

Inspection report for Woodside Children's Centre

Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	362630
Inspection dates	22-23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Deborah Udakis HMI

Centre governance	Local Authority
Centre leader	Christine Murray
Date of previous inspection	This is the centre's first inspection
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Wooden Tops Day Nursery EY334503

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Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Early Years Inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with Outreach workers, Integrated Services providers, senior managers from the Local Authority's Children and Families Services, health and education professionals, parents, Children's Centre leaders, Early Years Forum, activity group facilitators, and the Chair of Advisory Board.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Information about the centre

Woodside is a phase 1 children's centre providing the core offer. Operating within Park Lane Centre, the children's centre provides a range of integrated services that include health, family support, adult training and early year's advice and guidance. There are thirteen children's centres provided by the local authority, Woodside is one of 2 children's centres serving the South Telford area. The manager also has responsibility for the children's centre located in nearby Sutton Hill. The local authority holds the centre to account through strategic management. The children's centres' Advisory Board acts as a critical friend and supports the work of the centre through guidance and advice.

Statistical data for the Woodside district indicates that the area is one of high social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of workless households and those

dependent on workless benefits is significantly above average. Children start nursery with expectation below expected levels. Before the children’s centre was opened the area was served by a Sure Start Local Programme. The population is predominantly White British with significantly few numbers of families from minority ethnic backgrounds.

A day nursery, Wooden Tops Day Nursery, operates within the centre. This is run by a private provider, Wooden Tops Day Nursery Limited. The nursery was last inspected in November 2009 and the inspection report can be found on the Ofsted website www.ofsted.gov.uk

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children’s centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

1

Main findings

The outcomes for users are outstanding. This is a highly effective children’s centre that serves its community very well. The leadership and management inspire trust and encourage and promote excellence. This results in the provision of high quality activities and support for families, particularly to those assessed as vulnerable or disadvantaged. One parent simply said, ‘I love it here’ and another said, ‘staff take a personal interest in each child’ and this was echoed by all the parents who contributed their views.

The provision is outstanding because the high calibre team of highly trained and experienced workers understand the community and work very closely with families to promote and deliver services. Exceptional multi agency partnerships and the highly effective outreach support ensure that there have been significant improvements to the well-being of children and their families. For example, immunisation rates are above national average and there have been notable improvements in breastfeeding take up rates and reductions in the number of children classified as obese. Safeguarding and health promotion arrangements are particularly robust and showcase the extremely successful multi agency working. One health professional said, ‘Personally I don’t see the boundaries between different agencies.’ This view was unanimously agreed by all partnership agencies. Children subject to child protection plans have experienced great improvements to their well-being because of the excellence of the outreach and multi agency approach to safeguarding.

Children access predominantly good quality play and learning activities within the

area and they are becoming increasingly well prepared when they enter Early Years Foundation Stage settings. For example, activities designed to promote speaking and listening such as the 'Every Child A Talker' initiative and 'Lucy the Listening Rabbit' are effective. This means that those children who were identified as being at risk of delays in their communication, language and literacy development are now making good progress.

The centre is firmly established at the heart of the community. Users express great satisfaction with the children's centre and commented that they have lots of opportunities to influence and shape the services to meet their needs. The recently initiated Dad's group 'Let's play' is as a result of suggestions by parents and this has resulted in a higher profile of male parents and carers within the centre. The centre promotes equality and diversity and tackles discrimination by ensuring that services and provision is fully operational, responsive to the needs of the users and community, accessible and open to all. For example, the 'Asian Women's Group' is extremely well established and is attended by women from across the generations providing indispensable support to members of the community.

The leadership of the children's centre and their team are outstanding. There are ambitious targets set by the local authority requiring year on year improvement. This high level of ambition is equally matched by the leadership and workers who seek to exceed expectations wherever possible. The exemplary use of assessments to clearly identify the personalised needs of the child and family significantly contributes to the success of the work of the children's centre. The sensitive support provided by the outreach workers supports a judgement of outstanding care, guidance and support. Many of the barriers to improving the lives of children and families have been overcome as a result of committed multi agency partnerships and the centre has outstanding capacity to improve.

There are good opportunities for adult learning owing to effective partnerships with the local college to provide accredited nationally recognised qualifications, in addition to non accredited but valuable workshops and literacy and numeracy courses. The provision of crèche facilities are much appreciated by parents and enable them to access learning opportunities. Great effort is made to raise the aspirations of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged families including providing short-term placements in registered child care settings. There have been some notable successes where parents and carers have gained accreditations, qualifications and moved into work. However, the percentage of families living in workless households within the area remains significantly higher than the national average. The centre does not have regular opportunities for parents and carers to gain advice on how to apply for jobs.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Reduce the number of workless households and those dependent on unemployment benefits by improving opportunities for parents and carers to

explore employment options with Job Centre advisors.

How good are outcomes for users?

1

Outcomes for children and their parents and carers are Outstanding.

Highly effective, proactive multi agency working and a willingness to innovate all add up to significant improvements in the health outcomes for children and their families. Outstanding partnership working results in seamless health promotion services for users. This includes increased take-up of breast feeding and ante-natal provision particularly for teenage parents. Healthy eating initiatives are proving attractive to parents and are becoming increasingly successful. One parent commented, 'I have learned a lot about healthy eating...if it wasn't for the support I get here (from the children's centre) I wouldn't know what to feed (my child).' This increasing awareness of what constitutes a healthy way of life is reaping rewards with evidence of a reduction in the number of children classified as obese and fewer dental cavities in childhood. The effective interagency partnership working has been recognised this year with a 'Special Award' from the Shrewsbury and Telford & Wrekin NHS.

The highly effective use of the Common Assessment Framework and the Team Around the Child process ensures that children and families identified as in need of support receive timely and appropriate child protection interventions. Parents and carers are supported to ensure they provide a safe environment for their child. They receive advice on safety and access home safety equipment such as fireguards and stair gates. Highly effective monitoring and information sharing systems results in successful communication between families and agencies, better coordination of care services, and early identification of vulnerable children and families with key early years partners. Children who are subject to a child protection plan receive high quality support and attention as a result of multi agency input.

Access to good quality adult learning and activities are improving parenting skills and life chances. For example, one father referred to the 'One & Beyond' group as a 'fantastic service'. He also commented that the good quality trips and activities make him feel comfortable. Parents universally commented on the thoughtfulness of staff and the wide range of ways they are able to participate in the life of the children's centre. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making good progress and data indicates an improving picture. For instance, children behave well because they are provided a range of challenging and exciting activities. They enjoy the opportunities to interact with their peers in a safe, caring and secure environment.

Users are enabled to make a significant contribution to the children's centre through their involvement with the Advisory Board and Parent Panel. These forums provide an invaluable input into shaping the decisions and services within the centre. The inclusive nature of the centre and the provision of much needed activities have resulted in families who would be otherwise reluctant to use the children's centre accessing centre services.

The economic well-being of many families and in particular the vulnerable and those who experienced isolation is greatly improved because of their engagement with the centre services. The effective use of counselling and advice has maximised incomes of families ensuring they are supported to access benefits they are entitled to and reduced the debts of many users. There are good opportunities to access training courses to improve their basic or vocational skills and gain an excellent grounding for future employment and training. For example, there has been a 40% increase in the take up of courses since 2007 with 732 enrolments on courses this year. One user said that the training she was able to access at the children’s centre has been a ‘life saver and that she now has a bright future for her and her family’.

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable 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 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?

1

The use of assessment and evaluation is firmly embedded within the centre. The exemplary use of assessments covers the whole range of need and ensures that children and their families receive timely interventions and support. Highly skilled assessment of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities results in personalised interventions with very good support ensuring effective inclusion. Improved assessment of children’s starting points with the positive engagement of the parents has resulted in more accurate assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, children are making good progress and they are narrowing the gap between the lowest and higher attaining children. Children’s Centre workers develop excellent relationships with private, voluntary and statutory services. Together they ensure that parents are fully engaged and contribute to the highly effective assessments and evaluations of needs and services and are supported to make a positive difference.

The success of home visiting has been instrumental to the achievements of the centre. A high calibre of staff is employed at the centre providing a wide range of on-

site and outreach support to children and families. They work with ease across different agencies and partner agencies hold the centre in very high regard. The work they do is easily understood by the majority of parents and families in terms of reducing isolation and encouraging positive outcomes for families and communities. Outreach workers are experienced at breaking down barriers and working collaboratively to target users. Targeted support for hard to engage families has reaped dividends with successful engagement with teenage parents, expectant mothers, mental health survivors, survivors of domestic abuse, and children with special education needs and/or disabilities.

Care, guidance and support are a particular strength of the setting. A parent spoke about overcoming issues of isolation with the invaluable support of the centre staff. 'I felt on my own and not coping, here you feel that you belong and part of the family. Every one wants to help ... I was on the brink of collapse.'

Information for users is of high quality. One parents said, 'Staff are really very helpful they will find out information for you if you are stuck.' Users commented that the centre provides a safe and welcoming space where they are valued and listened to and can develop their skills. Comments from users about staff, 'breaking down barriers and racism' reinforce the inclusiveness of the centre. The attention to the emotional needs of the users has increased their self-esteem. One parent said, 'I have grown in confidence and learned to drive something I never thought I would do.' 'The support and encouragement (provided by staff) was fantastic.' 'Thank you for the continual support, encouragement and believing in me.' Users recognise the centre as a place to come to if they need help and advice and know that their needs will be attended to.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	1
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	1
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?

1

The leadership of the centre is outstanding. The local authority provides clear lines of accountability and ambitious targets and objectives for the centre. They have rigorous oversight of its work. There are excellent systems in place for the effective governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management of the centre. All leaders and managers work extremely well together sharing ambition

and expectations. Users play a key role in the governance of the centre and they participate in the centre’s decision making process through formal membership of the Parents Panel and Advisory Board. The centre’s development plan includes key performance indicators and targeted and specific points for action. There are clear policies on promoting equality and diversity, including the promotion of inclusive practice, especially for children with disabilities.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are extremely robust and child protection strategies are exemplary. Intelligent shared safeguarding protocols are in place between health and the local authority resulting in a universal and seamless approach to the protection of children and work with families. Excellent multi agency partnership working arrangements securely safeguard children and ensure that through the highly effective assessment processes children and families receive timely supportive interventions. The centre makes a significantly positive contribution to community cohesion with its focus on meeting community needs, empowerment and reducing social isolation.

There is excellent use of collated data which is used to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the services provides and to identify any gaps in provision. This helps to shape and improve services and activities when viewed with responses and suggestions from users. This important feature of evaluation is integral to the centres guarantee of providing value for money and informs the delivery plan, the local authorities ‘Annual Conversation’, and commissioning arrangements.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	1
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	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 evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	1
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
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Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

Inspection report for early years provision Wooden Tops Day Nursery EY334503.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Woodside Children's Centre on 22-23 September 2010. We judged the centre as **outstanding** overall.

Your children's centre is at the heart of the community and is relied upon for the well-being of large numbers of people. The excellent leadership and highly successful teamwork means families are provided with a wide range of superb services tailored to meet their particular needs.

The centre is making a very positive difference to children's well-being and learning. It is particularly making a significant difference in helping children to develop healthy lifestyles and giving them a safe start to childhood. Children are having good opportunities to develop their play and learning within the centre and this is helping them to prepare for their next steps into nursery. They make good progress in their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's attendance at school has improved as a result of effective partnerships between parents, teachers and the education welfare officer. This is having a positive impact on their learning.

Thank you for contributing to the inspection. Your comments proved invaluable to inspectors. It was great to see fathers becoming involved in child care and activities in the centre. Inspectors think that with the centre's encouragement many people now make an excellent contribution to the centre services and the life of the community. It was a great pleasure to speak to parents and families who were unanimous in their praise of the work of the centre's support workers. Those of you we spoke to explained how well staff supported families, helped to raise self-esteem and confidence and encouraged them to achieve. The care, guidance and support of families and children are excellent. This is because staff are very successful at working closely with parents and engaging with them. Staff make sure that you access the right services. Several of you believe that your contact with the centre has been life changing. These highly positive views are reinforced by

professional working in multi-agency teams and voluntary organisations who spoke with very high regard about the work of the children's centre support staff.

The leadership and management of the centre are terrific and understand the needs of the families extremely well. They have excellent systems to monitor that staff are doing a fantastic job. They show that they are determined to improve the lives of users even more. Inspectors have no doubt that the excellent work will continue.

We have asked the centre to make some improvements by:

- Reducing the number of workless households and those dependent on unemployment benefits by improving opportunities for parents and carers to explore employment options.

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