

Inspection report for Sunderland Children's Centre Washington, Rainbow Family Centre

Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	365859
Inspection dates	2 – 3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Jean-Marie Blakeley

Centre governance	Sunderland City Council
Centre leader	Tim Hakim
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Usworth Colliery Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY261495 Sure Start Childcare EY306214 Usworth Colliery Nursery School 318591 North Washington Neighbourhood Nursery, Concord

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 additional inspector and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with staff and senior managers from the centre, parents and carers, members of the advisory board and local authority representatives. Inspectors also met with a number of partners, from health, voluntary and community services, private providers and adult education. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

The centre is situated in Concord, North Washington to the west of the city of Sunderland. The centre is within an area of high social deprivation, although the total reach area has some more affluent areas within it. The centre is part of a cluster model, with the centre manager and management team responsible for all three centres. A multi-agency team, which includes health staff and partners, is co-located on site. The centre provides the full core offer of services.

The majority of local families are of White British heritage. The percentage of children who are living in households where no-one is working and families are dependent on benefits is above the national average. Children enter day care provision with skills and abilities that are generally lower than those expected for their age. Governance arrangements are through Sunderland local authority.

Day care and education are provided at Usworth Colliery Nursery School and day care is provided at North Washington Neighbourhood Nursery, Concord. These provisions were subject to their own inspections 2010 and 2007 respectively, and their reports can be found at www.Ofsted.gov.uk. A crèche facility is also provided in the centre

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 users and the wider community

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

Outcomes for users, quality of provision, leadership and management and capacity to improve are all good overall. A key strength of the centre is its success in empowering users to be fully involved in decisions about the provision and services. This aspect of the provision is outstanding. The centre continuously seeks the views of the users. As a result, services meet the needs of the local community and improve outcomes. This has a significant impact on the positive contribution users make. Parents develop confidence and skills and are effective members of the parents' group and advisory board. Users participate in decision-making, which leads to their increased personal development and self-confidence. Volunteers play an important part in the life of the centre. For example, they manage the highly successful cafe at the heart of the centre. The cafe provides healthy food and opportunities for adults to develop work skills.

Safeguarding is outstanding. Staff have a thorough understanding of child protection procedures. They are very well-trained and ensure that any concerns are promptly shared with relevant agencies. Particularly effective multi-agency working and strong support help early intervention to protect vulnerable children. Parents told inspectors that they feel their children are happy, safe and well looked after at the centre. They develop an excellent understanding of how to keep their families safe. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in the number of accidents involving children under five-years-old.

Through its outstanding partnerships, the centre actively engages with some of the hardest to reach families, including teenage parents. The fully integrated services result in highly cohesive provision for users, which impacts positively on their lives. The excellent, personalised support for parents and carers enables them to develop the well-being of their families across all the outcome areas. The centre knows its local community well and families receive prompt and effective support in times of crisis.

Parents, carers and children enjoy the welcoming and friendly centre. Children

behave well during sessions and make good progress in developing skills from their low starting points. Adults interviewed have gained confidence and skills and have good opportunities for learning. An increasing number of the most vulnerable families engage with the centre and attend play and development and learning sessions. However, few progress to qualification courses. Families increase their knowledge of how to stay physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.

The centre manager, senior team, advisory board and local authority rigorously monitor, evaluate and challenge all aspects of the provision, which helps it improve. Data on outcomes are used effectively to set measurable improvement targets. However, the centre recognises that systems to measure the impact it has on individual children as they progress to Reception classes are incomplete.

The leadership team is focused on improving outcomes, building on their strengths and partnerships and filling any gaps in provision. They consistently communicate high expectations to staff to secure further improvements. Good and improving outcomes, together with a sound understanding of strengths and areas for development, demonstrate a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- With the local authority, analyse achievement at an individual school level to measure the impact the centre has had on the children who have used its provision.
- Encourage more adults to gain qualifications to help improve their economic well-being.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Outcomes for vulnerable families who attend the centre or receive support through outreach and home visits are good. New and prospective parents receive good quality guidance through ante-natal and post-natal clinics, home visits and sessions focusing on preparing for birth, play and development. These services have a positive impact on the health, safety and well-being of both mothers and children. Although staff and parent volunteers provide extensive support for mothers, the number of babies that are breastfed is low but increasing.

Good communication and integrated working make an excellent contribution to improving the safety and well-being of children. There is particularly effective use of the Common Assessment Framework and other processes to help to keep children safe and improve outcomes. Timely support for families with children identified as at risk ensures that difficulties do not escalate. Children in care or on child protection

plans receive good support and as a result, they make good progress. Families benefit from home safety visits. As a result, the number of children aged below five reported as having accidents has reduced significantly.

The centre is very friendly, enabling children to play and parents to develop skills in a safe and secure environment. Reception staff are vigilant in the safeguarding of families and in welcoming them to the centre. The childcare provision and play and development sessions make a good contribution to children's and parents' enjoyment and achievement. Children show how much they enjoy the sessions through their happiness and very good behaviour. Extremely positive, respectful relationships between staff, children and adult users of the centre are evident in activities.

Parents' and children's views contribute extensively to future planning and sessions and resources develop to meet their needs. Parents interviewed told us how they have developed skills in parenting. Teenage parents said how they had gained confidence from coming to the centre and valued the support, transport, childcare and learning opportunities they had. One young mother from the young parents' group said, 'I have made good friends and am now much more confident. I look forward to coming to the centre with my baby every week and don't know what I would do without it'. A high number of adults become volunteers at the centre and some go on to further training or gain employment. One very successful parent said 'After years of domestic violence I lacked confidence and thought I was worthless. I've been supported through courses at the centre, gaining qualifications before going to college and then on to gain a degree. I now know I am worth something and I am looking for a job'.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable 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	1
The extent to which all users 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 users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	1
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre provides a flexible range of services and effectively meets the needs of the community. Parents value the excellent advice they receive from centre and partner staff. Engagement with the centre is good and through effective targeting, the centre is successful in reaching the most vulnerable families. The centre has adapted its provision to increase the numbers of children aged one to three years accessing the centre. The excellent, free toy library plays a significant part in encouraging users to engage with activities and services. The effective partnerships have a positive impact on families' safety, learning and well-being. On site guidance helps staff to be very successful in encouraging users to attend initial learning sessions. However, few adults progress to other accredited courses.

Effective sessions in the centre and in day care ensure that parents, carers and children make good improvements in their learning and development. The extensive displays around the centre and the 'Pink Pig' record books celebrate the successes of users and contribute to their enjoyment. The use of assessment is effective in planning learning and providing support and training opportunities. As a result, families increase their parenting skills and gain knowledge of managing behaviour, keeping safe and staying healthy. Progress of children in day care is good. Early identification and assessment of children with learning difficulties or families at risk enables timely intervention to enable all children to make good progress in their overall development.

Case studies clearly demonstrate that support from the centre is making a big difference to vulnerable families. Parents and carers who met with inspectors explained how their involvement in the centre has increased their self-esteem and changed their lives. Users particularly appreciate the support they receive to develop parenting skills. One parent said 'Support here is excellent. I couldn't imagine life without it'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	2
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The centre's ability to encourage the community to engage with services and to use

their views to develop the range of provision is outstanding. Parents and volunteers have excellent opportunities to be involved in the design and set-up of services and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of what is provided. As a result, they express high levels of satisfaction with, and confidence in, the work of the centre. The centre is very effective in reaching out to engage with those who are not yet accessing services, in order to identify and meet their needs. Excellent partnerships with parents and other services contribute to good outcomes for users. In response to feedback from users, the centre is continuously adapting aspects of its provision. The good communication and liaison with partners provides outstanding support for users. There is a positive impact on families' lives through close partnership with partners, learning providers and voluntary organisations.

Advisory board members who met with inspectors articulated their high ambitions for the centre and have a good understanding of the needs of their community. Attendance at board meetings although sometimes low, is improving. Careful planning and resource management extends and develops the services offered so that as many families as possible benefit from the centre.

The centre is at the heart of the local community. Staff are motivated and committed to improving their work with the most vulnerable families. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. High expectations, led by the centre manager and senior team, mean that outcomes are good and improving. One parent said 'The centre changed my life; it wasn't going anywhere before I came here'.

Sunderland local authority provides clear strategic direction and support to the centre. The centre manager, senior team, advisory board and local authority monitor and rigorously evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of the centre. The centre knows its strengths and appropriately prioritises areas for improvement. Data are analysed well and used to set measurable targets. Data from the Early Years Foundation Stage profile indicate an overall improving trend in the North Washington area, and gaps are narrowing. In response to lower outcomes in communication, literacy and language, the centre has increased activities to improve these skills in its sessions at the centre. There is still some work to be done to more closely evaluate the centre's impact on children by the time they enter compulsory schooling.

Safeguarding is outstanding. Procedures to ensure the protection of users as they move around the building are effectively implemented. Staff have an excellent understanding regarding their roles in identifying and reporting concerns and do so promptly. The centre has exemplary systems in place for recording information related to the vetting and recruitment of staff. Policies are appropriate and regularly updated. Activities are risk assessed and include the views of parents.

Centre staff and partnership agencies are committed to promoting the inclusion of all children and their families. Inclusive practices are promoted for children with disabilities. The centre's approach to sustainable development through locality working is good. As a result, it is increasing its activities and user participation. The services in the centre are supporting good outcomes for users. Therefore, 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 extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	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 evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	1
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community 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

Inspectors looked at findings from the inspection of Usworth Colliery Nursery School 2010.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Sunderland Children's Centre, Rainbow Family Centre on 2-3 February 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you very much for making us so welcome, for talking with us and contributing to the inspection of your children's centre.

The centre provides excellent support to all of you that use it. Those of you we spoke to told us how much you enjoy coming to the centre. You said that you and your children are well cared for and that it is very safe. One parent said 'Support here is excellent. I couldn't imagine life without it'.

You said that staff quickly respond if any families are in crisis and they offer you help. We found that staff have a very good understanding of child protection procedures and that they are well trained. You told us how the support you have received at the centre has given you more confidence as parents. The health care, family support, children's centre and partners' staff work closely together to support you.

You and your children really enjoy the stay and play sessions and you like the adult learning classes. Your children enjoy borrowing toys from the excellent toy library. Those of you we spoke to especially like the sensory play sessions, the beauty course and family learning. Young parents are really enjoying the 'Connect' course and value the free transport and good childcare. The centre provides lots of activities and adult courses. We would like it to help and encourage more of you to progress to the courses where you can get qualifications to help you gain employment in the future.

Your children behave well and you all learn more about how to stay healthy and be safe. We found that staff and 'Bosom Buddies' are giving good support. You all love the cafe run by volunteers and the healthy affordable food. 'Busy Bodies', soft play and weaning parties are helping families to learn how to stay healthy and keep active.

You told us that the services and activities at the centre meet your needs. You make an excellent contribution to help the centre improve its services through telling them what you want. Some of you are volunteers, on the advisory board or the parents' group. You are involved in decision making about your centre. The centre listens carefully to you and is keen to find out what you think of the services and activities they offer. They change how and when they do some things because of what you say. For example, baby weighing is now downstairs because you found it hard carrying the babies upstairs'.

Sunderland Council helps the centre make sure it knows who lives in the area so that the staff can try and make sure everyone finds out about what the centre can offer them. Data are used well to monitor and improve the provision. Managers are trying to improve systems to monitor the impact the centre has on individual children's learning by the time they go to school. The staff really try to make sure the most

vulnerable families get support from the centre. It is fully accessible to families and children with disabilities.

The local authority, centre manager, all the staff and yourselves are keen to further improve the centre and already know the things you need to do. Because the centre has continually been improving over the past few years and you all know what you need to do next, we are confident that it will continue to improve.

Thank you very much for sharing your views with us. Good luck for the future.

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