

Inspection report for Five Wishes Children's Centre

Local authority	Wiltshire
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Reporting inspector	Susan Mann HMI

Centre leader	Andrea Gray
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Five Wishes Children's Centre Amesbury Primary School Kitchener Road Amesbury SP4 7AX
Telephone number	01980 677218
Email address	agray@spurgeons.org

Linked school if applicable	Amesbury Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Smiley Face Nursery URN 145991

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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.

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

The inspectors held meetings with parents, leaders, members of the advisory board, and staff. They met with representatives from the local authority, the charitable organisation Spurgeons, and a number of partner agencies. They observed the centre's work, including groups at the centre and at an off-site venue used for Stay and Play groups. They also looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the planning and evaluation of services, development and delivery planning, and minutes of meetings.

Information about the centre

Five Wishes Children's Centre is a phase two centre and was designated in 2007. It opened in 2008. It provides the full core offer of services in partnership with health and social services. Since April 2011, the children's centre is run by Spurgeons, a children's charity, on behalf of the local authority. It is co-located on the site of Amesbury Primary School. The centre also uses a separate building for some activities which is less than ten minutes' walk from the centre. The Early Years Foundation Stage full day-care provision is provided on-site by a third party provider. Crèche facilities are provided by the centre.

The centre is located in an area that includes some areas that are within the 35% most deprived parts of the country, whilst some areas within its catchment are more affluent. Much of the catchment area is rural, and the population density is just below the local authority average. A number of army families live locally. Children's levels on entry to early years provision are generally well below national expectations. The population of the centre's catchment area is mostly White British, with very few with ethnic minority backgrounds, including Polish. A few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of families who live in workless households or are dependent on workless benefits is 11.2%, which is lower than the local authority average of 18%.

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

Five Wishes Children's Centre provides good services for families living in the catchment area. Leaders at all levels share a clear purpose to support and improve the lives of those families living within its reach. They prioritise those who are most in need through effective outreach and well-targeted services. The centre management and advisory board have a realistic view of what the centre does well. Evaluation processes are rigorous and engage all relevant parties including parents and partners.

The centre's strategic re-organisation in April 2011 led to a drop in numbers while the changes were implemented, and footfall dropped significantly around this time. However, managers have recovered lost ground and make good use of detailed and accurate needs analysis of the reach area. As a result, the majority of eligible families, including those families who might benefit most from services, have sustained engagement with centre services, and user engagement has improved rapidly over the last year. The centre has already identified the need to increase user engagement further, through further use of data analysis, so that a larger majority of families benefit from services to enhance their outcomes. The centre's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Rigorous development planning is focused on the needs of children and their families. All staff work effectively to implement improvements so services continue to meet families' needs well. Parents contribute to the centre and its development through continuous evaluation to shape services, giving their views informally and through the forum Parents' Voice or regular participation on the advisory board. As a result, families enjoy using the centre and, in a recent survey, the overwhelming majority expressed satisfaction. A parent expressed a shared view when speaking of the supportive staff, 'You connect with them as you would a friend.'

The centre demonstrates good outcomes, and uses robust tools to gauge these. The

extent to which families stay safe as a result of centre services is outstanding. Arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children and families are also outstanding. A small number of family case studies show the impact of the centre on improving their lives as sometimes exceptional. However, the centre's broader analysis of the difference its services make for all families is in the early stages of use, and while strong outcomes are clear, systems do not yet demonstrate reliable evidence to show they are better than good overall. Exemplary working with a wealth of agencies provides outstanding partnerships which significantly enhance services for families. The centre is proactive in seeking out high-quality services to meet families' needs. Partner agencies report highly positive engagement with Five Wishes, one saying, 'It is the most welcoming place and I always have a really positive response from the manager and staff.'

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Embed systems of evaluation used to demonstrate the impact of services on families so that outcomes are evidenced even more clearly.
- Extend the engagement of families living in the catchment area in centre services through:
 - raising the level of overall user engagement further so that a large majority of those living within the centre's reach use the centre regularly
 - enhancing existing tracking and data analysis to increase the proportion of hard-to-reach families who use the centre further.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Health outcomes are good. Rates of sustained breastfeeding for mothers in the catchment area are better than those found county-wide and nationally, with 55.2% breastfeeding at six to eight weeks. Centre services make a valuable contribution to increasing rates of breastfeeding further and the support group is popular amongst mothers. The centre has a number of trained breastfeeding peer supporters who work effectively in partnership with health services and the National Childbirth Trust so women wanting to breastfeed continue. Levels of children's obesity are more positive than local and national averages, and 7.5% of children are obese when they enter Reception Year. The centre identifies families that do not have sufficient and suitable food to sustain appropriate child development. The strategies used to tackle this are successful and many families have accessed food parcels and practical advice on how to eat healthily on a budget.

Children and vulnerable adults are exceptionally well safeguarded at the centre. Parents are highly aware of how to keep their children safe both in and out of the home as a result of concerted education on risk and prevention. For example, the vast majority of parents who accessed the parenting course Pram to Primary reported greatly increased levels of understanding of children's behaviour and how to

manage it effectively. Exceptionally caring staff take time to listen and proactively engage with agencies that support victims of domestic abuse. Those who find themselves subject to such abuse receive an excellent package of practical support and advice that empowers them to cope well and protect their children very effectively. Use of the Common Assessment Framework is wholly embedded and used extremely well to assess and protect children. Looked after children and those children subject to child protection plans have excellent outcomes as a result of meticulous safeguarding practices and superb inter-agency working that is rigorously planned and monitored.

Families enjoy attending services at Five Wishes. The achievement of children is better and more evident than that of adults, but families' achievement is good overall. Children make good progress from their starting points, and last year 61.46% of children achieved over 78 points on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest has improved on recent years, and at 23.16% is much narrower than both the national average and the county average of 29.5%. Children in receipt of two-year-old funding make accelerated progress as a result of coordinated and targeted provision. The strong focus placed on developing communication skills throughout all groups has had positive impact on children's speech and language skills, as well as on parents' understanding of ways to promote development further. For example, parents learn about the value of nursery rhymes and sharing books with children at the Bumps and Babies non-universal group, and they report their children are asking for stories to be read to them when at home as a result. Adults learn well because activities are planned and evaluated effectively to take account of prior learning. Families in most need of support have improved their childcare and parenting skills significantly through attending a range of well-designed groups such as Mums and Dads Matter and Bumps, Babes and More.

A number of parents are routinely engaged in the governance of the centre through sitting on the advisory board and being a part of the forum Parents' Voice. This parental engagement is well established. Most parents give their views on services and these ideas shape future services. The centre has a strong role in the local community as a result of strong partnerships and word-of-mouth recommendation. There is a strong ethos of friendly and mutual respect which is evident between families and staff. Families who speak English as an additional language receive translation support when needed, and the centre's informative website translates into 52 languages, including Polish, so that those families less confident in the use of English can access a wide range of information in a language they are familiar with.

Families' economic well-being is enhanced through their engagement with centre services. Take-up rates of relevant activities such as groups that promote their learning and development are good, and this is particularly the case for those families who are most vulnerable. For example, teenage and lone parents make good use of centre services to access help with courses and benefits advice. The volunteer programme is rigorous and supports adults well to prepare for work. Volunteers are recruited through application and interview, and are trained and treated as members

of staff. A minority of centre users (36%) has moved onto employment with the assistance of training and employment advice delivered by Next Steps, Jobcentre Plus and Connexions and effective support from centre staff.

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	1
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	2

How good is the provision?

2

Accurate assessment is made of the needs of families using the centre. The vast majority state that services meet their needs well. Leaders make good use of live birth data, partner information and local knowledge to reach families who live within its reach. In the past year, there has been a strong and successful focus on measuring the engagement of those families living in the most deprived parts of the reach, and effective use of a 'traffic light' system highlights the next area of focus. Good priority has also been given to identifying hard-to-reach groups, and participation of these groups is good and improving. For example, 75% of teenage parents are regularly engaged in services. The centre has started to use data more rigorously to track the participation of all target groups to enhance levels of engagement further, although this is still at an early stage. Overall user engagement has improved rapidly in recent months, and leaders rightly continue to make this a priority.

Families using the centre receive tailored support that promotes their outcomes well. This is particularly true for those who find themselves in times of crisis where staff give high levels of individual support to safeguard and promote their welfare. Outreach work is effective; intervention and support are planned and monitored rigorously, with a flexible approach to meet the changing needs of each family the centre works with. Provision for families to learn and develop is good, and for children it is especially strong. For example, detailed learning journals for the Stay and Play groups show rigorous evaluation of how well adults and children are learning. These are linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage and next steps are

planned to support further development. Most target groups engage in the broad range of universal and referred activities and services provided. Services are reviewed and amended to meet changing needs. For example, numbers attending the Stay and Play group have recently become too large for the venue and so managers quickly resourced and risk assessed an additional venue within a short distance to the main centre so families continue to enjoy the service.

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

Management arrangements at Five Wishes are effective and well established. The local authority provides support and strong challenge to the management team; quarterly monitoring, robust data provision, and rigorous strategic planning facilitate sustained development. Spurgeons has embedded its ethos of safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children quickly. It has established good governance over the last year. The advisory board fulfils its role effectively and has a good understanding of its strategic responsibilities. The centre manager and leadership team coordinate an enthusiastic and skilled team. All are committed to good-quality provision that engages those most in need. Progress towards performance targets is good. For example, the centre has been improving the proportion of families engaged in its services rapidly over the past year. It currently reaches 57% of all families who live in its catchment area, and is well on track to reach its target of 60%.

Evaluation is accurate and supports development planning well overall. The measurement of service impact has evolved in recent years, and the centre's use of 'progress wheels' to support data and partner information demonstrates outcomes well enough. However, summative analysis does not always demonstrate consistent impact over time to refine evaluation and development further. The centre is dedicated to helping each family improve its outcomes and inclusive practice is embedded throughout. The engagement of target groups has improved well over time, including children or parents with disabilities, and remains a priority the centre is tackling well. Sensitive management of poverty-related provision protects the dignity of those in need.

Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. Spurgeons provides excellent support for staff, and safer recruitment procedures are exemplary. For example, the centre

provides regular support to other agencies in the completion of Common Assessment Framework procedures. Multi-agency working is superb, and centre staff are tenacious in their approach so that referrals and concerns are rigorously pursued to achieve the best outcomes to keep children safe. Outstanding partnerships with agencies such as health, army welfare, and domestic violence support agencies result in an extensive range of fully integrated services. The vast number of partner organisations engaged in highly positive working relationships with the centre significantly enhances the experiences of families, and the centre provides good value for money.

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	1
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 onsite early years provision, Smiley Faces Nursery, was inspected by Ofsted on 11 January 2011 and was judged good overall. Several aspects were judged outstanding, including the areas of safeguarding and partnerships.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Five Wishes Centre on 25 and 26 April 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your centre, and for speaking with us about how the centre meets your needs and those of your families. You told us the centre makes a positive difference to you. We agree because the centre is good at providing a variety of services that meet the needs of your community well.

Centre management and staff are highly committed to keeping you and your families safe and the quality of their work in this area is outstanding. All who work at the centre make children's safety their top priority, and the extent to which you develop understanding of how to keep yourselves and your children safe is also outstanding.

Another excellent aspect of Five Wishes is the partnerships it builds with other agencies such as health services, army welfare service, and support agencies for victims of domestic abuse. There are many more agencies that work with the centre, and all partnerships are outstanding. The centre is also extremely good at its partnership working with you, the parents and carers, through friendly and welcoming interaction and providing lots of opportunities to give your opinions on services on offer.

The services you receive to improve your overall well-being, knowledge and health are good. There are lots of examples of the positive difference that attendance has made to your lives. We have asked the centre to make more use of the systems it uses to evaluate and measure the impact of its services so it can make sure they are completely matched to the needs of the community.

The proportion of families who use the centre is good, and has improved a great deal in recent months, especially for those most in need. We have asked the centre to continue this trend so that all who would benefit from centre services attend on a regular basis.

We saw that Five Wishes provides a wide range of groups and services that are well used, and that managers plan new services to meet changing needs, such as the new off-site Stay and Play group. It was clear that children greatly enjoy coming to the centre, and that you and your families benefit significantly from your involvement there.

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