

Inspection report for Hamworthy and Turlin Moor Children's Centre

Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	365788
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Reporting inspector	Margaret Dickinson HMI

Centre governance	Borough of Poole
Centre leader	Amanda Boclet
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Buffer Bear Nursery Postman Pat

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.

An inspection of the registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, senior leadership team, staff who work with children and parents, representatives from the local authority and health, and users of the centre. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

The children's centre serves an area that is one of the 30 per cent most deprived in England. Parts have high levels of unemployment and child poverty. A third of children under four years old live in households on housing benefit. Around 900 children under five live in the area. Most children enter childcare and early education with a much narrower range of experiences and skills than that expected for their age. The proportion of families from minority ethnic backgrounds is low.

The centre provides or arranges the core offer of children's centre services. It operates from two sites. From January 2011, its main centre has been on Turlin Moor estate, where it shares a site with Postman Pat pre-school and Turlin Moor Combined School. It also has a base at Hamworthy library, about a quarter of a mile away. This is within a campus that includes first, middle and secondary schools and Buffer Bear early years setting. The centre is governed by an advisory board.

The centre has two linked early years settings. It does not have the responsibility for managing the provision at either setting.

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

Hamworthy and Turlin Moor Children's Centre provides satisfactory services for the communities that it serves. It has gone through a period of significant change during the last year, including establishing a new site at Turlin Moor. Other changes have also arisen from the recent reorganisation of services in the local authority.

The centre manager and staff have successfully established the new centre as part of the Turlin Moor community. Time has been well spent on building essential relationships with community groups, spreading the news of the centre's services and encouraging children and parents from Turlin Moor to come to activities and see the centre as a source of help and support. Registrations have picked up strongly from both children and parents from Turlin Moor. Despite this focus, the centre's work at Hamworthy has not suffered and services have also been sustained and developed there.

The centre is a bright, welcoming environment for all. Parents and other users value attending the centre for advice, support and as a source of enjoyable activities for their babies and children. It is also a meeting place for many who find that coming to the centre's sites helps to build friendships, provide a listening ear and reduce the feeling of isolation. Staff are well aware of their responsibilities to create a safe environment for children and users. The centre's policies and procedures for promoting safeguarding are well known and followed.

Working arrangements with partner agencies, such as health and social care, are well established. Effective partnership working is often a key factor in improving outcomes for many families who access the centre and leads to prompt and well-tailored support. There is good communication among family outreach workers, health visitors and others who work directly with families. Staff are alert to families' needs and a single outreach visit can trigger specialist support, access to financial advice or additional resources to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The centre links effectively with the early years settings, through the children's

centre teacher. Increasingly, parents are accessing the funding for two-, three- and four-year-olds because this is well publicised by centre staff. Both linked early years settings were judged good when recently inspected. The increased uptake means more children have access to good quality early years provision to support their learning and development.

The centre manager has established a culture at the centre where staff reflect on their work and consider how services can be enhanced and developed. Staff are open to professional discussion and there is no sense of complacency. The centre staff can point to many examples where services improve outcomes for the children and families who come into contact with the centre's work. This demonstrates the centre's satisfactory promotion of equality and its ability to continue improving. However, the centre staff recognise that there is further to go to strengthen the centre's impact on breastfeeding, domestic violence and parents' return to training, education and employment. Consistent systems are in place to evaluate activities and services but reviews focus more on what is being provided rather than demonstrate the differences being made to families' lives. Information the centre holds and data from the local authority and health partners are not yet used effectively to target the most vulnerable and priority groups in the area.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Further improve outcomes by:
 - working in partnership with health services to provide better access to ante-natal services for prospective parents, including young parents, and contribute to improving breastfeeding outcomes
 - strengthening the existing work in supporting children and families encountering domestic violence
 - developing more opportunities that encourage parents to return to training, education and employment.
- Make sure that any evaluation of services pays particular attention to the difference that these are making to outcomes for children and families, including any target groups.
- Make more effective use of the information held by the centre and the data available from the local authority and health services to set priorities and targets, particularly for the engagement of the more vulnerable and excluded groups.

How good are outcomes for users?

3

Parents report that the centre's work has supported their family lives, in encouraging healthy eating, for example, managing their children's behaviour or trying out different ways of encouraging their child's play and learning at home. One parent commented, 'Having support at the centre has made me feel more relaxed with my children at home.' Another who received help managing her child's behaviour noted, 'There is help out there not only for single parents but for families that are struggling.'

Family outreach workers promote children's safety in many ways, including cases where a child protection plan is needed. They are regularly involved in review meetings, case conferences and the common assessment framework. Outreach workers have supported some families encountering domestic violence successfully but also know there are families that would benefit from their help that they are not yet reaching. Parents trust the centre and recognise that it is a place where they can share their concerns openly. Parents also know that staff have certain expectations of them when they come to the centre and that they are part of a community where everyone is respected and treated fairly. Their views are welcomed and considered. Several parents explained how they had put forward suggestions that had been considered and taken on board. Some also contribute to the work of the centre on a more regular basis, through being members of the parents' forum or the advisory board.

Children attending the centre enjoy exploring and playing, inside and out, and many gain confidence and develop independence. Some activities, such as music and movement and the drop-in play sessions, are particularly well attended and popular. One parent described how their child had gradually become more independent through joining in play activities. Parents also spoke of their own confidence improving. One felt more comfortable about going to their child's school, for example, and being confident to ask questions and voice opinions.

An ongoing project to develop children's talk, listening and understanding of language is having a positive impact. It has already led to improved outcomes, with an increasing proportion of children making up ground in their communication skills. The volunteering programme has encouraged many parents to pursue volunteering opportunities, helped by a structured induction programme. This is not followed up, however, to find out how many parents continue to volunteer once the programme is complete, or subsequently take up training or employment. The centre staff recognise that adult learning is an area that is not as well developed and this has been identified as a priority. Some steps have been taken to set up several courses, in partnership with adult learning, which are due to run from September.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	3
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	3
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and	3

parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment

How good is the provision?

3

Children and babies enjoy the varied activities at sessions, which are well planned, stimulating and well resourced. Sessions such as 'Let's Play Together' provide good opportunities for centre staff, childminders and parents to work together and promote positive experiences for children. Staff encourage children, and parents, who may feel reluctant to join in and they find ways of involving them in a helpful and non-threatening way.

The children's centre teacher provides good support for both settings to support provision, including for children with special education needs and/or disabilities. Careful plans are set up for these children. Parents and carers are routinely involved in reviewing children's progress, whether this relates to their learning and development or their emotional and social needs.

Children's and parents' needs are assessed carefully and support is tailored appropriately to the individual circumstances, drawing up specialist support when necessary. Case studies and discussions with parents show how visits from family outreach workers, often in partnership with health visitors, have triggered a range of support for families to improve their circumstances, health and family relationships.

Provision is often good for the families who take advantage of the centre's services. Parents have opportunities to meet one another, share experiences and gain support from each another and the centre staff. The centre manager and staff know that there are children and families living in the reach area who do not yet benefit from the centre's offer who could benefit. The centre is not yet engaging as much as staff would like with groups who are known to be particular priorities in the area, such as young and prospective parents and families encountering instances of domestic violence. The centre's work in helping adults to return to training, education and employment is not well developed although some early plans are in place to strengthen this aspect of the centre's work from September.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

The centre is efficiently managed and there is a strong sense of teamwork. The centre manager and staff know the area the centre serves well and have a good grasp of local priorities. As a result, the centre's plans for improvement reflect local needs. Feedback on services and activities is regularly sought from those who use them. Parents and carers spoken with during the inspection believe their views are valued and gave several examples of how activities had been changed as a result of their comments.

The determination of the centre manager and staff to work closely with other professionals is leading to integrated services and increasing the range of opportunities available to users. Links with other partners, such as health and social care, are good and those with other agencies, such as adult learning, are developing well. Effective partnership working is also enhanced by joint training on shared priorities such as supporting breastfeeding and tackling obesity. The centre manager actively seeks to improve provision and identify needs. For example, access to ante-natal courses is difficult for some prospective parents who find it difficult to travel to the hospital so discussions are under way to provide these at the centre. Work with adult learning has led to courses such as money management and healthy cooking on a budget starting in the autumn.

The centre manager and staff evaluate the centre's services as a matter of routine. However, evaluations concentrate mostly on the provision that is offered. Reports are not sufficiently focused on how successfully the services and activities have made a difference to the lives of children and families and how well outcomes are improving for the most vulnerable and any priority groups.

Data available from the borough and from the health authority are providing an increasingly detailed picture of the different groups who access services and the health outcomes in the area. However, this, and other information from the centre's own records such as attendance patterns, is not used to full effect to focus the centre's work and set targets and timescales. This particularly relates to encouraging more users from the most vulnerable families and groups to engage with services and to improving outcomes that are known to be important priorities for the reach area.

Arrangements for keeping children and users safe are good. Policies and procedures, such as those for assessing the potential risks of activities and vetting staff, are well established. Clear priority is given to users' safety and well-being. The prominent notice board in the entrance, which tells parents and carers who they should speak to if they have a concern, is a good example of this. Staff training and regular professional supervision ensure that protocols for sharing information are clear and widely understood. Consequently, staff know when to seek and involve specialist advice, for example by using the common assessment framework. Family outreach workers maintain good communication with health visitors. They are alert to

situations that may pose risks to children and families, such as domestic violence, and follow set procedures when necessary.

The membership of the advisory board includes representatives from parents and carers, community groups as well as relevant partners, such as health. The role of the advisory board is steadily developing. Members are learning more about the work of the centre, for example by focusing on three priority areas each term.

Centre staff are clearly committed to promoting equality and inclusion. More children and families from the Turlin Moor area are now accessing the centre's services. The children's centre teacher provides good support for individual children with special educational needs and/or disabilities in both linked settings. The new linked pre-school setting has also led to an increase in the take-up of childcare in the area. These are positive developments. The need to increase the engagement of users from the more vulnerable and hard to reach groups demonstrates that the centre's promotion of equality and the value for money it provides are both satisfactory.

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	3
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
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	3
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	2
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	3

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

The centre's two linked early years settings were inspected during the same week as this inspection and both were judged good.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Hamworthy and Turlin Moor Children's Centre on 6 and 7 July 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

You will know that the centre has gone through some changes over the last six months and the main centre is now based at Turlin Moor. The centre manager and staff have worked successfully to build links with the community and establish the centre's new base. They have not allowed the services that take place at the Hamworthy library to suffer. The centre is attracting more users, and many more children and families from Turlin Moor have registered now that they have easier access to the centre's activities and services.

Thank you for your contribution to the inspection. Many of you told inspectors how the centre is providing valuable support for you and your children and making a difference to your family lives. It is a safe place for you to go and you receive a warm welcome and helpful advice and support. The centre staff work successfully with other partners, such as health and social care, and this means that you have access to a range of advice and support that is tailored to what you need.

The activities that the centre organises for babies and children are stimulating and interesting. These help your children to learn and develop and encourage them to try out new things and explore, both inside and outside. The centre staff also work closely with the linked early years settings so that everyone is working in a coordinated way. The project to encourage children to talk and communicate is a good example of this joint working. It is making a difference to how children communicate and is helping many children who are behind with their talking and language to make up ground so that they are closer to where they should be for their age.

The centre runs efficiently and staff work well together as a team. There is a positive atmosphere in the centre and everyone is valued and respected. The centre manager and staff find out what parents and carers think of the centre's work and listen to suggestions and new ideas. They regularly review the activities and services at the centre to check how well they are going. However, they tend to focus more on what has been provided rather than check the difference made to children's or families' health, safety or achievements. Outcomes such as these are improving for many of

you who access the centre's services. There is more work to do to improve some healthy outcomes, to support families experiencing domestic violence and to help parents have access to training, education or employment.

The centre manager and staff know the area well and know which aspects they need to concentrate on to make the centre's work even more effective. They are aware that there are some people living in the centre's allocated area that do not yet take advantage of the centre's services who would benefit. We found that the centre leaders are not using the information that the centre holds, or the information that comes from the local authority and the health authority, as much as they could. We have asked the centre manager to make better use of this information to work out the groups in the area, such as young parents, that need more encouragement to approach the centre. The centre manager has already identified many of these points for improvement and some plans are already in place. This shows that the centre is clearly in a position to continue to improve.

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