

Inspection report for The All Saints Children's Centre

Local authority	Wolverhampton
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Reporting inspector	Clifford Rose HMI

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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	All Saints Children's Centre Childcare EY400185

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 senior managers and leaders, members of the parent organisation's board and the centre's advisory board, health and social care professionals, headteacher's representatives, representatives of the local authority, community partners, family support workers, early years professionals and parents. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

All Saints Children's Centre is part of the All Saints Action Network (ASAN). It reports directly to the local authority. The centre has an advisory board. Membership is drawn from the local authority, health services and other partner agencies. ASAN's own board is drawn from residents and businesses in the local community and local councillors. The centre's staff team consists of the centre manager, a family support coordinator, family support workers, administrators, an early communications officer, a fathers' worker and a children's centre teacher. The All Saints Children's Centre was designated as a phase two centre in 2008. It serves a small urban residential area, the population of which all live within areas which are among the 20% most deprived in the country.

The centre is located in premises within the Workspace Building, a former school refurbished in 2008 as a managed workspace and run by ASAN. The building also houses a registered childcare centre which is another part of ASAN. Much of the centre's provision is planned in partnership with community partners to maximise services for families. The local area contains a high proportion of privately rented housing. The proportion of families who claim benefits and worklessness amongst the adult population is at around 27%. Many families in the local area experience significant levels of poverty, unemployment, high levels of drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and low levels of literacy and numeracy. The local population is

ethnically diverse. Roughly half of the families attending the centre are of White British heritage. Of the remainder, the largest group are of Asian/Asian British heritage. A significant minority of those attending are new to speaking English.

Within the reach area, there are 475 children who are under five years of age. Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills, knowledge and abilities that are below those expected for their age.

The centre offers a range of health, social care and family support services. It complements the private registered childcare for children who are under five years of age in the same complex. Crèche facilities are arranged to support activities on site.

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 centre. It is firmly established within the community and the lives of the resident families. It provides a welcoming and safe place for families and children. The presence of a childcare centre and other community oriented organisations within the same building complex further support its place at the heart of the community. Parents speak very highly of the support they receive and the difference the centre is making to the lives of their children and themselves.

The centre has demonstrated a good capacity to improve. Self-evaluation and associated action planning is well established and involves all staff. The centre has taken concerted and effective action to overcome identified weaknesses and made good progress toward meeting its 2011 – 12 targets. Antenatal contacts with parents had increased to 42% by December 2011 from 15% in the previous year. Group and individual support has been given to families identified as having debt or household budget management difficulties. Data is now more consistently recorded and evaluated to inform service delivery and planning.

Outcomes, particularly in health and well-being, are good and continuing to improve. Staff are well aware of the centre's strengths but also strive to make further improvements and respond promptly to feedback from users on existing provision or

suggestions for other actions.

Participation rates are increasing steadily and almost all those engaged are from groups whose circumstances have made them hard to reach in this area of high deprivation. The range of programmes is well suited to the needs of local families.

Families benefit from both the range and quality of the programmes on offer. They also benefit from the particularly good individual support and guidance from the centre's staff and other partner organisations.

The children's centre and its users receive good support from the board and other elements of the All Saints Action Network, giving added value for the money for the local authority's investment. However, one or two board members, who work directly with the centre, do not undergo safeguarding training or have Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearances and have to be escorted at all times during visits to the centre.

The promotion of equality and diversity in the centre is good; however, after their initial induction, staff have not received regular refresher training and are unable to advise users on the full implications of the latest equalities legislation.

Good partnership working is a particular feature of the centre and assists in the well-coordinated provision.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Facilitate even greater involvement from the parent action network board members and reduce staff time away from user support by:
 - arranging safeguarding training for those board members with a particular interest in the centre's activities
 - arranging CRB clearance for those members so that they do not have to be permanently escorted by staff members during visits.

- Ensure that staff members have the necessary up-to-date knowledge to advise and support centre users on equality and diversity issues by:
 - introducing appropriate regular refresher training for staff on equality and diversity
 - ensuring that arrangements to keep the centre aware of legislative changes and their impact are effective.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Families' good health is promoted well through the varied range of health services. The centre's healthy lifestyle strategy includes healthy eating, the use of outdoor play and exercise, gym sessions and the use of ASAN's sports and other facilities. The percentage of mothers still breastfeeding after six to eight weeks is increasing

year on year and regularly exceeds that for Wolverhampton. Childhood obesity has reduced dramatically. Immunisation rates for two-year-olds significantly exceed local and regional and national rates. Families most in need of support are clearly identified and access the appropriate interventions which are improving outcomes for all. During interview, parents said that they and their families feel very safe in the centre. Staff exercise strict control of access to the centre. The risk assessment of accommodation, equipment, and activities is thorough and staff provide good role modelling for parents on behaviour management and on use of resources and equipment. Children demonstrate a good understanding of their own safety they feel secure and show consideration to others. Accidents are appropriately recorded including treatment and actions taken to prevent repetition. The centre provides good support for families suffering domestic violence. Home safety is also well promoted. ASAN has a free fitting service for child safety gates provided at well below cost price. Children who are subject to child protection plans receive sensitive and highly effective support. The skilled application by staff of Common Assessment Framework processes also provides good support to families. Most parents who have received targeted support report that they feel better able to support their child's emotional and physical well-being. Families in crisis receive high quality support. Comments received from mothers, who have been the object of domestic violence, highlight how support from the centre has changed their lives and how they do not know where they would be without the centre.

Users report successful completion of English language and other educational courses leading to improved confidence and employability. Over a third of engaged adults are involved in education or training. On site delivery of local authority adult education is temporarily suspended following a restructure of the local authority's provision. Completion of parenting and other courses also gives users the confidence to cope with child rearing in difficult circumstances. The uptake of places on programmes is high. Children make good progress from their starting points and develop skills to help them in their future and in their readiness for school. The percentage achieving 78 points at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has risen rapidly from 44% in 2009 to roughly the national level and considerably above the level for Wolverhampton. The number of children in the reach area receiving support through targeted communication skills enrichment and speech and language programmes support has increased year on year to 41 in 2012 to date.

Parents contribute well to the improvement of the centre through the user forum, completion of evaluation sheets and feedback and by involvement in wider community activities through ASAN.

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	2

target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	
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

Programmes are well targeted to improve outcomes for users and match the needs of the local community in this area of high deprivation well. This is because outreach services are used well. The centre is a welcoming and supportive environment and so engagement with users is good. Some users said that it feels like a family. Others report that the provision has been a springboard for their further development. The centre uses assessment well to identify the particular needs of families using the centre. In addition to assessing the development of children attending play and stay sessions in the centre and adapting the early years activities to suit individual development needs, staff also help parents to use appropriate early years activities at home. They also support local childminders to do the same through organised sessions at the centre for them and their charges and through visits to the child minders' own settings by the early years network officer. They also place children who would benefit from the pilot 'Two Year Old' project in the adjacent day care centre.

ASAN is resident led and closely monitors the contribution made to community development. Almost all local families belong to target groups. Programmes reflect the feedback and suggestions of users. Levels of user satisfaction are high. Although there is no discrete provision for teenage parents due to low numbers, their inclusion in universal provision with additional attention to their particular needs is a pragmatic and effective solution.

Multi-level and effective partnership working ensures that users benefit from well-coordinated programmes within the centre to support families in crisis, with an appropriate partner elsewhere through referral or by signposting to another agency. This includes on-site support on financial and debt management, a crèche facility for parents attending programmes, respite support in the day care centre and highly valued one-to-one direct support for users outside the programme provision. Although parents have assisted peripherally, the centre does not operate a volunteer programme to assist in its core programmes.

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 success of the centre results from the strong and clear governance by the ASAN board providing valuable support and strategic direction, combined with the strong leadership of managers and the engagement of all members of staff. The involvement of the board allows the centre manager and family support coordinator to focus on the core activities and the day-to-day running and professional supervision of the children's centre, with additional professional advice and guidance from the centre's advisory board. Staff development is good. Staff are encouraged and supported to attend training and gain appropriate qualifications. In addition to their annual appraisals, staff's six-weekly supervisions ensure that any development needs are identified and addressed. Both managers demonstrate an open and approachable management style.

The provision is under continuous evaluation through observation, data analysis and user evaluation feedback. Regular planning meetings allow staff to contribute to self-evaluation and further action planning. Regular meetings with a local authority representative to discuss data and progress towards agreed targets contribute to informed decision making. Action planning effectively addresses areas for improvement identified through evaluation and results in improving outcomes as well as response to community needs.

The centre provides good value for money. Centre staff make intelligent use of the space available within the building and successfully work around any structural shortcomings. Furniture and equipment is of a high standard and is kept in good repair. Rooms are furnished and equipped to suit the programmes being run in them. Overall the centre is welcoming and well used. Its provision improves outcomes for the families using it all of whom are from target groups centre is also able to make good use of the wider facilities owned or run by its parent network.

Social inclusion is central to the ethos of the centre. The ethnic and cultural make up of the staff reflects that of the local community. The centre promotes equality and diversity well and celebrates cultural and ethnic diversity. Having identified that a number of Punjabi speaking parents could not follow the successful parenting course at the centre, staff now collaborate with a neighbouring centre to run the course twice per year in Punjabi. Recognising the increasing presence of Polish families in the area, the centre employed a Polish family support worker with bilingual skills and produce publicity and other material in Polish. All members of staff are fully

committed to the promotion of the principles of equality and diversity. However, they do not routinely undertake refresher training and were not aware of all the implications of the Equalities Act 2010. The children’s centre and adjacent day care centre are both on the ground floor with ramps where appropriate to facilitate access for wheelchair users. The building has suitable toilet facilities for access by physically disabled users. The centre arranges individual support or placement on the pilot programme for two year olds, for those children whose language development is slower than expected. The parental support programmes help parents to cope better with children with particular support needs.

Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and effective. Policies are regularly reviewed. All staff have attended appropriate child protection training and hold enhanced CRB clearance. Children and families receive prompt attention and support when concerns occur. Close partnership working with other key agencies in sharing information and making referrals enables effective early intervention in reducing the risk of harm to children. Parents who had been subjected to domestic violence highly praise the support from the centre and actions taken to safeguard them and their children. Awareness among staff, key partners and the advisory board on safeguarding issues is good. However, a few members of the ASAN board, who work directly with the centre, have not received safeguarding training and are not subjected to criminal records bureau checks. When visiting the centre, they are escorted at all times.

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 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	2

Any other information used to inform the judgements made

during this inspection

All Saints Children's Centre Childcare (EY400185) was inspected in March 2010. The overall effectiveness of its provision was judged to be good and its leadership and management to be outstanding.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the The All Saints Children's Centre on 7-8 March 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

The centre provides a valuable source of support and guidance for families and children living in its area. The agencies supporting children and families work well together, striving to make sure that your children get a good start in life. They give you good quality support and show that they care what happens to you and your children. You told us that the support you have received has changed your lives. We found the level of care, guidance and support that the centre staff provides is really good. As a result, outcomes and the life chances for a large majority of families are much improved.

Being part of the All Saints Action Network helps the centre respond to the needs of families living in your area and also means that you have access to even wider resources and facilities than normal for many children's centres.

The close links between the children's centre and the children's day care centre in the same building are helping your children to become well prepared for school. The courses in the centre also help you to learn skills either for yourselves or to cope better with your children.

The centre caters for those most in need of support. Staff have taken extra steps to make this support available to those of you who are new to English by providing programmes delivered in Punjabi and translating information into Polish in addition to courses at the centre to help speakers of other languages to learn English.

Leaders and managers know what needs to improve to make the centre better for you. They and the staff have the skills to carry out their plans effectively and respond quickly to your suggestions.

We have asked the centre to do two things to improve it for you. The first is to help members of the ASAN board have a really good understanding of child protection and safeguarding so that they can support this part of the centre's work even better. The second thing is for leaders to make sure that all their staff fully understand the

latest legislation around equality and diversity so that they can give you the best advice and support in this area.

Thank you to those of you who met us to tell us your views and for contributing to the inspection. Your comments and experiences were invaluable to the inspectors and helped us to make our judgements.

We wish you and your families every success for the future.

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