

# Inspection report for Welton Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	384204
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Welton Pre-School William Farr Pre-School

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 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 and users of the service, centre staff, managers, local authority representatives and partner agencies. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Welton Children's Centre is a phase two centre which was designated in 2008. It is located in the village of Welton. Designated off-site day-care provision is provided by Welton Pre-school and William Farr Pre-school. The centre provides targeted and universal services to children from birth to four years of age and their families in the reach area that includes six primary schools. The centre is co-located with William Farr School and Welton Youth Centre.

The centre is managed directly by the local authority whose district manager provides the principal leadership for the local authority. The local authority delegates governance arrangements to the children's service partnership which is currently chaired by the district manager. The partnership is made up of representatives of the local community, carers, voluntary and statutory providers, and parents, the latter making up 50% of the membership. Day-to-day management of the centre is the responsibility of the children's centre practitioner who is assisted by three family support workers and a support assistant. Most service delivery, as well as the services of the early years teacher, is commissioned through partner agencies on a district or county basis.

By April 2012, Welton Children's Centre reach area had 474 children under five. The centre serves a community where most families live in an area ranked in the middle of the deprivation indicators. Of the housing stock, 83% is classed as highly affordable housing. The reach area has lower-than-average unemployment with the majority of those in work engaged in skilled employment. As well as the relatively affluent village of Welton, the centre serves three local wards, some of which are rural and isolated. Included in the reach area are two ex-RAF camps. The ethnicity of

the area is predominantly White British. A small number of parents from other nationalities access the centre.

Evidence indicates that the skills and knowledge with which children enter early years provision are above average for their age. The children's centre's core purpose encompasses services delivered from the centre by the children's centre team and partners including health services, family support, parent and child activities, targeted support for vulnerable families and family learning.

## 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

Welton Children's Centre is a good centre which provides a good range of services. It has built effective partnerships with a wide range of settings and these are now well established and are meeting the needs of families in the area, including the most isolated and vulnerable. It promotes the learning, development and enjoyment of all its users.

Families feel very safe in the centre and contribute well to their own safety by thorough risk assessments. The centre staff know the families and the area very well, and the centre is accessed by a large majority of eligible families in the reach area.

The centre works well with its health partners to promote healthy lifestyles; however, some challenges remain in ensuring up-to-date health data support the planning and delivery of services to improve health outcomes for all users.

Families thoroughly enjoy the activities offered by the centre, especially the good opportunities to play, learn and have fun together. Children make good progress with their speech and language.

Families are being satisfactorily supported to improve their economic well-being though regular debt, housing and financial advice provided by Citizens Advice. Volunteering is supported well by Home-Start. Most volunteers go on to engage in

further training and a good number have found employment. However, users say they would like more training opportunities to enhance their employment prospects.

The children's services partnership ensures effective governance through the advisory board. The board has recently been re-instated and is yet to appoint an independent parent chair. The good management of the centre ensures staff work very well together and deliver high-quality activities and support to families. Parents are fully involved through the parents' forum, recently renamed the 'Chat and Chill' session, which is improving parental involvement.

The centre provides good value for money and encourages all users to consider the sustainable use of resources. Safeguarding has a high priority and staff are well trained and experienced in recognising signs of abuse. All relevant checks on staff and commissioned providers are appropriately recorded. Good partnership working ensures information is shared effectively between agencies to ensure services are well integrated to promote good health, education and financial management.

The centre has good capacity for sustained improvement. The self-assessment process is well established, but wider involvement in self-assessment by partners and parents is not always evident. The local authority provides robust and effective scrutiny and challenge. Good-quality assurance arrangements help ensure that commissioned services are meeting local need. Accurate local data are used well by managers to set challenging targets.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the collection and use of health data to ensure that needs analysis accurately targets services and narrows the gap for the more disadvantaged families in the reach area.
- Increase the opportunities for families to improve their economic well-being by offering more accredited training programmes.
- Improve self-assessment by better capturing the views of parents and other partners to more accurately measure the impact of services on improving outcomes for families.

## How good are outcomes for families?

2
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Children make good progress and the proportion of children gaining at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage is well above the regional average. The gap between the lowest-achieving 20% and other children is less than in many areas and shows an improving trend with the exception of one school in the reach area. Good transition arrangements ensure children are ready for school and make good progress in relation to their peers. The opportunities to play in groups mean

children have a great chance to develop and have fun. Parents enjoy activities with their children and say they get good support and are helped to understand their children's learning and development needs.

The centre is sensitive to the needs of the more vulnerable and isolated families and does all it can to help them stay safe. Children behave well in the centre and play safely. Parents have a good understanding of how to keep their children safe. Confident use is made of the Common Assessment Framework processes, ensuring good support for the most vulnerable children.

Parents are active in the centre and the recently renamed parents' forum ensures that more parents are becoming involved in deciding what activities the centre should run. Some parents have been encouraged to become volunteers through Home-Start with some going on to gain employment. While there are some training opportunities in the centre, parents report they would like to undertake more training to enhance their economic prospects.

Health outcomes are improving and the drop-in clinic is well attended and appreciated by users. Midwives and peer volunteers are successful in their efforts to encourage breastfeeding. Obesity rates remain low in the reach area and parents have participated well in developing a healthy eating recipe book. All users comment on the support they have received in relation to emotional well-being both for themselves and their children. While there is a good initiative to promote smoke-free zones, data are not yet in place to evaluate the impact.

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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment</b>	<b>3</b>

## How good is the provision?

**2**

The centre commissions and provides a good range of services to respond to the needs of families, particularly those in target groups and in more isolated communities. The family support workers are confident and work particularly well

with the more vulnerable families. The centre works with high numbers of eligible families and attendance is good and well monitored.

The centre works well with local schools and commissions services that are accessible. In particular, staff undertake good outreach work with the two ex-RAF bases within the reach area. The centre is well resourced and offers a welcoming friendly environment that encourages the take-up of services. Commissioned activities are carefully planned and are of good quality. Parents comment how much they and their children enjoy participating. The Early Years Foundation Stage principles are embedded in all learning activities, and parents are encouraged to celebrate their children's progress.

Support, including advice and guidance, is well tailored particularly for those parents in crisis. Parents comment that they find the centre non-judgemental, welcoming and at times a lifesaver. They also comment that the team-around-the-child approach has literally turned their lives around.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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

**2**

Good leadership and challenge are provided by the local authority. Governance arrangements, while in place, have recently lapsed during the challenging period of local authority budget cuts. The advisory board through the children's centre partnership has now been reinstated and is beginning to work effectively. Managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities for governance and secure oversight of the centre. This includes quality assurance, performance management and sound financial accountability.

Staff have access to a good range of local data and use this well. This helps them plan provision, accurately identify need and ensures targets are set which are measurable and timely. Managers are ambitious for the centre and communicate high expectations to all staff and users. The development plan sets realistic priorities and identifies resources.

The centre's good resources, including a multipurpose room, good play space and outdoor area, are used well. This results in good outcomes, particularly for families in greatest need. All areas of the centre are safe and clean, making them attractive to both children and adults. Multiple use is made of all resources. The centre displays a

commitment to sustainability, including a focus on recycling and encouraging users and families to consider sustainable resource usage.

Sound policies and procedures ensure the centre meets its legal and statutory requirements in relation to promoting equality and diversity and ensuring appropriate actions are taken to prevent discrimination of any kind. Outreach provision is working well and improving access for the more disadvantaged, isolated and vulnerable. Opportunities to celebrate diversity are well embedded into the curriculum.

A good range of partnerships effectively supports the delivery of services. Partners speak well of the centre and the services offered. Commissioned services are thoroughly monitored and regularly audited and are very responsive to meeting local needs. Good partnerships with local schools help children make easy transitions.

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

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Welton Children's Centre on 10–11 May 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We should like to thank those of you who came to speak to inspectors. We read some of the things you said when you have been on courses. We found that many of you who use the centre enjoy the courses and activities you attend. The centre places a high priority on helping you and your children learn new skills and this is helping you to develop in confidence and your children to be better prepared when starting school.

Lots of you told us that the centre gives you helpful information about being healthy, and we know many of you find the drop-in session run by the health visitors very useful. We know that you are encouraged to take up breastfeeding and are given support and guidance on healthy ways to feed your babies. We are pleased that the health staff at the centre are working with you to make sure your children are not overweight and your children have lots of opportunities for exercise and outside play. There are some things health staff could not give us enough details about, for example, how many of you have been supported to give up smoking while you were pregnant. We have asked the centre to ensure there is more accurate data on health issues to help them plan and target services.

We know that those of you who act as volunteers for Home-Start really enjoy this role. You told us you feel the centre takes your views seriously, particularly for those of you on the children's services partnership board. However, we have asked the centre to ensure that your views are used more to inform self-assessment so the centre can make sure it provides the services and activities that you need.

Some of you have undertaken training courses at the centre and have had help with finding employment. However, the centre has not run many accredited training programmes. We have asked the centre to offer you more opportunities for training and help you access further training opportunities with other partners so that you can improve your economic prospects.

The centre offers a number of different services, which are helpful to families. These include drop-in health clinics, play activities and 'Tots on Tour'. We found there is lots of helpful information for you in the centre and many of you are making good use of this information to find out about what is on and what help you can get for your families.

The centre is good at making sure that families receive the right sort of support when they need it. Many of you told us that you feel valued when you come to the centre and you like the fact that nobody judges you. Thank you once again to those of you who came to speak to us. We wish you all the best for the future and every success.

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