

Inspection report for Windmill Children's Centre

Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	366340
Inspection dates	30 – 31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Joanne Smith

Centre governance	Leeds City Council
Centre leader	Christine Barrett
Date of previous inspection	Not Previously Inspected
Centre address	Windmill Primary School, Windmill Road, Belle Isle, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS10 3HG
Telephone number	0113 214 1759
Fax number	0113 214 1759
Email address	Christine.barrett@leeds.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Windmill Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY292298 Windmill Children's Centre

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 early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, carers, representatives of partner agencies, the local authority and local school representatives.

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

Information about the centre

Windmill Children's Centre provides the core offer to a community close to Leeds city centre, which is in one of the 20% most deprived wards in the country, with pockets that fall within the 10% most deprived wards. This is a designated phase one children's centre. The centre provides a range of integrated services, including health advice and support, on site early years provision, family support, adult education and employment advice and support. Within the centre's reach, families with children who attend three local schools are supported. Referrals from social care, health visitors, health for all, integrated support and the psychology service are also taken by the centre. The centre is an enhanced provision supporting children with additional needs. Provision is delivered in partnership with other agencies, including health services and is offered from the Windmill Children's Centre site and the Nesfield Resource Centre.

The head of centre manages the services provided by the centre and coordinates those provided by its partners. The local authority is responsible for performance management of staff in the centre and the Primary Care Trust and other agencies for their staff who work with the centre. The strategic management and development of the centre is the responsibility of the local authority with local support and challenge from the children's centre advisory board.

Within the community served by the children's centre, the majority of children aged under four years are living in families dependent on workless benefits. The large majority of families are of White British heritage, with a growing minority ethnic community in the area. Evidence indicates that the skills and knowledge that children have when they enter Early Years Foundation Stage settings is slightly lower than those expected nationally for their age. The children's centre's designated nursery provider is Windmill Children's Centre, and its inspection report can be found at 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

'We don't know what we would do without them' is typical of how families feel about their contact with the children's centre staff. Windmill Children's Centre provides users with good levels of care, guidance and support. The staff respond swiftly to families who are in crisis with practical and long term solutions to their needs. Staff are skilled at assessing the needs of individuals and families, which leads to well matched support and guidance packages. This in turn, enables the centre to use its resources to good effect.

Parents and carers are involved in the centre in a number of ways. They take part in the parents' forum to share their views. This information is then shared with the advisory board by carer representatives. This is one of the methods managers use to help prioritise the centre's work to meet the needs of the reach area. Users also contribute through their evaluation of the services they use. Alongside this, managers have a good range of local monitoring information and data provided at a more strategic level to inform self-evaluation. They have yet to analyse and use this data to best effect to make service delivery even more closely matched to users' needs. Nevertheless, managers have recognised the need to find out more about the reach area and what centre users want and need. For example, they have initiated a 'question of the week' for all parents and carers to answer, to improve their understanding of the users' needs in the reach area. As a result, there has been a rapid increase in the number of registered families. This is a reflection of how staff

quickly respond to issues once they are known and understood and demonstrates the centre's good capacity to improve.

Children in the early years provision make good progress in their learning and development. They have a keen interest in their environment, are confident and play safely alongside each other. Some children experience a long break in their early learning experiences in the summer holidays. This affects the momentum of their learning. Consequently, they spend time catching up when they enter Reception Year in school. Adults who access the good range of learning opportunities enjoy their experiences and their parenting skills are consequently improving well. For example, new strategies to manage their children's behaviour have had a positive impact on family life. The centre carefully tracks the learning and development of all children who use the centre's services. It is not as good at tracking adult learning, particularly knowing what the impact of courses held at the centre is on improving economic stability for families through employment or further training. Safety and security are well promoted at the centre. Staff are attentive and users are safe and well cared for. There is a well stocked and popular fresh fruit and vegetable stall with produce on sale in the entrance to the centre. This provides parents and carers with good quality, affordable fresh produce and the high take up of this service is a reflection of carers' growing understanding of how healthy eating contributes to healthy lifestyles for their families. Parents and carers are happy that children 'love' the bags of mixed, fresh fruit, which they buy from the centre, instead of sweets. Parents and carers see this as a very positive change for their children.

Adults who work in the centre, including volunteers, have been checked for their suitability to work with children and Criminal Record Bureau disclosures have been obtained. Staff supervision is well planned to ensure their work is properly focused and any case work is reviewed thoroughly and regularly to make sure progress is being made. Partnerships with agencies, such as social care and health are strong. The commitment to joint working is reflected in the centre's good involvement in Common Assessment Framework cases, for some of which staff have been lead practitioners. The centre has a strong ethos of inclusion, in particular for children with special educational needs and/or difficulties. This is evident in the well attended early years provision and the support groups, some of which are run by volunteers. The pictorial displays around the centre reflect the make-up of the community, which has a very small minority ethnic community. However, written information available to those who speak English as an additional language, is limited.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve outcomes and provision by:
 - developing the analysis and use of data, monitoring information and staff and users evaluations to precisely inform self-evaluation and future planning
 - gaining a better understanding of the needs of adult learners.

- Improve children's learning and development by:
 - developing continuous provision across the centre in the school holiday period in ways that make it more accessible and appealing to parents and carers.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Users at the centre speak highly of the support provided by the centre and the effect it has upon their lives at home. One user stated that the impact of the centre is, '...immense, I can't thank them enough'. Children with disabilities and their families are very well supported at the centre in both the early years provision and groups, such as Parent Power. Their carers' emotional well-being is improved as a result this. The take-up of immunisation and breastfeeding is good in the area, which gives children a secure and healthy start to their lives. It is also a reflection of carers' good levels of awareness of the many different ways that they can keep their children safe, in addition to the home safety assessments that have been so much appreciated by those receiving them. While the centre does not know exactly the impact of The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) free equipment scheme, their own recording indicates that there has been a reduction in accidents in the home. Families who have agreed to a Common Assessment Framework receive clearly targeted and well-coordinated support from a range of agencies. This has had a positive impact on all of the families and for some it has enabled them to continue to live together. The centre is very careful in its work with children who are subject to child protection plans and facilitates contact visits in its accommodation with great sensitivity.

Children who use the centre appear confident, enquiring and enjoy their time there, taking an interest in the builders who are working on the centre site or making the most of experiences they do not have at home. They are making good progress when they are in the centre. There is a strong focus on speaking and listening skills and carers have noticed significant improvement in children's ability to communicate at nursery and at home. Carers who use the centre enjoy their experiences. They are well supported to take part in decision making and shaping services in the centre. Carers are particularly well represented on the centre advisory board. Some of the groups on offer, such as the Foetal Alcohol Syndrome support group are a direct result of carers' interest and involvement with this issue. Carers, who are members of the advisory board or on the parents' forum, have developed in confidence and some have gained employment, which they credit directly to their involvement with the centre. Carers have adequate learning opportunities at the centre. Their options to access training and accredited learning are signposted to them by the centre or Jobcentre Plus. The centre is not clear how successful this is in helping families to financial stability or security. When carers are asked at the end of centre courses, such as the 0-6 Parenting Programme, which covers aspects of parenting such as behaviour management and bedtimes, they say their learning has had a positive

impact on their families. For example, they are calmer when talking and playing with their children at home. They also say that when they have received support and guidance about accessing benefits they have found it useful.

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

A broad range of services is offered by the centre, using a variety providers. These are delivered from two well-resourced and well-cared-for buildings on separate sites in the reach area, alongside a very effective team of family outreach workers. Services are shaped to meet the needs of the area based on local knowledge and users' input.

The assessment of users' needs is a strong feature of the centre. Staff know the families they are working with very well and are aware of the level of intervention needed at given points in their involvement. They know, for example, when the family outreach team need to visit families more frequently because they are alert to the signs of increased pressure or a decline in well-being in families. This results in tailored work with families, which are both supportive and constructive. When more than one agency is involved with a family, the review processes are regular and challenging in an effort to effect change as quickly and easily as possible for the family.

Carers are very appreciative of the support and guidance they are given by the centre. Comments such as, '...they were the rock' and 'It was a genuine turning point' are reflective of this. In times of crisis, carers are confident to approach the centre and know that they will be supported. Some of the essentials they have been helped to provide include food, nappies and clothing for children they have been asked to care for at extremely short notice. Although the centre is a place where carers know they will be helped and supported, the centre staff are careful not to

have carers become dependent on services offered. It does this, for example, by providing budgeting support if families find they have too little money for essential items.

There is a strong commitment to all children's learning and development at the centre and while all children are well supported, it is especially effective for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. When the funding for three year old nursery education entitlement ceases for the summer holiday break, some children experience a gap in their education. This is having a significant impact on their readiness for learning when they enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision in school. The centre has recognised and sought to address this gap by providing extra Stay and Play sessions in the summer holiday. However, these have not been popular with parents and carers for reasons which include having older children who also need caring for. The centre is not as strong in its understanding of where adults are making progress in their learning and development. For example, they do not have a clear method of tracking whether adults have taken up places on college courses they have been signposted to, or if they have had a positive impact on improving the economic stability or aspirations of a family. However, parents and carers who engage in learning and development opportunities at the centre attend regularly and take-up rates are good. Involvement with opportunities such as the volunteer programme or membership of the advisory board make positive changes to their lives.

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	3
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

There is strong user involvement in the governance of the centre. Parents' and carers' representatives on the advisory board are keen to ask questions and put across the views of their peers. Clear and well understood management systems mean that staff have appropriate and challenging professional supervision and development. Although the centre delivers services from two separate buildings there is a sense of joint working across the two. The teams in both buildings are strong, with staff valuing the feeling of '...working as one big team'.

Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare are integral parts of this process

ensuring the centre meets the requirements placed upon it in this aspect of its work. Building work on the site, which is shared with a school, has provided challenges for the centre in terms of safety and security. This has, in the main, been well managed. Local authority recruitment and vetting procedures are used when new staff are appointed to the centre and the good practice behind these procedures is used when volunteers are recruited to the volunteering programme. Consequently, adults who do not have a clear, current Criminal Records Bureau record do not start work in the centre.

Partnerships with other agencies are strong and valued by all those involved. The centre staff are seen as approachable and are recognised for their willingness to communicate and when necessary, seek advice for users. Weekly multi-agency meetings carefully consider referrals for services. This process is used to make sure that resources are properly targeted to provide the most appropriate and effective support or intervention to a family.

There is a genuine commitment to promoting sustainability and value for money in the centre. Students and volunteers are used well to support and develop the work of the centre. A good example of this is the very well presented Baby Boutique. This service is run by a volunteer and is a means of selling a range of affordable used children's clothes, which carers take advantage of regularly.

Inclusion is important in the centre's work. Staff are used well to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Timetables are carefully managed to release staff to work with other professionals involved in a child's care. This does not affect the provision to other children. There is a small, but growing minority ethnic community in the reach area. The centre is aware of this and is working hard to ensure they access the centre's services. However, information in a range of languages around the centre is not as readily available as it should be.

The management team know the reach area well as a result of a wide range of information and data that is available to them. This comes from the local authority and other partners, such as health, alongside local intelligence that the centre collects. The management team have also spent time in the reach area in an effort to develop their understanding of the difficulties that some families face. This is something that is familiar to the family outreach team, who are instrumental in engaging with the local community and raising awareness of the centre and what it offers. Much of the available information is in the early stages of being used and analysed, but that which is used informs service delivery in the reach area well.

Where staff evaluate sessions and courses, some evaluations tend to be descriptive rather than evaluative, limiting their value as tools for development. User evaluations are gathered regularly at the end of sessions and courses. The quality of the methods used to do this varies, but more recently they have become more focused on the learning and development of participants to enable better delivery. However, the centre does not routinely ask participants if they still use what they have learned

after a longer period of time. For example, they know that at the end of a course a parent is finding establishing bedtime routines for their children easier, but they do not know whether the strategies that were learned to bring about this change are still in use three or six months later.

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	2
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	3
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

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. 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 Windmill Children's Centre on 30 and 31 March 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you to those of you who spoke to us. We enjoyed finding out from you what you think about the centre. We know that the staff work hard to make you all feel safe and welcome when you visit the centre either to drop children off at nursery or to attend activities, such as Stay and Play. We found that the centre is good at helping you in a number of different ways, either telling you about courses or activities, visiting you at home to support you or providing you with help at times when you are finding it very difficult to cope. We were pleased to find that children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families are well supported at the centre. The staff make sure that they have the time to work with other professionals involved in the children's care and the centre hosts a number of support groups for families, such as Parent Power. This is helping families to support each other when times are difficult.

The centre knows clearly what the children need to learn next. It is successful at helping them to develop well and make good progress when they attend. When children can not attend nursery in the summer holidays, because they do not have a funded place, it affects how quickly they settle into learning when they start school in September. The centre has tried to help with this by providing extra Stay and Play sessions in the summer holidays. We have asked them to continue and improve this service so more of your children attend over the long summer break. We found the centre is not as good at understanding the learning needs of adults who use the centre. Therefore, we have asked them to improve their understanding of what your learning and development needs are in order to improve things for you and your families.

We found that the centre provides a wide range of activities and services that meet your needs and those of the community. They have a lot of information to help them understand the needs of your community. Those of you we spoke to told us that you are pleased that your children enjoy fruit instead of sweets. We also know that you value the fresh fruit and vegetables on sale at the centre. All this is helping you and your children to be healthier. Even though we think they do a good job, we have asked the managers to use all the information they have to help them improve the services they offer to raise the standard and range of services even more.

The centre is really clear that it has a responsibility to protect and care for you and your children. The systems it has in place to do this are strong and everyone who works with or at the centre understands what they must do if they have any concerns about the welfare of a child or its family. The centre has strong relationships with the different agencies it works with, such as health and social care. This means that when a family is being helped by more than one agency, support is well coordinated by the people who are in the best position to do the job. The centre is using its buildings, staff and other resources well, to deliver as much as possible to you and your families.

We were really pleased with how the centre involves parents and carers, grandparents and volunteers in the running of the centre. The Baby Boutique is a

good example of how you have become involved in centre life in a way that benefits other people. By being involved with the parents' forum and the advisory board, the centre has become better equipped in understanding your needs and it has helped some of you to gain confidence to go on training courses and get jobs. Keep up the good work.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come and speak to us, we are very grateful and we wish you every success for the future.

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