

26 September 2008

Mr Holt  
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Dear Mr Holt

Ofsted survey inspection programme – The impact of wrap around care within children’s centres on children and families

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, children, parents and representatives from other groups, during my visit on 25 September 2008 with Gillian Noble, Inspection Team Manager, Children’s Directorate.

As outlined in my initial letter, the focus of the visit was on the impact of wrap around care on children and their parents and families.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the centres visited, but individual centres will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements we made included: interviews with representatives of the services based in the centre and with parents, the manager and staff, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observations of sessions with children in the centre and in the linked Montessori Nursery.

The overall effectiveness of the impact of wrap around care on children and their parents and families was judged to be satisfactory.

#### Achievement and standards

The impact of wrap around care on children and parents is satisfactory.

- Standards are well below those expected for children of this age but children settle well in their classes and quickly begin to catch up.
- Children’s behaviour is good; they understand what is expected in the centre.
- Easily accessed outdoor learning ensures children have fun and thoroughly enjoy their exploration so their physical and social development is enhanced.

- The joint parent and staff reviews of children's progress together has a positive impact on parents' understanding of how to further support their children's achievement at home.
- Where the family programmes are well established, such as the Triple P parenting programme, they are effective in helping parents to assist their children's social development.
- Children in the linked nursery and those with the associated childminders learn and develop very well.

### Quality of provision

The range and quality of wrap around care is satisfactory and is appropriately focused on identified local needs.

- Family learning includes helpful courses to improve parenting skills, language and numeric skills as well as providing guidance and help on finding employment.
- Parents especially appreciate the individual help they receive when they ask for it in relation to their child.
- The breakfast session gives children a good start to the day and they come in cheerfully to their classrooms. Holiday provision is available or parents are signposted on to other local programmes.
- The kitchen for parents and children provides a good stimulus to encourage cooking skills and healthy eating.
- Links with health professionals are underdeveloped overall. For example, speech therapists no longer attend the centre.
- Plans exist to extend the range of provision for families but current restrictions on space limit what can be done immediately.
- Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully included and are well supported.
- The newly established home visits ensure centre staff establish good links with parents and understand what children already know and can do.
- A close watch is kept on the youngest and most vulnerable children in the centre to see what additional support and services might be suitable.

### Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management of wrap around care are satisfactory.

- The centres' management structure has been recently reviewed. The new team has made a good start on sorting out the challenges it inherited and has established a clear direction for future development. The governance of the centre is in transition at present.
- The monitoring of children's development and progress is consistent across the provision and effectively tracks progress. However, children's future progress in their primary schools is not known.

- The links with established partners are good, for example those with the childminder network.
- The centre's self-evaluation is comprehensive and highlights clearly what still needs to be done but there is less clarity in the evaluation of the wrap around care provided for families and deadlines for future developments are not sufficiently clear.
- It is not clear if all hard to reach local families have been identified and as the centre is oversubscribed management needs to be vigilant to ensure that the most vulnerable access the limited services.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed included:

- set deadlines for the development of the additional family services including the midwifery and speech and language service
- obtain fully comprehensive data on local births so that all vulnerable families are located and are consistently prioritised for services
- complete the review of the centre's governance.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop provision at your centre.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Mo Roberts  
Her Majesty's Inspector