

Inspection report for Wheatley Children's Centre

Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	384217
Inspection dates	14 - 15 March 2012
Reporting inspector	Rachael Flesher HMI

Centre leader	John Bailey
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Old School Way Beckett Road Wheatley South Yorkshire DN2 4AJ
Telephone number	01302 341484
Fax number	01302 363280
Email address	John.bailey@actionforchildren.org.uk

Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY335379 Little Einsteins Day Nursery
	500700 Wheatley Children's Centre

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.

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
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



No.100080

© Crown copyright 2012

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 registered early years/childcare provision, Wheatley Children's Centre, was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006. Little Einstein's Day Nursery was inspected in January 2011. The reports of these inspections are available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with parents, 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

Wheatley Children's Centre is situated in Wheatley, a suburb of Doncaster, close to the town centre. The centre was designated as a phase one children's centre in April 2006. The centre provides the full core offer.

The centre serves families living in one of the 10% to 30% most deprived areas in the country. The majority of families are of White British heritage, with approximately one third of families from minority ethnic groups, including Asian and Eastern European communities, some of whom are economic migrants and asylum seekers. For some of these families, English is an additional language.

Some families face financial issues, poor housing, domestic violence, crime, drug and alcohol misuse. Unemployment levels in the area are high. Families generally live in social housing, privately-rented homes and bed and breakfast accommodation. Approximately 40% of children in the reach area are living in households dependent on workless benefits. There are 205 lone parent families living in the reach area. On average, 120 families benefit from the childcare element of working tax credit.

Some children enter the early years provision with skills below those expected for their age.

The centre is one of seven children's centres in the local authority that Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council has commissioned Action for Children to run on its behalf. From April 2012, this agreement will cease and the local authority will take over the governance of the children's centre. The centre has an established advisory board made up of representatives from the local community, parents and partner professionals. The centre also has an established parents' focus group.

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

The services and activities delivered by the centre to improve the outcomes for children and their families are good. Those accessing services enjoy their time at the centre, value the staff and services and feel safe and welcome. As one parent stated, 'The centre is a happy welcoming place.' This comment supports the view of many. Those using the services are representative of the diverse community that the centre serves. A particular strength of the centre is the support for disabled children and those with special educational needs. All groups of children make good progress from often low starting points and a good proportion achieve the skills expected by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The achievement gap between the lowest-achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest is narrowing. A minority of parents are accessing further education and training to develop their employability skills, including personal and social skills, and literacy and numeracy skills. These parents make good progress. A small minority of parents have successfully secured employment.

The centre exemplifies high-quality safeguarding practice. All staff and partners give the highest priority to safeguarding all children and families. Their safety and well-being are significantly enhanced by the robust and consistent implementation of effective policies, procedure and practice.

Leaders and staff are committed to improving the outcomes for all children and families in the reach area and correctly target services to those identified as in most need of support and early intervention, while endeavouring to maintain a balance with universal provision. Provision is generally well matched to the needs of children and their families. Staff routinely

seek the views of partners and those using the centre to evaluate the effectiveness of the centre. Information is used well to shape services and secure continuous improvement. However, the centre's records of user engagement in provision are not effectively monitored. Consequently, self-evaluation does not yet lead to sufficiently challenging targets based on rigorous analysis of accurate data. Nonetheless, plans for the future are appropriately targeted and the centre demonstrates the capacity to improve further based on what it has accomplished so far.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Utilise the range of data available to monitor and demonstrate the impact of the centre's provision on outcomes for children and families and set challenging measurable targets for improvement.
- Ensure that the centre's records of how many families are engaged in services from each target group are accurate.
- Contribute further to the economic and social well-being of more families by:
 - increasing the participation rate of parents engaged in education or training designed to improve employability skills
 - developing the support for guiding users towards training and employment.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Users state they feel safe at the centre. Children and adults in circumstances that make them more vulnerable are exceptionally well safeguarded. Children are well behaved and develop their understanding of dangers and how to keep themselves safe. Families learn how to minimise risks to children in and around the home and the provision of safety equipment, home visits and activities further promote their safety. Many families are identified as needing support to improve their parenting skills. An increasing number of those in most need of support and intervention are accessing the parenting support programmes and demonstrate improvements in their confidence and parenting skills.

Children make good progress in developing those skills that will help them in the future. Additional interventions are well targeted to promote the learning and development of pre-school children for whom progress is not as good. These include the 'Early Days Transition Group' and the programme targeted at two-year-olds who are at risk of developmental delay. The well attended 'Music Tots', 'Playtime' and 'Dad's Group' sessions provide good opportunities for parents to learn how to support their child's learning and development at home. In addition, communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development are promoted and good outcomes are achieved. Parents and children enjoy these opportunities to play and learn together. As one father stated 'It makes a difference coming here, it gives us something to do. My child loves it and does not want to come

home.’ Schools report that children who have attended the centre start school with a good level of development and arrive ready to learn.

A good proportion of families in the centre reach area are improving their economic stability and independence. Outcomes for those adults accessing numeracy and literacy courses are good. They are successfully developing their employability skills as they make good progress and enjoy their learning. As some parents stated ‘I can now help my children’, ‘I have developed my confidence’, ‘I can help my children with their homework’ and ‘It enables me to break things down for my child and understand maths and writing.’ However, only a minority of parents are accessing opportunities to progress into training and employment.

The majority of families in the reach area are engaging with appropriate health services. A good and increasing proportion of mothers sustain breastfeeding their babies at six to eight weeks due to the joint working with health professionals. Children and their families are adopting healthier lifestyles because staff promote good dental health care, access support from the dental health team and attend training to ensure that a consistent message is provided. Disabled children and those with special educational needs benefit from good levels of support and intervention because of the centre’s collaborative working with partners.

The views of the users are sought by members of the parents’ focus group who visit a range of services and talk to parents. In addition, centre staff gain users’ views through regular evaluations and surveys. These views are shared with the advisory board and centre leadership team and are used well to shape services. As a result, parents using the centre feel listened to and believe their views are valued.

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.	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre can demonstrate that it is engaging with and supporting a good proportion of families from their key target groups and those the centre has identified as in most need of support and intervention. They have been particularly successful in engaging with, and improving the outcomes for, families from the most deprived areas, Eastern European community, fathers, disabled children and those with special educational needs. The centre provides good support and intervention for those families for whom English is an additional language. Personal development and achievements are celebrated and continuous development is promoted effectively. The needs of families are robustly assessed and used well to ensure that services generally meet the needs of the large majority of families using the centre. As a result, attendance and participation rates are good for most of the good-quality services and activities provided.

The centre offers particularly good support and provision for disabled children and adults and those with special educational needs, enabling them to access a range of opportunities to promote good outcomes. For example, the centre has accessed funding to enable children to access much needed and valued out-of-school provision, specialist equipment and a well-resourced sensory room.

Family support workers are providing intensive support to families in circumstances that make them more vulnerable and those facing times of crisis. All staff ensure that they are providing good care, support and guidance to all families attending services, are skilled at recognising signs that a family may need the support of other services and engage them with these accordingly. Their support is highly-valued by families whose many positive comments include 'My confidence has grown ten-fold', 'Staff are amazing' and 'The support the centre offers provides support for parents and children that they do not get anywhere else.'

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

Self-evaluation reflects the views of families and partners and provides the centre with a satisfactory appraisal of its strengths and weaknesses. The centre's improvement plan correctly identifies areas for development and the centre is working well with partners to address these. However, the good range of data provided to the centre by the local authority is not being fully utilised to robustly monitor and demonstrate the impact of the centre's provision on outcomes for children and families and set challenging measurable targets for improvement. In addition, the centre does not have a thorough ongoing knowledge and understanding of how many families are engaged in services from each

target group. This is because leaders are not ensuring that all those accessing services are appropriately recorded and monitored.

Staff work well with other partners and swiftly provide intensive and highly-effective support to children and their families whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, including children on the child protection register, those involved with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process, and looked-after children following any referrals to the centre's services. Outstanding systems for assessing the needs of these children and their families and monitoring these cases ensure that their outcomes greatly improve and their safety is assured. Staff receive regular, high-quality training and are acutely aware of safeguarding issues and extremely confident to carry out their duties to safeguard children and adults. The centre actively promotes the safety and welfare of all those using the centre and adopts safer recruitment practices to ensure that all those who may have unsupervised access to children are safe and suitable.

Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting the continuous professional development of all staff. They empower staff to lead projects and access a range of training and qualifications. Staff state they feel valued, challenged and motivated and are developing their skills, confidence and expertise resulting in a good-quality and enthusiastic staff team.

The centre works well with partners, sharing information and providing integrated provision which has a positive impact on the outcomes for families. Partners state that the centre has good lines of communications, that they are seen as colleagues and proud to be part of the team. The centre also works well with families to seek their views and uses these to shape services and inform important decisions.

The inclusion of all children is central to the centre's vision and diversity is celebrated. The centre has successfully engaged with the majority of families from most target groups and their attendance is generally good. Resources are managed well and the centre accesses funding streams and utilises their community partnerships to ensure that provision and resources effectively meet the needs of the community. Users are very positive about the centre and its services. They overwhelmingly agree that their needs are met well and services promote good outcomes for their children and families. As a result, the centre 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 secures 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	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

The findings from the concurrent inspection of the children's centre's Early Years provision and the most recent inspections for the local primary schools were used to inform the judgements made during this inspection.

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 Wheatley Children's Centre on 14 and 15 March 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you to those of you who contributed to the inspection. As one of you told us 'The centre is a happy, welcoming place.' We agree and we too found your children's centre to be welcoming and friendly. The services and activities delivered by your centre to improve the outcomes for children and their families are good overall and those of you accessing services enjoy your time at the centre, value the staff and services and feel safe. Your centre has supported a good proportion of you and your families to take up healthier lifestyles and better promote the safety of your children in and around your home.

Your children are making good progress due to the good support and interventions provided such as, the 'Early Days Transition Group' and the programme for two-year-old children at risk of developmental delay. In addition, the well attended 'Music Tots', 'Playtime' and 'Dad's Group' sessions provide good opportunities for you to learn how to support your child's learning and development at home. These groups effectively promote their communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. You and your children enjoy the opportunities to play and learn together. As one father stated, 'It makes a difference coming here, it gives us something to do. My child loves it and does not want to come home.' Schools report that children who have attended the centre have a good level of development and arrive ready to learn.

Some families in your centre reach area are improving their skills, economic stability and independence. Outcomes for those of you accessing the numeracy and literacy courses are good as you are successfully developing your employability skills, making good progress and enjoy your learning. As some of you told us 'I can now help my children', 'I have developed my confidence' 'I can help my children with their homework' and 'It enables me to break things down for my child and understand maths and writing.' Although a minority of parents are accessing these opportunities and progressing into training and employment, we feel this could be better. Your centre has been asked to increase the number of users accessing training and further education.

All staff and partners give the highest priority to safeguarding. Your safety and well-being are significantly enhanced by the robust and consistent implementation of extremely effective policies and practice.

Family support workers are providing intensive support to families whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Staff provide good care, support and guidance to all families attending services and are skilled at recognising signs that a family may need the support of other services and engage them with these accordingly. 'I could not have coped without the children's centre' and 'The support the centre offers provides support for parents and children that they do not get anywhere else.' These are two of the many positive comments received which show how much you appreciate the work of your centre.

Your views are sought and shared with the advisory board and centre leadership team and are used to shape services. As a result, those of you using the centre stated you feel listened to, are satisfied with the centre and that the services meet your needs. Consequently, you enjoy regularly attending activities and your centre has successfully engaged with the majority of families in the reach area.

Leaders and staff are committed to improving the outcomes for all children and families and the centre's improvement plan suitably sets out future developments. We have asked the centre to monitor more accurately how well activities are attended, what difference they make and use information to set more challenging targets for further improvement. We wish you all the very best for the future.

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