

Inspection report for Burnley Wood Children's Centre

Local authority	Lancashire
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Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not Applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY345032 Action For Children Sure Start Burnley Wood Children's Centre

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Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

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

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

An inspection of the registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with staff and senior managers from the centre and Action for Children. Inspectors also met with parents and carers, members of the advisory board and representatives from Lancashire local authority as well as a number of partners including those from health, the voluntary sector and education. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Burnley Wood Children's Centre is a phase one children's centre, designated in 2006, providing the full core offer of services. It was a former Sure Start Local Programme. It provides day care in the centre building and works with local private day care providers who provide full day care for children.

The centre is managed by Action for Children, on behalf of Lancashire County Council, with input from an advisory board made up of professionals, partners, community members and users. A children's centre manager, supported by a deputy manager, leads the centre.

The children's centre lies in the Rosehill with Burnley Wood ward. The majority of local families are of White British heritage with a low minority ethnic population of 0.3%. The centre is located in a very disadvantaged area which is part of the East Lancashire Elevate scheme to clear, rebuild or remodel substandard housing. Poor quality, private rental housing results in high mobility in the area.

The index of multiple deprivation places part of the Burnley Wood reach area among the 5% most deprived areas in the country with 21.41% of children in the ward eligible for free

school meals. Almost half of all households are made up of lone parent families. Data from 2008 indicates 275 children were living in workless households. In 2009, 20% of families were in receipt of working tax credits.

Mental health problems, drug and alcohol misuse, poor nutrition and incidents of domestic violence are key issues for many local families. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills development that is much lower than typical for their age, particularly with regard to language and social skills.

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

Burnley Wood Children's Centre is good overall. In particular, outstanding care, guidance and support and good safeguarding arrangements have a positive impact on the safety and well-being of families. The good-quality onsite day care and activities in the centre promote learning well and, as a result, enjoyment and achievement are good. This is evidenced by the improving achievements of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile which shows an increase of 13% in the number of children achieving 78+ points and at least six points in each of the scales for personal, social and emotional development and language, literacy and communication.

Outcomes for users are good. Skilled family support advisors provide outstanding one-to-one care, guidance and support to families in times of crisis. Staff are well-trained and have a good understanding of child protection procedures. They work closely with partners and ensure they share promptly any concerns with relevant agencies. As a result, families improve their ability to stay safe and the number of children on child protection plans has reduced. Policies and procedures for safeguarding including the recruitment and vetting of staff are good. Parents and carers told inspectors that they and their children are safe at the centre and that the support they receive helps them and their children stay safe.

The vibrant centre is at the heart of the community. Parents, carers and children enjoy coming to the centre which offers a good range of services to the community. Day care and

'stay and play' sessions provided at the centre are good and, as a result, children's progress from their starting points is good. Adults' development of parenting skills is good because of the support they receive from staff and peers. Adults engage well with the learning opportunities provided. However, only a minority of adults gain relevant qualifications to help improve their economic well-being. Case studies indicate that some adults return to work or training but the centre does not have complete records of all users' progress or destinations. The centre promotes healthy living effectively through its many activities which have a good impact on health outcomes. For example, the percentage of children in the Reception Year that are obese has reduced and is below the average for Lancashire.

The centre provides a good range of opportunities for users to make a positive contribution. Volunteers and the parents' forum play an important part in the life of the centre. The centre recognises that although community representation is good, too few users are represented on the advisory board. In the last two years, the board has met infrequently as meetings have been cancelled due to low attendance.

The centre manager is ambitious and highly motivated to continue improving the provision, building on its strengths and reaching the families most in need. Evaluation is systematic and clearly identifies key areas for improvement. However, the different reporting requirements and systems of the local authority and the managing organisation, together with a lack of local data from some partners, makes it difficult for leaders and managers to consistently monitor outcomes and set precise targets. Nonetheless, good leadership and management, good outcomes for users and good-quality provision combined with the clear vision and drive of the centre manager demonstrate a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Equality and diversity are good. The inclusion of all children and families is central to the vision of the centre manager. The centre meets the duties that apply to it for equality and diversity and there is good evidence of its impact on narrowing achievement gaps.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase the numbers of adults gaining qualifications and progressing to further education, training and employment in order to improve the economic well-being of families.
- Improve systems to consistently capture and measure the impact of the centre's work in order to set precise targets for improvement.
- Increase parental representation on the advisory board and the frequency of board meetings.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Families benefit from excellent support and advice and the good promotion of safety by the parent support advisors. As a result, they have a good understanding of how to keep their

families safe. Early intervention for families with children identified as at risk or in need is helping to keep children safe and is supporting their progress. One parent told inspectors, 'The centre has saved my life. The support I have had has been amazing. They are always there for you.' Timely support is provided for children through effective use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and case studies demonstrate that, as a result, they make good progress. However, the centre lacks local information on the full impact of its work on some staying safe outcomes, such as the number of children admitted to hospital.

The centre is a welcoming and attractive building, enabling children to play and adults to develop their skills. The good-quality on-site day care provision and stay and play sessions make a good contribution to children's and adults' enjoyment and achievement. Children's progress and development of skills is good. Although, boys' development is below that of girls, evidence from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for 2010-11, demonstrates an 11% improvement from the previous year. Transition into local day care and nursery is good. Adults enjoy courses to develop their parenting and other skills. One parent said, 'The centre has really helped me develop. They have found me lots of courses to do such as Paediatric First Aid.' Other users commented that 'Coming to the numeracy class helps with everyday tasks, shopping and it means we can help our children.'

The centre provides a good range of opportunities for users to make a positive contribution through surveys, a suggestion box, a volunteer's programme and a parents' forum. Some users are very involved in the life of the centre, supporting activities and sessions which lead to improvement in their personal development. Children behave well and are developing useful skills for the future such as cooperation and independence and families have respect for each other.

The centre promotes healthy living through a broad range of services and sessions, such as 'Healthy Family Foods' and 'Baby Massage'. Families increase their understanding of how to stay healthy but the centre recognises that too few babies are breastfed beyond six to eight weeks. The emotional health of families is improved through the excellent care, guidance and support provided by family support workers. Attendance at the 'Talking Together' sessions has a good impact on children's speech and language development.

The centre is aware that some users return to work or progress to education or training. Although the centre works in partnership with the adult education service only a minority of adults gain relevant qualifications in order to improve their economic well-being. The centre does not routinely receive information from its partners in adult education or Jobcentre Plus on the impact of their work on outcomes.

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	2
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.	3

How good is the provision?

2

Prompt and effective use of the Common Assessment Framework enables the centre to provide support and services to families. Informal assessment and feedback from users enables the centre to change provision to benefit users' learning and development. The flexible range of services provided meets the needs of users who access it. Participation is good. The centre is focused on providing services for families with the greatest need and is successful in working with its target groups such as workless families, teenage parents and children or parents with disabilities. The centre has established a monthly 'Saturday Dad's Group' to increase the engagement of male parents and carers. Although, some fathers engage with the centre others are proving more difficult to reach.

On-site day care and activities to help children to learn and develop are good. The staff employed in day care are well-qualified and plan for children's individual learning. The centre promotes children's learning well and activities provided are of a good quality. As evidenced in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, there is a positive impact on those children accessing day care and learning and development sessions. One parent said, 'Coming to the centre has really helped my child mix with others and learn to share. It has really improved their speaking.' The good support given to local childminders and private day care providers is helping to raise local standards and outcomes for children. The popular 'Creative Stay and Play' is well focused on particular areas of learning and has a positive impact on children's development.

Case studies show that outstanding support from the centre is making a big difference to families who may be potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances. Parents and carers told inspectors with considerable enthusiasm how their involvement with the centre has helped them make changes to their lives. One user said, 'My life was upside down and I found it hard to cope. The staff here are great- they really care about us. I would not go anywhere else for help.' 'I don't know what I would have done without them here, nothing is too much trouble for them' said another.

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.	1
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How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Good leadership and management of the centre have a positive impact on outcomes for families. Governance and accountability arrangements are clear. There are clear links between strategic planning and service provision leading to improvements. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and are appropriately supervised. Good community representation on the advisory board ensures a strong local voice in the life of the centre. However, the centre recognises that parental representation on the board is low and during the last two years meetings have been cancelled because of low attendance.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the key issues facing the centre. There are clear links between the centre's evaluation of its services and the priorities set out in its delivery plan. However, although data are improving, differing reporting systems impedes the centre's ability for consistent measurement of performance and precise target setting. The centre seeks and makes good use of feedback from users to develop and improve the range and quality of its provision.

The use of resources has a good impact on outcomes for users which means that the centre gives good value for money. The centre building provides a welcoming environment and outreach work is extending the services provided. The work of the family support workers is targeted effectively on supporting families in times of need.

Action to promote greater equality has resulted in the centre engaging most key target groups. The 'Magic Stars' group provides good learning experiences for children with additional needs and is highly valued by parents and carers. They have confidence in the care provided by knowledgeable staff and appreciate time to spend with their other children. The centre is effective in helping to narrow achievement gaps between different groups of users.

Safeguarding is good and meets current statutory requirements. The centre has effective systems in place for recording information related to the vetting and recruitment of staff. Staff and partners have a clear understanding of policies and procedures to ensure the protection of users. They understand their role in identifying and reporting concerns and do so promptly. As a result, users' ability to stay safe is increasing. The centre collaborates effectively with other key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children.

Partnerships with other services contribute to good outcomes for users. Services are integrated and generally deliver cohesive provision for users. The effective partnerships with voluntary, community, social care and health professionals contribute to the outstanding care, guidance and support for users. However, some partners do not evaluate the impact of their work at a local level. The good partnerships with private day care providers and child minders enable good transition arrangements for children and are helping to improve 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 effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting 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	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	2
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

Findings from the inspection of Action For Children Sure Start Burnley Wood Children's Centre Day Care provision contributed to this report.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Burnley Wood Children's Centre on 13 Oct 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

The centre offers outstanding care, guidance and support to all of you that use it. You said that parent support advisors give excellent support and always respond if any families are in

crisis. They offer you practical help and advice on parenting that you appreciate. Those of you that have attended the parenting courses really appreciate how it has helped you manage your children's behaviour. We found that staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and that they are well trained. You said that you feel your children are safe at the centre and support from the centre helps you stay safe.

You enjoy the sessions such as 'Creative Stay and Play' with your children. Those with children in day care value the care and attention their children receive. We found that children benefit from accessing services at the centre and make good progress from their starting points. The centre is working with the adult education service to give you good access to courses to help improve your own education and future employment opportunities. We have asked the centre to find ways to increase the number of adults who gain qualifications to help families go on to further training or employment and to become financially secure.

Your children behave well and you learn more about how to stay healthy. The centre listens to you and asks you what you think of the services and activities they offer. They change how and when they do some things because of what you say. Some of you are involved in making decisions about your centre through being on the parents' forum or becoming volunteers. However, not many of you are involved in strategic decisions through membership of the advisory board. Although there is strong representation from the community on the board, a lot of meetings have been cancelled in the last two years because of low attendance by some members. We have asked the centre to increase the number of meetings and users represented on the board.

We found that managers and staff are keen to promote equality and diversity. Young families are enjoying sessions to help them be parents and the centre works closely with those families that may be vulnerable due to their circumstances. There is good provision for children with disabilities or additional needs. The centre is trying to reach more male parents and carers in the centre and has established a monthly 'Fathers' Group'.

The local authority, Action for Children and the centre staff want to improve the work of the centre. They use a range of methods to monitor the impact of their work. We have asked them to simplify and coordinate their reports so that they can more easily measure how well they are doing at improving outcomes and set targets to improve further. Because the centre has been improving and it knows the main things it needs to do to improve further, we are confident that it will continue to do so.

Thank you for talking with us and contributing to the inspection of your children's centre. A special thank you to those of you who took the time to come in and talk to us and for letting us join you in some of your sessions. We wish you all the best for the future.

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