

# Inspection report for Chelmsley Wood Children's Centre

<b>Local authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	383651
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joy Law HMI

<b>Centre leader</b>	Linda Davies
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Not applicable
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Chuckles Day Nursery 250033

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

## Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

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

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

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the local authority, Action for Children, centre staff, partner agencies, parents and carers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's self-evaluation form, data provided by the local authority and the centre, documents and policies, and minutes of meetings.

## Information about the centre

Chelmsley Wood is a phase one children's centre providing the full core offer to a community which is in one of the 30% most-deprived wards in the country. The neighbourhoods of Cole Valley, Chelmsley Wood Town Centre, Craig Croft South and Alcott Wood which form part of the centre's reach area are in the 10% most-deprived nationally. Major regeneration work is being undertaken within Chelmsley Wood and surrounding areas.

Chelmsley Wood is part of a network of seven children's centres working across North Solihull. It is one of a cluster of three linked centres, which includes the Fordbridge and Marston Green Children's Centres. All three centres are led by one coordinator. The local authority has a contract with Action for Children to manage the centre. It also has a partnership advisory board that represents users, the local community and service partners.

The centre provides health and family support services and adult training. Crèche facilities are provided to support users' access to services. The centre does not provide early years childcare, but offers advice and guidance to parents and carers on the day-care and childminding facilities available within the local community. There are 998 children under five years of age in the centre's reach area. There is a

high number of workless families dependant on state benefits. The rate of unemployment and the proportion of people who leave school without qualifications are higher than the national average. The proportion of teenage parents is above average. The children's centre serves a community that is 93.4% White British, with the remaining population being from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small minority speaks English as a second language.

The skills and knowledge with which children enter the local Early Years Foundation Stage are below those expected nationally 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 families**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**2**

## Main findings

This children's centre serves the needs of its community well. There is very effective teamworking and good partnerships with other services, particularly health partners, early years teachers and practitioners, and employment and learning agencies.

Leaders are very aware of the ongoing issues and challenges for children and families in the reach area. They target and adapt the provision well to meet local needs. They set ambitious targets to improve the health, safety and economic well-being of the local community. The good-quality provision and effective family support ensure that families, including those whose circumstances may have made them vulnerable or who are disadvantaged by economic and social circumstances, benefit from a good range of services.

Inclusion is central to the vision of the centre and all staff have a commitment to promoting equality and diversity. Although the centre is successful in reaching all groups, it is aware that there are some groups, particularly fathers, disabled children and those from minority ethnic groups, which are less engaged than others with the centre's services. The centre is consistently reviewing, planning and taking action to address this. The centre is particularly successful in its targeted work to support children and families who are in most need of support.

The outcomes for children and adults within the centre's reach area are good overall,

although outcomes for being healthy are satisfactory. Parents and carers participate in activities and courses which build their confidence and develop their parenting and life skills.

Good inter-agency working means that highly skilled professionals identify the needs of potentially vulnerable families at an early stage and intervene appropriately. This prompt action and good use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) ensure efficient use of resources. Partnership with health professionals ensures that new and prospective parents have access to onsite pre- and post-natal midwifery and health-visiting services. In addition, sessions, such as 'Get Ready For Baby' which promote healthy living and smoking cessation, are accessed by young prospective parents. However, the proportion of babies born with low birth weight is higher than the national average.

Families are supported in developing their understanding of living healthy lifestyles. For example, parents and carers talked about how the 'Make and Taste' cookery sessions and workshops run by a local supermarket have enabled them to have a better understanding of eating healthily. Families also engage in activities outdoors. However, families in the reach area lead less healthy lifestyles than people in surrounding areas. In addition, data show that, while obesity levels in children of Reception age have reduced in Solihull, this decrease is less marked in Chelmsley Wood.

Users say they feel safe when attending sessions and during home visits from staff, and many say the centre is their first port of call if they face difficulties. Adult users evaluate activities routinely. Where users make requests for services, the centre strives to provide them. Users say they feel listened to and respected. Children who attend the centre's 'Stay and Play' and crèche sessions benefit from good-quality, focused support and a very good range of play opportunities that help develop their communication and social skills.

The centre has good capacity to improve. Its self-evaluation is accurate and largely based on case studies, knowledge of its community, feedback from service providers and users. Staff and partner agencies routinely evaluate the services they provide and contribute towards shaping what the centre does. Data to show improvement over time are available, although they are not always used to best effect. Both the local authority and centre have identified the need to have more efficient systems in place for collating, evaluating and sharing data and have recently implemented more effective systems to achieve this. The improvement plans show that priorities are based on a good understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for further development. However, the lack of sufficient measurable targets and timescales are likely to make it difficult for the centre to assess the impact of its improvement work.

Although key partners are engaged in supporting and developing the provision and regularly share relevant information, partnership advisory board meetings are not consistently well attended by all members. The centre routinely seeks views of families using the centre through various channels including termly 'Viewpoint' open

days. Although parents and carers are represented at the partnership board meetings, the centre does not have a parents' forum. Consequently, not all groups' views are well represented.

## What does the centre need to do to improve further?

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase the proportion of the most vulnerable families who engage with the services available to them, particularly fathers, disabled children and those from minority ethnic groups,
- Improve the physical and emotional health and well-being of children and adults by implementing strategies to:
  - reduce levels of obesity in children
  - reduce the number of babies born with low birth weight.
- Develop strategies to engage parents and carers more fully in evaluating services and shaping improvements.
- Make improvement planning more effective through better use of data and measurable targets which include review dates to assess the impact on improving outcomes.

## How good are outcomes for families?

2
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The centre is focused on improving the health and well-being of families, and in the majority of cases outcomes are improving. Some families engage in physical activity sessions such as swimming and 'In Your Stride' walking activities. They benefit from being outdoors as they take part in the fun activities organised by the park rangers such as treasure hunts, pond dipping and kite flying.

The effective partnership working between health visitors, midwives, the mental health team and family support workers results in positive outcomes for some teenage mothers and those new mothers considered to be most vulnerable. The baby massage sessions have contributed towards early attachment and positive relationships between mothers and their babies. The centre has successfully engaged breastfeeding-buddy volunteers. Parents say they have an increased enthusiasm towards breastfeeding and value the support available. Although families are engaging with the universal services available, the uptake of services overall to improve the health and well being of families is satisfactory.

Good procedures have been implemented to ensure that children are safeguarded well. Families with children on child protection plans are very well supported. Parents and carers say that they trust the staff to help them in times of crisis or personal difficulties.

First-aid courses, fire prevention and home-safety workshops are helping to raise children's and families' awareness of safety in the home and their communities. All

families who attended these sessions reported that they felt more able than they had previously to keep their children safe from accidents. Parents who have been subject to domestic violence and abuse have received excellent support from the centre and its partners.

The centre's early years teacher liaises closely with the local pre-school providers, childminders and schools within its area to support access to early years provision for children and families. These partnerships are very effective in improving outcomes for children. The centre has successfully supported families in accessing funding for two-year-olds. The local primary school headteacher speaks highly about the good partnership working and the positive effect the children's centre has in contributing to improved outcomes for young children and their families. Good transition arrangements between home, childcare provision and school enable children to settle very well, having a positive impact on their learning and development.

The good range of activities for parents, carers and children to play, have fun and learn together enables them to develop skills that will help in the future. Evaluations of the success of courses and activities are positive and show improving outcomes for families. Parents and carers say how much they value the 'Stay and Play' and 'Watch, Play and Learn' sessions. One parent reported, 'I feel much more aware of how to encourage my child to play,' and another said, 'I have seen my child develop and blossom.' Children are making good progress by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and, therefore, the gap between the outcomes for the most vulnerable groups and others is narrowing.

The engagement with fathers has increased as a result of the recruitment of a male support worker and the innovative ways to engage fathers in activities with their children, for example, breakfast and coffee mornings, and weekly 'Activ Dads' sessions. However, only a third of fathers currently access services. Fathers speak highly about how they feel, how much more confidence they have in their important role as a father, and how 'Activ Dads' has helped them to understand their children's learning needs. The centre supports parents with disabilities well to ensure they are included and involved in their children's lives. Volunteers are a particular strength of the centre and their contributions are valued by parents, carers and staff.

Parents and carers say they feel 'included' and 'listened to' and comment on the difference that the centre has made to their confidence, aspirations and achievements as well as their children's progress, development and behaviour. Parents and carers talk about how the staff support them through difficult times and that, without help from the children's centre, their lives would be very different. For example, families experiencing housing difficulties are now being supported through workshops.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy</b>	<b>3</b>
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<b>lifestyles</b>	
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment</b>	<b>2</b>

## How good is the provision?

**2**

The assessment of users' needs and the tracking of progress are good. Interventions that are used and the progress of all vulnerable families are well documented and monitored. The centre has forged good links with family and children's services. Its close partnership working with health services and learning and employment agencies has resulted in very effective support for all of the most vulnerable groups, such as teenage parents, lone parents, families in crisis and those experiencing domestic violence. Consequently, it is improving the life chances and personal development of parents, carers and children well.

The staff are very clear about and sensitive to the particular needs of their community and have been successful in encouraging families into the centre. They are proactive in trying to engage families through mail shots, promotion at local supermarkets, school open days and clinics. Consequently, they are reaching all groups to varying extents and engaging with the majority of families within the centre's reach.

The staff team demonstrates a very good understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and promotes children's learning and development well during sessions. Staff also effectively support parents' and carers' understanding regarding the quality and range of age-appropriate activities they can provide for their children. Parents and carers talked about their increasing confidence in playing with their children, developing their speech and managing their behaviour.

Parents and carers receive good advice and support to enable them access services, such as housing benefits, health services and childcare provision. Good partnership working with the learning and employment coordinator, Jobcentre Plus, schools and colleges has resulted in parents and carers successfully moving into learning, training and employment. Parents who became volunteers and were supported through training are now employed at the centre and there is an increase in the take-up of college courses by young parents. Consequently, parents' and carers' economic stability and independence have improved as a result of the opportunities the centre

has provided.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

**2**

Leaders are focused on the needs of the immediate community. Their expertise and the skills of a united staff team combine to ensure that a good quality of service is provided across the centre's operations. Regular and effective supervision supports the personal and professional development of staff well. All staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities.

Safeguarding is a high priority and is at the heart of what the centre does. Staff are very effective in ensuring children and families are safe, for example, through the vigilant approach to security at the centre. Staff training is robust and there is rigorous attention to child protection, vetting and recruitment procedures.

The children's centre is an integrated part of the community it serves. Its location within the town centre means that the community is well aware of its presence and, therefore, has easy access to the services provided. However, the much-welcomed and needed new supermarket has meant families no longer pass the centre when entering the town. Despite this, take-up of services is good and increasing.

The inclusion of all children and their families is central to the centre's vision, equality is promoted and diversity is celebrated. The effective integrated working with other professionals, such as speech therapists, health visitors, the social care team, early years teachers and learning and employment agencies, enhances opportunities for all children and families and has a positive impact on improving outcomes. The centre makes a positive contribution to community cohesion and the breaking down of barriers between families of different backgrounds.

Teamwork among staff is very good and morale is high. Staff are well qualified and experienced. The staff operate exceptionally well from the office and out in the community. They deploy resources well and make effective use of the local amenities to deliver some of their sessions. The operation of partner agencies from the centre has resulted in effective partnership working to the benefit of families with whom they work jointly. Outreach work has been tailored to meet users' needs and has enabled staff to reach more families.



Governors are highly supportive and have a strong commitment to the centre and to the ongoing development of its role in the community. Development planning is aligned to local and national indicators for children and families. The centre also has a partnership advisory board made up of a good cross-section of members, although not all members attend well. Clear induction procedures are implemented for parents and carers to ensure they are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

New systems, which enable the local authority and the centre to gather and evaluate data, are becoming embedded and are contributing towards the setting's ability to demonstrate improving outcomes. Although live birth data are currently unavailable to the centre, the very good links with health partners mean that pertinent information is shared with the centre and families so that early intervention takes place with positive outcomes. Parents and carers regularly report that very positive outcomes have been seen on their lives and their children's lives.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision</b>	<b>2</b>

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

Not applicable.

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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Chelmsley Wood Children's Centre on 7 and 8 September 2011. We judged the centre as good overall. We talked with some of you, your children, staff, and a wide range of partners and members of the local authority linked to the centre. We observed the centre's work and looked at a range of documents.

The centre manager and her dedicated team provide families with a good range of services that are carefully tailored to meet your particular needs. Those of you who spoke to us said that you feel the centre is very supportive and staff are very kind and caring, and give you good advice. Most importantly, you said it helps improve your lives, particularly for those of you who are facing difficult challenges. Your children's centre staff team meets regularly to discuss the centre's work and to plan for improvement. All staff place importance on you and your families and provide a listening ear for you. They are keen to create a warm and welcoming environment where you feel at home and are able to talk freely about things that matter to you or are causing you concern. As a result, you very much value the centre and use the services regularly. Staff listen to what you have to say about the centre and what you need and do their best to adapt the services to meet your needs. The centre offers a good range of services and activities which are led by skilled and dedicated professionals.

Those of you who use the centre are now much more able than you were previously, to keep you and your families safe, and you are developing your understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. Staff provide you with access to training and home visits and give advice on how you can prevent accidents in and around your home to keep your children safe. They are helping you to keep yourselves and your children healthy by encouraging mothers to breastfeed and by giving advice on preparing healthy and nutritious meals.

Those of you we spoke to are particularly proud of your achievements. These ranged from becoming better parents and carers, through gaining qualifications, such as first aid, and to entering voluntary or paid work because of the skills you learnt. The transition arrangements for children between home, early years childcare provision and school are good. This means they settle well and make good progress because they have benefited from the centre's services. The staff at the centre encourage you to engage in play with your children from a very early age at sessions such as 'Watch, Play and Learn' and 'Stay and Play'. You told us how much you and your children enjoy the activities you access through the centre and the positive effect these are having on you and your families.

We have asked the local authority and staff team to increase the proportion of the most vulnerable families who engage with the services available to them, particularly fathers, disabled children and those from minority ethnic groups. We have asked

them to improve the physical and emotional health and well-being of you and your children by implementing strategies to reduce levels of obesity in children and to reduce the number of babies born with low birth weight. We have asked them to develop strategies to engage you more fully in evaluating services and shaping improvements. We have also asked them to make improvement planning more effective through better use of data and measurable targets with review dates to assess the impact on improving outcomes.

We would like to thank everyone who came to speak to us. It was a privilege to be able to talk to you. Your honest and open discussions with us helped us immensely during the inspection. We thoroughly enjoyed spending time at your centre, and we wish you and your families the best for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).