

Inspection report for Sunrise Children's Centre

Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	362585
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Judith Elderfield

Centre governance	Local Authority
Centre leader	Glenis Charlton
Date of <input type="checkbox"/> revious inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY413645 Sunrise Day Care Centre

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.

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 managers from the centre and representatives from parents and carers, volunteers and the local authority. They also met a number of professionals including health, education, family and community involvement workers. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including key policies and safeguarding procedures. It looked in detail at the following.

- How well partnerships meet the needs of the users.
- The effectiveness of the local authority support.
- The level of challenge for the centre.
- The impact of the leadership and management on provision and outcomes for users.

Information about the centre

The Sunrise Children's Centre is located in the west of Stockton town centre. The centre is part of a cluster of two children's centres under the leadership of one management team and advisory board. The children's centre was developed from a Sure Start local programme. The centre provides the full core offer.

The majority of the area served by the centre falls within the 30% of most deprived wards in the country. Most of the children within the reach of the centre have been registered. The majority of these have accessed services recently. Parents from neighbouring communities outside the catchment area also visit the centre. The levels of worklessness and the proportion of families claiming benefits are much

higher than average. Recent figures show that 41% of children live in families with two parents in receipt of child tax credit, income support or job seekers allowance and 58% of children living with one parent are receiving the same allowances.

The majority of local families are of White British heritage. However, the reach area has a significant Black minority ethnic population. There is a bespoke hostel for asylum-seeking families situated close to the centre. Children from a minority ethnic background are accessing the children’s centre. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skill levels below those found typically for their age. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average.

Governance of the centre is by the local authority who also employs the leadership team.

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 users and the wider community

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

The Sunrise Children’s Centre provides good quality support to children and families who live within its locality. Parents, carers and children enjoy coming to the large, friendly and welcoming centre. It is buzzing with activity and children’s laughter. Inclusive approaches ensure that the many drop-in sessions such as ‘Stay and play’, ‘Baby massage’ and ‘Work Club’ are at full capacity with enthusiastic parents, carers and their children. Children are happy and well behaved in activities. Parents told inspectors that they are exceptionally well looked after at the centre. They describe staff as ‘really helpful’ and say that ‘they make you feel welcome’.

A particular strength of the centre is its strong partnership working which provides good all-round care for families. As a result, users stay safe, gain confidence and develop good parenting skills. New and prospective mothers benefit from the full range of services which very effectively promote their well-being including a ‘Baby Cafe’ session to promote breastfeeding and give advice and support on a range of subjects such as benefits and housing. The centre runs a very active fathers group.

This group provides excellent opportunities for social interaction and further education and many fathers took the time to explain the difference the sessions had made to their lives and their children's well-being. Users' views are collected continuously through consultation, surveys, evaluations, through the very active parent's forum and the advisory board which includes some parents. Parents and carers articulate their views clearly and in response to feedback from them, the centre adapts its provision very well to meet their needs.

Staff and partners work hard to engage families at the hostel for asylum seekers and at the nearby site for traveller families. The centre, through the outreach services, has arranged sessions for the families to enable health advice and language assistance to take place to provide them with good quality guidance and support. However, the centre recognises more work is needed to encourage the hostel and travelling families to access the facilities on a more regular basis.

The vision for the centre is shared between partners. Services are very effectively integrated, particularly the shared actions to support, involve and improve outcomes for parents, carers and their children. Knowledgeable and skilled staff provide exceptionally good advice and guidance during activity sessions in the centre or in families' homes. Referrals from partner services lead to family workers providing one-to-one support for vulnerable families with complex needs in the centre and at home. The centre provides parenting sessions, which are well attended and the parents speak highly of the difference this has made to themselves and their children. One parent said, 'It's nice to know you're not on your own with the problems'.

The centre makes a good contribution to improving the health of families and educational achievement of children. Centre staff and health care professionals are persistent in the promotion of healthy lifestyles through learning and play sessions, outreach, home visits and specific support groups. As a result, health outcomes are improving strongly from a low baseline. Despite the good quality of provision, the centre has been slightly less successful with the impact of its breastfeeding programme, however, rates are improving. The centre recognises that further work is necessary with the Teenage pregnancy service and health authority to reduce teenage pregnancy and encourage pregnant women to stop smoking. Children who attend the crèche provision and the play and development sessions are making good progress in all areas of their learning. However, although the centre is beginning to work with local schools to monitor the progress of children from the centre in the Early Years Foundation stage, it will be another year before sufficient data are available. Currently, local headteachers report that the centre does make a difference.

The quality of adult learning in the centre is excellent. Close partnerships with Jobcentre Plus and the centre's guidance adviser result in many parents accessing a wide variety of accredited courses successfully. Many go onto further and higher education and into work.

The leadership team are highly successful in working together to integrate provision

to meet the needs of the community. This is an outstanding aspect of the leadership of the centre. Equality is promoted sensitively and discrimination is challenged effectively. Safeguarding is managed well. The centre runs smoothly and calmly, which reassures the children and families who use it. Partnerships are highly effective and leaders have expert knowledge of partnership working. They work well across the range of partner organisations. The senior team has the full confidence of the advisory board and a good working relationship with the local authority who challenge and support the centre well. However, the primary care trust has been slow in providing data for the specific reach area to help the centre focus more efficiently.

The leadership team is effective in evaluating the success of what is achieved and is reflective and creative about strategies for further improvement. The centre's good work is evident in its effective provision and is founded upon good and outstanding aspects of leadership and management. The outstanding governance of the centre ensures its adaptability to the changing needs of the community. The centre is in a strong position to maintain and improve its effectiveness.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Further engage with the transient and minority ethnic groups to remove barriers to accessing services within the centre.

- Ensure the local foundation health trust provides the necessary data so that the centre is able to use this to target its integrated services to meet the needs of all groups as effectively as possible.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Children enjoy sessions at the centre and they achieve well. They are eager to join in activities and interact well with others, both indoors and outside. Well-planned sessions such as 'planting vegetables' and 'fit food for kids' allows parents and carers to have fun and learn together.

Parents and carers have excellent access to training on a range of accredited courses run by the centre. Success and attendance is high and many parents and carers progress onto more advanced courses and to higher education and work. The 'Dads Army' group is well attended and has had a positive impact on increasing the number of men who attend activities, many of whom commented on how included they now feel and how much more confidence they have in their very important role as fathers. Many trips to interesting places have been organised by the group and the recent acquisition of an allotment is a cause for great excitement. The 'Olive Leaf' session, specifically planned to help parents from the refugee hostel, is proving very popular. Parents from different minority ethnic backgrounds are effectively

encouraged to meet up in the large and inviting play room in the children’s centre to socialise and play together. Staff are at hand to offer advice and guidance across a wide range of subjects and if necessary an interpreter is used.

Evidence through case studies and discussions with partners, parents and carers reflect the positive impact of partnership working to promote children’s and families’ emotional well-being and their physical health. This includes the good work and dedication of health visitors, outreach workers and services commissioned by the centre. For example, The Teenage Pregnancy and Prevention Service provides tailored packages of support that effectively enables teenage parents and those teenagers who are pregnant, to access the full range of children centre services in their locality.

Historically, the reach area of the centre has not had high breastfeeding rates and the centre struggles to ensure mothers sustain breastfeeding after six weeks. However, breastfeeding rates are increasing and are higher than the regional average. Good strategies are in place such as breastfeeding peer supporters and breastfeeding support as soon as mothers and their babies arrive home. However, the centre recognises the ongoing challenge of improving rates of breastfeeding. Those mothers who attend the group speak positively about the support from staff and their peers. The local authority is presently working towards level three UNICEF Baby Friendly status in all its children’s centres.

Good procedures ensure children are safe. All parents and carers say they feel safe in the centre and have trust and confidence that, if there were concerns, they would come to the centre. Good multi-agency support to families referred to the centre in times of acute crisis is helping to minimise the number of children entering care or moving on to child protection plans. Parenting programmes are very successful in providing parents and carers with the skills and knowledge to promote safety by means of consistent routines and boundaries for the children. Parents comment on ‘feeling at ease’ during these sessions. All participants said how much they had gained from the sessions and each other. They value the crèche facilities provided knowing their children are well cared for as they learn new skills.

A number of parents and carers who spoke with inspectors, including young mothers, commented on how their confidence as parents has improved as a result of their participation in a number of activities offered by the centre. Children are at the heart of all that the centre does. Parents and carers feel that they have a voice within the centre. Through the well-established local parents’ forum their views are represented to the advisory board and the governing body very effectively. Parents said that services provided meet their specific needs and for some the centre is a lifeline.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

<p>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</p>	<p>2</p>
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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 users 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 users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	1
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	1

How good is the provision?

2

The staff provide a good range of services for the centre's users. Child safety week, includes road safety and safety in the home. All centre staff, partners and the local authority share a good understanding of the issues and challenges facing the community. This ensures very well-targeted support for local children and families, helping them to make the best of those opportunities available. The centre can identify numerous examples where families have been supported well, helping them to re-engage in everyday life and enjoy their families again. The work of the centre, particularly with its more vulnerable families, is a key strength and a clear reflection of its caring ethos and high expectations. The dedication and commitment of all involved in the centre ensures a continued focus on the centre's development and the engagement of all potential users in the local area.

Very effective partnerships with local professionals mean that the assessment of individual cases is robust. The Common Assessment Framework is successfully implemented; ensuring teams can be gathered quickly to support children and families in need. The role of the children's centre in the establishment of a weekly group for asylum seekers with young children ensures parents can build their confidence and parenting skills, supporting them to independence at a pace that is appropriate to them. A focus on developing effective channels of communication has also helped to strengthen multi-agency working. A streamlined process ensures that meetings successfully and efficiently identify and assess those children and families who need immediate support. Families benefit from home safety visits and the centre engages with the fire service, community police and paramedics in a way which is child-friendly and informative. As a result, parents and carers have a better understanding of how to keep their families safe. Participation in immunisation programmes is very high and above average at 100%.

The quality of the centre-based programmes for training and education is outstanding. There is clear and compelling evidence of how the centre has helped parents and carers into training and employment. A range of accredited training opportunities is available to support parents and carers towards further training and education. The Guidance Adviser liaises with Jobcentre plus and local businesses to

align the courses they run with current and future job opportunities. Many parents and carers, as a result of support received through the centre, have increased aspirations for themselves and their children.

As a result of good provision, children develop a wide range of early learning skills. For example, they improve their language skills and learn to listen carefully in storytelling and nursery rhyme sessions. They develop better observation skills and practise these through art work that demands an attention to detail. The high standard of technical equipment available encourages children to experiment and explore. The stimulating centre environment, with its good quality displays of children and parents at work and play does much to promote the development of children’s knowledge and understanding.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Leadership and management are consistently good at all levels and outstanding in some aspects. The cluster manager and leadership team provide excellent leadership with high expectations for the community firmly at the heart of the centre’s work. The advisory board and staff share their aspirations and are motivated and proactive in taking services out to families that are considered hard-to-reach and potentially vulnerable. They have a good understanding of the centre’s strengths and weaknesses and of ways in which they might extend their role in challenging staff. Together with centre leaders, they set ambitious targets based on good self-evaluation and some comprehensive outcomes information and data. This leads to good quality planning for action, supported by some excellent partnership working.

Inspectors spoke with representatives from a range of partner agencies, all of whom spoke highly of the centre’s open approach to partnership working for the benefit of the community. There are good quality partnerships with health professionals, social care, schools, early years settings, the local college, police and Jobcentre Plus. These active partnerships do much to secure the health, safety and achievement of families and children in the area. The centre also takes the lead in promoting training and professional development for childminders and a good percentage of the locality childminders have improved their grades in Ofsted inspections over time.

Effective safeguarding arrangements are supported by the clear lines of communication and collaboration between agencies to ensure children are safeguarded well. All checks, vetting and recruitment processes meet current guidelines and staff have up-to-date training in safeguarding, child protection and first aid. All managers on interview panels have attended safer recruitment training. Policies and procedures are strong and there are good systems in place to maintain and update these. The centre has completed appropriate risk assessments to ensure the safety of children and their parents and carers.

The centre uses its resources very effectively to provide a warm and welcoming environment. Financial management systems are in place to monitor day-to-day expenditure and delegation of responsibility for resources is at an appropriate level to ensure timely and effective packages of support to families. The cluster manager remains acutely aware of the need to ensure the long term sustainability of the centre. Staff are well deployed and utilised, ensuring good value for money. The views of parents, carers and users are collected through evaluations of individual activities and interventions in order to check quality, usefulness and to support improvement.

Equality and diversity are promoted well. The centre makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion and tackling unlawful discrimination. Everyone who attends is integrated well. Any family experiencing exceptional hardship, for example, with respect to debt, receives support to cope with legal issues and to budget more effectively. The centre's managers are aware of the need to introduce the children, parents and carers to other cultures in this White British community and plans are in place to engage more with traveller families and the growing number of Asian families who live in the locality. Leaders ensure users and community groups make maximum use of the facilities.

The local authority supports the centre's self-evaluation and action planning effectively by providing a comprehensive data set based on national indicators, local data and the centre's returns, detailing reach numbers. It provides further support and challenge through regular visits and an annual conversation that summarises the centre's achievements against ambitious targets. The centre analyses the data to evaluate the impact of specific activities and links this directly with the self-evaluation form. The centre manager and the local authority also recognise that more could be achieved with more up-to date data and information from the local primary care trust. The services of the centre are supporting good outcomes for all users.

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	1
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	2

The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	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 evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	1
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	2

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

None

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected the Sunrise Children's Centre on the 18 and 19 May. We judged the centre as good overall.

We looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with a number of you and the professionals who work with you. Many of you went out of your way to tell us how much you enjoy the activities provided through the centre. The centre does many things well. You told us staff are friendly, hard working and give good support. We agree with you. We found the centre to be welcoming to all families and buzzing with activity and children's happy laughter. The staff have a high level of expertise and offer very effective practical and emotional support to families who need it. Families who are facing complex or difficult times receive superb support. In fact, the staff provide outstanding care, guidance and support for all centre users. Their highly inclusive approach means that families from different parts of the community are all welcome.

All the professionals from the different agencies work well together to make sure you receive the right advice and support. The centre makes a good contribution to improving families' health and children's educational achievement. You told us you feel safe at the centre. This reflects the good work the centre does to promote safety and welfare and the secure safeguarding arrangements. Children are well behaved and explore confidently. You play a part too. We were very impressed by the positive and supportive relationships you have with one another and with your children.

The senior management team provide strong and highly effective leadership. They are well supported by the local authority and the governance board. All staff have high ambitions for everyone in the community. They all work hard with great enthusiasm. They have a really good understanding of your needs and are constantly striving to improve the quality of provision. There are two things we have asked the leadership team to work on in the immediate future:

- Build upon the work being done with traveller families and minority ethnic groups to remove barriers to accessing services within the centre.
- Ensure the local foundation health trust provides the necessary data so that the centre is able to use this to target its services to meet the needs of all groups as effectively as possible.

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

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