

Inspection report for Westfield Children's Centre

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Local authority | York |
| Inspection number | 367875 |
| Inspection dates | 11-12 May 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Daniel Grant |

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Centre governance | The local authority |
| Centre leader | Paula Richardson |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Centre address | Askham Lane, York, North Yorkshire, YO24 3HP |
| Telephone number | 01904 555 289 |
| Fax number | NA |
| Email address | Paula.richardson@york.gov.uk |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Linked school | Westfield Primary School Askham Lane York North Yorkshire YO24 3HP |
| Linked early years and childcare | Kaleidoscope Day Nursery 133374 |
| | Cheeky Monkeys play group 321493 |
| | Chapelfields District Out of School Club 321612 |

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.

An inspection of the registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. Also at the same time, an inspection of the linked primary school was carried out under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The reports of these inspections are available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre leader, other senior leaders and staff and representatives from the local authority. Discussions were also held with members of the advisory board, parents and carers and service users. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Westfield Children's Centre opened in 2008; it is one of nine designated children's centres in the York area. The centre serves a community where almost two thirds of the families are in one of the 30% most deprived wards in the country. The proportion of children attending schools in the area who are known to be entitled to free school meals is high for the region. Many families are in receipt of benefits and levels of worklessness are higher than average. Almost all of the local families are of White British heritage with very few from minority ethnic groups. Westfield Children's Centre is a phase two centre and provides the full core offer of services. The centre recently moved into a new building adjacent to Westfield Primary School. A multi-agency team, which includes an information champion, health visitors, family workers, midwives, speech and language therapists and a family learning outreach worker delivers services to users of the centre.

Other organisations based at the site include: Westfield Primary School, Kaleidoscope Nursery, Cheeky Monkeys Playgroup, Chapelfields and District Out of School Club. The centre provides additional childcare facilities for parents and carers attending activities and training at the centre. A locality centre manager employed by the local authority manages all aspects of the provision, supported by a senior leadership team. Governance of the children’s centre is provided by the local authority with guidance from a newly constituted regional advisory board which at the time of the inspection was seeking membership from the local community and users who attend the children’s centre.

The proportion of children with disabilities is significantly high for the region, as is the incidence of domestic violence. A large number of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a lower range of skills than 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

Westfield Children’s Centre meets the needs of users well. Users of the centre value the way staff understand and give high priority to meeting the needs of each individual child and their family. They appreciate the welcoming, stimulating environment that it offers which underpins the good learning and development it provides. All of the centre’s users appreciate the approachable staff, who form trusted working relationships among families. This has helped to establish a very positive image of the centre within the community, which contributes to good and increasing attendance rates of local families.

The centre leader is highly motivated and has a clear vision of how the centre can continue to develop and deliver integrated services which improve lives in the local area. This vision is shared by the senior leadership team and staff, who work hard to provide very effective services. The centre is well led and managed and provides high-quality activities for children and families. Morale is high and relationships between staff and users strong.

Partnerships are well-established and lead to positive outcomes for the centre's users. The centre provides a wide range of services that are effectively increasing the knowledge of parents and carers about ways to play with and care for their children, which promotes learning and development. Users transfer ideas and experience from what they do at the centre to their family life at home. This effectively promotes healthy lifestyles, reinforces learning and development and keeps their children safe; consequently, outcomes for users are good.

The integration of services is highly productive and the transfer of information between key partners is prompt and effective to the benefit of families and individuals. Partnership arrangements to improve speech and language development, education, training and employment opportunities for adults, and with health providers are particularly well developed. The centre is an inclusive setting and promotes equality well. Provision is expanding to meet the needs of all members of the community, including the most vulnerable and those who are hard to reach, and is impacting positively on their lives. The team work very effectively to provide outreach services where they can assess and meet the needs of parents and carers.

The centre is working very diligently to keep users engaged and increase the numbers of parents and carers who are taking advantage of the range of opportunities, but there is scope for more to be done to encourage a greater number of families, including the most vulnerable to use the centre. Assessments are thorough, ensuring that good support is provided. Staff and other adults consistently give the highest priority to safeguarding users, and their families. However, there is underdeveloped use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) by the centre and across the partnerships within the locality to identify users' needs quickly and precisely with a range of agencies.

Senior leaders and the centre staff have a good understanding of the strengths in provision and how the centre could improve but action plans are not detailed enough to fully support all staff in effectively driving improvement. For example, they are well aware that further work is required to reach more families in the area served by the centre, but do not have a detailed enough written plan that describes what should be done to achieve this. Whilst the centre evaluates the quality of provision regularly and uses the information to determine its priorities, staff do not consistently measure success. However, processes for monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the centre's work on outcomes have been established and have attracted much enthusiasm and interest. Great efforts are underway to refine and further develop these.

Westfield Children's Centre has successfully improved outcomes for users since opening. The centre has strong leadership and an influential advisory board that is well supported through strong partnerships. The local authority provides useful quality assurance and advice, which contribute to the centre's good capacity to build on these successes in the future and further improve outcomes for families and children.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase users' participation at the centre by identifying and encouraging more families to attend, particularly those from vulnerable groups.
- Improve arrangements for the assessment of users' needs and targeting of services by clarifying with partnership organisations the thresholds at which the Common Assessment Framework should be used.
- Further develop the arrangements to collect and analyse local data to more accurately identify users' needs and better target vulnerable groups.
- Increase the effectiveness of action planning by providing more detail about how targets are to be reached and how progress is to be monitored.

How good are outcomes for users?

| |
|----------|
| 2 |
|----------|

Outcomes for users are good and improving because Westfield Children's Centre provides a good range of activities that are developed well in partnership with other agencies and families. Strong arrangements have been established with the midwifery and health visiting team, who work very closely with centre staff to provide expert support for new and expectant mothers. This is well targeted and very effective. As a result, breastfeeding rates have improved in the past year. Users at the centre receive good advice to make healthier lifestyle choices through a series of interesting and fun activities. The staff team ensure that children and their parents and carers are well supported to recognise the importance of balanced food choices. Participation in many of the health-related activities is improving for groups that are potentially vulnerable. Specialist services, such as breastfeeding advice, immunisations, dental care and smoking cessation are readily available to all centre users. Evaluations and discussions with parents and carers clearly identify the positive impact of these programmes. One parent commented, 'Attending the centre has made a big difference to our life at home. We are much happier now'.

Westfield Children's Centre is a safe place to be. All services offered in the centre keep users safe. The centre's excellent relationships with families and their children allow staff to identify any safety concerns within families and intervene quickly. Case studies and interviews with parents and carers show how health visitors effectively promote the home-safety packs provided by the centre, which are very popular and used well by families. Staff model safe practices well and parents and carers learn to keep their homes and their children safer by watching and listening to staff. In addition, there is strong evidence that access to parenting programmes improves relationships, behaviour and home safety for centre users. Very well trained and

experienced staff ensure that work undertaken with children who are subject to child protection plans and those who are looked after is well coordinated and sensitive to concerns. The centre is also working very effectively with the local authority children’s social care service to deliver the Step-Down programme, supporting families as they progress and become less involved with statutory services. The centre is aware of an increase in the reporting of domestic violence from within the reach area and the need to review with partners the reasons for the relatively low number of children subject to the CAF.

Children at the centre access a stimulating and diverse range of activities, which includes outdoor provision that promotes physical health, allowing them to take risks in a safe, well-supervised environment. Users are encouraged to make good use of outdoor facilities, such as forest walks and the centre has developed an attractive woodland theme to further promote outdoor activities. Children are interested and engaged in their environment and try new activities with confidence. Good attention is given to ensuring that all children achieve well and develop good personal and social skills. Parents’, carers’ and children’s enjoyment is evident through the increasing attendance at drop-in and outreach activities. Users make a significant contribution to the running of the centre and their suggestions are valued and used to shape the sessions offered. Children’s behaviour is good as are relationships between adults and children across all settings. Transitions are particularly well managed.

Opportunities for adults to increase their employability are particularly strong. Staff engage very productively with partners to ensure users receive good quality accessible advice and information. Generous support is given to parents and carers by the manager and staff of the family learning service who told us ‘We always do our best to encourage parents not just to do a course but to continue learning and progress to higher levels’. Progression routes are well planned with many parents taking further courses and a few gaining places at university. The centre has its own job search computer for users and a designated information officer who provides well targeted helpful information to support users in their preparation of job applications. Good support is also available from Jobcentre Plus. Users make very good use of family learning and adult education programmes. Take-up of the opportunities that are currently available is high. Evidence from case studies and from speaking to several parents and carers shows that economic stability and independence had improved for many as a result of the opportunities the centre has provided.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| <p>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</p> | <p>2</p> |
| <p>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</p> | <p>2</p> |

| | |
|--|----------|
| 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 |
|----------|

There is a range of very effective assessment processes used to identify the needs of children and their families, including the development of an Early Years Foundation Stage profiling tool, which help to identify which services have had the greatest impact on preparing children for school. In most cases, assessment of needs is undertaken at an early stage and is used to ensure progress can be measured. Midwifery, child development and speech and language assessments are used particularly well. However, use of the CAF is under-developed and the centre and its partners do not routinely use this method to identify needs and target services.

The centre provides an increasing range of services to meet the needs of families in the area. Well planned drop-in and outreach activities, such as groups to encourage children to improve their speaking and listening skills, are helping parents to enjoy and better understand parenthood. The child care facilities provide parents and carers with good opportunities to make friends and support each other. Staff and leaders constantly seek ways to identify the needs of specific groups and then adapt services to meet their needs and ensure good attendance. For example, increasing numbers of fathers are engaged in support and information sessions by offering healthy cooked breakfasts. The child care facilities are used well to ensure equality of access to sessions for users and particularly those from groups that are most vulnerable. The centre recognises even more could be done to engage the hardest-to-reach families, and to ensure that all those who want to, can access services. Good progress is being made working with partners to gain the information needed to target such families.

Case-study evidence and interviews with parents and carers and partnership organisations show that the quality of individual support is good, and available for as long as it is needed. For those whose needs are greatest, staff provide well-targeted, personal support. Careful strategies are in place to ensure that parents and carers receive personalised support for their individual circumstances. This structured intervention gives them the confidence to attend the centre where excellent relationships encourage parents and carers to take part in memorable and purposeful activities, such as woodland walks and enjoyable dance sessions. This is reflected by one parent who commented, 'The staff are very supportive. They help you cope and give you confidence'.

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 | 3 |
| 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

Leadership of Westfield Children’s Centre is particularly effective. The centre leader has a clear vision which is shared and understood by staff and partners. The staff team are well motivated and enthusiastic and work hard to make a difference to children and families in the local area.

Inclusion is given very high priority in the centre and is central to planning all activities and programmes to ensure families can benefit from attending the centre. Users at the centre view staff as positive role models, which helps to establish trust, and builds their confidence quickly when learning new skills. The centre is determined to make a difference for all groups, particularly those who may be subject to discrimination. Children with disabilities benefit from well-targeted support. The centre promotes equal opportunities well and diversity is celebrated. The development of the Early Years Foundation Stage profile tool has already provided the centre with very useful information about the groups on which to focus to ensure personalised support and to improve children’s achievement. Robust procedures are followed by a range of professional agencies to monitor children’s welfare and to provide appropriate support where necessary.

Attention is given to ensuring that staff are suitable and safe to work with children. The centre has clear protocols implemented by staff and other agencies with regard to reporting any concerns relating to children’s welfare or possible abuse. Staff are well trained to identify and deal swiftly with concerns relating to safety and emotional well-being and have good levels of experience and knowledge. Processes for Criminal Records Bureau and recruitment checks are well established.

The centre’s development plan links broadly to area-wide priorities in order to improve the provision and outcomes for its users. However, not all targets are based on a strong analysis of the data available within the region. Sharing information to help establish targets has improved in recent months but the centre recognises more should be done to develop the use of local information and data. Senior leaders have identified appropriate priorities, but written plans lack sufficient detail about realistic

timescales, specific actions and budgetary considerations. The self-evaluation process is used effectively and correctly identifies the areas requiring improvement. Although the quality of evaluation is good, it is not always well linked to the impact of services on the outcomes for users. The management information system supplied by the local authority is beginning to provide useful information about the reach area. Analysis of this, although at an early stage, is providing a clear starting point for further improvement. Governance of the centre is good; the chair of the advisory board provides excellent support and challenge to the centre leader.

In most areas of the centre's work, partnership working is effective and very good use is made of shared resources to develop services where needs are identified. The centre leader and the senior team deploy staff and resources well across the settings to provide flexible and responsive provision and ensure that the centre is increasingly used well. They consult with users about how money should be spent and listen to the views of the wider community. As a result, the centre 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

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 enjoyed our visit to inspect your children's centre on 12 and 13 of May 2011. We judged your centre as good overall. We thank those of you who helped us with our work. Your information is very important to us. We visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's plans and documents and had discussions with some of you, your children, members of staff and other professionals who work with the centre.

The children's centre provides a good range of services that are helping children and families in York. Throughout the inspection, children, families and other users were keen to tell us how the centre had helped them. We were particularly impressed by the case studies that showed the difference that the centre is making. We really enjoyed speaking to some of you about how things you do at the centre have changed some of ways that you do things at home.

We found the centre to have many strengths, including the actions taken to support you and your children's safety and well-being, and the opportunities for so many of you to be involved in training and interesting courses. The centre is working very closely with many organisations, such as schools and health and social care professionals to improve the range of services that are available to you. Parents and carers have given us good examples of how the centre has helped them.

The centre offers an increasing range of programmes and activities, including those aimed at improving the health of people in your local communities. It is very good at helping new mums who choose to breastfeed their babies. It tells them about the help available on breastfeeding from mums who have successfully breastfed their own children, and know the good things and the concerns from experience. The centre is also good at helping you to encourage your children to develop their speech and language skills.

Parents and carers we spoke to describe the centre as providing a safe and welcoming environment; they are confident that their children will be secure and well cared for and the inspectors agree.

The centre leader has very strong procedures to make sure staff and volunteers are suitable and well trained to work with your children. Some parents and carers explained just how important the centre is in their families' lives. They told us that staff listen to them and advise them to get the right help and support. The support is provided quickly and professionals and others work closely together to support families and children. This includes teenage mums and parents and carers of children with disabilities.

Children make good progress because there is a wide range of activities. This helps them to be ready for their move to school. The centre staff make sure they check whether you have enjoyed any courses or sessions in the centre and they respond by making changes based on your comments. We saw that many of you are able to take advantage of courses that are leading to experience and qualifications that will help you look for paid work. We saw good opportunities for those of you who want support to get a job or go to university.

The centre is respected in the local community because of the good leadership of the centre leader and her team. However, the centre leader knows that to make the centre even better she needs to make sure that she has even better information about the things most needed by families and the difference that the centre is making in your lives. She and her team want to use this to make more detailed plans for more activities and also to ensure that even more people can use the good things that it is providing.

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

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