

# Inspection report for Petworth Children and Family Centre

---

|                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Local authority</b>     | West Sussex         |
| <b>Inspection number</b>   | 384052              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>    | 28–29 November 2011 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b> | Diane Wilkinson     |

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Centre leader</b>               | Caroline Chalkley                                  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b> | Not previously inspected                           |
| <b>Centre address</b>              | South Grove<br>Petworth<br>West Sussex<br>GU28 0ED |
| <b>Telephone number</b>            | 01798 871199                                       |
| <b>Fax number</b>                  | Not applicable                                     |
| <b>Email address</b>               | Caroline.Chalkley@westsussex.gov.uk                |

|  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Linked school if applicable</b>                     | Petworth Primary School |
| <b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b> | Not applicable          |

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.

---

**Report published:** December 2011



Corporate member of  
Plain English Campaign  
Committed to clearer communication

**361**

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

No.100080

© Crown copyright 2011



## 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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the centre and area managers as well as with members of staff and representatives of the local authority. Discussions were also held with a variety of families who visited the centre during the inspection, members of the Centre Partnership Group and representatives of the partners who work with the centre. They observed the centre's work, including some activities taking place at the Fittleworth Satellite Centre, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Petworth Children and Family Centre is a phase two children's centre which opened in October 2007. The centre shares a campus with Petworth Primary School, with which it has a service partnership agreement to provide a level of integrated working and collaboration. It is part of the Chichester District Cluster and is a full core service offer centre, serving a 70% disadvantaged area. Because of the low population density, services are also offered through the satellite centres at Fittleworth Preschool and Northchapel and Camelsdale Schools. The accommodation is purpose built and services are provided for a stay-and-play room with its own kitchen, toilet, baby-changing facilities and enclosed outdoor play area. There is also a training room, a small meeting/consulting room, a toy library and a staff office. The reception area houses an internet café with a servery and free access to computers for families. There is a secure outdoor waiting area which houses a buggy park. The centre is open all day on Tuesday and Thursday and on Wednesday and Friday mornings.

West Sussex County Council provides governance to the centre. There is a centre partnership group and 'Have Your Say', a parents' forum, which also contribute to evaluation and support for the centre's work. The cluster manager and centre coordinator oversee the day-to-day running of the centre and it is staffed by a Rural Outreach Coordinator, Family Outreach Worker and full-time and part-time

administrative assistants. As well as working in partnership with the co-located primary school, the centre works with the two local authority nurseries in the cluster, local health visitors, midwives, childminders and other pre-school providers, including the adjacent 'Caring Daycare Nursery'. Other organisations such as Jobcentre Plus also provide support and advice for families at the centre.

There are 590 children under five years of age living in the centre's reach area, with 65% of their families registered at the centre. The vast majority of families are of White British heritage, with a small minority of these affected by unemployment and/or in receipt of benefits. Children and families with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also supported through a number of agencies. Children's skills on entry to early years education are broadly in line with the levels expected for their age, but below those expected in communication skills and some aspects of physical development.

## 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

Petworth Children and Family Centre provides a good range of effective services for families in the area that it serves. Centre staff are exceptionally good at creating a warm, welcoming and safe environment where families willingly ask for advice and support. The quality of care, guidance and support, including that for target groups and those families experiencing significant problems, is outstanding. Staff and their partners such as health visitors or midwives who work at the centre provide excellent advice and support and are extremely good at pointing parents towards other services that can address their needs. The centre is a lifeline for parents experiencing difficulties, for example in dealing with unemployment or post-natal depression. For those families who need significant support with regard to health or safety issues, support is exceptionally good.

Good governance and the Centre Partnership Group support help ensure the centre is well led and managed for both universal and targeted services. Activities for target groups, such as teenage parents, are especially good, so that increasingly teenage mothers are breastfeeding and ceasing smoking in pregnancy. Families very much

enjoy visiting the centre, for example for baby weigh in. Fathers are welcome to attend activities and the monthly 'Family Breakfasts' are very popular. However, the number of fathers attending other activities is small. In most areas of learning children are well prepared for school, especially in their readiness for early reading and writing skills. Staff are now targeting communication skills and physical development, the weaker areas of their development. Parents have many opportunities to gain good parenting skills, for example in nutrition or behaviour management, ensuring that families are well involved in trying to be healthy and keeping their children safe. For parents who need it, there are good opportunities for further education, including vocational skills. These have helped to improve their achievement and families' economic and social well-being.

Partners who work with centre staff, such as the health professionals, report that liaison is excellent and supports their work exceptionally well. Staff are very appreciative of the ways in which partners work with them, especially in supporting families with significant problems. However, the recent re-organisation of services in the reach area has put some limits on partner services available at the centre, although everyone is working hard to compensate for this, including through the provision of transport for those who cannot access services without this support.

Staff assess families' needs well, directing them to the services that best support them. Outreach workers effectively support isolated families in their own homes and the satellite centres are attended by families who live a long way from Petworth. This helps ensure the large majority of families in the centre's reach benefit from its services. Parents' views contribute well to Centre Partnership Group work and through 'Have your Say', but the number volunteering to support activities is very small. Encouraging more parents to volunteer is a current priority. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads effectively to good action planning which, for example, is successfully tackling the incidence of childhood obesity in the area, which had begun to rise. All families living in the reach are regularly consulted about the centre's work and their views taken into account. However, the centre and their partners use many different ways to gather this information. Consequently it is difficult to collate, synthesise and evaluate, and to judge the effectiveness of their action planning. Despite this, the way provision has been successfully built on and extended since the centre opened and the good leadership and management give the centre a good capacity to improve further.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Enhance the quality of self-evaluation and action planning by:
  - ensuring that staff and partners use a common format for presenting data, feedback and analysis
  - collating and synthesising the information so that it provides a clearer picture of the effect services are having on families
  - ensuring that action planning identifies the expected improvement in adults' and children's outcomes.

- Increase the contribution that parents make to the centre's work through:
  - encouraging more parents to volunteer to support or lead activities
  - seeking further ways in which to engage fathers in a wider range of services and activities.

## How good are outcomes for families?

2

Families benefit from the health professionals, such as midwives, providing services from the centre. Their support and advice have, for example, improved immunisation rates. Breastfeeding rates are also improving, although they are still slightly below the local authority average. Adult health, such as the decrease in smoking and other substance misuse, is improving. Through the 'Cook and Eat' and Emergency First Aid courses, and sessions on dental care and baby resuscitation, parents become skilled in helping their children to be healthy and safe, and non-accidental injuries to children are decreasing. Families make good gains in their physical development through activities like 'Little Movers' and 'Legs, Bums and Tums' for new mothers. Responding well to the decline in early years' children's physical skills, the centre is promoting this aspect even more rigorously. 'Family Breakfasts' encourage healthy eating and are enjoyed by all who attend. Those fathers who visit the centre for pre- or post-natal meetings gain important skills to support their children, although other activities are predominantly attended by mothers.

Families know they are very safe and secure in the centre and parents are very clear about how to help their children play safely at home through the way staff demonstrate this in activities like 'Mini Makers'. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to reinforce children's safety during other activities such as 'Stay and Play'. Target groups and families subject to a child protection order or the Common Assessment Framework benefit considerably from the excellent liaison between staff and the centre's partners who support them. Families express great enjoyment in the activities on offer. The wide range of activities to support parenting skills has a positive effect, for example by helping children develop sleep patterns. A recent course to support teenage parents has made a significant difference, for example in nutrition and safety awareness. Children behave well at all the centre activities and families quickly learn positive strategies for managing their children's behaviour from the staff, which helps them to be successful at home. The centre's activities are contributing strongly to raising children's skills at the end of the reception year, which are now above average, with the gap between the lowest 20% and the rest closing well.

Families' social and economic well-being is enhanced through their participation in the wide range of courses on offer. They gain skills to help them access work, apply for benefits or deal with domestic violence or debt. In these activities they benefit considerably from the partnership working with other agencies. The centre itself provides very good opportunities for parents to train to become a volunteer, both in the centre and in other settings. Parents who attend make considerable gains in their confidence, self-esteem, capacity to work in a team and leadership qualities.

However, the uptake is low, which limits their contribution to the centre's work.

*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 lifestyles</b>   | <b>2</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>3</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**

Assessment of need is very good, especially through the Star Profile for target groups, so families are directed to activities that best meet their needs. Staff and their partners provide a wide range of very good expertise for centre services. Cookery and first aid courses, for example, promote health and safety well, and emotional health is enhanced through activities like baby massage. The many parenting courses are very popular, especially those related to managing behaviour and interacting with children in play activities at the 'Mini Makers' or 'Little Movers' music and movement groups. 'I feel a lot more confident' is the comment made by a vast majority of parents. Where there is a significant need or serious problem, excellent specialised help and support is provided. This is often achieved through the work of the Rural Outreach Coordinator and Family Outreach Worker, together with partner services such as 'Homestart' and 'Liaise at the Frontline'. Centre staff are well trained to manage health and safety issues, including those concerned with life-threatening disease or domestic violence. This is one reason why the quality of support and guidance for families is outstanding. The approachability of staff and the sensitivity of support mean the centre's help is very readily sought by any of those in need, including the most vulnerable of families. This is clearly evident in the way staff responded to parents' requests during the inspection. There are many examples of the centre making a considerable difference to the lives of families, for example in finding affordable childcare, permanent housing or in managing their family finances. Through Jobcentre Plus and other partners, parents receive excellent advice for managing debt, applying for benefits and accessing paid work.

Centre activities, including 'Stay and Play' and 'Baby Movers', support children's learning and development well and help parents acquire a good range of skills to support their children at home. The toy libraries make a great difference to the range

and effectiveness of resources parents can use to support children's development. For example, the story sacks are encouraging children's early reading skills. Parents also have good opportunities to improve their own skills through attending literacy and numeracy or vocational courses, some provided in partnership with Petworth Primary School, with the centre providing the crèche. Good liaison with childminders and other local pre-school providers ensures a coherent approach to learning and development and helps the large majority of centre children entitled to a free place at pre-schools to access them.

*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>1</b> |

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

**2**

The local authority provides a very strong model of accountability for its centres and the vision, support and challenge which are helping to provide positive outcomes for families. The centre management team has a strong focus on meeting user needs, especially for target groups. They are effectively providing services that meet them, including through engagement with a wide range of partners. Recent re-organisation has led to some adjustment in the levels of joint working, but where provision is associated with target groups or families subject to a child protection order or the Common Assessment Framework, the partnerships are exceptionally successful at supporting them. Safeguarding arrangements are good, with the vetting of staff, and staff training in paediatric first aid and child protection fully up to date. Risk assessments are rigorous and thoroughly monitored by staff and senior managers. The accommodation is safe and secure and resources are regularly checked.

The centre is rigorous in ensuring that discrimination is eliminated, promoting the opportunities of those families who have a special educational need and/or disability. Exceptionally good advice and support is provided, for example in obtaining the full disability benefit entitlement. This helps ensure that equality of opportunity is good. Centre staff are aware that this aspect could be improved further by engaging more with fathers. A large majority of parents in the reach area are registered and the centre makes strenuous efforts to engage with all families, especially those who find it difficult to travel to the centre, by providing home visits and setting up satellite centres. Where services can only be accessed, for example, in Chichester or Midhurst, the centre provides transport. This helped teenage parents to access an excellent parenting course held in Chichester.



Staff are continually seeking ways in which to enhance services, a key reason why there has been continuous improvement since the centre opened. Self-evaluation identifies what needs to be improved, although it is difficult to draw a strong conclusion about the impact on families as the evidence is not always linked together well enough. In addition, it is often focused on improving activities rather than families' outcomes. Nevertheless, good account is taken of regular evaluations to adjust services and allocate resources. Staff at this and the other three centres are deployed flexibly across the cluster to make the best use of their skills and expertise, with very good regard to target groups, ensuring the centre provides good value for money.

*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**

None

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 Petworth Children and Family Centre on 28 and 29 November 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank all those of you who spoke to us during the inspection, including those of you who came into the centre especially to do so, and thanks go to the many professionals from partner agencies who chatted with us as well. You told us how well the services provide for your needs, or point you in the direction of where you can access this. Our evidence agrees with this.

The centre is well led and managed and we are impressed by the very warm and welcoming atmosphere which encourages you to attend. Staff look after families well and are very friendly and helpful so that you feel very confident to ask them for advice and support. That provided in the centre by staff and partners, for example the health visitors and midwives who also work there, is excellent and staff are especially good at pointing you in the direction of other services for advice as well. This supports your families exceptionally well and is a lifeline for those experiencing difficulties, for example, with debt or post-natal depression.

The centre is supported effectively by the local authority and the work of the Centre Partnership Group. The building is very well maintained and used to good effect to provide a good range of services to support you and your children. These help you to provide for your families' health and safety and your children's development well. Effective activities such as 'Mini Makers' and the resources you can borrow from the very good sensory and general toy libraries enhance your children's learning and development. Children do well when they move on to school and those who find learning difficult are making increasing progress. We were very impressed by the story sacks that some of you helped to make, and using these is one reason why children's reading and writing skills have improved. However, their communication skills and physical development are less strong and staff are working hard to improve these areas also. For those of you who need support there are good opportunities to gain parenting skills, such as dealing with teething or managing your child's behaviour. You have good access to training, for example in literacy and numeracy and other vocational skills, which is helping you along the road towards work. The outreach workers provide especially well-tailored support at home for those of you for whom travel to the centre is difficult.

Without exception, all the partner services, such as Jobcentre Plus, that work with the centre praise the way staff work with them in the best interest of your families. However, as a result of recent re-organisation a few partner services, although available in the area, are no longer run at the centre. However, if needed, centre staff can provide transport to help you. Those of you who attend the centre very much appreciate the services, for example for baby weigh in, and we were pleased to see that fathers also feel very welcome on these occasions. The monthly Saturday Family Breakfasts are very popular for all the family, including the fathers, but although fathers also enjoy coming to other activities, the numbers attending are

relatively small. We have asked staff to look at ways in which they can encourage more fathers to come to activities.

Staff are very keen to involve you in their work. They consult you in lots of ways, for example through 'Have your Say', about how well you feel the services support your families. They also ask for suggestions on what other activities you would find helpful and where possible respond to this. Staff are very pleased that some parents are now members of the Centre Partnership Group and value the support they give. Staff provide especially good training for the very small number of you who volunteer to help at activities and are very keen to encourage more of you to do so. We have asked them to look at different ways in which to help you to volunteer.

When you register at the centre, staff and their partners are good at assessing how they can best help you and use lots of ways to evaluate how well they are meeting your needs, adjusting activities when necessary. However, they and their partners use a lot of different ways to gather this information which is difficult to cross check or collate and limits the quality of information they are gathering. Staff are beginning to tackle this by providing a universal evaluation form for all services, which we agree is an improvement but more work needs to be done to make sure they have the information they need to clearly understand how they are helping you and your families.

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