

Inspection report for Pewsey Children's Centre

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| Local authority | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number | 384053 |
| Inspection dates | 20 - 21 June 2012 |
| Reporting inspector | David Marshall |

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| Centre leader | Ali Perry |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |
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| Linked school if applicable | Not applicable |
| Linked early years and childcare, if applicable | Puddleducks Nursery EY412118 |

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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre management team, the local authority, health professionals, representatives from the advisory group, front-line staff, parents and partner agencies.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Pewsey Children's Centre is managed by the national children's charity 4Children, which took over the delivery of provision in Pewsey on 1 April 2011. Governance and accountability are supported by an advisory board and family forum, known as the Parents' Voice. Pewsey Children's Centre is based on the campus of Pewsey Vale Secondary and Pewsey Primary School. On the campus there is also a Swimming and Sports Centre and The SHAK, a youth club for 13- to 19-year-olds run by Wiltshire Youth Development Service.

The children's centre is open from 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday. The centre holds training sessions in the evenings and runs sessions once a month on a Saturday. Working in partnership with health, it offers clinics in the two GP surgeries based in the community area. It also runs Stay and Play sessions in Woodborough. The outreach workers cover two military camps, so there are sessions in Upavon and Netheravon to work with both civilian and military families. The centre itself is based within one of the Super Output areas for Pewsey. The Wiltshire Council Childcare Sufficiency Plan 2011 also states that Pewsey is within the top 20% most deprived areas in Wiltshire in terms of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), employment and income. The centre's reach area is ranked 22 out of 30 children's centres, one being the least deprived, 30 being the most deprived.

The Pewsey Community Area covers 87 square miles and is made up of 25 settlements. The surrounding area is one of small villages and large farm estates and is very rural in nature. Transport links in Pewsey are good, but links to outlying services are poor. Many people living in the small villages are unable to easily travel anywhere if they do not have a car.

Pewsey has few ethnic minorities, although there are a growing number of Eastern European migrant workers and their families moving into the area. There are 326 families living in the reach area, with 580 children under five years old. Overall, 10% of families in the reach area live in workless households. Around 50 families are known to benefit from the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit.

Children's skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to early years provision across the reach area are below expected levels for their age.

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

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management

1

Main findings

Pewsey Children's Centre is an outstanding centre that enhances very significantly the lives of families. As a result, outcomes for the very large majority of families are outstanding. The centre offers new experiences and innovative opportunities for the community it serves. As one parent said, 'You do things here with other people you would never have dreamed of doing.' Centre staff are passionate about increasing the life chances of families who live in this disparate, and often isolated, area.

The community has many distinct features including the profile of the community which changes frequently. In response, managers collect and use data exceptionally well to assess the diverse needs of their community, to monitor changes and to measure impact. Provision is high quality and is exceptionally well matched to the needs of the community and specifically to individual families. Because many families live in relative isolation, they particularly value the opportunity the centre gives their

children to share experiences with others.

Excellent partnership working contributes significantly to the wide range of provision that is offered. Centre staff have developed highly productive arrangements with local community organisations and also with partners from the health, education and other statutory sectors. These result in the highly effective integration of services that contribute exceptionally well to the positive outcomes for families. Partnership work is also effective in ensuring the safety of families and leads to families being exceptionally well protected. The centre's multi-agency work to safeguard families is particularly effective in providing early intervention and timely support for families.

Parents make an outstanding contribution to the centre's overall mission and are actively involved in governance, decision making and volunteering at different levels. Typically, a parent who came into the centre briefly to get advice has, over time, become the chair of the advisory board. The centre manager is the Community Champion for a pilot project run by Wiltshire Council called Pewsey Voices. The current project in Pewsey is looking at working with families living in rural areas on low incomes.

Intensive work to promote children's attainment and achievement across the Early Years Foundation Stage is having a positive impact. This can be seen in the significant progress children make from their starting points. They also develop excellent social skills. One parent said, 'When my child first came, he didn't mix much. He's changed now and is much more confident.' Parents also make excellent progress as a result of their participation in adult learning courses or through volunteering. The tracking and assessment of the children under the two-year-old financial support initiative, and those children from disadvantaged backgrounds, are very accurate and extremely effective. These methods, including detailed logs on individual children, are now planned to be used for all children in order to improve the rates of progress even further.

Centre staff are very sensitive to the needs of families and offer outstanding support and guidance. This enables parents from all target groups to develop skills and strategies to manage problems and explore solutions. They also benefit greatly from the excellent range of health provision which includes the services of health visitors and midwives.

The centre's strategies to promote equality and inclusion are excellent. Parents talk enthusiastically about the way the centre has brought families from different cultural and social backgrounds together. The centre has also made good progress in increasing the participation rates of families with disabled children.

The local authority, through 4Children, is ambitious in its outlook for all its children's centres. This is translated into action at centre management level. Targets for staff are set which explicitly link to centre performance targets. The self-evaluation process is thorough and is used very effectively to drive improvement. It involves parents and partners in assessing what has worked best and why. Mechanisms for

holding staff at all levels to account are excellent and highly effective. This, along with the centre's outstanding leadership and management, demonstrates that the centre has an excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- The centre must implement its plans to use the detailed assessment and recording systems currently in use for some children to enhance further the rates of progress of all children

How good are outcomes for families?

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Outcomes for the very large majority of families, representing all target groups, are outstanding. Data confirm that the centre is instrumental in improving the lives of families. The centre works in a highly effective manner with a wide range of health professionals, such as health visitors, midwives and speech and language therapists, to help families live healthier lives. Programmes to promote healthy eating and physical exercise contribute well to the reducing obesity rates in the area. Through the provision of excellent activities, such as Baby Massage and Curious Creations, parents increase their understanding of how they can improve the health and learning of their children. The centre's work with mothers has resulted in breastfeeding initiation and sustained rates improving significantly over time.

Centre staff view all aspects of safeguarding and health and safety as a high priority. As a result, families report that they feel totally safe. Through the highly effective work of family support staff, the safeguarding concerns of families are identified early and acted upon speedily. Staff use the Common Assessment Framework process exceptionally well as a key mechanism for early intervention. Excellent partnership working with social care teams provides families with a swift and effective response whenever safeguarding concerns arise. Records show that the number of children subject to child protection plans across the area has reduced over time due to the high quality interventions that keep children so very well protected.

Children and parents find great enjoyment in attending the centre. Most children make significant educational progress from their starting points at the centre. The centre's detailed evidence shows an improving trend in the percentage of children who gain 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage profile, especially in their communication and language skills and their personal and social development. Children who have attended to centre achieve well relative to others during the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal and emotional development. However, the centre has yet to make sure their good tracking system is used more consistently to ensure that children maximise their achievements across all of the areas they experience. The centre raises aspirations and enables parents to make their own outstanding progress in developing their personal skills and in gaining qualifications. As one parent explains, 'Before I came here, I had no confidence but

now I can talk to other parents, talk to people on the phone and volunteer for a lot of activities.'

'The centre, with the schools on the site, is the hub of the community' was a view expressed by many parents. The centre is pivotal to the lives of families and, through their work on the forum, parents make an outstanding contribution to the work of the centre and to their community. They are actively involved in high-level decision making, such as staff recruitment, and also contribute to the self-evaluation process. They organise activities for other parents and act as exemplary ambassadors for the centre. Parents also make an outstanding contribution to governance of the centre through their roles on the advisory board.

Centre staff have developed excellent relationships with local businesses and employers through the work of the Targeted Lead for Employment and Training. They work productively together to develop the employability skills of parents through 'work clubs' and other activities. One parent said, 'I was lost, but one session with the centre meant I was able to negotiate with my former employers and get back to work part time.'

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

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| The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

How good is the provision?

1

Assessment of families' needs is extremely efficient and effective and this informs the centre's planning. The health visitors pass on information about all births in the reach area to the children's centre which then makes contact with the family, inviting them to the centre. Early assessments of families' particular needs are made, which can lead to a higher level of intervention and possibly referral to other agencies. Effective and regular inter-agency meetings are held to monitor the progress of the family, the adults' needs and those of the child or children. There are excellent procedures for developing the team around the child and, if necessary, child protection plans follow.

This rigorous inter-agency working, and outstanding work from the outreach team provide continuous and effective support which results in some children being removed from the child protection plans. All families are given the different levels of support needed, whether by social services or by the centre team members who act as outreach workers. A high proportion, around 60%, of vulnerable families are successfully supported and involved in accessing services; the centre continues to focus on those who are hardest to engage. The reported statistical increase in domestic abuse in the area immediately prompted initiatives that have been monitored and proved to be very successful in meeting the needs of this specific group.

Information about the needs of particular families and the excellent data provided by the 4Children staff are used by the centre staff to plan their activities to work together developing the children's early learning skills. Consequently, children are better prepared for learning when they move into the local Reception class. Many parents appreciate the value of the different activities, taking on board suggestions for what to do at home and finding strategies for managing children's difficult behaviour more positively. The Stay and Play sessions, run every week, are particularly popular in enabling parents and their children to learn together and have fun. A range of experts visit the centre to share their experience. For example, advisers who specialise in benefits advice come in to the centre to discuss issues that are important to the families attending. The baby massage sessions are particularly popular and very effective in helping new parents bond with their babies. The modern and bright building is completely accessible for wheelchair users and children and adults with disabilities are fully included and well supported. The growing attendance at the centre is testament to its increasing success in engaging with all target groups.

All staff provide excellent levels of support, advice and guidance for whoever comes into the centre. One parent's comment typifies this care, 'You can just drop in – they always find time for you.' This results in families feeling confident in the support they receive. There are striking examples of how families and individuals have been helped in times of crisis. This high level of care, engagement of outside agencies where appropriate, and advice have ensured children are safeguarded and the families enabled to get the support they need. This includes personal support for those in abusive relationships.

Staff are trained to support adults to give up smoking and have had a large measure of success. Overall, the mental health, confidence and self-esteem of adults are exceptionally well promoted. Most aspects of care, support and guidance are provided by well-trained staff but where activities are not available at the centre, adults are signposted towards other agencies for example to help the long-term unemployed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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| The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups | 1 |
| The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups | 1 |
| The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups | 1 |

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

Management of the centre is outstanding and is the key to the centre's excellent capacity to improve even further. The work of the centre manager, cluster manager and staff has very effectively improved the way the centre is run and has had an outstanding impact on the outcomes for families. The advisory group members are totally involved in the management of the centre. Their levels of skill and experience mean that they can be both challenging and effective in support. Senior leaders have high expectations of staff that are shared with them and with the centre's many partners. The development plan reflects these expectations and provides a great deal of useful data to enable targets to be more specific and measurable. Self-evaluation is accurate, although at times over modest as the centre's management is far from complacent.

Resources are managed very effectively. Activities are costed carefully and evaluated according to their success so that the centre provides first-rate value for money. For example, the excellent Dads' sessions are largely self-financing, through the use of the many volunteers, and are helping improve parenting skills and children's learning in the process. The resources, such as story sacks and books, are very well used, but although growing are still somewhat limited in number.

Equality and eliminating discrimination are at the core of the centre's work. The centre responds swiftly to any concerns. Some previously hard-to-reach parents have been encouraged to come to the centre as a result of strong partnership work with health services and the outreach work. The number of migrant Eastern Europeans, who are accessing the services and becoming part of the community, is testament to how inclusive the centre's work is. Safeguarding is paramount in the centre. The site is secure and there are very robust staff vetting procedures and continually reviewed records of everyone connected to the centre's work. All staff play a highly important monitoring role in this aspect. Early notification of any child protection concerns leads to swift action which is recorded in the centre's confidential files. Staff who work with children and vulnerable adults are extremely watchful and alert to concerns and are very clear about procedures.

Partnerships with other agencies are outstanding and reflect the very hard work centre staff have put in to meet the emotional and physical needs of families. For example, health visitors, the targeted lead for employment, midwives and links with

childminders have all contributed greatly to the outcomes for users of the centre. Satisfaction levels are very high. Many families have been given a sense of self-worth and confidence which had been absent before, and this is having a very positive impact on their relationships with their children and hopes for the future.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood | 1 |
| The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes | 1 |
| The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups | 1 |
| The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

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

Not applicable.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Pewsey Children's Centre on 20 and 21 June 2012. We judged the centre to be outstanding.

During the inspection, we talked with parents, staff, partners and members of the local authority linked to the centre. We would like to thank those of you who spared the time to speak to us to share your thoughts about the centre.

All of you we spoke to told us how much you enjoyed using the centre. It has made such a big difference to many children's and families' lives, particularly those facing challenges that make life difficult. We could see how much you enjoyed activities where you could play with your children and help them learn, such as Curious Creations, Baby Massage and Stay and Play sessions. Many of you told us about the important things you had learnt about keeping your children safe in the first-aid courses and parenting courses. We could see there were many ways in which the staff at the centre helped you to understand how to make your families' lives healthier and how to keep them safe.

We know many of you enjoy coming to the centre to meet with other mums and dads and to let your children use the good range of toys and resources. However, some resources such as the story sacks that many of you find so useful are limited. Many of you told us that your children are making very good progress in their learning and so are many of you. These excellent outcomes for you and your family are because the staff at the centre work hard to do their best for you. They find out what your children need, and what you think is important too, and plan a very good range of activities to support you. Staff work well with the staff at the nursery and those in the primary school so that your children are helped in a similar way. As a result, they find moving on to new activities fun and they are well prepared for learning. The centre also works extremely well with the health visitors, the midwives, the local community and childminders so that your children have the best start they can and you feel well supported.

Keeping you and your children safe is taken very seriously by the centre. All the correct checks have been carried out by the centre's leaders to keep you extremely well safeguarded. Staff are very well trained, and work together as a team to keep everyone free from harm. You told us that you feel safe and are confident that your children are very well cared for at the centre. You have learnt a lot about how to keep your children safe at home and when out with them, for example by learning about fire risks, dangers to avoid when cooking, and road safety.

The centre runs very smoothly because it is exceptionally well led and managed. The links with the nursery and local school are very positive and helpful, particularly as your children get older and move on in their education. Everyone at the centre is determined to provide you with the services that you need. Leaders try to check what your different needs are and what the centre is doing to help you. As well as what you tell them, they get lots of other information to help them improve the services even more. We have asked them to make sure that the really good tracking systems they use to make sure many of your children make good progress in their learning are implemented more broadly, as they have planned, so that every child makes the best possible progress.

Thank you again for helping us with our inspection and do not forget the centre staff do want to know what you think about the activities they provide and how they can be improved. We wish all the very best to you and your family.

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