

Inspection report for Sure Start South West Burnley Children's Centre

Local authority	Lancashire
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Reporting inspector	Sue Pepper HMI

Centre governance	Action for Children
Centre leader	Megan Dumbleton
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Taywood Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY346173 Action for Children Sure Start South West Burnley Children's Centre EY235262 Taywood 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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with centre staff and senior managers, health professionals, local community partners, user groups and parents and carers. They spoke to the chair of the advisory board. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Sure Start South West Burnley Children's Centre is delivered from a purpose built site. The centre evolved from a local Sure Start programme. It was designated as a phase one centre in 2006. It provides the full core offer of services with the support of partners and local community agencies. A range of supporting services, including health and adult training courses are on site or within the reach area. Parents and carers are signposted to a range of universal and specialist services.

The majority of the population in the South West Burnley area is of White British heritage with a small percentage of Eastern European families, predominately from Poland who have recently moved into the area. The centre serves an urban area which is in the process of being re-generated; at least 10% of properties are empty and boarded up. Many families face challenging circumstances and the population is quite transient. Recent figures show that 1045 children under five years live in the reach area and that 63% live in the 10% most deprived and disadvantaged areas in the country. Unemployment is high with 35.9% living in workless households. A high proportion of children in the area are eligible for free school meals. A high percentage of young people leave school with low literacy and numeracy skills and 52% have no qualifications.

Obesity is high. Most children enter early education with a much narrower range of experiences and skills than that expected for their age. The Early Years Foundation

Stage is delivered through the groups activities and the Action for Children Sure Start South West Burnley Children's Centre crèche facilities which the centre runs. Next door to the centre is a maintained nursery and childcare provision. Taywood Nursery and extended services has its own board of governors. Taywood Nursery School provides childcare provision with their own management board of which the headteacher is a director. Full day care, education and out of school care is provided for up to 70 children in the early years age group of which no more than 12 may be under two years of age. The nurseries are subject to separate Early Years inspection arrangements. The inspection reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Action for Children is commissioned by the local authority to manage the centre. It is open from 9am until 7.30 pm Monday and 9am until 5pm, Tuesday to Friday, 50 weeks of the year. The centre works closely with the other five children centres in the Burnley area. The advisory board is made up of representatives from the local community, professional agencies and parents.

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

Sure Start South West Burnley Children's Centre is well-established and centrally located in the community. This is a good children's centre which promotes good outcomes for children and families across all five areas. Elements of the provision and leadership and management are outstanding, assessment of needs, care guidance and support, safeguarding and partnerships are all outstanding. Consequently, the centre and its staff have an excellent reputation.

The centre is often referred to by local residents as the 'Safe Centre'. The community police are based at the centre where they conduct an operation called 'Stay Safe'. The centre is regularly used by the police as a base where they bring children and young people from the local or wider community until their parents and carers are able to collect them. Users of the centre were unequivocal in their view that they feel extremely safe and welcome at this centre. Parents and carers were exceptionally positive about all members of the staff team who they have built extremely trusting and respectful relationships with. Many described the staff as, 'A fantastic,

compassionate, non-judgemental team who gave them excellent support and advice'. Early intervention work has made a big difference to improving many lives in this area. Attention to promoting emotional well-being in particular is exceptional.

Parents and carers see the centre as a place where they can come for high-quality care, guidance and support and to meet other families. The centre was described by them as a place where they can be calm and relaxed. The following comments convey clearly the impact of the centre, 'I do not know where I would be without the centre' and 'It has changed my life dramatically'. This is an area of great deprivation and poverty. Excellent strategies are used to sensitively assess and effectively meet the needs of a great many 'hard to reach' children and families whose circumstances mean they are in very difficult and vulnerable situations. The counselling service in particular was described as, 'Invaluable'. Multiple needs are assessed through successful outreach work.

This is an inclusive, anti-hate crime centre. Attention to equality and diversity is well-embedded and diversity is highly valued. Promotion of cultural diversity is carefully considered and promoted through exciting events in the community which involves others due to the predominately White British reach area. Users enjoy the good range of services provided, they are proud of their achievements and consequently attendance at sessions is good.

The settled staff team are highly-skilled and passionate about their work. They are led by a strong experienced leader who analyses the data she receives well. The manager knows how important it is to have reliable information to measure the full impact of their work on outcomes for children and families. This pro-activity demonstrates good capacity to improve. The centre is constantly improving their analysis of the impact of their work. The introduction of new electronic systems has led to some good results. Self-evaluation is extremely lengthy and although targets are identified in the business plan they cannot be easily measured.

Partners described excellent communication with the centre which they said enabled 'real' partnerships. As a result, users of the centre have access to a wealth of high-quality support and assistance. One parent expressed the view of many by describing the support she received, 'I received excellent advice, and I was not made to feel I was doing things wrong'. A variety of methods are used to consult with users to evaluate services the centre provides and to ensure the programme of events continue to meet users needs. The advisory board is well-established and a few parents are members. The centre now has a parents' forum which is in an early stage of development. The numbers of parents or carers currently actively involved in the governance of the centre is low. The centre values the important contribution fathers make to child rearing and some regularly attend established groups. The group in place specifically for fathers is ceasing but plans are in place to replace it with a new group and numbers attending are beginning to increase.

Users can access information provided by Jobcentre Plus with whom the centre has strong links and they are signposted to a range of adult training courses. Access to

volunteer training and basic skills courses provide many with opportunities to increase their skills and progress on to further education which can lead to employment.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve self-evaluation so that the centre can demonstrate success and be held to account for their work by:
 - making sure plans are succinct
 - ensuring the business plan includes specific criteria with measurable targets.

- Increase the numbers of parents and carers, particularly men, actively engaged and involved in meaningful decision-making in order to shape and develop services.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

All outcomes are good and some are improving strongly. Health colleagues inform the centre about mothers-to-be and this early notification promotes early engagement which is often very effective. Many parents reap the benefits of the 'Parents 2 B' course which helps prepare parents for parenthood. The pamper pack available for all potential parents provides practical gifts for the new baby and good advice for parents such as the importance of immunisation, how to sleep a baby safely and the impact of smoking has on children. As a result of specific campaigns on the dangers of smoking, several families have pledged to have smoke free homes and a few have stopped smoking. Although numbers ceasing smoking known to the centre are low their success is well celebrated.

Although the 'Little Angels' breastfeeding support group has ceased, trained volunteers and the centre staff ensure breastfeeding is well promoted and actively encouraged. The numbers choosing to initiate breastfeeding are increasing but the centre currently finds it difficult to monitor how many sustain breastfeeding unless they actually attend the centre. Several mothers described the exceptional support and encouragement they had received whilst breastfeeding saying, 'I would have given up without the centres help'. Other parents and carers told us how they go out of their way to attend the 'Baby Massage' session because they say it is, 'The best in the area'. They know that baby massage enhances relationships with their babies and can help them to be more content. This service has resulted in more self-assured and confident parents who are more likely to share their concerns and any health issues with the centre staff.

The mental-health and emotional support the centre provides is exceptional which has a positive impact on parents and carers feelings of well-being. One parent

echoed similar views of others when she said, 'I am able to believe in myself for the first time'. Counselling services are extremely well attended. They help parents come to terms with a number of difficult situations, such as, bereavement, abandonment, domestic violence and the effects of alcohol and drug misuse.

A high percentage of families live in areas of great deprivation and many have circumstances which make them particularly vulnerable. Children are well protected by a 'team around the child' approach to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). There is good evidence of improved outcomes for children on child protection plans due to effective outreach work. Early intervention prevents the escalation of concerns and support and guidance helps parents to cope with difficult situations reducing risks to children. 'I would not be the person I am today without Sure Start' was a typical view of a parent.

Parents and children are developing a good awareness of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and the importance of fresh air and exercise. Through joint-working with health colleagues, parents and carers have regular access to health advice and support across a range of developmental issues including diet and nutrition. Some are signposted to relevant courses such as 'Food Safety'. Staff know their families well and sensitively modify the delivery of sessions to meet user's needs. For example, when parents needed additional help preparing to wean their child, knife skills were introduced to ensure parents had the practical skills to prepare fresh food for babies. Visual images on the amount of fat or sugar in everyday food stuff or drinks help enlighten parents and carers about the content of processed convenience foods.

Users of the centre develop a good understanding of how to keep their children safe through specific safety sessions and regular liaison with the local community police who conduct outreach work in the wider community. All staff at the centre are trained in the delivery of road safety. As a consequence, road traffic accidents have greatly reduced in the area. Home safety schemes enable parents and carers to minimise risks in their cars and their own homes through the provision of safety equipment.

Parents and carers learn the benefits of routines and boundaries through attending courses. 'I felt empowered after attending sessions' was a typical remark. The fun 'Nursery Rhyme Time' was stated to be enjoyed by all and described as 'Brilliant'. This emphasis on communication makes learning enjoyable and aids children's transition from pre-school to nursery. A very strong partnership has been formed with the local school and links are improving with other schools in the reach. On entry to school, children's skills are mostly below national averages especially in speaking and listening and knowledge and understanding of the world. Concerted efforts on these areas of development are clearly showing some signs of improvements.

Children are familiar with the staff and crèche workers which promotes their continuous care, learning and development well. 'Learning Journeys' are completed

for each child which are the same as those used at the nursery. This standardisation of observation and planning enables closer partnership working and enhances parents and carers understanding of the value of early learning through play.

The centre and Jobcentre Plus refer adult learners to 'Skills and Employability' courses, which has led to good attendance on courses. Adults access to basic skills courses can lead to accredited courses and a number have gone into employment.

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	2

How good is the provision?

2

The quality of the environment is good. The building is secure and rooms are all light, airy and welcoming. The centre has a very well-equipped sensory room which is regularly used. Attractive displays are informative and celebrate achievements and events well.

Through an extremely well-developed multi-agency approach the centre provides a wide range of integrated services. The exceptionally strong partnership work is based on thorough analysis of the needs of users which is central to the centres success. The CAF ensures effective targeted support is provided for those families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Consequently, assessment of the needs of all those who use the centre is outstanding due to effective sharing of professional expertise and knowledge. Joint home visits are conducted with new families to assess their needs and they are well informed of the support available. For example, 'Fresh Start' and 'Hosted Holding Families' help support families where there is substance misuse. Several parents described the intervention provided as having 'changed my life dramatically'.

Parents and carers know they can turn to the centre and that they will be helped with childcare, sexual health issues and any practical problems, such as, help getting

practical items such as a cooker or helping them with debt management. The centre is a member of 'Credit Union' which gives money advice and access to loans at reasonable rates. Consequently, parents and carers see the centre has a great source of advice and support. Many described the staff has empathetic and non-judgemental.

At the 'Baby Massage' group the parents particularly enjoy the warm welcome they always receive and the opportunity it provides to relax with a cup of tea and a slice of toast. They appreciate the excellent advice and support which is made available to them through the centre staff and health colleagues. They know at this time they can have their baby weighed and there are often opportunities available to seek complimentary relaxation therapy, such as a head massage for themselves.

Parents can now access dental facilities at the 'Health and Community Centre' nearby. This new service is improving tooth decay which is high in the area. The centre provides free dental equipment to further promote better oral hygiene. The antenatal clinics are well-established offering periodical good quality advice.

A speech and language therapist compliments the 'Talking Together' group which the staff have been trained to deliver. This service empowers parents and carers to understand the importance of getting down to a child's level to speak to them, repeating words slowly and listening to children. It enables early identification of any concerns regarding speech development and makes it easier for parents and carers to access appropriate support.

The well-liked 'Teenage Lunch Club' has gone from strength to strength. The childminder group is very well supported and meets regularly. The 'Adventure Club' caters for children over eight years of age very successfully through providing them with challenging outdoor pursuits, which can lead to the 'Duke of Edinburgh Award'. This activity raises young people aspirations. The 'National Play Day' and themed events are run in the park which are great fun and regularly attract great numbers. A small number of grants have enabled children to be involved in local art projects which enable them to use their creativity to express their views. All these groups effectively bring wider members of the community together. This promotes community cohesion very well.

Parents and carers book their young children onto the 'Stay and Play' group. This is a stimulating and enjoyable group which fosters physical activity and development of communication and personal and social development. Staff are extremely supportive and offer guidance and advice when needed.

Although the centre does not have a specific service for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities they consult with appropriate services to provide any specialist support any individual child may need. Eastern European families new to the area have been made very welcome through translated information and a play group which has been set up to meet their specific needs. Courses for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are accessed as required.

Adult learners' needs are carefully considered to ensure they are signposted to the most appropriate sessions or courses for them. Confidence building courses and basic numeracy and literacy are well attended. 'I can now help my child with his homework' was typical comment from a parent after attending a basic numeracy course. Evaluations often show a rise in user's confidence levels. The 'Speak Easy' accredited course is particularly popular which promotes sexual health and healthy relationships.

Users of the centre have access to a good range of free adult training and childcare. Crèches sessions run from the buildings where adult learning takes place which is reassuring for parents. The centre regularly trains volunteers. 'Future Job Funds' students have had work placements at the centre which has enhanced their skills and prepared them to join the workforce. The centre works in close partnership with Burnley College which enhances the quality of the placements. Participation and retention rates are good. As a result, some courses have led to parents and carers successfully working towards further training or gaining employment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	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 manager is well supported at a strategic level and by an enthusiastic team who have clear roles and responsibilities and a good attitude towards continuous improvement. She acknowledges self-evaluation is unwieldy and targets identified in the business plan could be smarter. Clear success criteria will enable everyone, including parents and carers to understand when targets have been met or not. Staff's determination and drive to find out relevant statistical information ensures the centre is kept well informed. Managers and staff at the centre are developing their ability to evidence the impact they are having on outcomes for children and families. The majority of the well-established staff team live in the area. As a result, they have good knowledge of the reach area. They are all well trained and highly motivated to improve the life styles for children and their families in the reach area. Despite budget cuts impacting on some services new services are continually developing to

meet the user's needs. The latest data shows the centre is reaching 68% of the families in their reach. Governance and accountability arrangements are clear. Professional supervision is well-established. They monitor the cost effectiveness of services and energy efficient methods of heating the centre have been installed. The majority of staff are generic workers who undertake both group work and outreach family support work which also promotes good value for money.

The centre is aware of negative feelings toward other cultures within the community. They counteract this by actively promoting equality and diversity and tackling any discrimination. Consequently users said, 'I feel accepted here'. The centre is involved in the 'Tay Street Trail' art project which has enabled families to contribute to enhancing the local outdoor spaces through artwork.

Attention to safeguarding is outstanding. All staff attend extensive safeguarding training. 'Action for Children' provides a comprehensive safeguarding framework of policies and procedures which are regularly up-dated. The centre leader and two other safeguarding officers effectively align this guidance with local county council policies and procedures. They ensure safeguarding procedures are extremely well met. Robust selection and recruitment procedures are in place and volunteers go through the same rigorous vetting procedures as all other members of staff. The manager's expertise and knowledge of social work underpins effective safeguarding decisions and ensures good protocols are in place for referrals. The women's refuge 'Safenet' offer a regular drop in service at the centre to support the high number of families suffering domestic violence. This service ensures adults are made aware of the very damaging effect violence can have on children.

The views of users are regularly sought through a variety of methods to ensure no-one is excluded. Evaluations are in place at the beginning and end of all courses to ensure the centre can monitor their impact. Report cards are increasingly being used which record the difference the centre has made. Views are sought after all sessions and a comments box is visible. Due to low literacy levels of families in the area, an overview of opinions is often sought through discussion. The centre uses basic facial expressions well, which enables the majority, including children, to express their levels of satisfaction. The level of user satisfaction is high. Responses to ideas users have made to the centre shows a strong willingness to take into account users' views. The centre is working on increasing opportunities for fathers to express their views.

Outstanding partnership working was described by all the centres partners. Excellent communication and relationships have been built up over time and multi-skilled workers effectively blend their different skills and expertise extremely well to best effect.

The make up of the advisory board includes a range of partners who act has a 'critical friend'. They recognize attendance on the advisory board tends to 'ebb and flow' and does not always reflect the excellent partnerships in place. They acknowledge a concerted effort is required to ensure key partners regularly attend

and parental membership is increased.

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	2

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

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Sure Start South West Burnley Children's Centre on 23 - 24 March 2011 and we judged the centre as good with some outstanding features.

The centre is a very well-established in the community and it has formed excellent partnerships with other services and agencies. It provides an extremely safe place where families can be sure to receive a warm welcome and outstanding quality care, guidance and support. This is because they want the very best for you and your families. Those of you we spoke to told us you appreciated the, 'Brilliant' staff team. Some of you told us, 'I do not know where I would be without the centre'. You expressed high levels of satisfaction with the centre and your regular attendance shows how much you value the good quality provision and resources.

Safety schemes help you to get practical support, such as safety equipment, which helps reduce accidents in your homes. The health visitors, midwives, and centre staff combine their professional experience, knowledge and resources very well to meet your individual needs. They work closely together to assess any difficult situations effectively. They know what support they, or others, can provide for you in times of crisis and have built non-judgemental and trusting relationships with many of you. They successfully promote healthy lifestyles and are determined to provide the best support they can for you. Some of you told us, 'the centre has changed my life dramatically'. We know many of you enjoy the 'Teenage lunch Club' and regularly attend the baby clinic. We also know many of you go past other centres to come to groups the centre runs, such as the 'Baby Massage' sessions, where you can also assess other useful services at the same time. Those who have joined the baby massage groups were upbeat about the benefits of using massage to improve relationships with your baby. Some even reported improvement with baby's colic problems or sleep patterns.

The centre works in close partnership with the local nursery and school to aid your child's transition onto their next stage of learning. You said the 'Nursery Rhyme Time' group was great fun and helped develop your understanding of how singing rhymes can support your child to develop better speech and listening skills. The 'Stay and Play' sessions help prepare your child for school and have increased your understanding of the importance of play and how young children learn and develop.

The 'Parent 2 B' positive and other specific courses give you extremely helpful advice about different ways of managing your children's behaviour. Attending courses has helped develop your confidence and self-esteem and taught you new skills. It was a pleasure to see and hear how well some of you are now able to confidently manage your children's challenges in more positive ways. We have asked the centre to continue to identify and encourage even more dads to access the centre's activities so that more of them can also benefit from the good quality services on offer. The family events in Scott's Park are very popular and develop a good community spirit.

A few of you have trained to be volunteers and have been successful in completing courses which have led to employment. We have asked the centre to improve their self-evaluation and business plan so that everyone can clearly understand whether they have achieved what they have set out to do or not. We have asked them to ensure they create information which shows everyone how much they are helping you to improve the lives of your children and yourself.

The centre is hoping you will want to join the parent forum and advisory board to help ensure the centre's plans are constantly meeting your families' needs. We hope that more of you will be interested in doing this, particularly fathers, so that even more of you can become involved in decision-making and the centre's success.

We would like to thank everyone who was willing to speak to us. We are very grateful for your help and wish you every success in the future.

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