

Inspection report for Winterbourne Children's Centre

Local authority	South Gloucestershire
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Date of previous inspection	17-18 August 2011
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Greenfield Club After School/Holiday Scheme, St Michael's In Greenfield Pre-School Group

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 the senior leadership and staff, senior managers from the local authority, a representative from the advisory board, parents and volunteers and others from partner agencies and local early years provision. They also held discussions with parents off site and a telephone discussion with one of the centre users.

Information about the centre

This phase two, part-time, centre is located in an area of mixed housing. Within the reach area, there are small pockets of deprivation and disadvantage among relatively more advantaged areas.

The Winterbourne reach area is made up of a population of 20,283 people of which there are 953 children aged five and under. Unemployment is relatively low. Around a tenth of families within the local area are dependent on workless benefits and a similar proportion represents lone-parent families.

The area is served by a number of local amenities such as the Parish Council Community Centre, medical centres and a hospital, a youth centre, out-of-school and holiday clubs and the local Wapley Woods. It has seven local schools, including five primary schools, a secondary school and an independent preparatory school. The majority of families using the centre are White British, with the remaining population being from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds including the Traveller community.

A small proportion of users speak English as an additional language. The centre provides most of the core offer of integrated services including health, family support and adult training. The centre does not provide on-site early years childcare provision. It offers advice and guidance to parents on the daycare and childminding

facilities available within the local community. The skills and knowledge with which children enter the local Early Years Foundation Stage provision are in line with those expected for their age. The last inspection in August 2011 found the centre to be inadequate.

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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

Winterbourne Children’s Centre has improved significantly since the last inspection and its overall effectiveness is now satisfactory. The action plan devised following the last inspection was thorough and ensured the centre and strategic managers addressed all the identified issues. As a result, the services are now more focused on vulnerable families and there is stronger strategic direction, line management and accountability at all levels.

The centre receives the data it requires to better target its services and this includes current information about the number of babies born in the locality. Partnership working with health and other organisations has improved and is now one of the strengths of the centre. Staff adapt and respond to new trends in the data, for example by promptly finding a partner to work with them on further promoting children’s exercise as soon as there was an indication this was needed. Nevertheless, the new social housing in some parts of the reach means meeting changing needs is an ongoing challenge. The advisory board has maintained satisfactory oversight of the centre. Training was made available but has not yet been widely taken up. Recruitment remains an issue, although it is more broadly representative of users. Varying meeting times have not yet increased interest. Agendas and minutes lack systematic detail of the monitoring undertaken.

Taken overall the centre management remains strong and outcomes for children and families are satisfactory and developing rapidly. There are now good outcomes for health and enjoying and achieving. The lunch club, which rotates around local

centres, offers good guidance on portion sizing and parents felt it helped them select healthier snacks for their children. Immunisation rates remain high and there is a low incidence of smoking in pregnancy. The centre now reacts promptly to even minor downturns in any of its key indicators, such as the slight rise in obesity at the age of five. There has been a significant improvement in the scores children achieve at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage in the reach area and this builds on the strong learning and development work evident in all the centre's sessions. Strategic leadership is clearer overall, although further changes to local children's centres including Winterbourne are pending the results of a recent consultation. Staff form a close knit team who has a shared vision and a clear determination to reach out to those families whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. The staff are aware there may be some newcomers, especially in the new social housing development that is just coming on stream, and that they will have to be vigilant to find all potentially vulnerable families. They have successfully engaged with the Traveller community through an innovative partnership with the Play Bus that visits the Travellers' site. They are also very successful in supporting the thriving Dad's club. There is a high level of professionalism evident in all that is done and, despite the impending changes due to the reorganisation, staff have demonstrated flexibility and have found creative solutions to problems. This ensures a satisfactory capacity to improve further, irrespective of which direction the impending changes take. Safeguarding is a strong feature of the provision for all families and equal opportunities are appropriately maintained.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Be vigilant in the identification of any new vulnerable families coming into the area, such as in the new social housing or within the isolated pockets of deprivation.
- Raise the profile and effectiveness of the advisory board by:
 - devising a well published cycle of meetings that maximises users' involvement
 - ensuring there is a standing agenda item on any development issues that the centre or senior managers have identified
 - increasing the take up of the training offered.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

Outcomes are satisfactory as the centre increasingly identifies and address the wants and needs of most families in the area it serves. Parents speak highly about the ways in which they have been supported. This can also be seen in the individual case studies kept and one parent said the centre had completely turned her life around and she was now 'confident and in employment'. Emotional health and well-being are well promoted, and issues such as domestic violence are dealt with sensitively by staff. Users who are vulnerable due to their circumstances are targeted effectively and supported to develop healthy lifestyles. Fathers and male carers are effectively

encouraged to become involved in the upbringing of their children through the dynamic Dad's club. This group has come up with good suggestions and booklets to share with others regarding ways of supporting children's development. Children make good progress and achieve well. It is noteworthy that the continued rise in the number of pupils achieving at least 78 points in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been matched by a reduction in the gap between the lowest achievers and the rest. Outcomes have now shown a positive change over the last three years, so they are now broadly similar to their statistical neighbours. Children involved with centre activities rapidly catch up with their peers, and the gap in achievement in the reach has narrowed. They thoroughly enjoy activities such as the excellent 'every child a singer' programme that has helped them grow in confidence and develop their communication skills. This means that the children make better progress in speaking and listening.

A parent whose child attended the group at the Travellers' site said that it had helped her child to be ready for the transition to school as he was now used to working with other adults. In the various groups the behaviour of children is good and they develop positive relationships. Adult learning is effective and is developing users' economic well-being by preparing them with additional skills ready for future employment. For example, opportunities exist to improve both English and number skills.

Users are welcome to formally contribute to decision making processes in the governance of the centre, but currently only a small number choose to engage in this aspect of the centre. The parents' forum is successfully used as a way to consult users. Families say they feel safe and protected when at the centre or any of the outreach facilities. There are good systems for coordinating support for families who are in vulnerable circumstances. When children have detailed child protection plans, great care is taken to ensure that help and support are provided. The centre is used for supervised visits. Parents develop their understanding of health and safety issues; this is having a largely positive impact on improving outcomes for them and their children, although hospital admission rates for accidents have risen recently. There is a new breastfeeding support group to further encourage mothers as there has been a recent decline in rates, although it still remains above the national average. Good links exist with the area's coordinator for special educational needs and this provides a valued source of expertise for both parents and 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	3
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	3
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	3

How good is the provision?

3

Staff have a good rapport with the families who use the centre. Robust assessment systems mean that their needs are effectively identified. There is good use of the Common Assessment Framework process because staff are well trained in its use. This, added to the joint visiting done by health visitors and outreach workers, is beneficial in ensuring prompt intervention for those who may need extra help. There is better access to information than at the time of the previous inspection and this allows staff to build a clearer picture of the needs of the community. The staff make good use of all information to spot potentially 'hidden' areas of deprivation within their fairly affluent community. They also increasingly adapt services effectively to meet the needs of the most potentially vulnerable families. Staff have developed appropriate services to meet the needs of young mums and have a good rapport with Jobcentre Plus to help support those parents preparing to go back to work.

Managers recognise that the analysis of data is in the early stages. They know that more work will be necessary to ensure that service planning remains well focused as developing trends become clearer and are confirmed over time. Staff and volunteers seek ways to listen to the views of children and other users and react to these opinions. Parents said the centre has enabled them to move on to accessing other learning and development opportunities through their improved self-confidence and/or work within the centre's expanding volunteer programme. Through a strong partnership with the library service, parents have learned skills to support their child's learning and have been encouraged to improve their own literacy skills. Numerous families have gained first aid qualifications and knowledge about making their money go further.

Staff recognise and celebrate families' achievements. Parents expressed repeatedly how much they value the support they receive from centre staff and noted how their engagement with the children's centre had helped them develop a network of friends and avoid isolation. Families can easily access information, advice and guidance, although the times the centre is open are not sufficiently prominent on the centre's door. Staff are knowledgeable and they effectively signpost parents on to other agencies when this is the best course of action.

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	3
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	3

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The centre continues to be well led by a committed and passionate management team. Clear line management arrangements now exist and effective supervision has been introduced so that staff now feel well supported; this is a big improvement from the last inspection. Governance arrangements are clearer. The local authority is closely involved in monitoring the effectiveness of the centre; initially this was against an action plan following the inspection and more recently it is against a strategic forward plan.

A very strong focus is placed upon the continual professional development of all staff. This includes formal training opportunities such as those planned for further safeguarding disabled children. The centre has a well-trained and professional team at all levels. Partners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibility in improving outcomes and, as a result, services are more integrated. The centre knows its key priorities but, as yet, these are not fully challenged by the advisory board. A range of systems is in place enabling staff and managers to better evaluate the effectiveness of services on the most potentially vulnerable, while simultaneously maintaining universal provision via the use of trained parent volunteers. Evaluations show for example how much the children gained from the parenting programme and how families' understanding and confidence have developed. The centre offers satisfactory value for money as it is seeing increasingly well targeted groups and more users. Good use is made of off-site venues. The volunteers enhance service provision and ensure the sustainability of groups and services. The centre's ethos is fully inclusive. Specific groups and outreach work have been successful in engaging those who may be hard to reach, such as young parents, Travellers and fathers and male carers. Staff celebrate diversity within groups.

Appropriate support is provided for children who have additional needs; the impact of sensory provision was profoundly important for one child's well-being. Well trained staff have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and how to implement procedures to protect those children who are at risk of abuse. Effective liaison with appropriate agencies, such as children's services, means that concerns are effectively monitored. Appropriate procedures are in place in order to ensure those who work with the children and their families are suitable to do so. Staff at all levels recognise signs of domestic abuse promptly and parents are sensitively supported to recognise

potential risk for themselves. The centre values highly its strong links with a range of other agencies.

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	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
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	2
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	3

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

Ofsted reports on Greenfield Club After School/Holiday Scheme URN: 135997 judged satisfactory, and St Michael's In Greenfield Pre-School Group URN: 136082 judged good.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Winterbourne Children's Centre on 4 and 5 July 2012. We judged the children's centre to be satisfactory. It has made many improvements since the last inspection when it was judged inadequate, and now it also has some aspects that are good.

My colleague and I would like to thank those of you who gave their time to share their views of the centre with us and we appreciate how welcome we were made to feel. You were full of praise for the centre and those who work there. You told us that you particularly like the caring friendly way staff work with you. You reported that the centre has been very helpful and in some instances has very substantially changed lives for the better. There is a real sense of opportunity surrounding the centre and many of you are gaining valuable experience by volunteering. The centre does not discriminate and you feel equal opportunities are well maintained.

Some aspects of the centre are good, such as the 'every child a singer' programme and the outcomes for everyone in terms of health, enjoyment and achieving. The extra gym class and the cooking class some of you attend, coupled with the much better scores for achievement at the end of the Reception Year in local schools, are good evidence of this.

As users you are frequently asked your views and care is taken to evaluate your responses to courses and events. This and the better data now supplied by the local authority help to ensure that the services are closely meeting your needs and that you are supported effectively. You reported finding a sense of community and enjoyment at the centre. Those of you who have faced domestic violence or have needed support to cope with children's behaviour problems have also been given good support. We are pleased to confirm that the arrangements for safeguarding you and your children are good and the training for staff is thorough and effective.

The centre and the outreach sites are safe and your children are looked after well when they attend. Children make good progress from their various starting points when they first come into contact with the children's centre and their records are developing well to record this progress. This is equally true for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities who receive appropriate support. Children learn to behave well, to play and share things with others and develop positive relationships, including in off-site provision such as the twice-weekly programme linked with the Play Bus at the Travellers' site. We were especially pleased to see a dads' group at the centre coming up with lots of exciting ideas to support their children. They report great enjoyment from joining in the activities with their children.

There are a few things we have asked the centre to look at in order to become even better. We feel that the ways in which the data are used is just beginning to develop and that new needs may emerge once trends over time can be better seen. We have also asked that the advisory board sets a pattern of meetings that are family friendly in terms of timing; so more of you can join in. We asked that times and the agenda are publicised well ahead. We would encourage the board to take up the training offered to it as it will help build members' confidence so the board can check on any changing priorities and developments.

We think the centre works very well with its partners but we want everyone to spot new families arriving in the area, some of whom may need a helping hand. This includes anyone coming into the new housing being built in the north of the reach

area. Finally, we were pleased with the work done with Jobcentre Plus to help you confidently build up your skills so when you are ready to go back to work you are well positioned to do so.

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