

# Inspection report for Tommies Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Coventry
<b>Inspection number</b>	365865
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Not applicable
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	EY271635 Tommies Children's 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.

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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 inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with staff and senior managers from the centre and representatives from Coventry local authority. Inspectors also met with parents as well as members of the partnership advisory board and a number of partners including those from health and education services.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Tommies Children Centre was designated in March 2006. The centre is a phase one children's centre providing the full core offer of services. Tommies Childcare Ltd, a private company, manages the centre on behalf of Coventry local authority.

The centre is situated in Holbrooks, in the north east area of Coventry and also serves the Keresley area of Bablake. Although located in a 30% most disadvantaged ward, the Holbrooks community is made up of both affluent and disadvantaged families. Holbrooks is split into two Children's Centre reach areas, Tommies serves one part of the community and Flutterbies Children's Centre, owned by the same company, serves the other and will be subject to a separate inspection. Due to the close proximity of the centres there are collaborative programmes provided to serve the whole area. The centre operates from a leased, renovated, scout building and is used solely by the centre between the hours of 7.00 am until 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday. The centre also manages an 84 place nursery in the same building. The majority of centre activities are held in the company's other venues.

The majority of families are from White British backgrounds. The largest groups of minority ethnic families are of Asian or British Indian heritage with increasing numbers coming from Eastern Europe. There are 776 children under the age of five year in the area, 17 % are living in households dependent on workless benefits.

Children’s skills, knowledge and abilities are below those expected for their age on entry to early years provision.

## 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 families**

**3**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**3**

## Main findings

Tommies Children Centre provides a satisfactory service for families. The manager and centre staff are committed to improving the centre’s services and their actions are leading to improving outcomes. However, there is limited analysis and not enough use of data to monitor outcomes and inform the setting of precise and measurable targets to guide the centre’s future development. The local authority recognises that it is not currently providing sufficient support for the centre or effectively monitoring its performance. Parents, partners and the community make a positive contribution to centre life but are not yet sufficiently well-represented on the partnership advisory board.

For these reasons, and despite broadly accurate self-evaluation, the centre has satisfactory rather than good capacity to improve.

Outcomes are satisfactory overall. The centre’s work leads to families enjoying healthier and safer lives. Children’s achievements, as demonstrated by their results in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile in 2011, are improving and above national averages with 64.1 % of children in Reception Year achieving at least 78+scale points including personal and social, emotional development and communication, language and literacy. This improved from 53.2% in the previous year. The centre meets the duties that apply to it for equality and diversity. Recent action has increased the engagement of most target groups. However, the gap between the 20% lowest achieving children and the rest is still wider than seen nationally.

The range of activities provided is appropriately located with outreach provision enabling families to have wider access to services. Policies and procedures for safeguarding, including the recruitment, vetting and training of staff meet current statutory requirements and are given a high priority. Family workers provide effective care, support and guidance for targeted families and promptly share any concerns with relevant agencies. Fortnightly ‘Raise, Share, Review’ meetings provide an

effective forum for the centre and its partners to share information and to coordinate and monitor support for families who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances. However, local authority children's services do not always respond to communication from the centre quickly enough and this impedes the speed of its support for the most vulnerable children.

Adults improve their parenting skills through courses and by staff modelling how to play with children. Some adults participate in courses such as; First Aid and English for speakers of other languages and some increase their confidence and employability skills through volunteering at the centre. However, monitoring of the progress, achievements and destinations of adults who access further learning opportunities is incomplete and there is insufficient focus on improving families' economic well-being, and in particular those on low incomes or from workless homes.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- The local authority should ensure that:
  - it increases support for, and performance monitoring of, the work of the centre
  - children's services improve their communication with the centre so that they can contribute more effectively to early intervention and support for children who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances.
- Increase the collection and analysis of management information in order to set precise targets for improvement and measure the full impact of the centre's services on the outcomes for local families.
- Increase the guidance on adult learning, development, training and employability opportunities, particularly for workless and low income families, in order to monitor their achievements and improve their economic well-being.
- Strengthen governance by increasing the wider representation of parents, partners and community representatives on the partnership advisory board.

## How good are outcomes for families?

<b>3</b>
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The centre promotes healthy living through its sessions and families increase their understanding of how to stay healthy. The centre's targeted activities such as 'Cook and Eat Well' helps promote a healthy diet and its clear strategy to improve dental health has resulted in families' increased registration with dentists. The centre's close partnership with health professionals has increased information sharing and as a result, those children who have not been immunised are re-referred to health visitors. In Coventry, breast feeding rates have improved and childhood obesity rates have reduced. However, it is difficult for the centre to measure its impact on health outcomes because of the lack of reach area-specific data. However, available data indicates that only 23% of mothers who were smoking at the start of their pregnancy

had stopped smoking by the time of the delivery of their baby.

Children attending the centre make at least satisfactory progress from their individual starting points and for some it is good. Children and parents enjoy the targeted sessions such as 'Baby Massage' and 'Childminder's and Parent's Group'. Typical comments from parents include: 'Baby massage was a wonderful opportunity to bond with my baby. We loved it. It was a lovely, very calming experience.' Volunteering opportunities, adult learning and first steps courses are helping to improve the confidence and economic well-being of some families. However, the centre does not sufficiently prioritise this area of work and is not yet fully tracking the achievements and progress of adults.

The centre's attention to promoting the well-being and safety of families, particularly in supporting families whose circumstances make them vulnerable, leads to overall satisfactory outcomes in being safe. Case studies show that for some families outcomes are good. For example, some families benefit from individual advice and the promotion of safety. As a result, they increase their understanding of how to keep their families safe. One parent said 'The support from the centre has enabled me to keep my child. We have had a package of support. The staff are brilliant and are there to help you-not to judge. If I have a problem, I feel comfortable picking up the phone or just popping in.'

Centre staff listen to, and use the feedback of families, to help shape and develop its services. Some parents benefit from opportunities to make a positive contribution to the centre through volunteering or membership of the partnership advisory board. Children behave well and develop useful skills for the future, such as cooperation and independence, and families from a wide cultural and educational background demonstrate respect for each other.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target 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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, 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, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment</b>	<b>3</b>

## How good is the provision?

3

The centre provides a reasonable range of sessions and activities for families to engage with its services through outreach provision held at its other sites. The centre has recently viewed its activity programme and now aims most of its sessions at specific groups or targeted families. Joint sessions for parents and children are fun and staff effectively model good parenting skills. One parent said: 'I came from Africa in 2010. The centre has helped us to meet new people, build relationships, share ideas and access support. It has provided opportunities for my son to interact and communicate with others. He fitted in straight away.'

Children attending the on-site nursery enjoy a wide range of activities. Staff actively work with parents, carers and other agencies to support the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some adults benefit from courses such as First Aid or English for speakers of other languages. The provision of a free crèche enables them to attend while their children are safe and enjoy the fun activities provided. However, the centre is not sufficiently following up the progress adults make and this is an area for improvement.

The centre provides tailored individual support for families who are vulnerable due to their circumstances. Parents value home visits and the support they receive in times of crisis. Those families accessing parenting courses value the centre's support. One parent, said: 'The staff always give good advice on health and safety issues and information on such things as weaning, eating, healthy vitamins, oral health and hygiene and behaviour.' However, there is insufficient emphasis on promoting information, advice and guidance on training, further education and employment for adults as part of wider support for families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are the leadership and management?

3

The centre leader is highly committed to the work of the centre and sets high expectations. She has taken clear action to improve the quality of provision, particularly during the last two years. Staff are effective in their roles and are appropriately supervised. However, the local authority recognises that it is not

providing sufficient support for the centre or effectively monitoring its performance.

The centre has a clear grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. However, the current analysis of data does not ensure that there is a sufficiently clear view of the impact the centre's services have on improving all outcomes and specifically for different target groups. The limited use of data also restricts the centre's ability to set precise and challenging targets and prioritise developments.

The accommodation is welcoming and staff strengths are used well to benefit families. Coordinated activities with the neighbouring Flutterbies centre avoid the duplication of services. Action to promote equality has resulted in the increased participation of minority ethnic groups, fathers, lone parents and disabled children and parents. As a result, the centre currently provides satisfactory value for money.

Safeguarding arrangements meet current statutory requirements. The centre has clear procedures in place for recording information related to the vetting and recruitment and training of staff. Staff are well-trained and identify and report concerns promptly. Multi-agency co-operation is mostly effective and leads to timely interventions that help reduce the risk of harm to children and aids their development. However, although the centre communicates information to children's services staff this is not always reciprocated quickly. This holds up the speed at which well-coordinated support can be provided to families who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances.

Services are mostly well-integrated and generally deliver cohesive provision leading to satisfactory outcomes for families. Outreach provision in the company's other venues provides opportunities for families to benefit from contact with the centre. The centre has worked hard to develop strong partnerships with health professionals. As a result, families have good local access to services such as ante-natal and post-natal clinics.

The centre seeks and makes use of feedback from families to develop the range and quality of its provision and some families participate in shaping the strategic direction of the provision through their participation on the partnership advisory board. However, the current membership is not sufficiently representative of the centre's partners, parents or the community.

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 effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>groups</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>3</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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area 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**

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Tommies Children's Centre on 7–8 November 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you very much for talking to us and welcoming us into your sessions. The information you gave and the stories you shared with us helped us to make our judgements.

The manager sets high expectations and her clear focus on improving the centre is proving effective. The centre has a satisfactory grasp on its strengths and weaknesses and is becoming increasingly successful at engaging with families that need most support by carefully targeting its provision. However, there is incomplete use of data to measure the full impact of its work and set precise improvement targets. We have asked the centre to improve the analysis and use of data so it can more carefully monitor the full impact of its services on the families and set targets for improvement.

The centre works well for everyone in the community, irrespective of their background or disability and is increasing the participation of those who most need their support. We found that families treat each other with respect.

You enjoy the sessions with your children such as 'Baby Massage' and 'Childminder's and Parent's Group'. We found that children and adults benefit from accessing

services at the centre, but the centre has not fully introduced systems to measure the impact of all its sessions and particularly the progress of adults. We have asked them to improve this. Some parents told us how the centre has supported them to improve their lives and how much more confidence as parents they now have. Your children behave well and you learn more about how to stay healthy through advice from staff and sessions such as 'Cook and Eat Well'.

You told us how your involvement with the centre and involvement in courses such as 'First Aid' are improving your ability to keep your children safe. We found that staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and that they are well trained and promptly report any concerns to relevant agencies. However, although the centre communicates information to children's services this is not always reciprocated quickly and delays the speed at which coordinated support can be provided to families who may become vulnerable due to their circumstances.

Everyone seems to get on well together at the centre. The centre listens to you and asks you what you think of the services and activities it offers. Some of you contribute to the decision making of the centre as members of the partnership advisory board. We have asked the centre to ensure that parents and partners on the partnership advisory board are more fully representative of its services and the community. We also found that the local authority is not providing sufficient support for, or monitoring of, the centre. We have asked them to improve this.

Thank you once again for your contributions and best wishes for the future.

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