

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

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

OfSTED INSPECTIONS OF NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1. To inform the Cabinet Member of the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Barton Children's Centre that took place over two days on 19 and 20 October 2011.

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. 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 Barton Children's Centre was inspected on 19 and 20 October 2011 against revised inspection guidance issued by Ofsted in September 2011. This was the first 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. The full report is now available on the Ofsted website.
- 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 **Overall Effectiveness.** The Overall Effectiveness of Barton Children's Centre was rated as Good.

2.5 A judgment on 'overall effectiveness' is supported by a number of other judgments that are themselves underpinned by individual findings, each rated on the same scale as above.

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.

3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Barton 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's reach area comprises of the Barton and Ferry wards of North Lincolnshire.

3.2 **Summary of report:** The Children's Centre serves the needs of its community well. Partnerships with other services are good. The centre is successful in its targeted work to support children and families who are most in need. The outcomes for children and adults within the centre's reach area are good overall. There is good interagency working and good use of the Common Assessment Framework.

3.3 Governance provided by the local authority is good. Recognition is given to the recent restructure that has established Children and Family Support Services (CFSS) and that this has given a focus on small teams providing support towards prevention and intensive work. The new structure is enabling the effective management of referrals and the allocation of referrals. The centre provides good value for money.

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

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	Satisfactory

3.5 **Recommendations from the Ofsted report:**

There were four recommendations for further improvement;

- Increase the numbers of fathers and Traveller families who engage with the services available to them.

- Engage in dialogue with Jobcentre Plus to provide more information on job vacancies and further guidance on how adults might acquire the necessary learning to become more work ready.
- Improve communication to better inform parents and carers and other users to increase their understanding of the centre's services following its restructure.
- Make improvement planning more effective through better use of data and measurable targets, which include review dates to assess the impact on improving outcomes.

3.6 An action plan to address these issues is already being developed. Although capacity for sustained improvement was judged to be 'satisfactory' rather than 'good' it is notable that there is not a specific recommendation for improvement in this area. However the report does comment that some roles within the new structure had not yet been filled, whilst noting that approval for these posts has now been agreed. Successful recruitment will facilitate sustainable improvements at the centre.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The Cabinet Member may wish to write to the Children's Centre manager regarding the outcomes of their inspection.

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

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 An important part of the inspection was the dialogue between the inspectors and service users. The Inspectors wrote:

"Parents and carers comment on the difference that the centre has made to their confidence, aspirations and achievements as well as their children's progress. They talk about how the staff support them through difficult times and that without help from the children's centre their lives would be very different. One parent told us how the support from the centre had saved her relationship with her partner".

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

8.2 That Cabinet Member will write and make suitable comments to Barton 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.