

Inspection report for Spring Rise Children's Centre

Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	383803
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Centre leader	Pauline Monaghan
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Frogwell Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Frogwell After School Club

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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361

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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 manager and staff, parents, members of the advisory board, health professionals and representatives of partner agencies and the local authority. The inspectors held informal talks with children and parents.

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

Information about the centre

Spring Rise Children's Centre is a phase two centre which was designated in 2006 and meets its full core purpose. It was originally managed by Barnardo's and based in the grounds of Redland Primary School. In April 2011 the management contract was awarded to The Rise Trust, a local Christian regeneration charity. The Rise Trust is run by a Board of Trustees made up of representatives of the local community. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for all aspects of service management and delivery as well as establishing the Trust's overall strategic vision and framework for delivery. She is also responsible for the overall leadership and management of three Rise Children's Centres in Chippenham. The CEO is supported by a Deputy Director and a Service Manager and together they make up The Rise Trust's Directorate.

The centre has an advisory board which comprises a cross-section of parents and professionals. The centre relocated to refurbished accommodation in the grounds of Frogwell Primary School in April 2011 but also delivers a range of services from other sites in the reach area. Although the centre is on the same site as the primary school and works in close partnership with it, there are no direct organisational links. The centre does not currently provide childcare but is opening an Early Excellent Centre for two-year-old children in September 2012.

There are 960 children aged under five years living in the reach area. Of these, 90% are registered with the children's centre. The reach area is characterised by diverse neighbourhoods including owner occupied estates, areas of social housing, a residential army barracks and some outlying villages. There are pockets of multiple deprivation. The centre engages with 100% of families living in workless households and those dependent on benefits, including all lone parents. The vast majority of the community (94%) is from White British backgrounds, with the remaining population from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. There are a small number of European economic migrants and families of Bangladeshi and Chinese origin. The centre provides a full range of services, including health and family support and play and learning experiences for children and adults. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to early years provision across the reach area are below the levels expected for their age, particularly in communication skills.

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

Spring Rise Children's Centre is outstanding in all respects because of its very high quality provision and excellent targeting of services that fully meet families' needs. It is particularly successful in engaging with over 90% of children in its reach area. The centre also engages with all target groups exceptionally well, including teenage parents, lone parents and fathers. The outstanding provision is based on robust self-evaluation, including highly effective use of data gathered by the centre, together with that provided by the local authority. The centre places great emphasis on gaining feedback from all its families after every session to improve its services even further. Comments, such as, 'really friendly centre' and, 'the staff are brilliant – I have really improved my parenting skills' and, 'excellent advice on sleeping and weaning' are typical of many.

A significant strength of the centre is the way in which it engages parents and children in all of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage for children aged from birth to five. It is particularly successful in developing all parents' understanding of the importance of early years education and how it works in practice. Throughout the centre, there are high quality resources and displays that

successfully promote parental awareness of the six areas of learning, including a very strong focus on communication, language and literacy in all sessions. Consequently, the achievements gap between the 20% most disadvantaged children and the rest in the local area is closing each year.

Exceptionally close work with partner agencies ensures that health, learning and care services are seamless for all families. A carefully balanced, adaptable programme of activities is tailored to support groups and individual needs. An exceptional number (over 100) of parents and community members give their time as volunteers, which both adds considerably to the centre's resources and builds adults' personal, parental and academic skills. Excellent attention to inclusion drives the centre's work. Staff make sure that centre services are known to all new families with young children in the area and that it is the heart of family learning for the very large majority. A high number of families benefit from activities at the wonderful, welcoming main premises. The centre's innovative work in various locations around the town, including community home-visiting, removes the barriers faced by some families who experience difficulties in accessing the main premises. All families say they are treated with respect and are never judged or turned away.

The CEO, supported by highly skilled staff, provides outstanding and inspirational leadership and management. The centre's service plan is a detailed document, with specific and measurable targets aimed at improving outcomes for families, especially those in its target groups. Strengths in the exceptional leadership and management are evident in the high level of success the centre achieves in engaging with most of the community it serves and because health and social services plus other 'bespoke' services are available to all families. The centre demonstrates an excellent track record of improving outcomes for families, enjoys exceptional levels of parental satisfaction and uses all available resources to provide outstanding value for money. The staff's exemplary work is well worth sharing with other centres. Consequently, the centre's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Develop a leading role in working in partnership with other children's centres to promote innovative practice.

How good are outcomes for families?

1

The centre is very effective in engaging families in activities that develop their heightened awareness and understanding of healthy lifestyles. The excellent and comprehensive support programme has led to a high take-up of healthy lifestyles by an ever increasing percentage of families. The level of sustained breastfeeding is over 50% and on a rising trend. Parents speak highly of the quality of staff and peer support at weekly 'Buttercup Babies' breastfeeding sessions. Healthy eating is

promoted exceptionally well through numerous cookery sessions for children and families and by providing healthy snacks at all events and groups. Healthy eating advice is also provided by Family Visiting Service Volunteers and Outreach Workers in one-to-one discussions with families and in 4U Young parents' group. Baby Gym and 'Fit Kids' sessions are highly successful in promoting family fitness, and greatly assist babies' and toddlers' physical skills and prevent obesity.

Safeguarding procedures are extremely robust and as a result families feel very safe. Families who have experienced domestic violence are relaxed at the centre because they feel safe for both themselves and their children. Children show that they know how to keep themselves safe, for example, on the apparatus outside. Staff supervise children extremely well and case studies show that the support they provide for parents is having a very positive impact on extending parenting skills, particularly in the areas of behaviour management and home safety. There is a marked reduction in the number of children having accidents due to parents' raised awareness of how to keep children safe. Children on the child protection register, looked after children and those supported by the Common Assessment Framework process, are supported exceptionally well through the highly effective multi-agency team approach. As a result, any indicators that a child may be at risk are addressed swiftly, which keeps potentially vulnerable children very safe.

There is excellent support for parents and children to enjoy high quality play sessions, have fun and learn together. Parenting programmes, volunteers and sensitively targeted support are highly effective in improving the most vulnerable families' confidence and self-esteem. Babies and toddlers make excellent progress from their starting points. The focus on helping children develop their early language and communication skills has contributed greatly to the significant narrowing of the gap between the lowest achieving 20% at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest.

The centre works tirelessly to improve families' economic well-being. For example, the job vacancy board at the centre is updated daily to signpost parents to local job vacancies. Numerous literacy, numeracy and other skills-based learning courses are very well attended. Parents say that they have achieved qualifications that they would 'never have dreamed of attempting without the centre staff's excellent support'. The CEO and her staff see the potential in every parent and child and provide parents with increased confidence in applying for jobs, through for example providing a laptop and guidance to write curriculum vitae. There are numerous examples of how successfully the centre works to support parents to become increasingly skilled. For example, a parent who started as a volunteer, obtained qualifications in early years education, and in September 2012 will become centre manager. There are many examples of parents building high levels of confidence as they volunteer to run courses in the centre, for example Baby Gym, which is highly valued by families. Parents contribute very effectively to the life and development of the centre because they are encouraged to express their views freely through an excellent range of opportunities, including being representatives on the advisory board.

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	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	1
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

All staff, partner agencies and the local authority have an in-depth understanding of the specific needs of local families and skilfully match services to meet them. For example, the CEO has devised an excellent assessment target wheel depicting six areas: parenting; my child's learning and development; managing money; family safety; self-esteem; food nutrition and being active. Parents shade in a segment which relates to how they feel about each of the six areas. Many assess themselves as feeling 'Not confident' at first but rapidly move to the 'Cracked it!' bull's-eye after completing courses such as 'Fun with food', 'Incredible Years', 'Chat and Play' and 'Budgeting and Bargains'.

Attendance registers are completed at all events to record volume on E-Start and to identify attendance levels for the most disadvantaged families. Outstanding recording systems ensure that all staff are aware of the priority families in all their activities, and monitor their attendance and always follow up when a family stops attending. Exceptionally skilful intervention by expertly trained staff has significantly enhanced children's communication skills. Targeted support through all centre activities and home visits has played an excellent part in promoting children's language development. As a result, children start school with significantly improved communication skills and this plays a fundamental part in securing their future learning. Exemplary work has been carried out to engage an increasing number of fathers and male carers through the 'Dads' Aloud' group. The CEO and her staff are never complacent and strive constantly to engage with 100% of the families in the reach area. Consequently, they are setting up and resourcing an Early Excellence Centre for two-year-old children with additional needs. They also target their own specific groups requiring support, such as some Ghurkha families in a nearby army barracks.

The provision for learning and development of both children and adults is outstanding. All programmes are personalised and rigorous assessment ensures that development opportunities are tailored according to individual need. Families in outlying villages attend town centre based activities which have been established specifically to attract rural families because of the sporadic transport links. Adult learning providers play an instrumental role in supporting individual parents to build confidence and raise aspirations to return to education and employment. One parent summarised this by stating, 'Everyone wants to improve their life and this centre helps you achieve your full potential.'

The care, guidance and support offered to families are outstanding. Health visitors, social workers, midwives and the Family Visiting Service work tenaciously to identify the most vulnerable families and signpost to relevant support services. Agencies work seamlessly together, offering families an exemplary level of professional support, especially at times of crisis.

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	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

High staff morale and exceedingly ambitious, challenging and determined leadership demonstrate an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. A fundamental reason for the centre's exceptional success is that the CEO's inspirational leadership encourages staff to have the highest possible aspirations for themselves and the children and families. Self-evaluation is very robust, detailed and focused on measurable outcomes for families. The service plan is a high quality document that focuses closely on the precise needs of all target groups and provides sharply defined measurable outcomes. Day-to-day management is excellent, with staff playing a significant role in assessing accurately the impact of all the centre's activities on the lives of families. Governance is outstanding. The Rise Trust, the local authority and the advisory board provide excellent support and challenge, through providing high quality data, measuring outcomes and evaluating parents' satisfaction with the services provided. In the past year, there was a very high satisfaction rate. As one parent said, 'I think this centre is brilliant; it's well resourced, has excellent staff and all sessions are structured well.'

Working in partnerships with other agencies is a significant strength, especially as many are based in the centre. For example, health visitors and midwives hold regular

sessions there. The integration of all services is highly effective in meeting the needs of families. Through a robust analysis of high quality data, resources are directed very effectively towards meeting the needs of all target groups, including those most in need of support, for example, teenage parents who say they feel welcome and valued at the centre. The centre is very inclusive and promotes equality and diversity exceptionally well. Staff celebrate the diversity of families from minority ethnic heritages very well. For example, an 'Include' group for parents born outside of the United Kingdom meets regularly. Parents plan and evaluate this group.

The highest priority is given to safeguarding. Early intervention to support families, together with highly effective multi-agency links, is a significant strength. All staff are exceptionally well trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures. Staffing appointments are vetted fully through the Criminal Records Bureau and robust recruitment procedures ensure all checks are in place before staff start work at the centre. Families feel exceptionally safe at the centre because of the robust attention given to health and safety matters, including the secure outdoor play area.

Taking into consideration the exceptionally high levels of parental satisfaction and engagement, the excellent provision and outcomes for families, the centre provides outstanding value for money. Centre data show that for every pound provided from Sure Start funding, staff and volunteers deliver two pounds worth of services into the local care economy.

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	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

Findings from the Frogwell Primary School inspected in 2012 were taken into account.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Spring Rise Centre on 11–12 July. We judged the centre as outstanding overall. We would like to thank all of you who took the time to talk with us about your experiences and involvement with the centre. It was a pleasure to meet you and your children and it was very helpful to hear what the centre means to you and the difference it makes to your lives. It is clear to us that you are extremely happy with the centre's services.

The centre staff have an exceptional understanding of the needs of local families and adapt services to address these effectively. They are extremely dedicated and totally committed to helping you and your families and they successfully reach those of you who are most in need. We were particularly impressed with the very high number of families using the centre who benefit from its excellent range of services. The partnerships between all agencies who work at the centre are exceptional. This means that families receive excellent levels of dovetailed support from a number of different services. All staff are extremely passionate about ensuring families are safe. As a result, families receive very high levels of support when they are most vulnerable. Midwives, health visitors and other professionals are readily available for you to approach for help and advice and this means children's development is closely supported. Consequently, children benefit from healthier lifestyles. The learning and development opportunities within the centre are outstanding. There is an excellent range of activities and training provided enabling all families to develop their skills and knowledge and be successful in returning to education and employment. Staff deliver an exceptional range of high quality early years services, which enable your children to benefit from excellent play experiences. They help you understand how to interact with your children positively and support their learning through play at home.

Safeguarding arrangements are excellent within the centre. All staff provide a very friendly and welcoming environment and develop very trusting relationships with all families. Parents told us how much this helps them to seek help and advice when they need to. All staff work together exceptionally well to ensure any issues concerning children's welfare are identified early and relevant action is taken to keep all children safe. The CEO is an inspirational manager and she is supported by an excellent team. All staff share a strong commitment towards providing the highest standards and delivering services which local families need. The centre's

management team and the local authority continually review all services and frequently ask for your feedback to ensure services are having the very best impact. We noted the centre uses 'best practice' systems to track the on-going progress of all children and parents to demonstrate how well the centre has supported them. We think that Spring Rise staff should work in partnership with other children's centres to promote their excellent systems in support of others.

Thank you again to everyone who spoke to us. We are very grateful and wish you and your families every success for the future.

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