

Inspection report for St Michael's Children's Centre

Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	383338
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	St Michael's CofE Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	St Michael's Children's Centre Nurture Nursery EY426475

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 co-located primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with staff and senior managers from the centre. Inspectors also met with parents and carers, members of the governing body and representatives from Warwickshire local authority as well as a number of partners, including those from health, education and social care services and the voluntary sector. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

St Michael's Children's Centre is a phase two children's centre located in the south of Bedworth, Warwickshire. It is on a site shared with St Michael's Primary School. In September 2010, Warwickshire local authority commissioned the governing body of the school to govern and manage the centre. An advisory group comprising professionals, parents, and voluntary and community members supports the work of the centre. The centre was designated in 2007 and provides the full core offer of services. Day care is provided in the centre in St Michael's Children's Centre Nurture Nursery.

A range of partners, including those from health, social care and adult education services, and voluntary and private organisations, work with the centre to deliver services to users. The centre signposts users to other partners such as Jobcentre Plus. Services are provided in the centre and in outreach venues.

The large majority of local families are of White British heritage with a minority ethnic population of around 9%. The centre serves a disadvantaged area. The overall unemployment rate for the area is high at 20%. Low skills and qualifications are a feature of the area. Of the 972 children under four years old living in the reach area, 110 live in workless families. A high number of families are low waged, and 145 children live in families that are receipt of the childcare element of working tax credit.

Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills and abilities that are below those typically found for their age.

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

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

St Michael's Children's Centre provides a good quality of service for children and families. The good leadership and management of this well-resourced centre are leading to effective provision and good outcomes for families. The centre is at the heart of the community in which it is situated, and outreach provision is increasing opportunities for families in the wider reach area.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The inclusion of all families and children is central to the vision of the centre manager and is fully promoted in all aspects of the centre's work. The centre has a good understanding of its key target groups and, as a result, outcomes for those families who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances are good. Good on-site crèche facilities ensure adults have equality of access to learning while their children are safe. Recent action and outreach provision have resulted in the centre successfully engaging with the majority of its target groups. Although numbers are increasing, a minority of men and families in minority ethnic groups engage with the centre.

The enjoyment of children attending the centre is evident from their happiness and results in their good progress. The centre has a good impact on improving educational outcomes and is narrowing the gap between the highest and lowest-achieving children. There is clear and demonstrable impact from the effective,

targeted provision for two-year-old children. The majority of adult users benefit from well-planned learning, including parenting programmes, and first aid, literacy and numeracy courses. As a result, their personal development is good. Case studies demonstrate families are improving their economic well-being by gaining qualifications or progressing to further training, education or employment.

Safeguarding the health, safety and well-being of children and families is a high priority at the centre. There are clear policies and procedures, which staff consistently apply well, and the route for referral is clear and understood. Effective communication with other agencies enables timely sharing of information. As a result, the safety and progress of children identified as in need or those on child protection plans are good.

Partnerships with health professionals help ensure that families improve their health and well-being, and health outcomes are satisfactory overall. Participation in sessions, such as 'Growing Families', helps increase parents' and children's knowledge of how to stay healthy.

Leadership and management are good. Members of the governing body and the advisory group, with their wide range of professional expertise and parent and community representation, provide good support and direction to the centre's work.

The centre demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement. Good outcomes are achieved because the centre constantly monitors the quality and impact of services and identifies how they can be improved. Self-evaluation and development planning are good and used well to improve the provision. However, the health authority and Jobcentre Plus do not provide the centre with sufficient accurate, relevant data on outcomes. Therefore, it is difficult for leaders, managers and governors to monitor the full impact of the centre's work with accuracy and to set precise targets.

The centre provides good value for money. It uses its resources effectively and provides good quality of provision leading to good outcomes for users.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- The local authority should ensure that the centre has access to accurate and relevant data, including data from health partners and Jobcentre Plus, in order to measure the full impact of its work and set precise improvement targets.
- Develop further strategies to increase the number of men and families from minority ethnic groups engaging with the centre.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

The children's centre is a safe and secure environment. Children who are subject to a

child protection plan or the Common Assessment Framework process receive good individual support and, as a result, their progress is good. Families develop a good understanding of how to keep safe and reduce risk. The centre's successful courses, including 'First Aid' and 'Nurturing', result in parents improving their confidence and parenting skills. One parent said: 'I had no confidence at all and felt trapped at home. Coming here, I have made lots of friends and been on so many courses, it has made me so confident.'

The centre promotes health and well-being through its range of services and partnerships with health services. Families using the centre are developing healthy lifestyles because of advice and support which promote healthy living. The level of attendance at health clinics is good and immunisation rates are high. Although the centre does not have complete information on the number of babies that are breastfed at six to eight weeks, it is aware that these numbers are low, as is the impact on reducing childhood obesity rates.

Through a wide range of play and development opportunities, parents and carers are learning how to support their children's learning. Attendance at day care and crèche provision leads to good outcomes for children. Children develop good skills for the future. Parents and children treat each other with respect. Adult learning courses are improving outcomes for families. Case studies demonstrate that families improve their skills, and gain qualifications and employment. 'I have passed my numeracy level 1 and I am working towards my level 2,' said one parent. 'We now run the childminder's group ourselves,' said another parent.

The centre routinely listens to and uses the feedback of families to shape and develop its services. Parents and children make a positive contribution to the development of the centre through volunteering. Centre users participate in the strategic decisions of the centre through their membership of the advisory group.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

The extent to which children, including those from target 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 children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
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	2
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	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre's clear knowledge and understanding of the community it serves lead to the delivery of good-quality provision. Training, courses and progression routes are carefully planned based on the assessment of individual needs. The building is well-equipped to provide activities for users, adult learning courses, a crèche and day care for children. The centre is proactive in its approach to working with community organisations in order to enhance the provision. The majority of workless families with children under four years old access services at the centre.

The centre promotes learning effectively for children and adults. Staff use information about children's starting points to plan their learning and measure their progress. Parents and carers are encouraged to support their children through enjoyable activities such as 'Stay and Play' and 'Story Telling'. Adults' and children's successes are celebrated well through publications, presentation events and displays of work.

Strong partnership working results in effective support for families. Family support workers are successful in working with families, and users particularly value home visits and individually tailored support. Staff assess needs appropriately, provide ongoing support and refer users to other services. The highly effective approach to care, guidance and support is demonstrated by the improving outcomes for vulnerable families. Parents and carers comment that the centre has made a big difference to their lives. Typical of parents' comments was: 'The centre has really helped me manage my child's behaviour and having the free two-year-old place in the day care has helped him develop and be a happier child.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The centre manager demonstrates a clear vision of inclusion and commitment to the success of the centre. Governance, leadership and management are good and lead to good outcomes for users. Accountability arrangements are clear and understood. High expectations and ambitions are communicated to staff, and drive forward and improve services for families. The centre seeks and welcomes the views of all families and uses them to develop the provision.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The inclusion of all families and children is promoted in all aspects of the centre's provision, to ensure that their diverse needs are supported and barriers to access are removed. Good individual support is provided for disabled children, which helps their progress. The centre is effective in engaging with the majority of its key target groups, particularly workless families and young parents, but only a minority of men and families in ethnic minority groups engage with the centre.

Professionals from a range of agencies make an effective commitment to partnership working and to improving the life chances of children and families, which results in good and improving outcomes.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. The centre is effective in ensuring children and families stay safe through close attention to child protection and robust vetting and recruitment procedures. The safeguarding of children is a high priority in the centre and the centre consults well with users and partners to improve safeguarding. For example, the centre is working closely with its partner school to improve arrangements for children's safety in the busy shared car park.

Good outcomes are achieved because the centre constantly monitors the quality and impact of services and identifies how they can be improved. However, leaders, managers and members of the governing body do not have sufficient access to precise and relevant data, at a local level, to enable highly accurate monitoring of impact and precise target setting.

The good resources at the busy centre are managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users, leading to good outcomes. Families using the centre state that provision and support are good and make a strong contribution to their families' well-being. As a result, services of the centre are well used and engage the majority of families in target groups. The centre, therefore, provides good value for money.

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	2
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable	2

adults	
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	2
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	2

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

Findings from the concurrent inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School and the inspection of St Michael's Children's Centre Nurture Nursery in September 2011 were used to inform the judgements made during this inspection.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected St Michael's Children's Centre on 31 January and 1 February 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you very much for talking to us and letting us come into your sessions. The information you gave and the stories you shared with us helped us to make our judgements. Many of you talked about how the centre has helped you and your children. You told us how the children's centre has supported you to improve your lives and how you now have more confidence. It was clear that you are proud of your achievements. You told us how it has become easier to ask for help and support because of the friendly welcome and the relationships that you develop with centre staff. You also told us about the friends you have met and the things you have learnt because of your involvement in the centre's activities.

It is clear that you feel welcome at the children's centre. We found out that many of you have learnt new things and developed new skills, and many of you gain qualifications, go on to further training or find work. Some of you told us how the involvement with the centre is 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.

You enjoy the sessions with your children such as 'Stay and Play' and 'Story Telling'. Those of you with children in day care or the crèche value the good care your children receive. We found that children benefit from accessing services at the centre and make good progress from their starting points. The centre works well with the adult education service to give you access to courses to help improve your own

education and future employment opportunities. The centre is successful at engaging with the majority of local families that need support but only a minority of men and families from minority ethnic groups engage with the centre. We have asked the centre to find ways to increase these numbers.

Your children behave well and you learn more about how to stay healthy. We found that health outcomes are satisfactory overall. The level of attendance at health clinics is good and immunisation rates are high. Although the centre does not have complete information on the number of babies that are breastfed at six to eight weeks, it is aware that these numbers are low, as is the impact on reducing childhood obesity rates.

The centre listens to you and asks you what you think of the services and activities they offer. They change how and when they do some things because of what you say. Some of you are involved in making decisions about your centre through being a member of the governing body. Childminders enjoy running their own group and you have lots of opportunities to volunteer at the centre.

We found that all the staff are keen to promote equality and diversity. Many of the families with the greatest needs are enjoying sessions to help them and their children. Families treat each other with respect. The centre works well for everyone in the community, irrespective of their background or disability. The centre has been continually improving and knows what it needs to do to improve further. However, the health authority and Jobcentre Plus do not provide the centre with precise and relevant data so that they can accurately measure the impact of services and set precise improvement targets.

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