

# Inspection report for Tarner Children's Centre

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Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	366352
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Reporting inspector	Wendy Ratcliff HMI

Centre governance	Local Authority
Centre leader	Siobhan Hier
Date of previous inspection	None
Centre address	Ivory Place, Brighton BN2 9QE
Telephone number	01273 294090
Fax number	N/A
Email address	Siobhan.hier@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Tarnerland Nursery School

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
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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 is the first inspection of the centre. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and a Senior Early Years Inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, the health lead, representatives of the advisory board, staff, local authority representatives and partner agencies. They had informal discussions with parents and carers and with children, and visited the childcare provision at Tarnerland Nursery School.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including key policies, the centre's self-evaluation documents, its develop plan, evaluations of services and data about people who use the centre.

The Tarnerland Nursery School was last inspected in November 2010 and judged as outstanding. The inspection report can be found on the Ofsted website at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## Inspection judgements

**Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

## Information about the centre

Tarner Children's Centre was designated in September 2005 and is run directly by the local authority. This is a health led centre, which provides the full range of core offer services. There is an advisory board, which works in collaboration with another local children's centre (Cornerstone Children's Centre). This provides a wide membership including staff, parents/carers, stakeholders, multi-disciplinary

professionals and local authority representatives. A parent voice forum feeds into the advisory board.

The centre is a refurbishment of two existing buildings: a local authority family centre and a Primary Care Trust health library. The centre has developed from a Sure Start Local Programme. There is lift access to all floors and an entrance from the street to the first floor as the centre is situated on a hill. The centre also houses the 'Friend's Centre', an adult education organisation on the top floor. Health services such as antenatal, post natal and child health clinics are run directly from the centre. The centre provides crèche facilities when required so parents can access courses. The Tarnerland Nursery School, which is run by the school's governing body, provides the Early Years provision. Childcare is available from 8.00am to 6.00pm and is registered on the Early Years register.

There are around 1200 children under five living in the centre's catchment area, with around 28% children aged 0 to 4 living in poverty. Near to the centre is temporary housing for homeless families. The centre serves one of the 30% deprived areas in the country. The local population is mostly White British with smaller percentages of other minority ethnic groups. An increasing number of families in the centre's area speak English as an additional language. In 2010, 52% of children in the centre's catchment area scored at least 78 points across the Foundation Stage Profile (FSP), with communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development being the lowest scoring areas.

The centre is open all year round on weekdays from 9.00am to 5.00pm. The centre opens on a Saturday for 'See Your Baby Thrive', a targeted antenatal clinic and on the first Saturday of the month for a fathers group.

**Overall effectiveness**

**The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community**

<b>1</b>
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**Capacity for sustained improvement**

**The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management**

<b>1</b>
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## Main findings

Tarner Children's Centre provides an excellent range of high quality integrated services for the children and adult users within its community. The centre is successful for many reasons. Centre leadership and governance are outstanding as leaders at all levels, including the advisory board and officers from the local authority, have clear objectives to drive forward improvement. All staff share this drive as well as others associated with the centre. Teamwork is strong and together staff and leaders demonstrate an excellent capacity to improve.

All users of the centre value the welcoming, safe environment. The centre provides outstanding care, guidance and support for users, reflected in one user's comment: 'The centre is like my family and friend.' They confirm they feel extremely well supported particularly when feeling vulnerable or in times of crisis. Parents commented that 'health visitors recognise when you need support before you realise you need it', for example when identifying possible signs of postnatal depression. Safeguarding procedures are extremely robust. The centre's premises are extremely safe and secure as a result of effective procedures in place and meticulous monitoring to minimise risks.

Exceptional partnership working with a wide range of providers, such as midwives, adult education professionals, community organisations and social care teams, is making a significant contribution to the services available to users, resulting in improved outcomes. For example, the centre works with the 'Friends Centre' to allocate crèche places to enable parents to attend courses such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The café is the 'hub' of the centre providing a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where users can meet with friends and enjoy a variety of healthy choices. One parent reported that the cook 'is the best cook in Brighton'.

Outcomes for users are good and improving. Healthy lifestyles are actively promoted and users are responding extremely well to the various health services based at the centre. Parents and carers show they are developing a clear understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy as they talk about sessions they have attended on oral health and weaning. Breastfeeding rates are high and continue to rise. Families are improving their awareness of safety in the home through the effective support of health professionals on home visits and resources that help them make their home a safer place. Children are making good progress in their communication and language skills because of input from the speech and language therapist (SALT) during the 'Chatterbox Group'. Parents and carers are learning how to boost their child's talking and communication skills. As one parent reports, 'The more you talk and the more you play, the more your child will say.' Adults thoroughly enjoy and appreciate the services provided at the centre such as 'Stepping Stones' sessions where young parents are highly engaged and explore topics such as relationships.

Users' views about the activities and courses are routinely sought and staff value these comments and act upon them. Action taken is displayed for users to see on the 'You Said, We Did' board. Such evaluations as well as a wide range of other data are gathered to help support the self-evaluation process. However, procedures for the rigorous analysis of this data are yet to be implemented in order to fully demonstrate the impact the centre's services are having on improving the outcomes for children and families.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Develop the centre's evaluation cycle to ensure all available data are more robustly analysed to enable outcomes to be explicit.

## How good are outcomes for users?

<b>2</b>
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The centre is developing systems for evaluating the impact of its work and available evidence demonstrates that the centre's work is improving and in some cases strongly improving the outcomes for its users. The promotion of healthy lifestyles and supporting emotional well-being are central to all services, resulting in strongly improving outcomes for users. New mothers respond extremely well to high quality advice about breastfeeding. As a result the prevalence of mothers breastfeeding at six to eight weeks from birth is around 86%. Specific antenatal care for teenage parents ensures they are well supported during their pregnancy resulting in no low birth weight babies being born in 2010. Parents feel staff skilfully recognise when they should access services because they are suffering from post-natal depression in order not to become isolated. The emotional well-being of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those subject to a 'team around the family' or child protection plans is positively promoted. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is used effectively to ensure those with additional needs are able to fully access services. The health visitors and early years visitors are key in this work and build trusting relationships so families feel able to engage with other professionals to access the required help.

All services within the centre ensure children stay safe. Visiting children from the Puffin Pre-School are learning how to keep themselves safe when they walk to the centre to join in 'Jump for Joy' sessions. They are learning to cross roads safely and that high visual jackets ensure they can be seen. Parents gain a good understanding of how to deal with accidents as they attend first-aid courses and are supplied with a range of helpful guidance, such as leaflets providing advice on dealing with head injuries.

Children attending the linked childcare provision are making very good progress in their learning and development. Children subject to child protection plans or in receipt of two-year-old funding access Early Years Foundation Stage sessions at settings in the immediate centre reach which are of high quality, such as Tarnerland

Nursery School. The achievement gap for these children is closing because they are well prepared for school. Users report high levels of enjoyment and value the opportunities to work with their children and develop skills such as 'signing' to help them communicate with their young children. Parents grow in confidence as a result of attending centre-based activities such as 'Triple P', where they learn how to manage their child's behaviour. Parents attend a range of adult learning courses via the 'Friends Centre' where they benefit from gaining qualifications and increasing aspirations for them and their children. The centre staff are not routinely tracking the progress of all adults who attend adult learning courses, but users told inspectors how they have accessed services at the centre, attended training and gone on to be volunteers at the children's centre or other community groups.

The centre is an integral part of the community and all users treat each other with respect. Parents and carers highly value the opportunity to meet families who share the same background and to meet new friends at the bilingual families group (BFG). Parents and carers are asked to express their views in a variety of ways including questionnaires and by using a suggestion box. Parents and carers represent the different views of users through participating in the parent voice 'Big Wednesday' and parents and carers are represented on the advisory group. Users on the parent voice feel highly valued and recently achieved a celebration award for their volunteering. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to share their views.

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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 users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users 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 are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>	<b>2</b>

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

<b>1</b>
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Contact with centre users begins with universal health services and as a result the centre is reaching all its local families. Staff are highly effective at sensitively assessing the individual needs and skilfully identify those who are more vulnerable and require targeted services. Excellent use is made of assessment information within both the centre and the nursery school to provide well-targeted support packages for children and families. Individual education plans (IEPs) for children who

access different settings are now shared to ensure a consistent approach. The Common Assessment Framework procedures are used extremely well to record concerns and target specific support to the individual needs of children on child protection plans.

Care, guidance and support are a particular strength of the children’s centre due to the range of high quality services and sensitive way in which staff assess individuals’ needs. This is highly valued by users. They feel extremely well supported and build trusting relationships. Users are confident to approach staff when they experience a crisis. Home visits are very effective at engaging those users who are harder to reach; this ensures that the most vulnerable families access relevant services. Staff show users high levels of respect and are sensitive to the fact that users may wish to access some information in private. They display information regarding personal issues such as sexual health within the toilet areas so users can read it without being observed by others.

Staff adapt services to meet both individual and community needs. They regularly celebrate achievements of users, boosting their confidence and encouraging them to participate more. For example, teenage parents receive a certificate to celebrate when they are successful at breastfeeding their baby at one week, one month and so on. One teenage parent has become a peer mentor and is now providing support and guidance for other teenage parents. Parents express their satisfaction with the range of services provided at the centre. The toy library run by the Early Childhood Project provides an invaluable resource for parents and carers. Parents and carers report how their children are able to spend time in the toy library accessing different resources, which they can then borrow. One parent said, ‘I borrow Italian story books, which I wouldn’t have access to otherwise.’ Parents report how some sessions have become so popular, such as ‘Baby and You’ on a Tuesday that when the sessions are full users have to be turned away. The staff regularly review their services to ensure they meet users’ needs and are exploring ways to ensure there is a good balance of universal services and targeted support in order to prevent potentially vulnerable families being turned away from sessions as they are full. The centre runs smaller and ‘booked’ groups to target specific users such as the post-natal depression group and ‘Stepping Stones’ a group for young parents. Data collected show that between July and September 2010, 82% of targeted children accessed services.

The centre staff have used creative ways to engage fathers, such as ‘Touchline Dads’. These sessions help fathers to express themselves, build relationships with their partners and children and to develop parenting skills. For some this has resulted in them accessing adult learning and gaining qualifications, for example in community work. One father reports that these sessions have ‘changed my life’.

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

<b>1</b>
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A strong sense of teamwork exists among all staff. They are enthusiastic, motivated and show a commitment to improving outcomes for users and striving towards high quality services. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Procedures for performance management are thorough and used well to develop the skills and expertise of centre staff. Staff value the supervision and professional development opportunities they receive. A recent whole staff training day provided the opportunity to focus on the centre's vision and how this can be effectively represented for all those who access services.

Governance arrangements are excellent and clearly understood by all parties. The integration between the local authority and health services is working exceptionally well and is having an extremely positive impact on the quality services provided. The advisory group provides the centre with challenge and support. Leaders and managers have clear objectives to drive forward improvement. For example, the centre proposes to deliver child accident awareness training to raise awareness of hazards and accident prevention in order to help to reduce the number of attendances at hospital.

Self-evaluation is supported by some evidence of the impact the centre is having on the lives of its users. For example, the centre is gathering evidence of impact through some case studies. The process for evaluation involves others who work and are engaged in the centre, identifies priorities for improvement and has clear links to strategic planning. Senior staff gather a wide range of data to support the development of the centre's effectiveness and seek the views of users through a range of evaluation processes. Outcomes for all users are not systematically tracked and data are not analysed robustly in order to fully demonstrate explicitly the effectiveness of the centre in improving the lives of families and their children. For example, the centre does not collect information on the number of adults achieving qualifications and any impact this is having on their economic well-being.

The centre is successful in promoting equality and respect for diversity. This is evident in sessions such as 'Jump for Joy' where children and adults from different backgrounds come together to play and talk. There is a commitment to providing an inclusive environment and removing barriers. For example, interpreters are used to enable those who speak English as an additional language to access services and crèche places provided in order for parents and carers to access courses such as ESOL.

Safeguarding procedures are extremely robust and vetting and recruitment practices rigorously applied. Highly effective procedures are in place to monitor children's safety and well-being. Staff exemplify high quality practice as they see safeguarding at the heart of the centre's work. Outstanding interagency partnership ensures excellent support is given to families in times of crisis. The partnership between the centre and the Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Protect is symbiotic.

The quality of resources is excellent and these are very effectively deployed to provide a fully integrated package for service users. Very effective use is made of the accommodation at the centre and staff are deployed extremely well to support users when accessing services. For example, parents and carers attending the group for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, 'Sweet Peas', highly value the input from an early years worker and volunteer. They provide a range of engaging activities for the children, which enable parents and carers to talk to and support each other.

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision</b>	<b>2</b>

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copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Tarner Children's Centre on 3 and 4 March 2010. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Your children's centre provides you and your children with an excellent range of high quality services. The centre is successful for many reasons. We found that the care, guidance and support that staff offer you are outstanding. Many of you told us that the staff support you well and are always ready to listen. Staff work well as a team and are doing their best to help you make positive changes to your lives. You told us that you value the welcoming, safe environment and the excellent range of services.

Those in charge show a strong commitment to improving the lives of you all and they are working extremely hard with other professionals to do so. They have developed some excellent partnerships with other organisations such as the 'Friend's Centre' and the 'Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Protect' in order for you to attend courses which are helping you to develop skills as well as opportunities to become volunteers. Partnerships with other key agencies are also highly effective in order that they can offer you the correct support and guidance, particularly when you may be feeling vulnerable or experiencing a crisis. One parent told us: 'Health visitors recognise when you need support before you realise you need it.'

Safeguarding procedures are extremely robust and centre staff do all that they can to make sure you and your children are safe. For example, all staff are trained in how to safeguard children and leaders make sure that all those working or volunteering at the centre are suitable to do so. The centre's premises are extremely safe and secure because staff are meticulous in their monitoring to minimise risks. Outcomes for users are good and improving. The staff are working extremely hard in supporting you and your families to improve your health and it is evident that many of you have taken positive steps. We were impressed with the high numbers of mothers breastfeeding their babies at six to eight weeks and how younger parents' efforts are celebrated with certificates.

You told us how you and your children highly enjoy and benefit from opportunities to play and learn together when you attend sessions at the centre from 'Chatterbox' to 'Baby and You' as well as the toy library. You did tell us that some sessions have become so popular that you cannot always get a place. The centre staff are looking at ways to address this. We noticed that you have opportunities to share your views about the services provided and some of you are actively involved in the 'Big Wednesday' group and value the opportunity to be part of the advisory group. The staff are looking at ways in which they can better seek the views of your children. Many of you are now volunteering and helping out at the centre. You told us that these opportunities as well as attending courses help you to develop confidence and provide you with skills to help you gain employment. It was good to hear some of

your examples of where centre services have helped you to develop your skills, such as 'Touchline Dads' and 'Stepping Stones'. We could see that the café is the 'hub' of the centre, providing a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where you meet with friends and enjoy a variety of healthy choices.

The centre staff gather lots of information about what you think about the services available and they use this information to plan activities for you and your children. They also collect a wide range of other data. We have asked them to look more precisely at the information they routinely collect in order to show the full impact that the children's centre services are having on improving outcomes for you all.

We would like to thank the centre users for speaking with us and contributing to the inspection at Tarner Children's Centre.

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