

Inspection report for Kingsway Children's Centre

Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	365688
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Daniel Grant

Centre governance	Action for Children
Centre leader	Jane Bowtell
Date of previous inspection	N/A
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Linked school if applicable	Kingsway Community Primary School 130872
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Surestars Day Nursery 403898

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 linked primary school was carried out under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is 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 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

Kingsway Children's Centre opened in 2006 as part of a Sure Start Local Programme and is situated in the south of Leamington Spa. It moved to its current location adjacent to Kingsway Primary School in 2009. The centre serves several communities in an area which includes large housing developments and some rural areas. The centre is managed by Action for Children as part of the Leamington and Warwick West Children's Centre Cluster.

The governance of the centre is through Action for Children and includes a strategic advisory group for all centres in the cluster and a steering group with parental and community representation. The strategic group includes representatives from the local authority and is led by an independent chairperson.

Kingsway Children's Centre is a Phase 1 centre and provides the full core offer including, family support, child and family health services and Jobcentre Plus. The centre serves a community where over half of the families are in one of the 30 per

cent most deprived wards in the country, with pockets in the 10 per cent most deprived areas in the district.

Almost one third of the families are from minority ethnic groups, the majority being of Indian heritage with increasing numbers of families from Eastern Europe. The area has a mix of housing types that include high-rise flats. Unemployment rates and the number of families on benefits are higher than elsewhere in the region.

The proportion of children with disabilities is about average for the region. The rate of recorded crime, including domestic violence is reducing, as is anti-social behaviour. Early Years Foundation Stage profile data for the Kingsway Children's Centre area shows a year-on-year improvement exceeding county averages.

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

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management

1

Main findings

Kingsway Children's Centre meets the needs of its users extremely well. It offers outstanding support to families and young children. It is a busy centre with a warm and inviting atmosphere, where all users and visitors are welcomed and made comfortable by the very focused team of staff. The centre is a hive of purposeful activity, where families are drawn because of its reputation in the community for making real differences to people's lives. The view, shared by all professionals who are connected with Kingsway Children's Centre is that it is a centre of excellence, where users are empowered to make important decisions and changes which have significant, lasting benefits for their whole family. A large majority of families in the Kingsway area are registered with the centre and attendance rates are the highest across the cluster. The needs of each individual are thoroughly understood by the staff team who make it their highest priority to use this information sensitively and skilfully to provide outstanding levels of support.

Equality and diversity are promoted very effectively. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and are used particularly well to ensure users remain and feel safe at the centre, at home and when out in the community. Users of the centre recognise and highly value its generous role within the community, and many are proud to be

associated with its success. The wider community engage well with and support the centre's many activities. Among the many comments praising its work was: 'Kingsway is a smashing place to be. It makes you feel special to be part of it.' and, 'There is so much to do when you get to the centre. They introduce different things all the time and we learn something new every time we go'.

The centre is rigorous in its collection of evaluation material from users and partner organisations. They listen carefully to people's views and make changes whenever needed. The process of improvement is dynamic and progressive. The impact of the centre's work is recorded diligently and accurate analysis of both data and personal views is used very well to establish the centre's effectiveness. This analysis reveals that across almost all measures of success the quality of life for centre users and the community is improving. The centre has exceeded all targets set for it by the local authority.

Partnership arrangements are very strong and very effective. The local health visiting team is located at the centre and this has successfully increased the number of people registered with the centre. In some cases expectant mothers are introduced to centre staff at their 30 week ante-natal appointments so that they can find out what's on offer even before their children are born.

The centre leader is a very effective manager, supported well by senior colleagues and the staff team. The centre works towards fulfilling an aspirational vision set by those who govern the centre, which places the interests of each user at the centre of everything it does. Self evaluation is meticulous and all staff are fully aware of priorities and progress. The staff team are motivational, experienced and well trained. They are representative of the local community and make positive role models because of their outstanding work.

Users are provided with many choices from a very broad range of courses and programmes to both stimulate further interest in child development and parenting and to increase their employability. The centre has recently celebrated a significant number of parents completing courses and receiving certificates and accredited qualifications. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), literacy and numeracy courses are as popular as art, camera club and gardening.

Almost all activities at the centre involve users having fun and enjoyment. Promoting the development of communication skills is given very high priority, and there is early intervention with additional support where the need is identified. A very effective partnership arrangement with speech and language specialists ensures staff at the centre have a high level of knowledge and skill to inform their work in sessions such as 'Chatter Matters' and 'Jo Jingles', which are very well attended and successful. The wider community support the work of the centre and benefit from attendance at family fun days and through purchasing vegetables from the centre's food cooperative.

Kingsway Children's Centre has an outstanding capacity to improve. The staff have established very effective systems to ensure those who attend the centre derive maximum benefit. The whole staff and leadership team are self-critical and constantly search for ways to do things better. Weekly team meetings focus on performance to ensure families with the highest needs receive high quality support. A recent change to boundaries of the reach area has been managed very successfully, demonstrating that Kingsway Children's Centre is flexible and responsive to individual need. The centre has clear plans for its future development with current targets and outcome measures set out very clearly in a written development plan. However, the written document does not contain complete information about how each of the targets is to be reached. The lack of detail has had no impact on the success of the centre.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Ensure continued success by using more detail in the written development plan to explain how targets are to be met.

How good are outcomes for users?

1

Kingsway Children's Centre offers an excellent range of services which are fully integrated with partners. Very effective work with health visitors provides users with immediate, expert advice on many issues including breastfeeding and weaning. Baby clinics are held in the centre and these are very well attended by users who then remain at the centre to participate in one or more of the many well organised groups available. Several users help to promote breastfeeding by providing very effective peer support to other mothers. Children make excellent progress because the centre works very effectively with speech and language experts. The centre is very effective in helping parents and carers to increase their awareness of the importance of listening and talking during critical periods of their children's development. One parent told us: 'I never realised that some of the things my baby was doing could be turned into a game which would eventually help him to speak. It made me feel closer to him because I understood him better'.

Services are accessible to all users and very well attended. Healthy lifestyles are promoted very well at the centre in sessions such as mini-movers and picnics. Parents receive highly effective encouragement and information from the centre staff which helps them make important decisions about immunisations, exercise and diet. Expert guidance is also available from a nutritionist who visits the centre to help with topics such as weaning and healthy eating. The 'Friends and Parents Group' at the centre have been successful in obtaining a grant to develop an area outside for growing various produce. Users and children have been involved in planning and

developing this innovative project, which is fully accessible and very popular.

Targeting of services for users who are particularly vulnerable or who have high needs is precise and very effective. Weekly 'Family Matters' meetings are used very effectively as a forum to discuss concerns about families and target intervention. The Common Assessment Framework is very well understood by the staff. Users benefit greatly from the challenging and interesting outdoor space at the centre. One parent said: 'There is no proper garden at the flats where we live so I take my baby to the centre to play in the garden there. She loves to dig for worms and explore in the long grass'. There is very strong evidence of sustained improvements in breastfeeding and engagement of young parents, and a reduction in teenage conception rates, and the number of accidents in the home. This has resulted in significant improvements to the quality of life for all users and particularly so for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and for children with disabilities.

Children behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. They are learning to manage and take risks safely through play and interaction. The centre is a safe place to be and users feel safe during their time there. They consider security to be excellent. Many parents improve their parenting skills and have confidence to share concerns with staff. Staff model safe practices and offer gentle reminders to users, where necessary, in relation to safety issues. The centre team works closely with the local authority children's social care department to ensure children who have child protection plans receive a level of support which is matched to their needs. The centre team includes student social workers, whose additional perspective adds further value for families. Evaluation shows significant and sustained improvement of outcomes for children on child protection plans and those looked after by the local authority.

Children make outstanding progress from their starting points in developing skills that will help them in the future. Children are very well prepared for school. Transition is supported well and in a variety of ways, for example, through the 'Little Champions' course. Early Years Foundation Stage profiles are high in comparison with others in the region. Almost all users make significant progress in learning new ways of doing things at home which have huge benefits for the whole family. There are very good levels of involvement and enjoyment. The centre has a very positive impact on users' understanding of how children learn through play and they use this knowledge at home. This learning has greatly increased their skills and confidence and encouraged many to volunteer at the centre and to continue with further learning. Parents, children and carers benefit greatly from the extensive range of courses on offer at the centre and these help them to support their children, acquire new skills and develop their confidence and self-esteem. Parents make excellent progress with adult education classes which makes positive and significant improvements to their lives.

Children demonstrate very positive behaviour and develop positive relationships. Users are very well represented at all levels of governance at the centre and are

involved in making decisions about the way the centre develops. They gain confidence and very useful experience. There is an independent 'Friends and Parents Group' who receive expert advice from a community development worker and have successfully competed for grants to provide new resources to develop the outdoor area at the centre. People are listened to and the wider community is engaged well in the life of the centre. Childminders receive very good support and advice.

The centre works very productively with partners such as Jobcentre Plus, Citizens Advice Bureau and adult education services to ensure users have access to a broad and interesting range of courses, individual support and information to help increase their employability and financial independence. User engagement with these services is excellent and there is a clear link to increased positive outcomes for children as parents become more confident, self assured and productive.

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	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	1
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	1
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	1

How good is the provision?

1

Robust assessment procedures enable the centre to meet users' welfare, health and social needs using high quality and well-targeted services. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation, taking into account comments made by users about the services, ensures that where needs are not being met, services are changed and tailored to meet requirements. For example, the centre learned that targeting fathers by offering a discreet group made them feel excluded from the other services on offer. There are no fathers' groups now and the number of male parents attending the centre is increasing. One father told us: 'The centre is awesome. The staff and families I meet are really nice and everyone helps each other'.

The centre and its partners work very effectively to ensure assessments of the challenges faced by families or individuals are well informed. The centre keeps very

detailed case records which helps them personalise support and measure the impact and value of the separate courses and programmes completed. In their feedback to the centre, users are clear that provision is making a real difference to their lives.

The centre celebrates achievement well through award ceremonies for those completing courses. Free nursery education and crèche facilities have opened up training and development opportunities for users who improve their educational and personal development. The very well-integrated services at the centre are highly effective in ensuring arrangements to help children learn and develop are outstanding. There are highly personalised approaches to targeting courses to ensure users achieve and become more successful. The centre has very high expectations of all users.

The centre provides a comprehensive range of services which matches the changing needs of the community. The centre is successful in engaging users, particularly those whose needs are greatest and they ensure programmes are available for users with additional needs or disabilities. Programmes and services are coordinated so that parents and carers can access them at a time that suits them best. The centre makes very good use of a venue close to the town centre known as the Coffee Shop, which is increasingly popular because of its convenience and opening hours. Participation rates are high and evaluations very positive. Outreach work is well organised and there is valuable work undertaken to support families in their own homes.

The centre works very hard to encourage parents to get involved in influencing the way the centre develops. There is strong representation from parents and the wider community at all levels of governance. The wider community holds the centre in positive regard and many people attend family fun days and buy food from the centre's food cooperative. In addition, users have joined the community forum and are now involved in making decisions about council services and policing.

The quality of care for all centre users is excellent. The staff team and their partners provide personalised support which is very effective. All users at the centre are made to feel special and this promotes well-being, fosters achievement and supports development of individuals and families. Staff are trusted and users have confidence in their professionalism and outstanding support. Empowerment is a common theme across all of the services offered by the centre.

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	1
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	1

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?

1

The centre has highly effective governance and accountability arrangements which are very well established, highly visible and understood. Strategic planning has strong links with local and regional targets and is heavily influenced by a determination to ensure everyone succeeds. The centre and its users work collectively to govern, manage and evaluate the services it delivers. The centre manager is viewed by her staff and the majority of the partner organisations she works with as being an inspirational leader who pays very close attention to improving outcomes for users. She makes sure everyone knows how well they are doing and what is to be done to improve. Very close attention is given to sustaining the outstanding partnerships and making sure that quality assurance and improvement initiatives remain effective.

Staff receive very high quality training and support in their work. Appraisals are very effective. The centre is performing very well and has exceeded the targets set for it by the local authority. Use of data to target vulnerable groups is very well developed. The centre leaders, partners and whole staff team hold great ambition for users. Self-evaluation is used to drive the work of the centre forward. There is rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge. Outcomes for almost all users of the centre are very high. The centre fulfils all its statutory duties and provides excellent value for money.

Safeguarding procedures are robust. Local authority procedures and guidance for safe recruitment are followed closely. The centre works in partnership effectively with a range of agencies to protect children and vulnerable adults. In addition, staff enable users to access services, such as support for domestic violence. All staff have been subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check, have very good levels of awareness and are trained well in child-protection procedures.

Everyone is made to feel very welcome at the centre. Equality and the inclusion of all children and their families are promoted very effectively and discrimination tackled rigorously. Users with high levels of need are targeted very effectively and become the focus of very well coordinated support to address their needs by removing barriers and helping to establish the foundations for change and improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood

1

The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
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	1
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	1

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

The outcome of the concurrent inspection of Kingsway Community Primary School and the ofsted report dated 2010 for Surestars Day Nursery were taken into account in the provision and outcomes judgement.

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 Kingsway Children's Centre on 18 and 19 May 2011. We judged the centre to be outstanding.

The children's centre provides an excellent range of services that help children and families in Leamington Spa. Throughout the inspection, children, families and other users were very enthusiastic in telling 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 you about the ways that things you do at the centre have changed some of ways 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 get 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 have given us good examples of how the centre has helped them. The food cooperative and the 'Friends and Parents Group' are particularly impressive initiatives that show us how busy some of you are in helping to run the centre.

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 mothers who choose to breastfeed their babies. It tells them about the help available on breastfeeding, from parents who have successfully breastfed their own children and know the good things and the concerns from experience. The centre is also very effective at helping you to encourage your children to develop speech and language.

Those of you we spoke to described the centre as providing a safe and welcoming environment; you are confident that your children will be secure and well cared for and the inspectors agree. The centre leader has very strong procedures to make sure that staff and volunteers are suitable and well trained to work with your children.

Some of you explained just how important the centre is in your family's lives. You told us that staff listen to you and help you 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 mothers and parents of children with disabilities.

Children make very 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 increased knowledge, skills and qualifications. We saw good opportunities for those of you who want support to get a job or go to college.

Kingsway Children's Centre has shown that it is a very successful centre which has made big improvements to the lives of many people. The staff at the centre do whatever they can to make sure that families enjoy themselves and benefit from the courses and groups.

We wish you every success for the future.

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