

Inspection report for Woodland Sure Start Children's Centre

Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	366439
Inspection dates	27-28 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Daniel Grant

Centre governance	The local authority
Centre leader	Tracey Msahli
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	135017 Woodland Community Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY337977 Woodland Private Day Nursery EY338113 Woodland Children's Centre Creche

The inspection of this Sure Start Children's Centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and one Early Years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior managers from the centre, parents, members of the advisory board, and partners including Early Years Foundation Stage and childcare, health, education and children's social care professionals. The inspectors visited a range of provision across the centre.

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

Information about the centre

Woodland Children's Centre is a phase 1 centre. It provides the full core offer. The centre is located on the same site as Woodland Community Primary School and Woodland Private Day Nursery. The centre has its own crèche which is registered by Ofsted and was last inspected in April 2011.

The area served by the centre is in the 30% of the most deprived areas nationally and has pockets of more significant social disadvantage surrounded by areas with less need. The vast majority of families are of White British heritage. The largest minority ethnic group is Pakistani at just over 1% of the population. The proportion of children who live in households without paid employment or in families in receipt of benefits is above average.

A large number of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a lower range of skills than those expected for their age.

The centre is governed and managed by the local authority and an advisory board made up of representatives from the local community, including parents and professionals.

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

Overall effectiveness of the centre is good with some aspects that are outstanding. This is because those in charge are demonstrating a clear vision and have an accurate understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for improvement. Good relationships exist with key partners and together they are taking steps to improve already good outcomes for users and reach more families. The centre collects a wide range of data. This includes data about the needs of the communities it serves, referrals from health and other partner organisations, as well as very useful survey and evaluation information related to events, courses, and visitors to the centre. Staff use these data accurately to identify individual need and to assess whether targets have been met. They are beginning to analyse the data more precisely to ensure all potential users are reached and can benefit from the centre's activities. As a result, the centre's capacity to improve further is good.

Outcomes for users are good and improving. Many users are responding very well to healthy cooking courses, opportunities for exercise and trips to explore wildlife areas. Families are improving their understanding of keeping themselves safe by preventing accidents at home through activities such as child safety week and home safety packs. Those using the centre thoroughly enjoy and are very appreciative of the extensive range of services on offer. They feel the centre is extremely responsive to their needs and there are many examples of how it has impacted positively on their own lives and those of their children. Children are making very good progress in their communication and language skills because the speech and language workers understand their needs and encourage parents and carers to talk, listen and play with their children in ways that stimulate further development. One parent reports, 'I now know how to encourage my son to develop his speech and I practise it all the time with him at home.'

The centre has excellent involvement with many fathers, male relatives and carers, who attend a great many events and activities regularly. They enjoy attending activities because they have fun, are made to feel welcome and learn the importance of play in promoting development. This has led to improved outcomes for many

families.

All users of the centre value the welcoming, safe environment it offers and the good range of services it provides. The centre listens to and takes account of users' views about courses and activities, as well as asking for suggestions. It provides outstanding care, guidance and support for users, reflected in one user's comment 'The centre is a great place. Staff have helped me cope with some very difficult personal problems.' It has an excellent understanding of individual user's needs, particularly the more vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The centre promotes equality and inclusion extremely well through very effective policies and outstanding work undertaken by the staff to help all users overcome personal barriers and improve their lives.

The centre has established very strong links with other professionals such as health visitors and midwives to target specific support to those users who need it the most. Several case studies confirm the positive impact on outcomes this is having.

The centre meets all safeguarding requirements and staff offer positive role models of high-quality practice as they see safeguarding at the heart of the centre's work. The centre knows its community well and is very knowledgeable about its vulnerable groups, taking proactive steps to engage them in the children's centre work. As part of its commitment, it recognises the need to increase staff awareness of national initiatives and local arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable adults.

Users are benefiting from completing very useful courses such as paediatric first aid and gaining recognised qualifications in literacy and numeracy but more could be done to promote opportunities to increase training and employability for those seeking paid employment.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Continue to promote access to education and training so that more centre users receive opportunities to improve their education and employability.
- Increase staff awareness of initiatives to safeguard vulnerable adults.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Outcomes for the children and families who use the centre are good. Parents and carers respond very well to the wide range of activities which relate to improving diet, exercise and lifestyle. Analysis of data indicates that health outcomes are improving, such as breast feeding, and smoking cessation. Children and families feel safe when accessing services at the centre because staff have a good level of expertise and the building is secure, comfortable and welcoming. Children settle quickly in the crèche as they have positive relationships with the adults and respond

very well to the established routines. The registered crèche was inspected by Ofsted in April 2011 and found to be good.

Parents trust staff and confidently discuss and share their issues. Courses available are valued and used well by parents. They give them confidence, help support their children’s learning, promote good parenting skills, and for some; increase educational attainment and prepare them for the world of work. Users are gaining recognised qualifications such as paediatric first aid certificates. One user is a regular volunteer, offering support to other parents.

Ensuring the emotional well-being of all users is a high priority for the centre, particularly those with illnesses or disabilities. Staff build very strong, trusting relationships with users so families feel more able to engage with other professionals to access help and support. These relationships support the good work that is undertaken through the Common Assessment Framework, those subject to child protection plans and with looked-after children. This support is highly-valued by users, for example one parent told us ‘I never thought I would have the courage to continue coming to the centre and meeting people, but the staff help me do this.’

Attendance at almost all sessions offered by the centre is extremely good. There is a strong focus on language and communication which has seen positive benefits in improving children’s speech and by increasing parents’ understanding of how they can encourage their children’s language development. Initiatives such as the ‘listening walks’ and ‘Happy Talk’ sessions have worked well because they promote language, understanding and development by demonstrating the value of listening carefully to sounds and pausing to encourage communication.

The centre is collecting and analysing data which suggests that contact with the centre has enabled children to have a better start to school life. The children’s centre teacher works well with the local Early Years providers to improve the quality of their provision and so improve outcomes for children.

Children’s behaviour is excellent in the children’s centre. They have positive relationships with adults and develop confidence to be separate from their parents and carers as a result. Users’ views are taken into account regularly and have a positive influence on provision. For example, the centre changed the date and time of activities to be more convenient and offered more courses in baby massage and activities at weekends and for fathers, male relatives and carers.

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 centre is very effective at assessing the individual needs of the children and families who use its services. The staff and partners are very experienced and establish effective, supportive relationships with all users. Assessments cover the whole range of needs, including the needs of those most vulnerable. Assessment is used very well to plan outstanding individual support for users.

Excellent partnerships are in place with a range of key partners including the co-located school, health, speech and language therapy, social care, Early Years Foundation Stage providers and voluntary organisations too. The centre follows clear processes to involve these partnerships in targeting services for individual children and families. The crèche and family workers use their knowledge and influence to help families engage with other professionals, thereby ensuring the well-being of children and their parents.

Current arrangements for education, training and support to find employment are good but the centre recognises that more needs to be done to increase access to these services for more adults. The use of a volunteer within the centre is a strong example of the commitment to developing users' confidence and to supporting them to move into further training, education or employment.

Senior leaders and staff constantly seek ways to identify the needs of specific groups and to tailor activities accordingly, for example, 'Family Fun Days' are used very effectively to provide potential users with a taster of what the centre has to offer. The crèche and 'Stay and Play' facilities ensure equality of access to all users and particularly those from groups that are more vulnerable. Outstanding personal and practical support is provided for all users, and particularly for those with disabilities and illnesses who would otherwise find it impossible to attend the centre. This provides very valuable opportunities for families to have fun and engage in exciting activities, whilst building their confidence, relationships and parenting skills.

The centre staff have excellent arrangements with the co-located school and other Early Years Foundation Stage providers to ensure good transition arrangements as children progress into school.

The centre has a very effective strategy to publicise its programme of activities, such

as the extremely informative website. A comprehensive range of relevant information is provided for all users in a wide range of formats including leaflets, and discussions with staff and partners. One parent told us 'there are always new things to do. You never get bored and can then do the same things at home.' The quality of advice and guidance for those accessing benefits is very good.

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	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 centre's leadership team provides a clear focus for the well-motivated staff to recognise the strengths of the centre and to continue to improve the services it offers. Arrangements for governance are good. The centre has a well-established advisory board which is chaired by a parent who receives good support and training for her role. The advisory board carefully reviews progress and sets targets and clear priorities for the centre. The parent forum provides an effective link between centre users and the centre's leadership team, who listen to and take account of users' views.

The centre leadership team involves staff at all levels in the process of self-evaluation in order to identify strengths and areas to improve. Recent reorganisation of the staff team has provided leaders with an opportunity to reinforce staff understanding of the centre's vision and priorities successfully and helped staff recognise the importance of precise targeting, accurate assessment and the impact that their work is having on improving outcomes for children and their families. This, together with effective use of evaluation, has combined to ensure the centre provides good value for money. The development plan sets out the centre's ambition and identifies where improvements are needed, making clear links with national and regional priorities. The centre has set challenging targets for its improvement and is making good progress toward reaching them.

Staff value the challenge and support they receive from their individual line-managers and are improving their professional development with on-going training. The centre has a very strong commitment to inclusion and removing barriers. They promote equality very well in sessions and activities, some of which involve the celebration of different cultures and beliefs. Discrimination, where it occurs, is dealt with promptly and effectively. All groups within the community are positively

recognised and supported in the centre. Safeguarding practices are rigorous and robust. The centre recognises the value of ensuring its work to safeguard vulnerable adults is well-informed by national guidance, accredited training and local procedures.

Comprehensive risk assessments are systematically carried out to ensure the safety of all users when accessing services organised by the centre. Staff have a good understanding of and high commitment to ensuring the well-being of children and their families. Staff know their communities well and have developed excellent relationships with partners and professionals in social care, health and education to ensure good integration of services. They understand the needs of the families well and quickly identify where additional and early support is needed. Staff are knowledgeable about the centre’s vulnerable groups and take proactive steps to engage them in the centre’s work, for example using volunteers as role models for others. The centre has established links to provide effective support for families subject to domestic violence and work hard to ensure the consistency of health referrals across the reach area.

The centre is using innovative ways to evaluate its services through the imaginative use of creative photography and art work. Staff use these findings to inform practice, for example by finding increasingly-effective ways to help boys develop through structured play, such as pond-dipping, construction with boxes and adventure. The centre is collecting a wide range of data and this is used increasingly well to measure effectiveness. There is evidence to show the good impact of the centre’s work on improving outcomes.

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	1
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	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been	2

commissioned to provide	
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

The inspection reports for Woodland Children’s Centre Crèche published in April 20011, and Woodland Community Primary School published June 2011, have been taken into account in this report.

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 Woodland Children’s Centre on 27 and 28 June 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

We enjoyed our visit to your centre and meeting so many of you. We would like to thank those of you who helped us with our work. We found that under the good guidance of the centre leadership team, the staff work very well to provide outstanding levels of care, guidance and support for all users. We found the staff to be committed and keen to support both children’s development and to develop adults’ skills and levels of confidence.

The staff have established some excellent partnerships with other professionals and organisations to ensure you have access to a full range of support and guidance. They are providing good guidance on how to keep families healthy and safe, and have placed great efforts on increasing children’s speech development through many of the interesting and exciting activities.

Some of you told us that the support of the centre is like ‘a lifeline’ when you are having problems. We found the staff to be very good at providing individual personal support and that they are determined to become even better at supporting those who are most vulnerable.

We found that Woodland Children’s Centre is a safe place for you and your children, and the reception staff are very welcoming and helpful. Some of you told us how the centre is a bright and attractive place and we agree. The rooms and play equipment are of a very good standard and the staff have lots of experience and skills to make

sure your time there is well spent. The children we saw were making good progress and enjoyed what they were doing.

The centre is a good place for you to meet other parents and people who can help families. Some of you said that sessions such as breastfeeding support and baby massage are very valuable and we agree. We also think that your centre is very good at involving fathers and other male relatives and carers. The centre asks for your views on activities and courses and some of you have been very involved in helping to manage the centre.

The centre managers meet the parents' forum regularly to ensure that the services the centre is providing meet your needs and interests. The centre staff listen to your views and use this information to make improvements. They are aware that more could be done to provide more of you with interesting opportunities in training and help for those preparing to find paid work.

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