

# Inspection report for Manor Children's Centre

Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	367838
Inspection dates	22-23 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Gillian Bishop HMI

Centre governance	Local authority
Centre leader	Kate Hamill
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Pipworth Community Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	300816 Manor Community Childcare (Little Learners) 300906 Manor After School and Kids Klub (MASKK)

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.

An inspection of the registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with senior managers and staff from the centre and the local authority, parents and carers, members of the advisory board, children's centre partners and practitioners including health and Early Years Foundation Stage professionals. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Manor Children's Centre is a phase one centre, which is located in the Manor area of East Sheffield. The centre serves a community which is in the 10% most socially deprived and disadvantaged in the country. Local authority data indicate that 35% of children under five years in the Manor area are living in households dependant on workless benefits and 49.5% of children are living in poverty. This is significantly higher than the city average of 25.3%. Families in the area experience significant issues relating to long-term unemployment, youth crime, substance misuse and low levels of literacy and numeracy. The majority of local families are of White British heritage, although there are an increasing number of East European, Afro-Caribbean and Asian families residing in the area. Most children enter early education with skills and knowledge lower than that is usually expected, particularly in their personal and social develop and speech and language skills.

The Manor Children's Centre received designation in 2004 operating from Stand House Community Centre. The centre was re-designated in 2008 and relocated to Pipworth Community Primary School; and then again in 2010 when it was relocated to its current site at Manor Community Childcare Centre (MCCC). The centre provides for the full core offer including a full day care facility provided by the MCCC. A

maximum of 73 children may attend the nursery at any one time and of these, 24 may be under the age of two years. Manor After-School Kids Club (MASKK) provide registered out of school and holiday care for local families. A maximum of 20 children aged from three to under eight years may attend the setting at any one time. Separate arrangements are in place to inspect these provisions and their reports can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The local authority is the lead body for the children’s centre. The delivery of children’s centre services is a partnership between MCCC, the Inclusion and Learning Service (ILS) and Manor and Castle Development Trust, who provide and coordinate the outreach and family support services. All agencies directly concerned with the governance and delivery of the centre are represented on an advisory board alongside other children’s centre partners.

The centre is supported by a Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST) who coordinate services for vulnerable children and families and Sheffield Information Link (SIL) who provide local information for centre users. The Manor Training and Resource Centre (MaTReC) provide adult education and training and Life Long Learning and Skills (LLS) provide a family learning programme. The centre has established links with health professionals, Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) through the Castle Advice Team and Jobcentre Plus, all of which provide a range of services.

## 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**

**3**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**3**

## Main findings

Manor Children’s Centre has experienced many challenges since its designation resulting in a much slower pace of development than that generally expected of a phase one centre of its age. The upheaval from two earlier locations, alongside disruptions within the centre governance, has stunted service development for a significant period of time. However, following a year of stability, secure leadership and the recruitment of an experienced and motivated centre coordinator, the centre demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve and move swiftly forward. This is reflected in the satisfactory and in some cases, strongly improving outcomes for families accessing centre services.

'I don't' know how I would manage without it' and 'I'm a better parent because of the centre's help and support', are views expressed that demonstrate the difference the centre makes to users' lives.

Good quality learning and development for children within the centre and the systematic support and guidance from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) leaders ensures outcomes for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are good. Secure links with the local adult learning provider MaTReC, coupled with commissioned services for family learning, provide some useful learning and training opportunities for adults. However, outcomes are unclear because learner's engagement and achievements are not sufficiently tracked and the impact of pertinent services on users' economic stability is also unknown. Thus, the centre is unable to demonstrate the full impact of its work.

Safeguarding arrangements are good, which ensure children and their families are well protected. Furthermore, centre staff and partners have developed a cohesive approach to reducing the risk of harm and preventing difficulties escalating. This includes the successful implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the effectiveness in which referrals to the centre are assessed, managed and acted upon. Key health indicators show steady improvement, particularly in relation to breastfeeding, although an increase in conception rates for young people under 16 means this remains a key priority for the centre. Some health and maternity services are available but only a few of these are on site which often prevents the centre from being introduced early to new families and limits opportunities for parents and carers to access clinics led by health visitors. Furthermore, the extent of the centres work to address a rising trend in substance misuse is not clearly evidenced.

The centre strives to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. As a result, attendance by most user groups is steadily increasing. The centre is described as a place where friendships and respect are encouraged and where cultural differences are celebrated and valued. Families benefit from a satisfactory range of services and activities. However, some fail to succeed, participation in many groups remains variable and services within the wider community have not yet been developed to engage those families that are harder to reach. User engagement remains relatively low although centre data show a strongly improving picture in terms of increasing registrations and participation recently.

The centre is efficiently managed on a day-to-day basis by a new manager who instils high expectations of the staff and for the community. Leadership of the centre is strengthened by clear roles and responsibilities and clearly defined governance arrangements. However, the leadership team is still in its infancy and systems to demonstrate its effectiveness across all services are not thoroughly embedded. Additionally, there is still much work to be done to quicken the pace of development and improve the strategic partnerships with Jobcentre Plus and NHS Sheffield Children's Hospital Foundation Trust. An established advisory board provides

appropriate support and challenge to the centre as board members have a clear understanding of the children's centre remit. However, parents and carers are not yet included in the strategic development thereby preventing their concerted role in the shaping and development of services, furthermore, formal consultation with users is only just commencing.

The local authority acknowledges the impact of the centres turbulent past and is ensuring the centre receives the right support and interventions to secure a more successful future. This is reflected in the strong strategic steer and the increasing range of localised data which are aiding the centre to develop strategies to assess the impact of its work. A robust action plan containing some ambitious targets and success criteria is now in place, firmly addressing the development priorities already identified through the centres, accurate self assessment. Taking into account satisfactory outcomes, provision and leadership and management, the centre's overall effectiveness is also satisfactory.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Improve outcomes by:
  - increasing opportunities for users to communicate their views more formally and by engaging them in governance, strategic planning and decision making processes
  - improving users' economic well-being through more refined activities to support their social independence, financial stability and their preparedness for employment, training or further education
  - analysing health data and local trends to tailor services, monitor their direct impact and tackle pertinent health priorities, such as the rise in under 16s' conception rates and concerns relating to substance misuse.
  
- Improve provision by:
  - providing an appropriate range of services, activities and training for centre users based on a firm analysis of their needs, requirements and aspirations
  - developing outreach services and provision to meet the needs of families who are harder to reach.
  
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - developing robust systems to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of services on outcomes
  - ensuring all partner agencies provide appropriate levels of information about the impact of their services to enable the centre to demonstrate the full impact of its work

- improving the strategic partnership with NHS Sheffield Children’s Foundation Trust and Jobcentre Plus in order to secure the integrated delivery of health and advice services for all families
- developing consistent and productive partnerships with centre users in order to confirm their on going satisfaction and their full engagement in the centres work and future development.

## How good are outcomes for users?

<b>3</b>
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Children and their families increase their understanding and willingness to lead healthier lifestyles due to the consistent messages they receive during cooking classes, Dance Club and the Garden Club. Some of the parents and carers who spoke with inspectors stated they are now more aware of the nutritional value in food and they have reduce or excluded sweets and fizzy drinks from children’s diets. Some parents and carers are also growing their own fruit and vegetables. Young parents are ‘excited and better prepared’ for the birth of their babies due to on site antenatal and information sessions. Other mothers report being able to ‘bond better’ with their babies because they are making good use of baby massages techniques at home with their babies. However, baby clinics are not held on site which restricts parents’ access to professional advice from health visitors as they have to be signposted to local GP surgeries. An increasing range of health data confirms that obesity and smoking rates are beginning to decline and breastfeeding rates are improving. However, the centre is not able to show the same improvement in reducing the rate of conception in those aged under 16 in the area and access to sexual health guidance and promotions is limited.

‘Its lovely to know there is always somebody to listen, give me the right advice and help me to sort myself out’ and other similar testimonies from parents and carers confirm the improving outcomes for families using the centre. Parents and carers state that their homes are calmer, happier and safer places because of strategies learned during parenting courses and home safety schemes. Comments such as, ‘it’s really increased my understanding about how boundaries can keep my child safe’ confirm this. Staff and outreach workers have established good relationships with families, encouraging them to share their concerns at times of worry or crisis and increasing their willingness to engage in the CAF process. Support for children on child protection plans and for young parents already engaged with a range of partners at the centre is good. Targeted and tailored support provided through cohesive multi-agency services helps to prevent difficulties from escalating. As result, the necessity for second child protection plans has decreased and, for families experiencing domestic violence, referral to pertinent agencies is swift.

Children make good progress in their learning and in developing the skills they require for the future from their very low starting points throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children who speak English as an additional language or who have communication difficulties are effectively supported through well-planned speech and language programmes, the use of sign language and the Every Child a

Talker initiative. Opportunities to read and enjoy books together ensure parents, carers and their children learn the importance of early literacy, thereby encouraging families to access books more frequently. One parent said, 'I have learnt how to play with my child, teach her things and help her to make choices in her play' which demonstrates the impact of good learning opportunities available to parents and carers within Rainbows Toddlers, Story Sack sessions and music workshops.

Centre users state that a key strength of the centre is 'the approachable staff and the strong welcome everybody gets'. Users who spoke with inspectors confirmed that they can use the suggestion box or just talk to staff if they wish to raise any views or concerns, although few actually recall doing so. The 'What Parents Want Group' has provided a small group of parents and carers with some good opportunities to influence the range of activities provided by requesting specific sessions, such as 'Cook and Eat' classes. However, parents and carers have a limited understanding of the governance arrangements as opportunities to engage them more formally are in their infancy. Centre data confirm that some parents and carers respond to signposting and undertake some accredited courses, such as in literacy and numeracy, childcare and computer courses. However, the breadth of access to job related schemes, training programmes and classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is not sufficiently monitored to determine short and long term outcomes. Furthermore, the extent of users' access to Jobcentre Plus, Castle Advice Team or any financial services is not known due to the lack of monitoring.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</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>2</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>3</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>3</b>

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

<b>3</b>
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'This place is fantastic, we love it' and 'I'm a better mum because of the centre' reflect users' views that Manor Children's Centre meets the needs of the people already accessing services. The care, guidance and support for those actively participating are good because of the sensitive and personalised support they receive from their family support workers and the sense of trust instilled by all the staff. The

range of literature, information and the 'hand holding' which centre users benefit from, encourage families in difficulty to make positive changes in their lives and enables them to attend various groups and activities with sensitive support. Parents and carers value the good quality activities for older children provided by MCCC during school holidays and those provided by MASKK for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The centre is challenged by some significant barriers. Despite recent efforts to promote services and establish groups in one identified area within the reach of the centre, services have failed to develop or attract users. Consequently, the development of outreach services is very much 'work in progress,' particularly in relation to those users considered harder to reach. The centre is beginning to broaden the range of activities and services to increase the engagement of teens and young parents through the 'Young Mums Antenatal Group' and 'Prepare for Your Baby' course. However, the engagement of this group is also proving difficult. The centre staff are clear about these priorities and those associated with engaging more fathers, lone parents and those from minority groups and well-targeted plans are in place to address this. However, provision is not yet developed in line with a secure analysis of need which prevents the centre from being sure that all services are well matched to needs.

The effective use of the CAF alongside the Multi-Agency Allocation Meeting (MAAM) ensures a range of teams and resources can be gathered quickly to support children and families identified as being in need. As a result, families referred to the centre are provided with bespoke packages of care provided by the Manor and Castle Development Trust outreach team, which are designed to tackle a range of social and economic family difficulties. Established relationships with Home Start, Castle Advice Team, designated midwife and health visitors along with a clear assessment of need ensure interventions are well placed and productive. For example, case studies and testimonies from centre users demonstrate how referral to such agencies has improved their housing and financial situations, helped to address issues surrounding depression and domestic violence through referral to counselling services and provided access to funded childcare and respite care.

Educational outcomes for children are monitored closely and provision is adapted when gaps in learning are evident. This is shown in children's improved speech and language following their attendance at Talking Toddlers. In addition, 'Count me In', 'Sing and Sign' and 'Fun with Letters and Sounds' provided through a family learning programme enables parents and carers to learn alongside their child and build on their development at home. However, attendance at such activities remains variable.

Adult learners are able to access a wide range of accredited courses, such as 'Introduction to Community Development and Health', 'Step Up to Excellence' in addition to practically based skills training, such as book keeping and curriculum vitae writing. Access to courses is encouraged because a crèche is provided to enable their participation but it is not clear how many centre users actually enrol or complete them. In general, these types of activities are poorly advertised by the

centre, thereby preventing users knowing what is available to them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>

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

**3**

Following a difficult start, the pace of development is beginning to quicken as governance arrangements are becoming embedded. The active advisory board and the local authority are providing a secure strategic steer firmly focused on improvements for the future and not on past issues. Performance management arrangements and a programme for staff development are well established; consequently, staff are well trained, skilled in their roles and well equipped to support families in very difficult circumstances. The centre coordinator provides a secure link between MAST, MCCC, MCDT, the advisory board and the local authority. As a result, she maintains a sound overview of the various roles and responsibilities associated with this multifaceted facility which ensures the smooth running of the centre on a day-to-day basis. The advisory board is well informed and, therefore, able to ask some challenging questions to hold the centre to account for its work. Equally, leaders are very aware of the necessity to engage centre users as equal partners on this board. Action plans are in place to support this process.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the challenges ahead for this centre. Through accurate self-evaluation the resulting key priorities for improvement are already firmly focused on tackling weaknesses in provision and increasing the engagement of the wider community. The local authority has developed a much firmer steer for the children's centre. Improvement plans are more robust, and although still in their early stages, include both ambitious and realistic targets to achieve and measure performance. The centre is demonstrating an improving trend; consequently, it provides satisfactory value for money.

In the short space of time since her appointment, the centre coordinator has introduced some sound structures for monitoring, recording and evaluating aspects of the centre's work. However, these are not yet consistently applied across all services because most agencies and partners do not hold a clear perception of what is expected of them or the role they play in demonstrating outcomes for families. In some cases, the lack of consistent monitoring prevents the centre from

demonstrating the impact of their signposting because they can't confirm the role the centre actually played in improving aspects of health and life chances. This is particularly the case for the significant reduction in smoking rates and the high percentages of adults accessing training through MaTreC.

Developing partnerships with local schools, community organisations and the childminding support network are broadening the centre's reach and ability to extend its work more widely. Strong links with MCCC are having a concerted effect on children's good educational progress and their preparedness for school and MAST and MCDT ensure services for the most vulnerable are placed where they need to be. Operationally, health professionals provide some pertinent health services but strategically, access to health data and the development of a wider range of health services held on site, remains problematic which inhibits earlier and more targeted interventions. Equally, the role and input from Jobcentre Plus remains very limited.

Appropriate policies and procedures for recruitment and vetting ensure the suitability of staff and partners working with families. Security and the safety of centre users are ensured through good visitor and security arrangements and robust risk assessment procedures across all activities. Families experiencing significant crisis in their lives are well supported through good multi-agency links developed through MAAM meetings which encompass links with police, health professionals and children's social care. Staff receive good training which aids them in their safeguarding roles and duties and ensures that referral procedures are clearly understood and acted upon when difficulties escalate.

The centre promotes the inclusion of all children and their families. This is demonstrated in the high value placed on everybody's contributions and the use of Makaton in nursery, crèche and groups to aid communication via simplified sign language with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A more refined data system is providing information about the changing demographics in the community. As a result, the centre has a better understanding of the precise groups of people it serves and, therefore, the appropriateness of services to engage them. However, consultation with the whole community remains in its early stages so the centre is yet to fully understand the range of any unmet need.

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>3</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>3</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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>statutory duties</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 evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>3</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>3</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>3</b>

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

Ofsted reports for Pipworth Community Primary School have been considered as part of this inspection. The school was inspected in 2009 and achieved a good overall outcome. MCCC was inspected at the time of the children's centre and achieved a good overall outcome.

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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Manor Children's Centre on 22–23 June 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

'I don't know how I did without it' and 'the staff are just so approachable and helpful' are typical comments from centre users who have benefited from the new friendships they have made and the good care guidance and support they consistently receive from sensitive and knowledgeable staff. Parents and carers who spoke to us, confirmed that parenting classes have helped them to 'connect and bond better' with their children. They said that they have taken steps to improve safety in their homes by completing risk assessment checks with their family support workers and by installing safety gates and equipment. They also described how they always feel safe in the centre because the building is very secure and staff provide a 'lovely smiley welcome' when they need somebody to talk to.

We found that safeguarding procedures are good and we confirmed that the centre works particularly well with other agencies and professionals to support children and

families in crisis. As a result, children and adults at significant risk have been well protected. Equally, guidance about family health has helped parents and carers to make some big changes in their lives by giving up smoking, getting help to carry on breastfeeding or learning to cook cheap but healthy food. However, the centre staff know that they must do more to reduce pregnancy rates for young people under the age of sixteen. We also found that although some health and maternity services are available, only a few of these are on site which often prevents the centre from being introduced to new families in the community much earlier.

Parents and carers confirmed that all the groups and activities they attend are enjoyable. However, we found that the number of families attending some groups is often quite low because lots of families are still not accessing the centre. Parents and carers enjoy 'Talking Toddlers', 'Families Love Books' course and 'Rainbow Toddler Group' and those that spoke with us said they now implement some of the learning from the different groups at home. This, they say, has helped their children be better prepared for school. We also found that adults enrol on a variety of courses, improving skills such as English and maths. We found that all children make good progress in their learning and development but the centre is not sure how well the adults actually do because they don't ask all the agencies they work with to let them know about adults' on going achievements.

Centre users stated that they have trust and confidence in the managers and staff and they feel that groups such as the 'What Parents Want Group' enables them to make decisions about the activities they want the centre to provide. Although we agree with this, we found that parents and carers are not yet represented on the advisory board which prevents them from taking a bigger role in the development of services more officially, so we have asked leaders to consider different ways to help achieve this. We have also asked the centre to consult with you, as centre users, about the range of groups and training available so they can be sure those on the weekly programme are well matched to your needs and help you to improve your independence and chances of getting better qualifications or a job. The centre is a pleasant and happy place to be and those who attend say they 'couldn't do without it'. Older siblings can join in activities in the school holidays and the centre provides a welcoming environment for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, there are lots of people in the community still to access the centre.

The centre is led and managed satisfactorily. The centre coordinator and her staff and the people who govern the centre work hard to meet your needs and they have some good plans in place to improve activities further and ensure more people register with the centre. However, they miss opportunities to monitor and record information about the difference their work makes to your lives and in some cases this is because they do not get the right information from other agencies they work with. So we have asked them to develop systems and procedures to improve this.

We really enjoyed our time at your children's centre and we thank you for your willingness to speak with us. We are very grateful for your help 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).