

Inspection report for Sunshine Children's Centre

Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	384125
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	119230 Brockholes Wood Community Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY300746 Brockholes Wood Neighbourhood Nursery School

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.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with parents and carers, centre staff and representatives from professional partnerships, the advisory board and the local authority. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Sunshine Children's Centre is located on the site of the Brockholes Wood Primary School in the Preston district of Lancashire. The centre was designated as a phase one children's centre in 2005, developing from a Sure Start Local programme. The centre is linked to the nearby Ribbleton Children's Centre. Staff work across both centres and governance arrangements are shared through an advisory board reporting to the local authority.

Almost all families within the centre's reach area fall within the country's most 20% deprived areas and the majority within the most 10% deprived. The Farringdon estate on which the children's centre is located is primarily White British whilst the Fishwick area has a high percentage of Asian families, small numbers of Chinese and African Caribbean families, and an increasing Polish community. The proportion of children registered with the centre from minority ethnic groups is in line with the population profile.

Families face issues of poor housing, domestic violence and drug and alcohol misuse. In 2010 the proportion of children aged under-five who were living in households where no one was working was 33%. The proportion of families claiming key working age benefits was correspondingly high.

The centre provides the full core offer within purpose-built premises and is located within the grounds of the Brockholes Wood Primary School. On-site childcare is provided by Brockholes Wood Nursery. The early years provision was last inspected in June 2008. Most

children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development below those found nationally 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

This is a good children's centre overall. The high quality care, guidance and support and excellent safeguarding arrangements have a good impact on the safety of families. The strong emphasis on healthy living is having a positive impact on the health and well-being of the users. This has been particularly effective in improving oral health, a recognised priority for the region. Targeted work to improve achievement for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been particularly effective in reducing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the other children.

Provision is well planned to support the needs of users, although provision aimed at supporting fathers is insufficiently developed. The assessment of children's needs, including the use of the Common Assessment Framework, is good. The centre is attractive and welcoming, enabling users to benefit from a wide range of high quality resources. Parents make a good contribution to monitoring and planning their child's learning and development. There are some good examples of adult progression into further education, employment or training but overall this aspect of the provision is insufficiently developed.

The centre is well managed and the views of those who visit the centre are used effectively to improve the quality of the provision. Partnership working is particularly effectively used to support children and families. The centre promotes equality and diversity well through its location of activities and the range of very effective materials and resources. The advisory board provides satisfactory support and challenge but is not given sufficiently detailed performance data about the centre. Nonetheless, the good outcomes for users, good quality of provision, good leadership and management and clear priorities for future development indicate a good capacity to improve.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase the opportunities for adults to participate in further education and training to develop their employability skills and enable entry to employment.
- Develop the provision available to male parents to increase their engagement with the centre.
- Working with partners, where necessary, to increase the range of performance data relating to the reach area that is reported to the advisory board to further enable their role in providing effective support and challenge

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Assessment of the needs of vulnerable children and adults including the use of the Common Assessment Framework is effective. The support for those children on child protection plans is good. Case studies show these children to be making good progress. Children and parents feel safe at the centre and its outreach provision. The provision of safety information and equipment during home visits ensures families are safer in and around their homes. The promotion of healthy living is strong and parents have a good understanding of how to keep their families healthy. The centre's involvement in strategies to improve oral health, a recognised issue across the Preston area, has been particularly effective. The number of families registered with dentists increased from a minority in 2010 to the vast majority currently. The strong promotion of healthy eating is having a very positive impact on reducing obesity levels although further reducing this remains a key priority for the centre. The proportion of mothers still breastfeeding at six to eight weeks has increased significantly and, although lower than national rates, is achieving the local targets.

Through successful early engagement strategies the large majority of families and most children are registered with the centre. The number of families from across the target groups using centre services is at least satisfactory although provision aimed at supporting fathers is insufficiently developed. Targeted work to improve the achievement of children not achieving 78 profile points and at least 6 points in each of the scales for communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development in the Early Years Foundation Stage is particularly effective. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest reduced by nearly 10% points in 2010/11.

There are some good examples of users progressing into further education and links with Jobcentre Plus are well established. The empowering parenting course has been particularly successful at giving users the motivation and confidence to progress into training or further education. Similarly, the volunteering programme has been equally effective with one

volunteer commenting that 'volunteering gave me more confidence and I am now starting a foundation degree'. However, the centre is correct in recognising in its self-evaluation that the overall provision to meet the needs of adults is insufficiently developed and it is currently implementing a strategy to address this.

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	2
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.	3

How good is the provision?

2

The centre's strong focus on engaging with those families with the greatest need of intervention is successful in meeting those needs. Outreach centres are well located to meet different groups' needs within the local community. Some courses are delivered either in the centre or in the users' home to meet their individual needs. Staff have a good understanding of, and make good use of, the Common Assessment Framework to support children. The centre recognises the need, and has plans in place, to further develop the provision for adult learning and the provision aimed at supporting fathers.

The centre provides a bright and welcoming environment and parents are greeted warmly by staff. On site activities are effectively helping children to develop and make good progress. Children are well behaved and enthusiastically enter into learning activities. A qualified early years teacher gives staff good support, ensuring that all activities are well designed. Parents have good involvement in recording their child's 'learning journey' and identifying the next steps in their learning and development. One user said, 'We are really made to feel welcome and it is great that children have the opportunity to mix and learn how to share'.

The centre provides an extensive range of leaflets to develop parents' understanding of how to be healthy and stay safe. Counselling services are well used and a new programme to support mothers with post-natal depression or anxiety has just commenced. Bilingual staff

provide good support for members of the Asian community where appropriate. The Citizen’s Advice Bureau provides good support and advice, and links with local charities providing support are also good. One user commented that, ‘When I was in need of support my outreach worker was with me within the hour’, whilst another was impressed that ‘my outreach worker came to see me in a refuge in another part of the county’. One lone parent commenting on the impact of the centre said, ‘Groups like these are brilliant. I can get out, meeting and talking to other parents, so I don’t feel I am the only one.’

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**

Staff are well supported and value the clear direction and strong commitment to improvement from the centre manager. Arrangements for governance and accountability are satisfactory. Self evaluation accurately identifies the centre’s strengths and areas for improvement. The advisory board is well established and has a good understanding of the centre’s key priorities. However, it is not provided with sufficient performance data to provide better than satisfactory support and challenge. For example, local data are not readily available on the number of children admitted to hospital accident and emergency units. Users feel ‘valued and listened to’ and their feedback is used well to improve the centre, as are the views of the relatively new parents’ forum.

Partnerships with an appropriate range of professionals are good. Very high quality accommodation and resources are very well managed to provide good value for money. Partners confirm that they ‘find working with the centre to be mutually beneficial’ and that ‘staff are very approachable and willing to implement new ideas’. For example, the centre is currently piloting a newly developed course for managing post-natal depression and anxiety.

Safeguarding arrangements are excellent. Risks are thoroughly assessed and minimised to promote the safety of users and staff, particularly when lone working. Very good staff training ensures their excellent knowledge of how to safeguard users. Arrangements for the recruitment and vetting of staff are thorough and appropriate records held. One manager is a qualified social worker and her experience in child protection is utilised exceptionally well to support staff who play a critical role in multi-agency team meetings, often as lead professionals. The outcomes from a wide range of externally attended activities such as serious case review update panels are used particularly well to further develop staff knowledge, understanding and practice.

The centre promotes a very strong ethos of mutual respect. A very good range of materials and resources are well used to promote equality and diversity. Outreach centres are well located to meet the needs of the culturally diverse population and this has resulted in good improvements in engaging with minority ethnic users. The centre is effective in narrowing the achievement gap between different groups of users.

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 effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures 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 adults	1
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

Before the inspection, inspectors read the Ofsted inspection reports for local primary schools and nurseries to learn about partnership-working, attainment of local children and contextual information about the area in which the centre is situated. The local authority provided comparative data about the centre’s performance.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Sunshine Children's Centre on 22 February 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you to those of you who contributed to the inspection. We agreed with you that the centre is very welcoming and friendly. Particular strengths of the centre are the good quality of the care, guidance and support and the good quality resources to support your children's learning and development. A good proportion of your children achieve at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage profile scales. Measures to close the gap of the lowest performing 20% and the other children are proving very effective. However, we agree with the centre that the overall approach to supporting adult learning is insufficiently developed. Your centre has been asked to improve this and it already has a strategy in place.

We found that the centre's approach to safeguarding is excellent. You confirmed that you feel your children are safe at the centre and that it helps you stay safe. We found that managers and staff have a strong focus on promoting equality and diversity and there is a very strong ethos of mutual respect and trust within the centre. The centre works closely with those families that may be vulnerable due to their circumstances and you were very appreciative of the speed with which centre staff respond to your needs. We have asked the centre to increase its provision for male parents and carers, which it already recognises to be insufficiently developed.

Your children are well behaved and enthusiastically join in with learning activities. It was good to see the very good range of high quality resources available for your children and that many of these promote a greater understanding of equality and diversity.

The centre listens to you and uses your feedback well to improve its services. It is good that an increasing number of you are joining the parents' forum which, although relatively new, is proving to be very effective. It is also good to note that some of you are willing to be advisory board members. We have asked that the centre provides the board with a greater range of performance data so that it can provide better support and challenge.

Thank you for talking with us and contributing to the inspection of your children's centre. A special thank you to those of you who took the time to come in and talk to us and for letting us join in with some of your sessions. We wish you all the best for the future.

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