

# Inspection report for WorldShapers Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	383912
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 March 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nina Bee

<b>Centre leader</b>	Lillian Andreassen
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Not applicable
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Woodhall Farm Pre-school Koinonia 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 of WorldShapers Children's Centre was carried out by one additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager and the director of WorldShapers, which is an educational charity, other staff, representatives from partner services and two local authority representatives, as well as talking to parents. They observed the centre's work, including activities provided at the centre and at other settings, and looked at a range of relevant documents and policies, safeguarding arrangements and data.

## Information about the centre

WorldShapers Children's Centre is a phase two centre which is situated in Woodhall Farm Community Centre. It has links with Woodhall Farm Pre-school and Koinonia Pre-school which are also based in the community centre. The centre has been fully operational since April 2009 and serves Grovehill and Woodhall Farm estates which have three areas that are among the 30% most deprived in England. Approximately a third of children live in workless household which are in receipt of benefits. A group of trustees is legally responsible for the educational charity WorldShapers, which includes the children's centre. An advisory board is responsible for the centre's development. The centre fulfils its core purpose by providing services which focus on the well-being of the child and their families. Approximately two thirds of the families in the reach area are from White British backgrounds. Nearly a third of the families are from minority ethnic groups; the largest proportion comes from Indian backgrounds and there are a small, but growing, proportion of families from Eastern Europe. A few children are Irish Travellers.

Although the centre's primary location is in Woodhall Farm Community Centre, sessions are run at The Little Playhouse, which is situated on the site of Brockwood Primary School, and at Grovehill Community Centre. When children enter Early Years

Foundation Stage provision, their levels of skills, knowledge and abilities are below those expected for their ages.

## 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

WorldShapers Children's Centre provides a satisfactory level of early childhood provision to parents and young children. The families who use the centre appreciate and enjoy all that is on offer. Well-established procedures ensure that parents' views are sought through regular evaluations of activities and sessions. Provision is then developed accordingly. Parents speak highly of the work of the centre manager and the outreach workers, particularly when they have major family issues to deal with. They openly say that the centre has made a difference to their lives.

Centre staff have worked conscientiously to increase greatly the number of families who are registered at the centre, but the number who actually use the services on offer is comparatively low. Nevertheless, staff have successfully increased the number of participants of some targeted groups they work with. Services provided by centre staff, including outreach workers and partner health professionals, are well attended and focus effectively on individual needs. Sessions are well planned and enable all participants to take part and learn effectively. Although photographic evidence in children's learning journals shows much enjoyment, information is not detailed enough to show clearly the rate of progress children make as they develop skills and knowledge through accessing activities based on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a good focus on the safety of individuals who take part in all activities and sessions run by the children's centre. Thorough daily checks ensure that, whatever and wherever activities or sessions take place, children are kept safe.

Families have opportunities to look at a wealth of information to improve their lifestyles. A satisfactory range of activities and sessions are provided for families to develop a better understanding of the importance of eating healthily. However,

insufficient advice and guidance are available to focus on issues such as smoking, alcohol, drug misuse and sexual health.

Governance and leadership are satisfactory. Centre staff develop good partnerships with the external agencies with whom they work. This results in the smooth day-to-day running of the centre's activities and sessions. Self-evaluation is generally accurate, but the centre's improvement plan does not focus effectively on the main priorities for improvement or have clear timescales and measurable targets to work to. Parents have some opportunities to become involved in making decisions during regular advisory board and parents' forum meetings. However, discussions and scrutiny of minutes of meetings indicate that neither the advisory board nor the parents' forum are sufficiently involved in determining the centre's priorities and do not have a clear understanding of the most important issues facing the centre. The centre, with its happy and contented community, has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Improve outcomes and provision by:
  - more rigorously reaching out to and engaging with members of the community who are not accessing the services provided by the centre
  - tracking children's progress more effectively so that their rate of progress can easily be determined
  - improving the quality of information, advice and guidance for adults about smoking, alcohol, drug misuse and sexual health.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that the centre's development plan identifies the most important priorities for improvement and has clear timelines and measurable targets
  - ensuring that all staff, the advisory board members, the parents' forum, and families who use the centre, are clear about the centre's priorities and are involved in identifying them.

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

<b>3</b>
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The centre is having a positive impact on outcomes for the minority of families in its area who access the services. More families from target groups, such as lone parents, children from workless households and adults who are unemployed, are now using the centre when compared to last year. This is because the centre staff and partners have focused successfully on these groups. However, the centre is still not having an impact on enough families in its reach area, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas. Despite this, much enjoyment was observed as parents, including one or two fathers, took part with their children in sessions such as 'Shake, Rattle N Roll' music sessions. It was clearly apparent that families were coming back to this session because they had enjoyed it so much previously. Relationships

throughout are strong. Children achieve well in their personal and social development because staff focus on this aspect of their development during all activities. Behaviour is good. Children play alongside each other and learn to cooperate amicably when they participate in small groups.

There are strong partnerships with the two pre-schools on the site. A large majority of families who use the pre-schools access the children's centre and all families are registered. Progress when attending the centre's activities, including for the few disabled children and those who have special educational needs, is generally good in relation to their starting points and individual needs. However, the percentage of children who achieve 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage profile has decreased in the last three years, and attainment on entry to school is below average. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest has widened recently, but is smaller than it was in 2009.

Healthy lifestyles are promoted satisfactorily within the centre and through outreach and partnership work. Some parents say that when their children are introduced to eating healthy snacks at the centre they then want to eat them at home. Adults have sound opportunities to cook and learn about healthy options. At baby clinics, which are well attended, parents have good opportunities to liaise with health specialists and outreach workers to gain advice and guidance on their babies' weight and what foods to start them on. They are most appreciative of this helpful support, which enables them to become more confident parents. The centre links successfully with teenage parents in their reach area and engages with a large majority of them. Parents speak positively about the good-quality advice and support they receive from breast feeding peer supporters and, as a result, three parents have become enthused to train so that they too can support others.

The centre's records show that a few people who speak English as an additional language have completed courses to improve their English. There is a reasonable take-up of courses for parents to improve their skills and knowledge in a number of areas. Parents spoke positively about how well the centre helps them to develop their parenting skills and learn about issues which make their lives a bit easier, such as the best way to deal with temper tantrums. Parents say that they themselves become more confident in coping with their children's challenging behaviour and more competent in identifying their children's needs. They say their homes are now happier places to be. Parents who want to gain employment are given help on what is needed to prepare them for the world of work. A few have been successful in getting employment. The centre also focuses on other priority groups in its reach area, such as Irish Travellers, and records show families are supported effectively, especially in relation to helping children develop personal and social skills before they start pre-school or school.

All rooms and buildings which the centre uses are safe and secure environments. Parents have opportunities to develop a better understanding of safety through conversations with staff and, at times, the fire service. Early intervention in response to concerns identified by outreach workers ensures that any child protection issues

are identified quickly and children are kept safe. The Common Assessment Framework is used effectively when specialist intervention is necessary.

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>3</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?

**3**

The centre offers a satisfactory range of activities which promote parenting skills, safety, healthy eating and preparation for employment. There is little evidence to show if any adults go on to further education courses to develop basic literacy, numeracy or information and communication technology skills. Because provision takes place in three different buildings which are a few miles apart, well-established partnerships are essential to the smooth running of sessions and activities. For example, staff and partners who deliver the baby clinic work well together as a team to set up the hall as a clinic for mothers to feel comfortable and be able to pick up information which is relevant to their immediate needs. Participation rates for the activities which are offered are generally good.

The needs of families who visit the centre are assessed appropriately, and many parents take part in courses to improve and develop their skills and interests. Centre staff identified that they were reaching out to too few families in their target groups. As a result, they have successfully increased the number of families with whom they engage from target groups in their area. Particular successes have been with unemployed adults, children from workless households and lone parents. In times of crisis, families receive expert help and advice from the centre manager and outreach staff. Elsewhere, more informal assessment tends to focus on enjoyment, interest and building confidence and self-esteem. Personal development and achievement are not always effectively recorded and targets for improvement are not sufficiently detailed to ensure that all achieve children well. Staff acknowledge that their current assessment records do not clearly show children's achievement in relation to their starting points.

Data show that the centre still has more work to do if it is to reach out to some individuals, particularly those in the most disadvantaged areas. Good relations with its parents and their children make everyone feel relaxed when they take part in the activities and sessions which the centre puts on. During discussions, parents said they really enjoyed coming to the centre to improve their parenting skills and develop their confidence. Many said, and written evaluations agreed, that the courses and support they receive enable them to become more confident individuals and better parents. Others added that they had made lots of new friends and so had their children.

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>3</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

**3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The services that are offered have a positive impact on those who attend, but are used by too few families from the reach area, particularly those from the two most disadvantaged areas. The centre is satisfactorily supported by the advisory board along with the trustees. Development planning is satisfactory but lacks clear identified priorities. Parents, through the advisory board meetings and the parents' forum, have regular opportunities to be involved in the work of the centre. However, minutes from the advisory board meetings show that there is too little focus on improvement planning. Key partners are effectively engaged in supporting and developing integrated provision that meets the needs of those who access the centre. Outreach workers are praised by parents for the good support they give to families.

The centre demonstrates its commitment to promoting equality and diversity suitably throughout its services. All children and their parents who use the centre are supported effectively in the activities they take part in. Adults really value the individual support they are given. The individual needs of disabled children and those who have special educational needs are identified and addressed. The range of families using the centre reflects the community, but there is not enough information provided in other languages spoken within the community. The use of resources has a satisfactory impact on outcomes for families in the centre's reach area and the centre provides satisfactory value for money.

Safeguarding arrangements are secure and staff are suitably trained, particularly in relation to child protection. All staff understand the implications regarding



safeguarding, and all adults who come into contact with children are suitably vetted. Effective partnerships promote good practice in the sharing of information between professionals and in checking that all staff are effectively trained to ensure early intervention where needed can be provided. There is effective work with other services such as the health service, local pre-schools and primary schools to secure improving outcomes for children and families. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the centre manager and her team. Their views are sought after activities and during parents' forums which are held regularly. There are a few examples of parents being encouraged to volunteer their services and then being offered part-time employment.

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 secure 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>2</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**

Observations and discussions with staff at Woodhall Farm and Koinonia Pre-schools informed the judgements made on outcomes and provision for children.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the WorldShapers Children's Centre on 27–28 March 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you for the help you gave us during our visit. Those of you we spoke to told us you enjoy coming to the centre and that all staff, but especially the centre manager, are really supportive and have helped you lots. The centre offers a satisfactory range of activities and sessions to those of you who use it. You said that taking part in the centre's activities has enabled you to become more confident, especially in relation to looking after your children. We found that staff have a good understanding of issues relating to child protection and that safeguarding arrangements are secure. Everyone focuses effectively on making sure you and your children are safe when in the centre or in the other buildings where activities and sessions take place.

We saw children happily taking part in musical activities and behaving well. We looked at many photographs of children enjoying themselves doing a number of exciting things. We could see that you have many opportunities to learn about how to eat healthily. Your children learn well during activities and sessions. We have asked the centre staff to find more effective ways of recording the amount of progress they make over time. We also feel that the centre works closely with children in the Woodhall Farm and Koinonia pre-schools as well as the local primary schools nearby.

Although the number of families who are registered at the centre has increased over the last two years, the number of families who actually use the centre is still too low. We have asked the centre staff to try and increase these numbers. Despite this, the centre staff have been particularly successful in increasing the number of teenage parents they work with, along with those from workless households who receive benefits and lone parents. We think you have satisfactory opportunities to gain information if you want to become employed. It was good to hear that a few of you have been successfully supported to become volunteers or gain employment. We think the centre staff could do a better job in promoting other issues about which you might need additional advice, support or guidance, such as smoking cessation, alcohol or drug misuse or information about sexual health.

The staff ask you what you think about the services and activities they offer. They then sometimes change how and when they do things because of what you say. Some of you are involved in making decisions when you attend advisory board meetings or sit on the parents' forum. We have asked the staff to improve the way they identify their priorities for improvement and ensure that all staff, the advisory board members, the parents' forum and families who use the centre, are clear about the priorities which are identified and have been involved in identifying them.

Thank you so much to those of you who took the time to come in and talk to us and made us so welcome. We wish you the 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).

