innovative and highly efficient checking and data retrieval systems to identify and register families who need the most support. This includes families experiencing domestic violence or those in workless households. As a result, the very large majority of registered families access the centre's services and the trend of registration continues to rise.
- Family support programmes are very successful in providing 'new birth visits' that offer extended services and access to health advice and guidance. Effective parenting support, including an intensive and highly effective programme, such as the 'Incredible Years', offers parents essential guidance and links to other services that make a real difference to families. As one very satisfied parent commented, 'This has turned my life around.'
- Leaders and staff in the centre's focus groups of speech and language, employability and family support, have established excellent partnership arrangements to support both universal services and targeted families. The support for lone parents, for example, offers opportunities for them to volunteer in the centre and this is remarkably successful as it enables these and other parents to contribute and have a voice through the parent forum.
- Parents of Black and minority ethnic backgrounds are helped to access early years provision for their children, with, for example, specialist translation services for families of Polish heritage and parents who speak Punjabi, enabling them to continue accessing services and pre-school settings or schools. This is also helping families to contact local employment services and agencies to strive towards securing work or employment on a regular basis.
- Attendance and revisiting rates compare very favourably with local averages, with an increasing number of families registering for the national free entitlement to early years education for two-year-olds. These numbers compare very well with district and county-wide numbers.
- Very effective support and contact is made with teenage parents to help their child nurturing skills and enables the centre to access families to support babies from birth to six months. Effective child-minding, crèche facilities and nurturing sessions managed by volunteer parents enable the large majority of registered families to access services and to keep up their attendance once registered.
- Although adult literacy rates are well below average in the areas served by the centre, the employability focus group is increasing access to basic skills courses through links with adult education services. Nevertheless, leaders and centre staff recognise that more is still needed to contribute to improving adult literacy locally. The centre has been more successful with improving access rates to courses aimed at improving adult numeracy skills.

The quality of practice and services

Outstanding

- Support for the most vulnerable families and children is coordinated extremely well through highly specialised multi-agency teams and focus groups that are tasked to monitor and track the impact of services on each family. Parents and carers report high levels of satisfaction and are particularly pleased that the centre improves their parenting skills and confidence, as well as providing emotional stability for parents who need the most support and guidance.
- There is an excellent record of support and intervention provided by family support workers, social work agencies and health workers. Focus group leaders and the centre's coordinator are determined and effective in pursuing and identifying the most appropriate support for each family. This is especially effective when working with the most vulnerable in the centre's target groups, for example, those families experiencing domestic violence or those who are at risk of falling into financial debt.
- Parents and carers are improving their knowledge of healthy eating very well and make good progress learning to prepare a balanced diet through regular and well-attended 'Be Healthy' programmes and activities. For example, 'Cook and Eat' workshops, 'Weaning' sessions with young children and babies, and a range of other activities or facilities, such as the centre acting as a 'healthy vitamins collection point', contribute to the well-being and health of families. The data shows that services like these make a significant contribution to reducing obesity rates amongst young children in the local area.
- Partner schools and settings, rightly, comment very positively about the impact that the centre is having on children under five. The centre has highly effective and well-established partnerships with early years settings and primary schools that ensure a smooth transition for children under five when preparing for school or the next stage of their early education.
- Records of children's progress at the centre are shared with other settings and schools and these synchronise very well with each setting's own records as they relate to age-related child development measures. Consequently, schools and settings are able to maximise children's initiation to the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, assessments of children's speech and language development and 'learning journeys' show that schools are able to build effectively on the progress made by children who attended the centre.
- Adult and family learning programmes delivered by partner organisations and colleges are usually of good quality although there is still more to do to contributing to improving local adult literacy levels. Each focus group or team in the centre adapts activities and sessions to make sure that they are effective in meeting the needs of parents and children. Staff receive regular feedback from families so they can continually improve and modify future sessions and optimise their impact on participants.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Outstanding

- The centre's coordinator and staff are highly committed, very well qualified and dedicated to meeting the needs of families. All staff set high expectations and this is reflected in the professional and warm welcome that families receive when they first enter the reception area.
- The local authority, through the Nottinghamshire Children and Families Partnership (NCFP), produces clear and accurate data to set ambitious targets. The centre coordinator sets high expectations for her teams and focus groups and uses data productively to analyse and adapt the services offered to meet the individual needs of each family.

- Line managers and staff hold regular and relevant meetings to check that professional development and training needs are delivered, and that the work undertaken with families produces appropriate action points that can be followed up. This accounts for the very good success rates in reaching out to those families that would otherwise be reluctant to register with the centre.
- The centre's improvement plan provides a clear route map for sustained improvement. It is accessible to all staff so they understand their core purpose and the targets they are aiming for to continually improve outcomes for families and children.
- Self-evaluation is effective in that it is based on measurable outcomes that are informed by data that compare the centre's performance with locality and county-wide measures. Centre staff have made some modest evaluations of their performance, reflecting their high expectations and aspirations for the centre's work and the way forward.
- The centre coordinator works with the NCFP and local advisory group to ensure that the centre continues to improve on its previous best performance, recognising for example, that more is now needed to improve adult literacy levels in the local area.
- The governance and management of the centre have established clear lines of communication that enables families to contribute. The 'You said it, we did it' means of gathering parents' views is just one of many examples that help the staff act on the views of parents. Members of the parent forum told HMI that it is through their work that they are able to volunteer and encourage other parents and families to register and contribute, resulting in increasing access and registration rates.
- Procedures to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and vulnerable adults are robust. Staff are very knowledgeable and act promptly to contact children's social care partners if they have concerns about a family or if there is a need of more specialist support.
- The staff are very well trained to assess the needs of families. Case records and reviews from child protection plans, for example, show that staff are very clear about what action has been taken, what the response was from the family and what needs to happen next. The centre uses the common assessment framework very well to plan and coordinate the most appropriate support for families. Case records are regularly updated and staff are aware of the need for relevant partners to be involved in working with families who are subject to a child protection plan. Safeguarding and staff vetting procedures meet all requirements and are regularly updated and checked by leaders.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for children and their families and as a result inequalities are reducing rapidly and gaps are closing.
Grade 2	Good	Practice enables most children and their families to access good quality services that improve children's wellbeing and achieve the stated outcomes for families.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	Performance is not as good as it might reasonably be expected to be in one or more key areas.
Grade 4	Inadequate	The needs of children and families in its area are not being met and/or the leaders and managers are not providing sufficient challenge to bring about improvement to the quality of services.

Children's Centre details

Unique reference number	80672
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	434508
Managed by	The Nottinghamshire Children and Families Partnership

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	830
Centre leader	Amanda Jobling
Date of previous inspection	Not Previously Inspected
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