

Inspection report for West End Children's Centre

Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	384207
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2012
Reporting inspector	Jai Sharda

Centre leader	Sumitra Mina Jogia
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	5 Catesby Street Leicester LE3 5PB
Telephone number	0116 225 2225
Fax number	0116 225 2222
Email address	Mina.jogia@leicester.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Not applicable

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.

Report published: March 2012



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No.100080

© Crown copyright 2011



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 the chair of the neighbourhood advisory group, the centre leader, members of staff, parents and carers, local authority officers and partner professionals from other agencies. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

West End Children's Centre was designated as a phase one centre in 2005. It serves an ethnically and socially diverse community in the south west of the city, known locally as the West End. Responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the centre lies with the centre leader who reports both to the Local Authority's integrated neighbourhood services manager and to the centre's advisory board. The centre offers a range of services which include health services, family play sessions, parenting programmes and outreach services.

Most families in the area are of White British heritage. The proportion of residents from minority ethnic groups is lower than the Leicester average. A large number of Eastern European migrant workers and their families have recently settled in the area. An increasing number of businesses and restaurants reflect this diversity. Many adults from these communities speak little or no English; they live in poor accommodation, often overcrowded, with shared facilities. The proportion of children from households with no adult working and claiming out-of-work benefits is higher than the local authority and national averages.

Significant pockets of deprivation exist in the Westcotes and Castle wards. The housing in this area is very mixed with blocks of flats, sheltered housing for older persons, hostels and flats in varying states of repair and student housing. In contrast, the Western Park ward is among the most prosperous in the city. Although

many terraced houses characterise the area, most properties consist of newly-built flats, detached and semi-detached family homes. Some 32% of children in the West End live in poverty, which is significantly higher than the average for England. About 20% of children in the area are eligible for free school meals, which is similar to the city average. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are often above national averages.

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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

The overall effectiveness of the centre is satisfactory, with some aspects that are good. Parents, carers and children benefit from the centre's effective promotion of healthy lifestyles, such as through its 'Stay and Play' sessions, baby massage programme and healthy eating courses. The centre's strong peer support programme has helped a good proportion of mothers to sustain breastfeeding during the first year after birth. Centre users report that they feel safe. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Children on a child protection plan, as well as those subject to a Common Assessment Framework, receive effective and well-integrated support. The 'team around the child' approach is particularly effective in ensuring that all agencies work together to prioritise the child's welfare.

The centre works effectively to promote children's learning and development so that they are well prepared for their first year at school. Children and adults enjoy the activities run by the centre, such as 'Discovering Babies' and 'Talking Toddlers.' However, the centre does not offer courses to support parents' improvement in basic literacy and numeracy or to support adults back into work. Parents provide evaluations of services, which centre staff use effectively, to improve provision. Many parents are encouraged to volunteer at the centre, which promotes their confidence and personal development.

Parents receive a satisfactory range of services to help them in their education and to become independent. Many parents benefit from the work of the welfare rights officer, so that they can claim all of the benefits to which they are entitled. However,

the centre does not offer sufficient opportunities for parents to participate in further learning, training or employment.

The centre has worked hard to reach a high percentage of families with children under five years within the local area and has had some success in increasing the participation of families for whom English is an additional language. Outreach services successfully support a good proportion of families in their homes and on an individual basis. Families have good access to advice and guidance from knowledgeable staff who signpost parents onto other agencies where appropriate.

The neighbourhood advisory group provides an appropriate level of challenge and scrutiny of the centre's work and supports the centre leader well in making improvements. Centre staff have clear roles and responsibilities and they work well together, as well as with a wide range of partner agencies. The local authority effectively monitors the performance of the centre and it ensures that self-evaluation is suitably critical and inclusive. As a consequence, the centre's capacity to secure further improvements is satisfactory. Senior managers understand the centre's strengths and weaknesses. They make effective use of feedback from parents and carers, for example, through parent forums, to evaluate the provision and to make improvements. However, the centre's inefficient recording procedures mean that leaders and managers do not always have up-to-date information about which groups of parents are using centre services. This limits their ability to target provision even more precisely.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Implement strategies to increase users' further participation in learning, training and employment, including those who speak English as an additional language.
- Provide courses that support adults' literacy and numeracy and the knowledge and skills that will support their families' better economic well-being.
- Ensure that the centre holds accurate information about the families who use the range of services so that managers can target provision even more precisely to meet the needs of all families in the reach area.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

The centre promotes healthy lifestyles for parents, carers and children well. Following a recent successful and well-attended healthy eating programme run in conjunction with a local college, the centre now plans to develop this provision further. The centre's popular 'Stay and Play' sessions are effective in promoting healthy diets. The health visiting team promote and reinforce healthy lifestyles when they carry out home visits and during individual sessions with mothers at the centre. The well-attended baby massage programmes contribute significantly to improvements in children's emotional well-being and securing bonding and

attachment. A good proportion of mothers who choose to breastfeed at birth sustain this due to the strong peer support programme offered by the centre. The centre has had some success in encouraging mothers who smoke to do so outside of the home environment through its 'Smoke Free Homes' scheme but overall, the proportion of women who smoke during pregnancy remains high.

Users say that they feel safe in the centre in terms of physical safety and in raising concerns they have about their own family or others' parenting skills. The impact of the centre's initiatives on home safety visits help parents to keep children safe. Children subject to a child protection plan receive good quality support. In the last six months, centre staff have worked so successfully with six children on child protection plans that they are no longer considered to be at risk. Children subject to a Common Assessment Framework, as well as children with a disability and those with special educational needs, receive effective support by a 'team around the child' approach. Their welfare is prioritised through joint working and effective early intervention.

The centre's work with young children contributes suitably to their learning and development and their readiness for school. The profile scores for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides strong evidence of this, as does the narrowing gap between the lowest 20% of children and the rest, which is now broadly average. Children and adults enjoy the activities run by the centre. There are no courses currently, however, to support parents' improvement in basic literacy and numeracy or to support adults back into work.

Staff and centre users treat each other with respect. The centre gathers feedback from parents and carers to ensure that they feel welcome and included. Parents and carers are expected to provide their evaluations of activities and sessions regularly and centre staff take these into account in the planning of future sessions. Parents who volunteer at the centre report considerable gains in confidence. Parents on the parents' forum make a satisfactory contribution to decision making by suggesting ideas for centre activities or groups.

Parents make satisfactory progress in their education and personal development. The welfare rights officer provides effective support for families to enable them to access the benefits to which they are entitled. Parents who have become volunteers develop skills that help them to increase their employability. However, opportunities to help parents improve their economic and social well-being through learning and training are limited.

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	3
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	3
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?

3

Centre staff have been successful in registering a high percentage of families with children under five years within the local area. The centre uses information from partners to assess needs accurately and to provide services that match those needs. Outreach work by the centre's family support officers is used well to identify the most vulnerable families and to help them progress from using targeted to more universal provision. Families' needs are effectively assessed. In addition, effective multi-agency working ensures that families receive well-coordinated and integrated services. Outreach services successfully support a good proportion of families both in their homes and on an individual basis. Joint working between health visitors, neighbourhood nursery officers and the children's early learning officers, has resulted in the majority of families, including those from priority groups, participating in purposeful learning and development, especially in relation to improving their health and well-being. However, the centre offers few activities to engage target groups to develop fully their learning and qualifications and progress to further employment, education and training.

Families have easy access to satisfactory care, guidance and support. Staff are knowledgeable and have a clear understanding of when to signpost parents onto other agencies, and do so effectively. In addition, a good range of information is available on notice boards and through leaflets on display throughout the centre. Staff receive training in providing support for those affected by domestic violence and they give help and advice if required.

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	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	3

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

The centre has clear governance arrangements. Procedures to evaluate the work of the centre are in place and provide a sound understanding of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. The neighbourhood advisory group provides an appropriate level of challenge and scrutiny. Clear line management arrangements and effective supervision mean that managers and staff feel well supported.

The local authority effectively monitors the performance of the centre. Self-evaluation is inclusive and judgements suitably supported by evidence. Senior managers understand the centre's strengths and weaknesses. However, there are some gaps in the centre's procedures for recording attendance or participation in the wide range of services offered. Consequently, managers do not always have the most up-to-date information about which groups of parents are using centre services. This limits their ability to target provision even more precisely.

The participation rate by families within the local area represents a wide range of users, including lone parents, fathers and children of disabled parents. Consequently, the centre provides satisfactory value for money. Families of all backgrounds feel welcome in the centre. Inclusion for all families is actively promoted and diversity celebrated. Resources at the centre, such as toys and books reflect the wider world in relation to different cultures and languages. The small proportion of families with children or adults who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive satisfactory support. The centre has worked hard to tackle the language and cultural barriers preventing families from Eastern European communities who speak English as an additional language using its services. For example, a member of staff translates parent/child information and the centre has more recently appointed a service user from the Polish community as a volunteer to help the centre's outreach work with the migrant community. The centre has also recently begun to make use of interpreters in the Stay and Plays sessions. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of this initiative.

The centre has a strong focus on keeping children safe and on promoting the emotional well-being of parents and thus the well-being of the children. A well-qualified and experienced team has developed good links with social care teams, health partners and the police to support the safeguarding of families. As a result of quality training, staff have a good understanding of how to implement procedures to protect those children who may be at risk of abuse. Robust procedures are in place to ensure those who work with the children and their families are suitable to do so.

Good partnerships between centre staff and the various statutory and voluntary sector agencies ensure that they share information about families and children to provide a coherent and integrated service, especially for the most vulnerable. Joint working with the three health visitors based in the centre, are effective in providing a good quality universal service. Information sharing between different agencies is particularly well coordinated to ensure that families, especially the most vulnerable, receive the help and support that they need. Links with Jobcentre Plus are positive.

Centre staff engage families in the feedback process so they can evaluate how well services meet the needs of users. Staff act upon parents' feedback as appropriate, for example by changing the frequency and/or time of when they offer activities for groups. Parents' participation in the parents' forum helps them to engage with centre management and to have their voice heard. Parental involvement with the neighbourhood advisory group has, however, been sporadic.

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 secure improvement in outcomes	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
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	3

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

There were no other inspections of services and Early Years Foundation Stage provision that directly informed these inspection judgements.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Complaining about inspections*, which is available from our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected the West End Sure Start Children's Centre on 28–29 February 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We enjoyed talking to you during activities and meeting groups of you during some of the sessions. You were clear on your views about the centre and they were very helpful to us. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution to the inspection.

We are pleased to find that the centre provides effective support for families to improve their healthy lifestyles. Many of you told us how much you enjoyed the 'Stay and Play' sessions, baby massage programme and healthy eating courses. The centre's breastfeeding peer support scheme has helped many of the mums who use the centre to continue breastfeeding their baby for the first year after birth. The team of health visitors based at the centre promotes healthy lifestyles during home visits as well as during one-to-one sessions with parents and carers at the centre.

Staff work well with health visitors and with the different specialist teams in the centre to support you and your children. We noted how much you appreciate the help, support and advice of many of the staff at the centre. The sessions that your children attend are planned carefully to help them develop their social skills and to prepare them for their first year at school. Many of you told us that you had learnt parenting skills which you are now putting into practice. You said that the centre provides opportunities for you to give feedback on the centre's services as well as on individual sessions and that staff work hard to ensure that these services meet your needs.

You told us that centre staff and other users treat you and each other with respect. We agree. The centre has worked very hard to reach a wide range of families in the area with children under five. It provides a warm welcome to families from the West End's diverse communities. You told us that the centre was a safe and welcoming environment. Centre staff provide appropriate support for those families, carers and children who have a disability. The centre has encouraged many of you to train as volunteers so that you can help out at the centre. The volunteers we spoke to told us that they had gained considerably in confidence and that they felt they were making a valuable contribution to the centre and to the community.

The centre's leaders and managers have a reasonably accurate understanding of the centre's main strengths and weaknesses. Both the local authority and the neighbourhood advisory group provide an appropriate level of challenge and scrutiny of the work of centre leaders. The centre has implemented good safeguarding arrangements. All workers and volunteers have been checked to confirm their suitability to work with children, and adults and are well qualified in all the important areas connected to your safety and that of your children. The centre has good partnerships with health and social services teams in the city as well as with private day nurseries and voluntary organisations. This joint working helps partner agencies to share and coordinate information about families so that they receive the best help and support to meet their needs.

We have asked the centre to increase the number of parents, including those who speak English as an additional language, who participate in learning, training and employment programmes. We have also asked them to help parents to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, as well as the knowledge and skills that will support them to gain employment or training. Finally, we have asked centre leaders to ensure that it has accurate and up-to-date information about who uses its services, so that it can identify any gaps and plan future activities to meet the needs of even more parents and children in the West End.

Thank you once again for all your help during the inspection. We wish you well for the future.

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