

# Inspection report for Westleigh Children's and Community Centre

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Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	384211
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Centre leader	Elizabeth Andrews
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	106442 Leigh Westleigh Methodist Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY373179 Honey Bears Pre-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 one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the senior leadership team, the Chair of the committee, frontline workers, health services, Jobcentre Plus, partner agencies and users of the centre. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Westleigh Children's and Community Centre was designated in 2008 as a phase one centre. It is situated in the Westleigh area of Wigan. The centre is based on the site of Leigh Westleigh Methodist Primary School. In 2009 the local authority commissioned the management of the centre to the primary school and a collaborative leadership committee was appointed. The school headteacher is also head of the children's centre.

The centre serves families living in one of the 30% most deprived areas in the country where families face high levels of social disadvantage. The population of the reach area is predominantly of White British heritage. Most families live in social housing or rented accommodation. There are some local shops and two general practitioner surgeries. Levels of long-term unemployment are high with 34% of children aged from birth to four years living in workless households. Local employment is mainly in the service industry and retail. The reach area is widespread with some families having to walk some distance to access services.

The centre delivers health services, adult learning and employment support and guidance. It works in partnership with health professionals, Jobcentre Plus and adult learning services. The centre's early years and childcare provision is inspected separately and the report of this inspection is available to view on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their age, particularly in their personal and social development and speech and language.

## 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, as is the capacity to improve. The centre has undergone many changes since the initial designation, resulting in a change in governance arrangements in 2009. The current senior leadership team has a clear vision and understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for improvement. The outcomes from the tireless drive and determination of the senior management team and staff over the last two years are now becoming evident as there has been a significant increase in registrations to the centre during this period.

The centre covers a large geographical area and for those families who live the furthest from the centre, it is approximately one hour's walk to access services within the centre. Consultation with families has identified that they feel this is too far for them to travel and are disadvantaged by this. The centre is rightly concerned about this and has worked tirelessly to source alternative ways to engage with these families.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding children and work seamlessly with the school and childcare setting to provide a safe and secure environment within the centre. Parents say they feel safe leaving their child at the centre. Parents who are experiencing challenging circumstances in their lives share their concerns with staff and say that the centre is a 'trusting, warm and friendly place'. Parents describe the invaluable support given to them and as one parent said about staff, 'Without their support I don't know how I would have got through'.

Links with some partners are more effective than others. With live birth data not currently available, the centre is heavily reliant on information from the local health visitor. The expansion of the accommodation at the centre is set to provide room for the provision of ante-natal services. Data from key partners and commissioned services are not always

shared with the centre. This limits the centre's ability to accurately evaluate and monitor the impact that the centre is having on families, and plan for future development. Parents are beginning to become more involved in the work of the centre. They contribute to surveys and consultations and are represented through a parent's forum.

There has been a significant improvement in children's learning. Intensive work by the qualified teacher has seen a year-on-year improvement in the social and emotional development and speaking and listening skills of children through the use of programmes specifically designed to involve parents in children's learning. The on-site adult education facility provides opportunities for adults to gain accredited qualifications.

## **What does the centre need to do to improve further?**

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Establish clear protocols for the exchange and sharing of information between partners to further promote the integration of services.
- Ensure that key performance targets identify where there is most need and that data and qualitative evidence are used as part of a rigorous monitoring system.
- Engage more parents in decision-making to enable them to help shape services and drive improvement.
- Work with the local authority to explore solutions to ensure that those families who live some distance from the centre are not excluded from services and activities.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

<b>3</b>
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The importance of breastfeeding is a message the centre has worked hard to promote. The percentage of children being breastfed at six to eight weeks has gradually increased and although below the national average, has now exceeded the local average for Wigan. The centre is recognised as a breastfeeding-friendly establishment. The percentage of children in reception who are obese is above average. However, the children who live in the Westleigh area are nearest to the national average. The centre has been awarded the Healthy Business award for providing healthy food and drink. It successfully uses the play sessions as an opportunity to deliver messages on dental health. Parents commented on how useful they have found this. The importance of leading a healthy life is promoted through sessions on healthy lunchboxes. Adults and children were seen to be having lots of fun in the lively 'Groovy Tots' movement and dance session.

The centre is a safe place for all who attend and there has been a significant reduction in the number of emergency hospital admissions in Wigan. In response to needs within the community the centre has initiated a number of safety campaigns. Home visits are undertaken to offer safety advice and equipment to help families understand the importance

of safety within the home. The road safety team works closely with parents and children to raise awareness of dangers when crossing roads and using car seats safely. Consequently, families now have more awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe. The 'clearing house' meetings have been highly effective in ensuring that families receive the appropriate service; the successful implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) has resulted in a reduction in the number of children subject to a child protection plan.

Children are well prepared for school due to the seamless transition between the private on-site childcare provision, the nursery and Reception. The qualified teacher has driven the year-on-year improvement across the areas of learning and the emphasis on programmes to improve personal development and speaking and listening skills have been highly successful. This good work has also been promoted in the private, voluntary and independent sector to reach as many children as possible. Data show that the number of children who achieve 78 by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has significantly increased over the last year.

Children play well together and adults are respectful and polite to each other. Parents are warmly greeted at reception and comment on how welcome they are made to feel. Parents who felt isolated at home have grown in confidence. 'Everyone says hello' and 'I've made loads of friends' are comments which reflect the value parents put on the centre. The role of the volunteers within the centre has grown and they play a vital role. They play with children in play sessions where parents have difficulty with physical activities or while they access on-site adult learning. The parents' forum is growing in strength and contributes to driving improvement across the centre. A small number of parents are beginning to become more involved in decision making.

There has been little change in the percentage of children aged from birth to four years living in households dependant on workless benefits. However, there has been an increase in the percentage of families claiming childcare tax credits awarded to those in employment. Jobcentre Plus provides 'drop-in' sessions at the centre. However, these are not well attended and have had little impact. Data on parents' progression into employment are not shared with the centre. The participation rates for non-accredited courses are high compared to accredited courses. Some parents have clear aspirations with regard to their future employment and are progressing well towards this.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>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.</b>	<b>3</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

<b>3</b>
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The centre knows the majority of the community well and recognises the importance of early intervention. The provision of on-site ante-natal services at a much earlier stage is planned for and dependent on the completion of the on-going refurbishment of an adjacent building. Whilst registration rates have doubled in the last two years, it is recognised that one section of the community is frequently overlooked due to the distance from the centre. As the reach area has not been re-configured to accommodate this, the need to provide resources in this area has been a priority for the centre. Premises in this specific area have now been identified.

The one outreach worker works tirelessly to engage families and promote the centre. The worker also provides a 'hand-holding' service and will accompany any user who feels they need this extra support to the centre or to appointments. A new referral system has replaced the Leigh, Lowton and Goldborne family service. Plans are in place to monitor the impact of this system over the coming months. The centre has responded well to individual needs, as shown by the success of the 'Men Matter' project and the 'Young Mums' groups. 'Babies Bubble and Rhymes' and 'Joxy Tales' are popular courses and have had a positive impact on improving speech and language. However, a lack of space prevents some courses being offered as regularly as the centre would like.

Care, guidance and support is good as the centre effectively provides a safe haven for families who have grown in confidence and feel able to share their concerns with staff. Highly-effective support is in place to support families and there are many poignant accounts of how the centre has supported families and brought stability to their lives. Home-based one-to-one support for families is effective. As a consequence, families have established routines and improved relationships with their children. Good-quality childcare is provided at the centre which has the highest number of children funded through the early education grant for two-year-olds. This has enabled the centre to work with an increasing number of children at a much earlier stage. A good range of information is sensitively displayed and time is taken to explain the services fully to users and potential users. Parents say how they feel at ease and that 'there isn't one member of staff that wouldn't help you'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.</b>	<b>2</b>
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**How effective are the leadership and management?** **3**

The centre is governed by a collaborative leadership team. Management structures are clear and the formation of the senior management team has been instrumental in driving through the improvements needed to build a strong foundation for the centre. The advisory board is represented by working groups which form part of the decision-making process to develop the centre. The parents’ forum is gaining in strength and becoming more involved in the work of the centre. However, few parents are directly involved in decision-making. Policies and procedures are now embedded within the infrastructure of the centre and staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. This is mainly due to the sterling work of the centre co-ordinator. Services are not fully integrated as service level agreements do not always specify the expectations of the centre.

Senior leaders recognise the centre’s areas for development and the newly-written ‘poverty pledge’ focuses specifically on key target groups. The process of self-evaluation is satisfactory and enables staff to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Meetings take place at regular intervals to monitor progress across the centre. However, previous action plans lacked specific targets and there is reluctance from some key partners to share information which makes the impact of services difficult to monitor. Where relationships are clearer the centre is able to be more effective in identifying need within the community. The data system has proved to be an invaluable support in helping staff analyse data.

The management of resources and value for money are satisfactory. Services offered by the centre are used well and there is a high demand for some courses. Outreach work is successful in identifying need and referring families to the centre or signposting them to alternative services. Shared accommodation with adult learning enables families to access a wide range of courses. The centre makes good use of the skills and expertise of its staff. Outcomes for families in the area are at least satisfactory and some are good.

The centre satisfactorily promotes the inclusion of children and their families. Families feel very welcome at the centre and have a good relationship with staff. The range of families using the centre is representative of the community. However, services are not easily accessible for those who live the furthest from the centre. The centre is committed to narrowing the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest and tackling inequalities, including those faced by disabled children. The centre promotes an inclusive culture and the formation of the ‘Young Mums’ group for teenagers and the regular attendance of fathers demonstrate the success of this.

Keeping families safe is at the forefront of the centre’s work and good safeguarding procedures are effective. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place and staff



receive suitable training for their role. Early intervention procedures are diligently followed. Risk assessments are thorough and fire drills are held on a regular basis. The centre is proactive in making timely referrals to key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to adults and children.

The centre works satisfactorily with external partners. For example, it facilitates play sessions with local childminding groups and delivers baby clinics and parentcraft classes through the health service. Jobcentre Plus provides a drop in service and the adult learning department encourage families to use the computer suite. Parental views are sought on a regular basis and surveys show they are generally satisfied with the services provided. Parents are becoming more involved through voluntary work and working groups. Outreach services are developing and engagement is now satisfactory for most groups.

These are the grades for leadership and management:

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>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.</b>	<b>3</b>

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

Leigh Westleigh Methodist Primary School was inspected in 2007 and judged to be an outstanding school.

Honey Bear Day Care was inspected in 2008 and was judged to be a good provider.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Westleigh Children's and Community Centre on 29 February – 1 March 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We would like to thank those of you who spoke with us. Your views were very helpful to the inspection team. We know from visiting the centre that it is a very welcoming place. You told us how much the centre means to you and how, when you visit, you don't feel as if you are on your own. Some of you told us that the support of the centre is very important when you are faced with particular challenges in your lives. We found the care and support offered by staff and the organisations they work with to be real strengths of the centre.

The headteacher, centre co-ordinator and nursery teacher work very well together and they clearly know what they need to do to make the centre even better. They are aware that there are times when many of you feel isolated and lack confidence in how to improve your lives. You told us that you feel safe at the centre. A high priority is given to safeguarding you and your children. Due to the support from the centre, your homes are now safer and you have gained more understanding of the dangers both at home and on the roads.

Your children in the nursery and childcare provision are looked after well. They are making good progress and are well-prepared for school. We were delighted to hear how you have become more involved with reading and singing with your children as a result of what you have learnt at the centre. We very much enjoyed watching the children join in with songs, dance and action rhymes in what was quite a lively session. They clearly enjoyed what they were doing. We were also pleased to hear how many of you have taken advantage of the courses on offer and the opportunity to gain qualifications. Your centre has an action plan and we have asked staff to make it clearer so that they can demonstrate more easily how their contribution has made an improvement to your well-being. Staff work with a wide range of professionals to best meet your needs. However, to be really successful more information is needed from these agencies.

We were pleased to hear that some of you have become involved in the centre by joining the parents' forum where you have good opportunities to shape improvements in the centre. We have asked the centre to encourage more of you to become involved in decision making to make the centre an even better place. We understand that the long walk to the centre prevents some of you from accessing services. We have asked the centre to work with the local authority to explore ways of overcoming this problem and they would welcome your views.

It is important that you continue to achieve and we wish you and your families all the very best for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).