

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES CABINET MEMBER

OfSTED INSPECTIONS OF NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE CHILDREN'S CENTRES; WESTCLIFF AND LITTLE GOSLINGS CHILDREN CENTRES

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1. To inform the Cabinet Member of the outcome of the Ofsted inspections of Westcliff and Little Goslings Children's Centres, both of which took place over the same two days on 15 and 16 December 2011.
- 1.2. A full copy of the reports are available in Group offices

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 All Children's Centres are subject to inspections carried out by OfSTED over a five yearly cycle. Inspections began in the summer of 2010. The *Framework for children's centre inspection* details what inspectors will look at during their visit. Inspectors check that centres:
 - know their community and the range 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 Both Westcliff and Little Goslings Children's Centres are phase one Children's Centres, providing the full core offer of services to their respective communities. These communities are among the 30% most deprived areas in the country.
- 2.3 Separate Ofsted Inspection Teams inspected the centres on 15 and 16 December 2011. The Inspections were conducted using the revised, more demanding, inspection guidance issued by Ofsted in September 2011.

- 2.4 Ofsted categorises the outcomes of the judgments against the services inspected as
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

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION:

- 3.1 **Inspection Outcomes:** The ‘Overall Effectiveness’ for both Westcliff Children’s Centre and Little Goslings Children’s Centre was judged to be Good. Both Centres were also judged to have Good ‘Capacity for Sustained Improvement’. Furthermore, both Centres were judged to be at least Good across all areas of their work and both Centres had some significant areas of Outstanding practice, as described below.
- 3.2 **Westcliff Children’s Centre.** The following comments are taken directly from the report: Westcliff Children’s Centre serves the needs of its community well.
- It is particularly effective at engaging with groups whose circumstances have made them vulnerable or hard to reach and is having considerable success in improving their lives.
 - While outcomes are good overall, the centre is extremely successful in improving the safety of families.
 - Staff are particularly skilled in safeguarding children and families and supporting families’ own knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
 - The centre is extremely highly regarded equally by those who access services and partner agencies, who work well with centre staff to ensure delivery of high-quality provision.
- 3.3 Judgments to support the main finding that the overall effectiveness of Westcliff 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 Areas identified as Outstanding at Westcliff are:
- The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them.
 - The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.
 - The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups.

- The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults.

3.6 **Recommendations from the Ofsted report for Westcliff:**

Inspectors can make requirements or recommendations. A requirement is a mandatory action; a recommendation is a suggestion to improve current practice.

There were no requirements made for Westcliff and only three recommendations for further improvement;

- Work with health partners to ensure that data available reflect the centre's reach area more accurately in order to support the centre's analysis and setting of priority targets.
- Re-launch the advisory board and ensure that members have the skills and knowledge to offer appropriate challenge and support to the centre manager and local authority.
- Rigorously monitor and evaluate the impact of the strategies employed, including transition arrangements, to raise Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores, particularly in communication, language and literacy.

3.7 **Little Goslings Children Centre.** The following comments are taken directly from the report for Little Goslings:

- Unfaltering dedication and the commitment of all The Little Goslings Children's Centre staff have ensured that outcomes for the large majority of families living within this locality have improved greatly and are now good; this is often in the face of the most challenging of circumstances.
- This centre is at the heart of the community and is an accessible and much needed resource in times of crisis.
- The outstanding care guidance and support are empowering families to deal with these crises in an effective and productive way.
- The manager of this centre is also responsible for the management of a further two centres which are relatively close and easily accessible to all families.
- Maintaining an overview of the services delivered from each centre has ensured that duplication is avoided but families are still able to access a wide range of services and activities of their choice. As a result a large majority of families particularly those within its target groups of users 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.

- 3.8 Outcomes for children and families who are using the centre are good overall. As a result they are making significant improvements to their lives. The views of users are routinely gathered through evaluations and the Families Forum. These views (see para 7.1 below) 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.
- 3.9 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. As a result of these learning and development opportunities, a few adults move into employment. However, too few centre users are given the opportunity to take part in volunteering or buddying opportunities and, as a result, are not developing the necessary skills to prepare them for the world of work.
- 3.10 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. A recent re-organisation within the local authority has established single points 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.
- 3.11 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. 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.

3.12 Judgments to support the main finding that the overall effectiveness of Little Goslings 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 |

3.13 Areas identified as Outstanding at Little Goslings are:

- The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.

3.14 **Recommendations from the Ofsted report for Little Goslings:**

There were no requirements made for Little Goslings and only three recommendations for further improvement;

- Improve engagement and the participation of the centre's hard-to-engage groups particularly fathers, male carers and teenage parents
- 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
- Improve the opportunities for centre users to become involved in buddyng or volunteering

3.15 Action Plans are being drawn up by both Centres to address the identified issues.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The Children and Family Support Service (CFSS) Locality Model offers a responsive, child focussed, model of support that provides value for money. Comments made under the 'Leadership and Management' sections of both reports reflect this, for example; 'the vision to provide a 0-19 service which meets the holistic needs of children is making rapid progress' and 'the senior leadership team, together with the local authority ensure the provision and services meet the needs of all target groups extremely effectively and therefore the centre offers excellent value for money'. This is all the more valid considering that it is a single 'Scunthorpe South Preventive 0 to 11' staff team that provides staffing activity at both centres as well as outreach support to vulnerable families.

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

5.1 None arising out of this report.

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

- 6.2 The Assistant Director (Localities and Partnerships) is intending to take a report to the Children's Trust Board to discuss the important role to be played by Children's Centre Advisory Boards and to ask that partner agencies continue to give priority to ensuring resources and capacity to support the delivery and performance management of our co-ordinated early help offer through Children's Centres.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 An important part of the inspection was the dialogue between the inspectors and service users. In both cases the inspectors identified strong supporting comments from parents.
- 7.2 At Little Goslings the Inspectors quoted parents as saying 'I am proud of my achievements'. 'I feel listened to by the staff'. 'All staff go the extra mile'. 'They have made a huge difference to our lives'. 'They really care.' 'You feel part of it without feeling a failure.' These were reported as typical of the comments made by users.
- 7.3 At Westcliff one parent reported that she had enjoyed the literacy and numeracy courses , despite not wanting to learn when she was at school, whilst another said that 'Before I came here I wasn't interested in helping myself, but now I want to make a better life for me and my children'. These were reported as 'typical' comments from centre users.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Continue to support improvements in Westcliff and Little Goslings Children's Centre.
- 8.2 That the Cabinet Member writes to both Children Centre managers and makes suitable comment on the inspection reports.

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.