

Inspection report for Livesey Children's and All Age Centre

Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	383697
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Reporting inspector	Rachael Flesher HMI

Centre leader	Miss Tracy Lysons
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY336015 Livesey Children's and All Age Centre

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

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Introduction

The inspection covers 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 parents and carers, centre staff and representatives from professional partnerships, the management board and the local authority. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Livesey Children's and All Age Centre is situated in the Ewood ward of Blackburn. The centre has developed from a Sure Start local programme and was designated as a phase one children's centre in April 2006. The centre offers a range of intergenerational and integrated services from one community location, including specialist provision for children with additional or complex health needs and their families. The on-site early years provision provides childcare and education within the Early Years Foundation Stage for children from birth to five years. This provision is inspected separately and inspection reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk

The centre serves families living in one of the 10% most deprived areas in the country. The population is predominantly of White British heritage with 3.3% of the population from Black and minority ethnic groups. Families face issues of poverty, high levels of unemployment, low average household income, poor dental health and poor healthy lifestyles. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their age.

The centre is governed by the local authority and has a management board made up of representatives from the local community, including parents and carers and professionals. The centre has a 'Family Voices' group providing a forum to consult with local families.

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

Outcomes, quality of provision, and leadership and management are all good. The centre's capacity for sustained improvement is also good, leading to good overall effectiveness.

Particular strengths of the centre are the excellent partnerships with parents and other agencies and the processes in place to empower and enable a wide range of children, parents, members of the wider community and partners to contribute to the decision-making and governance of the centre. As a result users play a significant role in developing services and driving improvements. The centre also uses and manages available resources extremely well. It provides a wide range of integrated services from a safe, inclusive and high-quality environment. Sustainable development principles are thoroughly embedded within the centre's practices and children and their families are developing and adopting socially responsible behaviour and practices to care for their environment. As a result, families and staff treat each other with respect and services are closely matched to the needs of families and the wider community. They are therefore highly-utilised by the majority of families from target groups, thus providing excellent value for money. As one professional summarised, 'the centre has become the hub of the community' and a parent stated 'it is the community's biggest asset'.

There are clear links between strategic planning and service provision. Professional supervision and management arrangements are robust. Assessments of families' needs are detailed and accurate, and plans for the future are well-targeted to bring about further improvement. However the centre does not fully utilise the available data and information to set measurable, challenging targets for improvement to ensure that it can be held fully accountable. In addition, systems to monitor and evaluate the centre's success are not sufficiently robust to enable staff to demonstrate readily the impact of their work on outcomes for children and their families and the engagement of all target groups. However, the centre has the ability and determination to continue improving based on what it has accomplished so far.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve outcomes for more families in the community by:
 - monitoring the engagement of families from key target groups to ensure the centre knows exactly how many are engaged in its services and how many are not, and targeting families accordingly
 - using all available information to set challenging and measurable targets for improvement and monitoring performance accordingly, to ensure that the centre can fully demonstrate how well it is helping to improve outcomes for families.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Outcomes for users are good. Children are safeguarded and families using the centre feel safe. Excellent partnership working and the effective systems for assessing users' needs are having a positive impact on outcomes for children, including those subject to Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes, looked-after children and children subject to a child protection plan. Partners and staff intervene early to support families and as a result the centre is reducing the number of those needing child protection plans, and preventing situations from reaching crisis point. Through the services provided children and parents are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their families safe and ensure precautions are in place to prevent accidents and injuries occurring in and around the home.

The centre has successfully established very strong partnership-working with health professionals. A good range of child and family health services, closely-targeted to the families' needs, is delivered from the centre. These are well-matched to the needs of the reach area and are used well by the majority of target groups. The centre has achieved or is working towards a range of healthy outcome-related initiatives, for example achieving all three stages of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) breast feeding initiative. As a result, healthy outcomes are good and improving for many families. For example, more families are physically active and eating more healthily and a good proportion of mothers successfully sustain breastfeeding their babies. As one mother stated 'I wouldn't have been able to carry on breastfeeding without the help and support'.

A good proportion of families accesses the available advice and guidance regarding benefits and money management to improve their economic stability and independence. Many families are engaged in courses and activities designed to develop their personal and social skills and their employability. As a result they are developing confidence and self-esteem and outcomes for those seeking employment are good. Families using the centre make an outstanding contribution to its governance and decision-making leading to enhanced personal development.

All centre staff and partners are determined to achieve good outcomes for all children by ensuring all have access to good-quality services. For example, staff are deployed and expertise is shared with the wide range of early years provision in the area, improving the quality of the care and education for all children. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points in developing their skills for the future. Their behaviour is exemplary and they are developing extremely positive relationships. Schools report that children arrive ready to learn and settle in well. Good-quality transition arrangements and excellent partnership-working are in place to ensure consistency and the continuity of care, learning and development of children. The Early Years Foundation Stage is securely embedded across all aspects of the centre's provision. The centre ensures a strong focus on the areas of development where children are achieving less well. Almost all three- and four-year-old children are accessing their free nursery education entitlement. As a result, the majority of children achieve 78 points in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the gap between the lowest-achieving 20% and the rest is narrowing.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

The extent to which children, including those from target 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 children and parents, including those from target groups, 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 parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	1
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.	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre works extremely well in partnership with other services to ensure assessments, such as those carried out under the CAF process and for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are robust, well-informed and lead to early intervention. Staff are skilled at identifying the needs of families and intervene early to ensure they receive the personalised support they need to improve their outcomes.

All partners take an active role in promoting good-quality, integrated provision which is responsive to local needs. Provision is based on secure analysis of need, using meaningful consultation and evaluation processes to ensure the centre knows the families using the centre well. This ensures the range of services, activities and opportunities meets the needs of the large majority of users. As a result, outcomes and participation and attendance rates

of most target groups are good and improving and users are generally representative of the community that the centre serves.

Good provision enables children to learn and develop across all areas of learning through good-quality activities and resources that interest and engage them. Parents are improving their parenting skills due to the effective support and modeling of good practices by staff. The centre has good evidence of how it has enabled users to take on roles and responsibilities and develop their skills for the future, for example by empowering parents to participate in decision-making and governance of the centre. Some users are supported to improve their educational and personal development and to progress to further employment, education and training. Users enjoy learning, achieve well and their achievements are celebrated and built upon effectively.

The environment is warm and inviting. Staff and partners at all levels are friendly and extremely welcoming and the centre places great importance on encouraging the community to access the centre and services. Centre staff provide effective personalised support for families in crisis, offering good levels of care and guidance. Families state the centre has enabled them to make friends, develop their confidence and self-esteem and improve the outcomes for their families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The inclusion of all children and families, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is promoted very effectively. The centre plays a significant role in the life of the community and is breaking down barriers to further community cohesion. This has resulted in the centre successfully engaging with many of its most vulnerable and hard-to-reach families. The centre leader and staff are passionate about their work in improving outcomes for their community and motivation and morale are high. As one parent stated, 'staff here are amazing'.

Governance and accountability arrangements, as well as clear roles and responsibilities at all levels of leadership and management, are well-established and understood by all. Partnerships are outstanding. An extremely wide range of partners sit on the management board and partners are highly committed to partnership working. The management board and 'family voice' group, which has a high parental representation, challenge the centre leaders and enthusiastically carry out their role of critical friend as part of the centre's quality and improvement processes. They share their ideas, information and the views of the community and are influential in shaping services and activities. This ensures provision is

matched to the needs of families and therefore sustainable. Parents state they 'feel highly-valued' and 'listened to' and are confident their views are escalated to the Children's Trust strategic management level where necessary.

Staff, leaders and partners routinely reflect on their practice and provision to secure continuous improvement. Users' views are thoroughly sought and used to contribute to good self-evaluation and in shaping services. Self-evaluation provides the centre with a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development and is used to inform planning. However, data is not fully utilised to set measurable, challenging targets, nor is it used to analyse the engagement of families and target groups and to fully demonstrate the impact the centre is having on their outcomes.

Safer recruitment procedures are followed and all relevant checks are made to ensure that all staff are suitable and safe to work with children. All staff, including volunteers, receive high-quality child protection training and are confident in their role to safeguard children. Risks are thoroughly assessed and minimised. Staff are effectively deployed. Good professional supervision and management arrangements are in place to monitor the performance of staff and ensure their safety and well-being and ongoing professional development. Staff development and training are effective and appropriate in order to meet the current and future needs of children and families in the reach area.

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 effectiveness of evaluation and its use of ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	1
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 partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	1
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.	2

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

The Early Years childcare provided by the children's centre was last inspected by Ofsted 5 February 2007 and the quality of childcare and education was judged to be good and this report was used to inform judgements made during the inspection. The report is available from our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Livesey and All Age Children's Centre on 21 and 22 September 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you to those of you who contributed to the inspection. Like you, we found your children's centre to be very welcoming and friendly. Your centre has a good idea of what it does well and what it needs to do to be even better. However, it does not use all the information available to set challenging measurable targets for improvement to ensure that it can fully demonstrate how well it is helping to improve outcomes for your families. Neither does it use this information to make sure it knows exactly how many families from target groups are engaged with the centre services and how many are not. Your children's centre has been asked to improve this.

You told us you feel safe at your children's centre. High priority is given to safeguarding your children. Staff are skilled and knowledgeable in making sure you and your children are safe and protected. The staff at your centre work very well together with its partner services, sharing information and resources to make sure you and your families get the right support when you need it.

You told us that you 'feel highly-valued' and 'listened to'. Your centre places great importance on ensuring that you can all express your views and contribute to centre developments. Your views are used meaningfully to drive improvements and to make sure your centre is providing services and activities that you and your families need most. The majority of families in your community access the good range of services and activities provided and, as a result, outcomes for your families are good and improving. Your families are safer in and around your homes, healthier, financially better off and many of you are achieving well with some of you gaining skills and qualifications and going on to

employment. Your children are making good progress in developing their skills for the future and schools report that your children arrive ready to learn and settle in well.

Your centre has established itself as the hub of the community and is well-used by a wide range of community members. It provides a high-quality environment where you receive good care, support and guidance from highly-skilled staff. You value the centre staff highly and told us 'staff here are amazing'. Your centre also provides you with opportunities to make friends and socialise and you are developing your confidence and self-esteem. Your centre is helping your families to develop and adopt socially responsible behaviour, for example caring for the environment, in order to promote sustainable development. You treat each other with respect, and your children's behaviour is excellent. As a result your centre provides excellent value for money.

Your centre strives to be better and is always looking for ways to improve to ensure it is having the biggest impact on improving outcomes for you and your families. Your children's centre has a good capacity to improve further the outcomes for families living in your community and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged and the rest. It does so with great determination and dedication. We wish you all the very best for the future.

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