

Inspection report for Wavertree Children's Centre

Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	362615
Inspection dates	24 – 25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	John Coleman

Centre governance	The Local Authority
Centre leader	Doreen Newby
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Greenbank Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Wavertree Children's Centre URN 503992

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.

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 one additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre staff, local authority coordinator, parents and carers and members of the centre's advisory board.

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

Information about the centre

The centre is run directly by the local authority. It serves a community which is in one of the 30% most deprived wards in the country. The local authority coordinator works in conjunction with the centre manager to provide the senior leadership. A deputy manager provides support to this structure. Most families are of White British heritage. There is a high level of workless adults in the area.

An advisory board provides the strategic management and direction of the centre. The centre is working towards offering a full range of commissioned services. The centre provides a base for a range of services including a community midwife, a speech and language therapist and a qualified teacher advisor. The centre includes a local authority day nursery, with places for up to 54 children in total aged 0-5 years. There are currently 17 children in the nursery with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Evidence indicates that the skills and knowledge with which children enter the nursery are well below those expected for their age.

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

Wavertree Children’s Centre successfully provides a good range of services and enables users to achieve good outcomes. This is because leaders are bringing about constant improvements to services which take full account of users’ views through a range of evaluations. Consequently, the number of children and families registered at the centre is rising rapidly and the percentage of users regularly engaging in activities is increasing.

The local authority and the centre leader have built an effective core staff team. Together they provide clear direction for the centre’s development and improvement. There is a strong focus on monitoring the quality and outcomes of the centre’s activities and services. As a result, leaders have an accurate view of the centre’s strengths and areas for development and the capacity to improve is good.

Much of the data available to measure outcomes covers the broad area of the city and, in some cases, the local reach area of the centre. The local authority has recently introduced new elements to its computer system to track the progress of children who are supported by the centre’s services. Staff have been trained for its use. It is too soon for the centre to specifically measure the longer term sustainable impact of its work through the analysis of the database.

All staff are passionately committed to providing the very best for users. There is a welcoming family feel to the way visitors and users are received. Very good relationships are evident throughout the centre between staff and parents, carers and children. Parents who spoke to inspectors were extremely praiseworthy of the staff and one parent summed up the views of many when she said, ‘The centre brings you back to the family.’

The centre’s leaders ensure that all the required policies, procedures and checks are fully in place to effectively safeguard staff and users. Appropriate training is provided for child protection and first aid and these are kept up to date. Parents and carers are also offered opportunities to undertake the training which is available to staff.

Risk assessments are suitably completed which minimise risks for all involved in the centre's activities and those taking place in alternative locations. Leaders ensure that services provide equality of opportunity for users. Activities provide well for the diverse needs of the local community.

Provision for health services is good overall and has some outstanding features. Leaders are excellent in their ability to effectively target services, engage users and increase participation. For example, the centre's breastfeeding support programme has brought about the highest rate of breastfeeding in the city. A peer support group, trained by the centre staff, provides 24 hour, seven days a week access for mothers to receive help and guidance. In recognition of this outstanding achievement, the local authority is to use Wavertree as an example for other children's centres to follow.

The centre recognises that not enough is done to provide opportunities for adult learning. There are courses in basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills available at some high schools and a local adult learning centre. The children's centre signposts these to users. However, there is little provision at the centre and insufficient structure and planning to improve adults' employability. High numbers of workless adults are not helped enough to improve their skills and qualifications. Staffing instabilities have resulted in a lack of timetabled regular access to the services of Jobcentre Plus.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the centre's provision for adult learning including access to a suitable range of accredited courses and qualifications.
- Ensure the centre provides regular timetabled sessions for parents and carers to access Jobcentre Plus to improve support and guidance for future employment.
- Fully embed the new data recording systems to ensure that the centre rigorously tracks the progress of registered children from pre birth to five years.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Health provision includes good ante and post natal support at the centre and through a home visiting midwifery service. The result is high rates of initial breastfeeding with a prevalence at six to eight weeks which is significantly above the local authority percentage with a very low drop off rate. Dental services achieve a 100% consent from parents and carers for fluoride interventions. Healthy eating is promoted well in the nursery and at the centre with lots of fresh fruit. Outcomes from recent inspection reports for the day care and local nursery provisions show mostly good judgements for healthy lifestyles. Childhood obesity figures show a mixed picture with about half the reach area above local authority targets and half considerably below. Data shows a good success rate for smoking cessation with 20 of 50 pregnant

smokers successfully quitting in the last 12 months.

The centre operates a 'think family' holistic approach to working with parents and carers. The 'Incredible Years' parenting programme is well attended and many parents spoke about how this had improved their parenting skills to keep their children safe and content. Staff are approachable, and as a result, users say they feel safe and well cared for. Courses are provided for those families with issues of domestic violence and abuse and by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA). Participation rates are very good. For example, in the last year 74 families in receipt of benefits have engaged in a ROSPA course. Parents say the courses greatly improve family safety. All children who are looked after by the local authority and those with a child protection plan are registered at the centre and are active users of services. Family outreach working provides good support for the needs of the local community. The centre uses the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to effectively assess and support children who are identified in the day care provision as being in need. Other children are assessed by external agencies such as the health professionals working with the centre. There are regular multi agency meetings to ensure that children are referred to the centre for support where appropriate. There can be some delay in the centre being informed about CAFs initiated by external agencies and the centre and local authority agree that all CAFs should be coordinated by the centre.

Data for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage from nurseries and schools in the centre's reach shows that their attainment by age five years is above the local authority average. The percentage gap between children attaining in the lowest 20% and the median figure is lower than the local authority. This gap is narrowing at a faster rate than the local authority. Approximately 16% of adults are workless. There is no data available about the outcomes for adults engaging in accredited courses or gaining qualifications.

Inspection reports show that children's behaviour in the day care and local nurseries and schools is good. They are encouraged to make a good contribution by being involved in the day to day tasks and activities. In the centre users appear very much at home and enjoy taking part in activities as demonstrated by the good numbers attending. A good example of this is the dads group which last year had 78 active members. Parents are well represented on the advisory board and their views are valued and make a good contribution to the centre's strategic planning. Parents are asked for their views on all activities and leaders use this to evaluate the success and plan for the future. One parent from the advisory board has successfully established a parents' coffee morning and this provides a very useful forum for parents to express their views.

The centre has a clear focus to improve language and communication skills for users. As a result, all activities are planned and delivered with this in mind. There are specific courses aimed at improving basic skills such as 'Hanen' which promotes children's language enrichment. These activities help children and adults to improve their skills. They also help parents and carers to improve the learning potential in the

family home. Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes show children gaining good levels of basic skills. The outcomes for adult learners lack any reliable data. Given the high workless percentages and the limited opportunities provided by the centre this is an area of relative weakness.

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	2
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	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	3

How good is the provision?

2

The Early Years Foundation Stage settings successfully plan and provide a mainly good range of activities across the range of every child matters outcomes. Good assessments are made of children's needs and include comprehensive formal assessments for two year olds. Primary Care Trust (PCT) data is used well to establish the levels of smoking, obesity and breastfeeding. Resources in the centre and the nursery are bright and motivating for children. CAFs are used to identify children with additional needs. Assessments of adults' learning needs in the community are less strong. The centre responds to individual personal needs well by listening to parents' views and acting decisively to provide effective support and guidance. It does not yet plan proactively for adult learning needs and there is a lack of opportunities for adult learning in the community.

The centre provides a very wide range of activities which promotes healthy living, enjoyment and safe lifestyles. Examples include, 'splash and sing' which develops language and builds water confidence, 'stay and play' which provides opportunities for peer interaction, language enrichment, and opportunities for children to enjoy and achieve. The centre has also developed communication friendly spaces. Staff complete training to support children in creating spaces to support the development of language and communication skills.

Good partnership working means that knowledge is shared, support is coordinated and actions taken are decisively supporting the most vulnerable families. Regular fortnightly meetings take place between the multi agencies which provide support

and guidance. Communication is good and there is a strong joint working. Outreach work provides well for the local community and quickly identifies and supports individual family needs.

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	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Leaders at all levels work in strong teams with a united view on the direction of the centre's continuous drive for improvement. Effective procedures are in place to monitor progress and evaluate the success of improvement plans. Cohesive, and seamless communication takes place between the local authority, the advisory board, senior leaders and the core staff team. Consequently, there is effective accountability including rigorous performance management for staff. Training is targeted as a result. The advisory board is well informed and knowledgeable about the centre's relative strengths and areas for improvement. The board uses the individual skills and experience of its members very well to aid the impact of the board's plans. For example, some members work or volunteer in the local community and use their positions effectively to market the centre and to present a visible and approachable presence. Day to day management is first class at the centre; it is well organised, friendly and accommodating for users.

Safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet all requirements. They include requests to the Criminal Records Bureau and appropriate recruitment checks. Multi agency cooperation is good and helps ensure early intervention for the most vulnerable and urgent needs. The centre effectively ensures all members of the community are equally well served by suitable outreach working. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are assessed early and the centre monitors the suitability of the services which support them. The centre fulfils its statutory duties and 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	1
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider	2

community	
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	2
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	2
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	2

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

The inspection findings of the most recent reports for early years, childcare and nursery provision have contributed the children's centre report and judgements.

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 the Wavertree centre on 24 and 25 November 2010. We judged the centre as good overall.

Those of you who spoke with us told us how much you appreciate what the centre provides. Parents and carers also told us that they feel welcomed by the friendly staff. Many of you spoke about how the centre has made a difference to you and your families by giving you opportunities to learn new skills, to play with your children and in some cases to get involved in the running of activities at the centre. Thank you for contributing to the inspection, your views were very helpful.

We judge that the centre is improving, provides good value for money, a good range of services and that users achieve well.

The inspectors judged that the centre's leaders are doing a good job. The centre runs well day to day. All the required steps are taken to make sure people are properly safeguarded and looked after. The staff team are good at planning the right range of activities for children and their families to enjoy and learn from. Staff monitor and record how successful each course is and listen to what parents and carers say. The centre does not yet track children from pre birth to five years so that it can show clearly how those children who access services progress over time. The number of children registered at the centre and getting involved in activities is good and increasing.

Health provision at the centre and through the outreach work of external partners such as the community midwife are very good indeed. The centre has excellent provision for supporting mothers who breastfeed including a wonderful peer support counselling group.

The centre does not offer enough opportunities for adults to learn through accredited courses and those which lead to qualifications. The Jobcentre Plus service is not accessible enough to significantly increase the chances of adults gaining employment.

We have judged that the centre must make improvements to the following,

- Improve opportunities for adult learning.
- Improve access to the services of job centre plus.
- Track children's progress carefully from pre birth to five years.

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