

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CABINET MEMBER**

OfSTED INSPECTIONS OF NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE CHILDREN'S CENTRES

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1. To inform the Cabinet Member of the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Frodingham Children's Centre that took place over two days on 16 and 17 November 2011.
- 1.2 A full copy of the report is available in Group offices.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 All Children's Centres are subject to inspections carried out by OfSTED conducted over a five yearly cycle. Inspections began in the summer of 2010. The *Framework for children's centre inspection* September 2011 details what inspectors will look at during their visit. Inspections check that centres:
 - know their community and the sorts of services, activities and courses families living there need
 - offer those services, or give families advice and support on where they can access them
 - do all they can to help families use those services they need most, especially the families that might find it hard to do so
 - make sure that no groups of the community have been overlooked
 - have partnerships with health services, Jobcentre Plus, childcare providers and any other key services that join up to provide the support families need.
- 2.2 Frodingham Children's Centre was inspected on 16 and 17 November 2011 against revised inspection guidance issued by Ofsted in September 2011. This was the second Children's Centre to be inspected in North Lincolnshire against the new guidance. Descriptors against each of the judgement areas are notably tougher than previously, reflecting a general 'raising of the bar' in terms of required standards.

2.3 Frodingham Children's Centre is a phase one children's centre, providing the full core offer of services to a community that is in one of the 30% most deprived areas in the country. The Centre is located on the Frodingham Infants School site and services are also delivered from Frodingham Community Centre. There are 320 children under the age of five living in the Frodingham. Governance of the centre is the responsibility of North Lincolnshire Council and it is now part of the Scunthorpe South Children and Family Support Service.

2.3 Ofsted provides a judgment on the overall effectiveness of each children's centre.

This can be one of four grades:

1. **Outstanding**: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality.
2. **Good**: this aspect of the provision is strong
3. **Satisfactory**: this aspect of the provision is sound
4. **Inadequate**: this aspect of the service provision is not good enough

2.4 **'Good' Overall Effectiveness and Capacity for Sustained Improvement.** The Overall Effectiveness of Frodingham Children's Centre was rated as Good. Capacity for Sustained Improvement was also rated as Good.

2.5 **'Outstanding' Care, Guidance and Support.** The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups was rated as Outstanding.

2.6 Inspectors can make judgements as to whether requirements or recommendations are needed. A requirement is a mandatory action; a recommendation is a suggestion to improve current practice. There are no required actions for Frodingham Children's Centre.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 **Summary of report:** Ofsted described the strength of this family centre as lying in "the commitment of centre staff who are led by a manager whose tenacious determination has ensured that this centre is at the heart of the community". The following comments are also taken directly from the report.

3.2 The outstanding care guidance and support are empowering families to deal with circumstances that are extremely testing. A large majority of families within the reach area are accessing services at the centre. However engagement of and regular participation by a few of the centre's hardest to reach families continues to be a challenge.

3.3 Outcomes for children and families who are using the centre are good overall. As a result they are making significant improvements to their lives. Services are delivered in an inclusive environment where inequalities are swiftly and effectively removed. Activities are well established and delivered in partnership with a range of agencies. As a result of the centre's effective partnerships with health, families within its reach area are benefitting from a wide range of pre and post-natal services. Similarly relationships with child-

care and education providers are consistently improving children's learning and development. As a result they are seeing a year on year narrowing of the achievement gap between those who achieve and others who do not. Adult learning and development is enabling parents to become more confident in their communication and interaction with their children.

- 3.4 High priority is given to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults by all staff and partners. As a result outcomes for this aspect are good. The use of the Common Assessment Framework is firmly embedded. Case files and discussions with staff provide evidence of their sound understanding and effective implementation of assessments using this framework. Referrals of vulnerable families are swiftly addressed through early intervention.
- 3.5 A recent re-organisation within the local authority has established a single point of contact and multi-agency locality assessments in order to ensure an effective team around the child approach. The centre forms part of a preventative team and is seen very much as at the heart of multi-agency working in order to afford better protection to children and families.
- 3.6 The centre is managed well and governance arrangements are good. In the recent re-organisation arrangements were managed exceptionally well. This resulted in a seamless transition for families and ongoing service delivery. Staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and report that they support one another well. Evaluation of the impact of the work with individual families takes place within the team, through case studies and through regular supervision of staff. The success of group activities is closely monitored.
- 3.7 The manager, staff and partners have a good understanding of the priorities and needs of the centre and the community it serves. There has recently been an improvement in the accuracy of information from health. This combined with the detailed information supplied by the local authority is enabling the centre to pinpoint accurately areas of likely vulnerability. However, the centre is still embedding its procedure/ system for the evaluation of this increasing range of data to even more closely meet the needs of the area. Despite this, as a result of the centre's effective partnerships, the dogged commitment of managers and staff and the good quality of its work and resources, there is good capacity for improvement.

Judgments to support the main finding that the overall effectiveness of Frodingham Children's Centre is Good:

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| • How Good are Outcomes for Families? | Good |
| • How Good is the Provision? | Good |
| • How Effective are the Leadership and Management? | Good |
| • Capacity for Sustained Improvement | Good |

3.5 **Recommendations from the Ofsted report:**

There were only two recommendations for further improvement:

- Improve engagement and the participation of the remaining few families within its most hard-to-reach groups.
- Ensure that self-evaluation procedures incorporate the most recent and accurate information and data from all sources in order to sharpen the evaluation and analysis of the long-term impact of the centre's services

3.6 An action plan to address these issues is already being developed.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The Cabinet Member may wish to write to the Children's Centre manager to offer congratulations to staff on the outcomes of the inspection and to make mention of the outstanding judgement for the quality of care, guidance and support offered by the staff.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 None

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Each Centre completes a Self Evaluation document and a business plan and an annual conversation is undertaken with the centre by the Local Authority to ensure responsibilities and duties in respect of Equality and Diversity Act and Disability Discrimination Act are addressed.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 An important part of the inspection was the dialogue between the inspectors and service users. The Inspectors quoted one parent as saying 'I could not have turned my life around without the support of the centre'. 'I was lacking in confidence and very lonely, the centre has helped me make friends, I feel part of this community now,' Ofsted described this as being typical of the comments made by users.

Ofsted also found that the views of users are routinely gathered through evaluations and the Families Forum. They confirmed that these views are used very effectively to develop provision and tailor services according to need. Families confidently challenge the centre when they are unhappy about an element of service provision.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Continue to support improvements in Frodingham Children's Centre.

8.2 That Cabinet Member will write and make suitable comments to Frodingham Children's Centre on the inspection report.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

The Framework for Children Centre Inspection. Ofsted. September 2011.

Ofsted Inspection report Frodingham Children's Centre