

# Inspection report for St John's Children's Centre

---

<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	383329
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 June 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steve Nelson

<b>Centre leader</b>	Darren Barrow (Julie Curtis: Centre Manager)
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Centre address</b>	Mortimer Road Kenilworth CV8 1FS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01926 856397
<b>Fax number</b>	01926 856397
<b>Email address</b>	admin2620@we-learn.com

<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	St John's 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:** July 2012



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.

An inspection of the co-located/partner primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, the local authority, the children's centre manager and members of the advisory board. They met with a number of representatives of services who work through the children's centre, including health visitors and outreach workers. Inspectors spoke to groups of parents. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's self-evaluation, development plan, user evaluations and case study information.

## Information about the centre

St John's Children's Centre is a phase two children's centre that provides full core purpose provision. It operates in the St John's ward from one site and is based on the same site as St John's Primary School.

The headteacher of the primary school is responsible for overseeing the work of the children's centre. The centre manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre and is assisted by the deputy manager. The governing body of the school oversees the centre's work and the advisory board acts as a steering group. The advisory board consists of representatives from partner organisations and key stakeholders that work with the children's centre, the local authority and parents.

Most families who use the centre are White British. A growing number of families using the centre are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Data for the reach area place the user base in the bottom 70% nationally for deprivation. The children's centre has 742 children under five in its reach area. About 5% of children and adults who use

the centre come from homes that are dependent on benefits and where no-one is in work. When they start early years provision, the majority of children have skills, knowledge and abilities that are in line with those expected for their age.

The range of activities offered by the centre includes a child and health baby clinic, antenatal birth clinic, breastfeeding support and baby massage. The centre has links with health visitors, community midwives and speech therapists. It signposts families to a range of providers that offer adult education, volunteering opportunities, and activities designed to support parents back into employment and training.

## 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

St John's Children's Centre meets the needs of its community well and delivers good provision. Outcomes for parents, children and other users, including the most vulnerable, are good. Learning and development opportunities are good and the centre provides good opportunities for purposeful learning. Parents feel comfortable in the centre and know they will get a warm welcome from the staff. These are some examples of what families said to inspectors about the centre: 'excellent children's centre with interesting and varied activities laid out each week' and 'staff are very helpful and friendly and can't do enough for you.'

The centre promotes a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Working with health practitioners, the centre helps to secure good health outcomes. Baby clinics run by health visitors are well attended, and families get ready access to specialist speech and language services following early identification of children's developmental difficulties. A real success has been the drive to encourage new mothers to sustain breastfeeding.

The centre staff have a clear sense of drive and passion and a good understanding of the difficulties they face in the reach area they serve. As a result, families are supported well. Partnerships with the local community and other agencies are generally effective. However, links with nurseries in the reach are not yet fully developed to deliver a fully integrated provision for families.

The centre works closely with the neighbouring children's centre to provide a broad range of activities to promote adults' and children's learning and development, and all involved with the centre are encouraged to have high aspirations. Children and adults were seen enthusiastically enjoying activities together. The number of families accessing the centre's provision has increased during the last year. However, not enough minority ethnic groups and families in rural areas use the centre's facilities.

The centre's approach to safeguarding families who use the centre and who receive family support is a strength of its work. Staff have a good awareness about child protection matters through regular training and updates provided. There are clear processes to ensure that all who need to know are informed about any safeguarding concerns to ensure swift and appropriate action is taken.

The centre has rigorous systems and procedures in place to monitor and evaluate its work. The centre refines its programme continually. Parents contribute routinely to evaluation of the centre's work. The centre's self-evaluation is broadly accurate and it is used to inform the setting of ambitious targets. As a result, managers and the advisory board understand what they need to do to improve the centre and their development plans are well founded on the available information. Based on the good and improving outcomes secured, the strong teamwork of staff and high levels of commitment by all stakeholders, the centre has good capacity to improve further.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase the centre's outreach to engage more effectively with minority ethnic groups and families in rural areas, in order to encourage them to use the centre's services.
- Create stronger partnerships with local nurseries by working more closely with them to enhance opportunities to improve families' outcomes.

## How good are outcomes for families?

2
---

The centre successfully promotes healthy lifestyles through a range of effective activities, including 'Cooking on a Budget' and the 'Lets Get Physical' sessions for children and adults. A parent commented, 'My daughter has great balance and enjoys the physical exercises.' Many of these health-related initiatives are developed with effective health partnerships, which include ante-natal and post-natal visits. Due to the centre's effective provision, the rates for child obesity are lower than the rest of the county and the rates for sustained breastfeeding at six to eight weeks are better than seen in the locality. The 'Buggy Breakfast' group has led to improved health outcomes and active engagement for teenage parents and young mothers.

The stimulating range of learning and playing activities ensures that enjoyment is high. There are good opportunities for parents, childminders and children to play and

learn together. Parents report improvement in their children's behaviour as a result of the help and support they receive from staff. Primary school data show clearly that children who have attended the centre make good progress by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents learn useful skills and activities which they can try out at home to support their children's learning. For example, children and their parents enjoy singing at the 'Music Bugs' sessions and developing their physical skills during the 'Little Foresters' outdoor play sessions.

The environment is safe and secure for all users. Vulnerable groups receive both practical and emotional support and families feel safe enough to openly share their concerns with staff. Seventy-two parents have successfully completed the 'Save a baby's life' course in the last year. Children are safeguarded well. Home visits ensure support is tailor-made for vulnerable families. Intervention for children on child protection plans is effective, the support for children subject to a Common Assessment Framework and looked after children, is good.

Community consultants play an active role in the community. They organised and ran a second-hand clothes and toy stall at the Kenilworth Festival, which raised funds to pay for the centre's carnival float. Children and families show high levels of respect, care and concern for others. Parents and childminders have many opportunities to express their views, including parents from priority groups such as lone parents. As a result, for example, the timings of some sessions have been adapted to ensure an even better match with the needs of families.

Training and both formal and informal education programmes for parents have improved their self-confidence and work-readiness. Work experience in the centre helps volunteers to develop work place skills. One volunteer said: 'I can't thank the centre enough for giving me the opportunity to gain work experience to complete my Level 2 child care qualification.' Advice to families on debt management and benefits has effectively improved their economic stability. Parents who completed the 'Money Wise Mums' award have continued to support each other through regular 'get together' meetings at the centre.

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</b>	<b>2</b>

**parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment**

## **How good is the provision?**

**2**

Activities and services are based well on the needs and wants of parents and children. Facebook is also used effectively to promote engagement with families. Staff are experienced in their areas of specialism so assessments cover the whole range of needs, including those of vulnerable families, disabled children and those with special educational needs. Strategies have been developed successfully to meet the needs of priority groups. For example, the centre delivers a Saturday 'Dads' Group.' Sessions regularly focus on helping parents to gain a better understanding of how to interact with their children and effectively develop speech and language skills. Childminder 'Stay and Play' courses give opportunities for adults to talk with each other and to discuss issues with staff.

Provision to help children learn is good. The centre is a rich learning environment both inside and outdoors. Children enjoy engaging in activities such as the 'Twins and More' sessions. A parent commented: 'My boys benefit greatly from the many opportunities to explore and socialise with others. It is a vital network to be able to share advice and experiences.' Case studies and individual parents highlight how they have positively changed their attitudes and behaviour following attendance at courses and that this has made them stronger people and better parents. Crèche provision is provided to enable parents to access training and development successfully.

The centre provides effective, personalised support for all families including those who have most need. They know that the centre is somewhere to turn to in times of crisis and to help them turn their lives around. The centre knows its families well and uses this knowledge effectively to shape its provision so that outcomes for all groups are at least good. Careful assessment of families, especially those in most need, on a one-to-one basis ensures high quality, tailor-made support and accurate signposting to the most appropriate agencies.

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**

The headteacher provides clear strategic direction. Staff understand their roles and lines of responsibility. The centre is led and managed successfully on a day-to-day basis by the centre manager. Governance and accountability arrangements are well defined. The advisory board effectively monitors performance, reviews progress and contributes to future planning. Formal service level agreements are in place for commissioned services and are carefully monitored at quarterly contract review meetings. Managers and staff are enthusiastic, motivated and committed to improvement.

All staff are involved in the self-evaluation process which results in a broadly accurate review which, with strong local knowledge and robust target setting, underpins the centre's good capacity for improvement. The work of the headteacher, centre's manager and other leaders' is well focused on an identified set of priorities to take the centre forward.

The centre promotes the inclusion of children and their families well. Good strategies have improved engagement and outcomes for some priority groups, such as disabled children and those with special educational needs. The centre has effectively contributed to narrowing of the achievement gap of the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the area.

Procedures for safeguarding are good and, together with the centre's effective early intervention and multi-agency cooperation, ensure that families, including those experiencing domestic violence, feel safe and that their emotional and social needs are effectively met. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. Robust risk assessments are undertaken regularly and good records are kept. Staff training is regularly updated.

Statutory and voluntary organisations such as the Mothers' Union and Kenilworth Lions work closely together to ensure that a coherent, supportive and developmental programme serves the needs of the community. However, the centre's relationship with nurseries in the area, while appropriate, is insufficiently established. Families express satisfaction with the services the centre provides. Outreach services are improving and they are effective in targeting identified needs in the wider community. Nevertheless, the centre's engagement with minority ethnic groups and families in rural locations is not fully developed to sufficiently involve them in its activities. The centre's impact on the community results in consistently improving outcomes and its good quality provision engages the majority of families. Resources are managed effectively and 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>3</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>3</b>

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

The inspection findings of St John's Primary School.

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 St John's Children's Centre on 20–21 June 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We are very grateful to all the parents and representatives from the centre and the professional partners who took the trouble to come and tell us about the work they do. You gave us a positive picture of the centre, and what you said was very useful in making our final judgements.

The centre is well run and managed and the good teamwork of staff ensures that the centre functions effectively on a day-to-day basis. We found that the centre tries hard to help everyone. It is keen to promote equality and diversity. It is particularly good at making sure young parents are supported well and have good opportunities to achieve well.

The centre is an inclusive and welcoming place, which is run by dedicated adults who want to serve you well. You speak highly of the centre as being a place where you feel safe, secure, supported, included and listened to. You comment positively about the difference that the centre has made to your confidence and achievements as well as to your children's progress, development and behaviour. Comments such as: 'Children benefit hugely from playing with other children in a different, safe environment,' and 'Great place to come, meet other mums and the staff are fantastic' are typical of the views you expressed.

You and your children benefit from the good services provided by the centre. Children enjoy the physical activities as they take part in sessions such as the 'Let's Get Physical' sessions. The centre ensures that children and families are safe and well protected. Staff have worked hard to make it safe for you and your children. They are all very experienced, well trained and regularly update their training in safety aspects.

The support the centre has given in helping your children learn and develop has also been positive because you are more confident in the ways that you can help your children. Good quality displays and resources promote children's learning. The centre provides a broad range of activities, which are linked to children's interests and support their social and emotional development, and communication skills. 'Stay and Play' sessions are well attended and appreciated by you and your children. Comments such as, 'It has supported my four-year-old move into nursery and is helping my two-year-old grow in confidence' and 'I now offer fruit to my children where they had previously only eaten sweet treats or biscuits' confirm some of the benefits you gain from attending the centre.

We have found a few areas for improvement and the centre's leaders are already aware of these. We are recommending that the centre increases the number of minority ethnic groups and families in rural areas who access its services. We are also asking managers to work more closely with nurseries in the area to involve them more in the work of the centre.

We wish you every success for the future.

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