

# Inspection report for Seascape Children's Centre

Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	368218.
Inspection dates	21 – 22 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Jean-Marie Blakeley

Centre governance	Durham
Centre leader	Pauline Cogan
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Seascape Primary School Ellison Road Peterlee SR8 5NJ
Telephone number	0191 5182900
Fax number	0191 5180684
Email address	pauline.cogan@durham.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Seascape Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY386626 Sunshine Day Nursery

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 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 parents' forum and local authority representatives. Inspectors also met with a number of partners from health, social services and private providers as well adult education personnel. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Seascope Children's Centre, previously known as Eden Hill Children's Centre is situated in Peterlee, Durham. The centre is located in the Seascope primary school building, which opened in 2007. Previously, the centre was located on the site of the former Eden Hill Community primary school. It serves a former coal mining community on a large council house estate.

The area is one of high deprivation and unemployment rates are above the national average. The majority of local families are of White British heritage with a small percentage of families from ethnic minority groups. The centre provides the full core offer of services and is part of a children's centre cluster that includes five other children's centres and two outreach centres. The centre manager is supported by a team of senior staff responsible for aspects of the provision. A midwife provides ante-natal services on site.

The percentage of children who are living in households where no-one is working is well above the national average at 38%. The number of families that are in receipt of the childcare element of working tax credit is also very high. Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills and abilities that are lower than those

found nationally. Governance arrangements are through Durham local authority. A private company provides day care for children aged from birth to eight years and is open 10 hours per day, fifty-one weeks a year. This provision, Sunshine Day Nursery at Seascope Sure Start Children's Centre was subject to its own inspection in May 2009 and the report can be found at [www.Ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.Ofsted.gov.uk).

## 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. Parents, carers and children enjoy coming to the safe, friendly and welcoming centre. A particular strength of the centre is the good support it provides to vulnerable families and children. Parents told inspectors that they and their children are safe and well looked after at the centre. They describe family support staff at the centre as '...always ready to give support, practical help and advice'. As a result, users stay safe, gain confidence and develop parenting skills. Knowledgeable and skilled family support workers provide good advice and guidance in the centre or in families' homes. They provide one-to-one support for vulnerable families with complex needs. Good partnership working and a 'going the extra mile' approach means that these interventions are very successful. As a result, the number of children placed on the child protection register has reduced.

Users play a key role in the development of services. The centre continuously seeks their views through surveys, evaluations and increasing involvement in the advisory board and parents' forum. Parents do not hesitate to voice their views on services provided. In response to feedback from users, the centre adjusts and develops its provision to meet their needs. Following feedback from users a new outdoor play and allotment area is under construction and volunteer training has been introduced.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures. They are well trained and ensure that any concerns are promptly shared with relevant agencies. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The centre actively engages with some of the most vulnerable families. Particular strengths include the success in

engaging with fathers, parents and children with disabilities and Traveller families.

Services and activities are well-matched to the needs and interests of users. As a result, outcomes are good in three of the five areas of Every Child Matters. Children behave well during sessions and make satisfactory progress from low starting points. Centre staff strive to raise the aspiration of families in this area of high unemployment and deprivation but the impact on achievement is currently no better than satisfactory. Adults interviewed have gained confidence and are developing parenting skills and some have achieved qualifications. They enjoy coming to sessions in the centre and some are of good quality. However, there is little focus on the tracking individual learning of adults or children in group activity sessions. Early interventions to improve children's communication, language and literacy skills are having a satisfactory impact on their development of skills and progress. Adults and children are developing skills, such as inquisitiveness and cooperation, to help them in their future lives.

The leadership team is ambitious to continue improving the provision, building on their strengths and partnerships and reaching vulnerable families that are not engaging with the centre. The advisory board and local authority support the work and development of the centre through good relationships, openness and sharing of information. The local authority provides clear strategic direction and is increasing the provision of data to support and monitor the work of the centre. The use of target setting to develop the provision is increasing and, as a result, outcomes are improving. However, monitoring and evaluation at all levels, although well-focused on the users' experience, occasionally lack sufficient rigorous analysis of outcomes.

Good and improving outcomes and quality of provision, together with a secure 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**

- Accelerate the achievement of children and adults accessing the centre by careful monitoring and planning of individual learning.
- Increase the effectiveness of evaluation and monitoring by greater focus on the analysis of outcomes.

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

<b>2</b>
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Outcomes for vulnerable families who attend the centre or receive support through outreach and home visits are good overall. New and prospective parents receive good quality guidance through antenatal and postnatal clinics, home visits and sessions focusing on preparing for birth, play and development. The good attendance at these provisions has a positive impact on the health, safety and well-

being of both mothers and children. Immunisation rates are high at 97% and are above national rates. The percentage of obese children in the Reception class is reducing and at seven per cent is below the local average. The incidence of breastfeeding, although increasing, is low in the area and across the local authority.

Good communication and integrated working make a strong contribution to improving the safety and well-being of children. Families benefit from home safety visits, advice and free safety equipment. As a result, they have a better understanding of how to keep their families safe. 'Because I am on benefits, I was given lots of free safety equipment such as a fire guard, stair gate and cupboard locks. I could not have found the money to buy them and they are so important to keep my baby safe' said one mother. There is particularly prompt and effective use of the Common Assessment Framework. Timely support for families with children identified as at risk or in need is helping to keep children safe. Families receive good interventions from relevant agencies. Children in care or on child protection plans receive good support which helps them progress.

The new centre is very welcoming, enabling children to play and parents to develop their skills in a safe and secure environment. The day-care provision and play and development sessions contribute to children's enjoyment and achievement. The centre and childcare provider recognise that poor speech and language development is a significant issue for children in the area. Early intervention to promote communication, literacy and language development is having a satisfactory impact on outcomes. Sessions to increase children's language development, such as 'Music and Rhyme', are fun and help children make satisfactory progress from very low starting points. Children show how much they enjoy the sessions through their happiness, enthusiasm and good behaviour. However, in these sessions, there is little monitoring of individual learning in order to raise aspirations and increase children's and adults' achievements. Good relationships between staff, children and adult users of the centre are evident in activities and parents clearly voice their views. Children are developing satisfactory skills for the future, such as inquisitiveness and independence.

The centre maintains links with Jobcentre Plus and there is evidence that a few users have gained employment. Training for users to become volunteers is in its early stages and adults are developing satisfactory skills to improve their economic well-being.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for users*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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 users enjoy and achieve educationally and in</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>their personal and social development</b>	
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>	<b>3</b>

## How good is the provision?

**2**

Case studies clearly show that good 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 had built their confidence and changed their lives. 'The family worker has given me great support and strategies to help me manage my child's behaviour. I don't know what I would have done without her' said one parent. Parents particularly appreciate the prompt and practical support they receive at times of crisis. One parent said 'My child was too tired to walk home one day so they loaned me a pushchair. They really will help you with anything - they always find time no matter how busy they are and will even come out to the house if you need it'. Good specialist support helps to empower victims of domestic abuse. Parents in crisis value the free respite places provided for their children in the day care. Low-income families take up a high number of childcare places.

The flexible range of services provided by the centre meets the needs of users well. Participation is good and has increased significantly during the last year. The centre is successful in engaging with some of the most vulnerable families. Good use is made of parents' views to inform future events and adapt sessions to meet their needs. A community engagement worker has specific responsibility to develop services for fathers. As a result, engagement with the fathers is good and the Sunday morning sessions are well-attended. The good partnership with adult education is helping fathers develop parenting skills and enjoy activities and visits to places of interest with their children. One father reported that 'This year the sessions have really improved. We do interesting activities with our children, the community worker listens to what we want to do and more dads are now attending'.

Staff have a secure overview of adults' needs and abilities and use this information well to plan provision. This includes 'first steps' courses, which lead to other courses, such as training for teaching assistants at level 2, family learning or accredited literacy and numeracy. Parents and carers, many of whom have few or no qualifications, are enjoying the learning opportunities. Case studies demonstrate that some users make good individual progress and gain qualifications. Early assessment of children with learning difficulties enables timely intervention. As a result, parents and children receive good support, advice and guidance. The Common Assessment Framework is used effectively and has a good impact on outcomes for children. The centre and childcare provider recognise that the development of children's speech

and language is an area for improvement. Early interventions to accelerate progress in communication, literacy and language development are having a satisfactory impact on children's learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>

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

**2**

Strong partnerships with parents and carers and other services contribute to the good and improving outcomes for users. The centre makes good use of feedback from parents and carers to develop the range of provision. The centre is effective in encouraging the community to engage with services and as a result has significantly increased the number of users registered over the last year.

Dynamic and supportive leadership results in effective management of services by the senior team. Staff and partners are very motivated and committed to improving their work with the most vulnerable families. They have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The centre manager communicates high expectations to centre staff to raise the aspirations and achievement of families. Careful planning and good resource management extends the services offered so that as many families as possible benefit from the centre.

The centre knows its strengths and the local community well and appropriately prioritises areas for improvement. The advisory board members understand their responsibilities with good representation by parents. However, regular monitoring by the local authority, advisory board and centre staff sometimes lacks challenge as the focus is mostly on the quality and enjoyment of services and not always on all aspects of outcomes.

Safeguarding is good. Procedures to ensure the protection of users in the building are effectively implemented. Staff have a clear understanding about their role in identifying and reporting concerns and do so promptly. Reception staff are vigilant in checking visitors to the centre. The centre has clear 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 users.

Centre staff and partnership agencies are committed to promoting the inclusion of all children and their families. Inclusive practices are promoted particularly well for children and parents with disabilities. As a result, all children identified as having a disability are registered with the centre and a support group effectively meets the needs of their parents. In 2009-10, 74% of teenage parents engaged with the centre and improved their parenting skills. The centre's approach to sustainable development through locality working in a cluster model is effective. As a result, it is increasing the range of its activities and user participation. Users access activities and sessions at a number of centres and outreach venues. The services of the centre are reaching the most vulnerable learners and supporting good outcomes for users. Therefore, the centre provides good value for money.

*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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</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>2</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 evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>2</b>

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



None

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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Seascope Children's Centre on 21-22 February 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

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

Those of you we spoke to told us how much you enjoy coming to the centre and that it meets your needs. You told us that you get many opportunities to tell the staff what you want to do and that they really listen to you. You said that the centre belongs to you and you do not know what you would do if it ever closed.

The centre offers good support to all of you that use it. You said that family support workers '...give good support and advice' and quickly respond if any families are in crisis. They offer you practical help such as providing safety equipment and offering advice on parenting that you appreciate. We found that staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and that they are well trained. You said that you feel your children are well cared for and that they are safe at the centre. Some of you told us how the support you have received at the centre has helped you be better parents and improved your lives. The family support workers, children's centre and childcare staff work closely together to give you good support.

You and your children really like the sessions such as 'Twinkle Time'. Some parents enjoy the adult learning classes and some of you have gained qualifications. Fathers enjoy coming to the Sunday group and having fun with their children. The centre is working with Jobcentre Plus to develop more opportunities for you to access information and support to gain employment. Your children behave well and you all learn more about how to stay healthy and be safe. As a result, nearly all children have had their immunisations and the number of obese children in the school Reception Year is reducing. The centre is providing sessions and support to help improve children's speech and language skills. We have suggested that this would be even better if they plan more for individual learning in these sessions.

The centre listens to you and asks you what you think of the services and activities they offer. They change how and when they do some things because of what you say. Many of you are involved in making decisions about your centre through the parents' forum or by being on the advisory board. We have suggested that the advisory board, local authority and centre staff monitor the outcomes more closely and really challenge the centre to improve further.

We found that equality is promoted well at the centre. Durham local authority helps the centre to know who lives in the area so that the staff can try and make sure everyone finds out about what the centre can offer them. The centre is fully accessible to families and children with disabilities and a support group is helping these families.

The local authority, advisory board and the centre staff are really keen to further improve the centre and they already know the things they need to do. Because the centre has continually been improving over the past few years and they and you know what needs to improve further, we are very confident that it will continue to do so.

A special thank you to those of you who took the time to come in and talk to us and for letting us join you in the parent's forum. We wish you all 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).