

Inspection report for Bellefield Children's Centre

Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	383385
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Bellefield Church of England Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Wally's Day Nursery, Pre-school and After-School Club

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.

An inspection of the co-located primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is 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, leaders, members of the advisory board, and staff. They met with representatives from the local authority, the charitable organisation 4Children, and a number of partner agencies. They observed the centre's work, including groups and a home visit. They also looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the planning and evaluation of services, development and delivery planning, and minutes of meetings.

Information about the centre

Bellefield Children's Centre was opened in 2008, and was designated in 2009. It provides the full core purpose of partnership with health and social services. It is co-located on the site of Bellefield Church of England Primary School. The Early Years Foundation Stage full day care provision is also delivered off site and managed by a third party. There is crèche early years provision provided by the centre. Children's levels on entry to early years education is generally well below national expectations. In 2011, the charity 4Children was contracted by the local authority to manage the centre and its governance.

The centre is located in Trowbridge, which is a town of new house building and inward migration. The centre's catchment area is a mixture of affluent and more deprived areas. Much of the area is defined as being one of the most deprived areas (the lowest 30%) nationally, and is the second most deprived area in the county. In some areas, as many as 33% of families live in workless households. Overall, 20% of children live in households dependent on workless benefits in the centre's catchment

area. A minority of families living in the centre’s catchment area are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and most of these are of Polish origin.

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

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

1

Main findings

Bellefield Children’s Centre provides outstanding services for families living in its catchment area. Exceptional leadership is completely embedded at all levels of governance and parents are fully involved in processes of decision making and highly effective self-evaluation. All services and staff are highly inclusive.

The provision for those families with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with Polish or other minority ethnic backgrounds is extremely effective and wholly integrated. There is a relentless and successful focus on engaging those families who are most in need of support. As a result, a large majority of these families have sustained engagement with centre services. Excellent provision results in consistently outstanding outcomes. Many parents describe the centre as, ‘welcoming’, ‘a lifeline’ and ‘my second family’ where staff go ‘above and beyond’ to help. Surveys show that almost all adults are highly satisfied with their engagement with the centre.

Exemplary safeguarding arrangements protect children and vulnerable adults very well. Excellent partnership working with social care and health teams enables rapid action and sustained intervention to keep children and vulnerable adults safe. All staff make the safety of children and their parents their highest priority. Leaders of the centre frequently assess the needs of families living in the area and the provision on offer. They have comprehensive understanding of needs, and redesign and develop provision to meet changing needs, for example when new housing brings more families into its reach, or when families feed back their changing priorities of need. Targets set to improve services further are challenging with measurable success criteria which are founded in the take-up and impact of services for hard-to-reach groups. Therefore, the centre’s capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

The development of communication, language and literacy, especially for boys,

permeates all provision in the drive to narrow the gap between boys' and girls' attainment and in enabling the lowest 20% of the population to have improved long-term life chances. Special events, for example 'Chatter Matters', promote a high focus on developing these skills at the centre and at home. There is a wealth of information available to parents on this throughout the centre in displays, resources, and information. The advisory teacher and wider team work closely with partner schools and early years providers to improve children's achievement. This is beginning to have a significant impact on raising standards. Assessment of children's development in communication, language and literacy indicates strong improvement in the linked Early Years Foundation Stage provision and the Reception class of the school. However, at present not all settings achieve consistently excellent outcomes in this aspect of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has some impact on the overall learning and development of children living in the centre's catchment area, and who use additional childcare provision other than that directly commissioned by the centre. Thus the centre remains highly focused on promoting this aspect of development as a key priority.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Enhance overall progress in communication, language and literacy for all children living in the reach area and especially for boys, by disseminating the centre's outstanding practice to all the early years providers in the centre's catchment area.

How good are outcomes for families?

1

The centre demonstrates outstanding outcomes in all areas. Data analysis and 'Long Term Impact Reports', family folders, case studies and group learning journeys demonstrate consistently excellent outcomes for groups and individuals. Health outcomes are outstanding, especially for targeted families. Almost all families (99%) are fully engaged in appropriate health services including the vast majority of teenage and young parents. Rates of breastfeeding are improving strongly as a result of individual support from staff and peer supporters, as well as through expert advice given during groups, for example the 'Under 1s' sessions. The proportion of women in target groups sustaining breastfeeding at six to eight weeks is improving very well in the centre's catchment area. Higher than average levels of childhood obesity are reducing very well for target groups as a result of healthy eating sessions which have a lasting impact on how families eat at home. For example, the impact of a recent healthy eating group for all 15 targeted participants was that all implemented a healthier diet and sustained this after course completion. Some adults who previously smoked have stopped because of sustained support and stark advice on the costs and dangers of smoking.

All adults are developing an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and

their children safe. Those experiencing challenging circumstances develop their self-confidence exceptionally well through excellent outreach and support work. Women in abusive relationships are empowered to gain knowledge and confidence to keep themselves and children safe through the programme to help them learn more about the realities of domestic violence. Currently there are no children with child protection plans, although processes are extremely robust to promote the best outcomes. Children involved with the Common Assessment Framework have very good outcomes as a result of extremely rigorous monitoring and superb partnership-working with social care and health which provides well-coordinated and timely support.

Adults learn exceptionally well at the centre as a result of highly relevant activities which are rigorously planned and expertly delivered. These result in extremely good improvement in personal development and communication skills. Adults who have English as an additional language develop their English very well through both specific groups and supported integration into targeted and universal groups, where they develop their language skills further. Children are very eager to come to the centre; they run in happily, keen to engage in the excellent activities on offer. For example, they thoroughly enjoy exploring the sand and using mark making activities outdoors in the Puddle Ducks group. Learning journeys and user evaluations indicate a very high level of enjoyment and progress for children and adults alike.

Outcomes for how well children enjoy and achieve are outstanding from the many centre activities, particularly in communication and personal development. Data indicate that targeted intervention is rapidly reducing gaps in achievement for over 75% of those at risk of falling behind the rest at the linked early years setting. The recent inspection of the nearby school judged that overall, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were making satisfactory progress from very low starting points and recently, their progress in communication, language and literacy was good and improving. Staff at the school and centre say this is because of successful children centre initiatives; the centre is developing provision in all settings within its reach to raise literacy standards further.

The involvement of parents and carers in the governance and evaluation of the centre is fully embedded and wholly effective to ensure services continue to meet needs well. Adults using the centre speak highly of how they have made many strong friendships with one another as a result of their attendance. The centre is well established in the community through its strong reputation and superb partner links with an extensive range of local services. The majority of families using the centre are engaged in high quality training that suits their individual needs very well. Partnership-working with agencies, including debt advice (Hope Debt), Family Learning, Pathways to Employment, a local housing association, and Jobcentre Plus, provides an extensive range of service which is improving the economic stability of a large majority of families. A large majority of vulnerable families have addressed their financial worries and housing difficulties with success. The majority of adults (57%) improve their likelihood of employment through training and volunteering at the centre, and grants to support learning for those on low incomes together with

the provision of two-year-old funding has helped a number to return to the workplace.

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	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	1
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	1
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	1

How good is the provision?

1

The centre's extensive range of services is based on a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the catchment area. As a result, the centre engages the overwhelming majority of teenage parents and a large majority of lone parents and those living in workless households. Targeted provision is matched to needs extremely well and inclusive practice is fully embedded throughout so adults are not categorised or excluded. For example, an English as an additional language course was followed up by an integrated 'Fun with Food' group, where five of the six participants of the earlier course joined with several others who have English as their first language to learn together. Exemplary outreach has sustained and positive engagement with many families identified by other agencies as most challenging to difficult to connect with. Isolated parents receive exceptional support in the home and at the centre; thorough assessment and evaluation lead to successful target setting which empowers vulnerable parents to become more socially and emotionally secure.

Provision to help children and adults learn and develop is consistently excellent. Enthusiastic staff identify, plan and evaluate comprehensively so that learning builds on individual needs so all can celebrate success. Staff are exceptionally diligent to ensure vulnerable adults have a firm foundation of self-belief before they are exposed to challenging learning. This has proved extremely successful. Attendance of targeted families is frequent and sustained, and the vast majority of adults complete the courses they begin. Several parents have moved on to volunteer at the centre, and some are considering taking further qualifications. The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support empowers individuals to take charge of their lives and as a result, issues such as low self-esteem, domestic abuse, smoking, and debt are

thoroughly addressed.

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	1
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	1
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

Exceptional leadership at all levels provides a sturdy framework for the delivery of exemplary services. Governance is outstanding because all parties are highly effective in their roles. The local authority and 4Children provide a superb level of challenge and support which is relentlessly focused on further development and the sustainability of quality. Strategic assessment and development have robust links with delivery of services, and these systems provide an excellent foundation for planning ambitious growth targets, which are routinely met. The advisory board is well established; parents and a broad spectrum of partners are fully involved. Services are evaluated very well. For example, a childminder group was recently reviewed to provide more opportunity for attendees to learn best practice so they could take ideas into their own provisions. The board is highly proactive in improving outcomes for those most in need who live in the catchment area.

The centre manager and leadership team are highly effective in providing well-targeted services of exceptional quality while maintaining a happy and friendly environment. Performance management is rigorous and support for ongoing professional development is very good so staff maintain their high levels of expertise. All staff exhibit strong leadership within their roles. They consistently evaluate and develop services, which strengthens the centre further.

Safeguarding arrangements are highly effective to keep children and vulnerable adults safe. Rigorous checks on staff and volunteers help protect children from possible harm, and staff are fully trained to keep children safe. They give extremely high regard to promoting emotional well-being and promoting safe outcomes both in relationships and in the home. All referrals have a 'pre-Common Assessment Framework' completed so that risks and needs are comprehensively assessed. Partners are integral to the centre's work at all levels from strategic planning and sharing of information to the delivery of services so all needs are provided for. For example, breastfeeding peer supporters meet each quarter with the health visitor, midwife, National Childbirth Trust Coordinator and staff to evaluate and coordinate services.

The physical environment is exemplary, rich with superb displays that promote

safety, health and other outcomes extremely well. Diversity is celebrated throughout the centre. Displays and resources reflect a range of cultures, beliefs, generations and disabilities and much information is provided in Polish and Arabic as well as English. Polish and Moroccan families readily share their cultures with others, and this promotes greater understanding and a sense of community. Discrimination is sensitively tackled so adults understand the importance of not judging others. Thoughtful provision for children and adults who are disabled or have special educational needs enables them to access services equally, as well as receive individual support. The exceptionally high priority given to families in need and from target groups, and their very successful engagement with services, means that any gaps in achievement are narrowing rapidly. Almost all families who use the centre are highly satisfied with the services it offers, and believe it meets their needs well. As a consequence, the centre provides outstanding 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	1
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
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	1
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	1

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

The inspection considered the previous inspection (January 2011) of the linked early years provision, Wally's Day Nursery, Pre-school and After-School Club. The setting was judged to be outstanding. Outcomes for children's learning and development were deemed to be excellent as a result of extremely good provision which supported their learning and development in all areas of learning. The inspection also considered the emerging findings of the parallel inspection of the co-located school,

Bellefield Church of England Primary School, which judged the school's overall effectiveness as good.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Bellefield Children's Centre on 21–22 March 2012. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your centre, and for sharing your views about how the centre meets your needs, and those of your families. You told us the centre has made an extremely positive difference to the lives of you and your families. We agree with you because the centre is very good at assessing the needs of your area, so the excellent services provided match your requirements very well. There are many strengths to Bellefield Children's Centre, and we have judged every aspect to be outstanding, some of which are described below.

A large majority of families who live in the centre's catchment area are using the centre regularly, and use it very frequently. This is because you receive a very warm welcome when you come to the centre, and services and groups are of a very high quality.

Those in charge of the centre provide extremely good leadership and management for the centre and staff who work at the centre are highly skilled and enthusiastic. All are very good at making sure that the services on offer are matched to your needs.

Children and adults are learning how to be healthy and stay safe extremely well through groups, displays and information, and working with health visitors and midwives. Many of you have been helped to learn new skills, deal with debt and budgeting, and prepare for employment.

Children are developing their communication skills very well at the centre. Events such as 'Chatter Matters' and singing in stay and play groups are making a big difference to how well they learn to speak and listen. We have asked the centre to help other early years settings in the area develop their provision for developing children's communication so all have excellent support to develop their skills.

The centre promotes equality very well. Many families have different cultural or ethnic backgrounds, and they share their food and celebrations with others at the centre. The inspection team noticed how well parents, carers and staff get on with one another and the centre has a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Children especially love coming and are eager to join in with the excellent activities.

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