

# Inspection report for All Saints Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	367734
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 July 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Priscilla McGuire

<b>Centre leader</b>	Carolyn Theedom
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Centre address</b>	Magpie Hall Road Chatham Kent ME4 5AZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 338862
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	Carolyn.theedom@medway.gov.uk

<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Not applicable
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	EY341162 All Saints Sure Start Children's Centre (day nursery) EY341207 All Saints Sure Start Children's Centre Pre-school

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Manchester  
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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 headteachers from local schools, centre staff, local authority managers and staff, representatives of the advisory board and of partner organisations. They also met with parents. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

All Saints Children's Centre is a phase one centre in Chatham, Kent that was designated in 2006. The centre meets its core purpose. It operates from a two storey building and shares its site with health professionals. The centre offers an integrated package of services for families which include health provision, early years education, family support and support from the Jobcentre. Centre services also include an on-site nursery and pre-school provision which is located at another venue. Families live in privately owned, privately rented or social housing.

The centre serves a large reach area with around 1,830 children under five years of age living in the 13 super output areas (SOAs) that comprise the reach area. Of the 13 SOAs, two are in the 10% most deprived and 10 in the 30% most deprived for income, education and skills. Three SOAs are in the 10% most deprived and eight are in the 30% most deprived for employment. Approximately, 95% of children in the reach area live in the 30% most disadvantaged areas. Most families are of White British heritage, but an increasing number of families belong to minority ethnic groups, including an increasing number of Eastern European migrants. Around 21% of children in Medway live in poverty and 15% of families benefit from the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Data indicate that 16% of the children aged from birth to four years in Medway live in households dependent on workless benefits. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities when the children enter early years provision are typically below the levels expected 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**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**2**

## Main findings

All Saints Children’s Centre is a successful centre which has engaged with the large majority of families in its community. Some aspects of the centre’s work are outstanding, for example in providing early and effective intervention to keep families safe. Safeguarding work is exceptional and staff actively support other children’s centres to implement effective safeguarding best practice. Parents talk of feeling welcomed as soon as they walk in the centre. ‘It’s a home from home environment here,’ was the comment of one parent, which was typical of many others.

Families speak very highly of the support they receive from staff. Arrangements to provide support and care to families are exceptionally strong, mainly as a result of the work of the Support Workers In Teams Communities and Homes (SWITCH) team. The team provides high quality and often intensive support for families, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Support from the SWITCH team significantly increases the well-being of families.

Staff use data well to monitor the participation of key target groups, such as minority ethnic groups and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The centre responds well to their needs and interests. As a result, the centre’s engagement with these groups has increased over time.

Through the expertise and skill of staff, who work well with early years education staff and schools, the centre enables children to make good progress in their learning, development and skills. Sessions for children link well to the Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes. Enjoyment and achievement for adults are also well promoted. Through adult learning classes and also through learning from other programmes, such as parenting programmes, many parents develop knowledge and skills to improve their own and the lives of their families.

The centre’s partnership arrangements with schools and other educational professionals are productive. They enable the centre to provide a range of good quality educational opportunities for families which improve their life chances. The

centre also provides good quality health provision which overall leads to positive health outcomes for families. However, in spite of the efforts of health professionals and centre staff, breastfeeding rates remain low.

Partnership arrangements with agencies such as the Jobcentre are effective and enable the centre to improve the economic independence of parents. Evidence shows that about a third of parents are involved in a range of relevant adult learning and training activities.

Parents' involvement in decision making and governance is excellent. As members of the advisory board and as parent representatives on the ASPIRE and Parents Champions groups, parents make an outstanding contribution to the work of the centre. The centre's volunteer programme is very well planned and provides an exemplary model. It includes training in equality and diversity and also in child protection. However, it does not yet offer formal accreditation for parents who take up the excellent opportunities for training and personal development that it offers.

The quality of leadership and management at all levels is good. Managers are highly competent and the staffing structure effective. Self-evaluation is a rigorous process which leads to improvement. The centre knows what it needs to do to improve. The delivery plan to improve the quality of provision and services is comprehensive, very detailed and includes a reasonable number of ambitious targets. As a result of all of this, the centre's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Further develop the volunteer programme to incorporate opportunities for external accreditation.
- Build on the existing good work with health partners to increase breastfeeding rates.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

<b>2</b>
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The centre actively promotes positive health outcomes for families. Staff work effectively with the on-site health professionals. They make good use of the Boardroom Café as a key resource to promote and reinforce healthy eating messages. Sessions such as Baby Bites and Nipper Nosh are both very effective in helping parents, from a range of target groups, understand how to prepare healthy meals. As one parent explained, 'The different cooking activities have helped widen my child's appetite.' The centre contributes well to the local priority to reduce obesity rates. These have now reduced from 16.3% in 2010–11 to the current rate of 9%. However, breastfeeding rates fluctuate and the most recent data show low rates at six to eight weeks both in the reach area and throughout Medway. Nevertheless, centre staff are working in conjunction with health visitors, midwives and breastfeeding peer support workers to encourage more women to breastfeed for

sustained periods.

Families feel safe at the centre. Those whose circumstances make them vulnerable and other key target groups, such as women living with domestic abuse, develop a very good understanding of how they can remain safe. Staff use the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and multi-agency referral forms exceptionally well to identify and respond very effectively to safeguarding concerns. Case study evidence demonstrates the centre's success in taking appropriate and timely action to keep children safe. Evidence also shows that positive outcomes are achieved for children on child protection plans and looked after children. Across Medway, the percentage of children admitted to hospital for deliberate and unintentional injuries is reducing.

Parents make good progress in their learning and development. They benefit from courses such as Brave New World, which helps to develop their understanding of brain development in babies. The proportion of children in the reach area who achieve 78+ scale points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile has improved over time and is now 59%, which is broadly average. Children are well prepared for school as a result of their attendance at the centre and involvement in good quality activities. Parents report gains in their children's social skills. The gap between the lowest attaining children and the rest has not been reduced in recent years. By intensifying work to support the development of children's communication and language skills, schools and centre staff are continuing in their efforts to narrow this gap. This includes collaborative funding to provide a dedicated speech and language therapist whose targeted work is already having a positive impact.

Parents make an outstanding contribution to the work of the centre and the wider community. One parent talked of 'being inspired' to volunteer because of the support she received from the centre. Parents receive excellent training from the centre's well planned volunteer programme. The personal development of volunteers is outstanding and they also develop transferable skills which have enabled many to progress into employment or further education. A significant number of parents from different target groups are actively involved in key decision making about centre services. They are well represented on the advisory board and on the ASPIRE and Parents Champions group which act as highly effective forums for parents. Behaviour of children using the centre is excellent.

The centre works very effectively with agencies such as the Jobcentre and other community organisations to help parents become 'work ready' and more employable. Parents make good progress into employment or further education. Parents are also provided with good quality advice about benefits and 'better off calculations'. They receive effective guidance which helps to reduce barriers to employment.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for families*

<p><b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>
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<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment</b>	<b>2</b>

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

<b>2</b>
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Centre staff use data well to analyse needs. Services are well integrated with the on-site health team and with other partners. Outreach work is also effective in providing services for families at a range of venues within the reach area. Centre staff have productive relationships with a wide range of partners, such as schools and health professionals. These links are used well to help the centre achieve positive outcomes for parents and to plan provision that is responsive to local priorities. The balance between universal and targeted services is good. The centre makes good use of data to monitor and increase its engagement with different target groups, such as those from minority ethnic backgrounds, fathers and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Parents have good opportunities to learn at the centre. Sessions for both adults and children are well planned and linked to well defined learning outcomes. Good quality resources also promote learning. For example a 'solid foods library' provides parents with books to support their learning about nutrition for babies. Planning for children is purposeful and well informed by the expertise and experience of education professionals. The centre also works effectively with local adult education providers to offer English for speakers of other languages courses for parents. As a result of the good quality and purposeful learning they receive, parents' personal development is good. Families' aspirations are also raised and their life chances increased.

'Staff are very good at reading my emotions,' was the way one parent described the excellent support offered at the centre. Another parent said, 'If it wasn't for them, I'd be pulling my hair out.' These comments reflect only in part, the outstanding support offered to parents from centre staff. Case studies and other testimonies from parents demonstrate the success of the centre in providing intensive and sensitive support to families who sometimes have multiple barriers to overcome. The highly effective work of the SWITCH team is central to the support and care service offered to families. For example, in response to needs of parents, the team developed Topaz, a specialised programme to help parents improve their self-confidence and self-esteem. As a result of Topaz and other support strategies, parents become empowered and better able to cope with problems. The range of information sources

at the centre which provide advice and guidance to parents is also excellent.

*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>1</b>

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

<b>2</b>
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The quality of leadership and management, including governance, is good. Arrangements to hold the centre to account are effective. The advisory board regularly uses data and other evidence to review the performance of the centre and provides effective support and challenge. At all levels, staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and of how these contribute to strategic priorities. Staff management is good and staff are well qualified for their roles. Their personal and professional development is strongly encouraged and supported by the highly competent centre manager. Staff are well supervised and well matched to their roles.

Self-evaluation is a rigorous process that leads to improvement. Parents and partners regularly evaluate the quality and impact of provision. Through periodic review meetings and also through the annual conversation, local authority managers effectively monitor the performance of the centre. The centre's delivery plan, which includes measurable targets, is then used as a key tool to drive improvement.

Resources, such as staffing and accommodation, are used well and outcomes are good. Consequently, value for money is good. Partnership arrangements are effective and used to develop, plan and review provision. The centre has cultivated productive partnerships with a wide range of providers from the voluntary, statutory and private sector. These enable the centre to provide a wide range of services and support which promote positive outcomes for families. Parents are also highly regarded as partners and user engagement is therefore good. Through surveys and the ASPIRE and Parents Champions groups, the centre engages well with parents.

The centre promotes equality and inclusion well. It provides effective support for families with disabled children. Through its 'coffee and culture' group, it promotes understanding and tolerance towards different groups. Parents value the opportunities they have to learn about each other's culture and respective countries. The centre has responded positively to the increasing number of Eastern European migrants within the community. By using volunteer 'language ambassadors' who translate materials and interpret on behalf of families, the centre reduces barriers for



families who do not speak English as a first language.

The centre's safeguarding work is exemplary and exceeds statutory requirements. Centre staff are exceptionally well trained and experienced in safeguarding work. Because of their expertise and experience, centre staff also contribute to the work of the local children's safeguarding board and help other centres implement effective practice. The centre is therefore instrumental in promoting high quality safeguarding practice across Medway. Policies and practice are continually reviewed to ensure safeguarding work is of the highest standard. Health and safety are also well promoted and risk assessments carried out appropriately. Recruitment checks including Criminal Records Bureau checks are rigorously carried out. Multi-agency work and referrals are also highly effective. Early intervention to prevent problems escalating is very effective. The centre also provides exceptional support to women and children affected by domestic abuse.

*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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision</b>	<b>2</b>

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

Findings from the inspections of All Saints Sure Start Children's Centre (day nursery) and All Saints Sure Start Children's Centre Pre-school were used to inform the judgements made during this inspection.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the All Saints Children's Centre on 18 and 19 July 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Many thanks to all of you who took time out of your busy lives to talk to us during the inspection. We appreciate your honesty and your openness in telling us about some of the difficulties centre staff have helped you to overcome.

Your centre offers a good service to families and also offers a wide range of services and activities which you told us you thoroughly enjoy. Centre staff work very well with many other organisations to help you improve your health, your education and also that of your children. They also provide good training to help you improve your chances of finding employment.

We could see from our look at statistics and other evidence that the centre helps your children to become better prepared for school. More and more children in the area are also making good progress once they arrive at school.

From our visit, we could see that families from different backgrounds use the centre and feel welcomed. In fact, some of you described your centre as having a 'home from home' environment. We heard much about your 'coffee and culture' group and we know it has provided a very special opportunity for families to learn about each other's culture and appreciate similarities and differences.

Staff really care about families and we found this to be an outstanding aspect of your centre's work. We share your very positive views about the way staff support families. You told us that you and your children feel safe at the centre and we found this aspect of your centre's work to be excellent. Centre staff take safeguarding really seriously and do their utmost to make sure families are well protected.

We were privileged to meet some of you who volunteer at the centre and were very impressed with the way the centre supports and trains volunteers. We would like the staff to build on the success of the volunteer programme by offering accreditation to parents who complete the training. This would give you formal recognition for the hard work you do as volunteers.

We found the way that centre staff and health professionals work together to be very positive and help you and your families to remain healthy. We like the way the Boardroom Café is used to encourage families to eat healthy food. When we looked at statistics, we could see that obesity rates have decreased in the area. However,

we have asked centre staff to do more work to try and increase breastfeeding rates which are still too low.

Once again, many thanks for giving up time to speak to us during the inspection. We wish you and your families the very best for the future.

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