

Inspection report for Coseley Children's Centre

Local authority	Dudley
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Time for 2's 260155

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 senior managers, health and education professionals, family support and early years workers, parents, and representatives of the local authority, the advisory board, adult and family learning services.

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

Information about the centre

Coseley Children's Centre is a phase two centre and was designated in October 2007. The centre fulfils its core purpose through a range of integrated services relating to health, family support, adult training and childcare provision. The head of centre reports to Action for Children and the local authority, both of which are responsible for the governance of the centre. An advisory board with representatives from key partners and parents supports the work of the centre.

Parts of the reach area are ranked within the top 10% and 30% of the most socially and economically disadvantaged areas in the country. The percentages of workless households and those dependent on benefits are above average. On entry to early years provision, children's skills, knowledge and abilities are below those expected for their age. The population is predominantly White British with a very small, but growing, population from minority ethnic backgrounds, predominantly from Eastern Europe.

Time for 2's day care is provided in the centre. The childcare provision is inspected separately from the children's centre. The latest inspection report is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

Coseley is a good children's centre. It offers an inclusive, warm and welcoming environment. Staff identify and overcome barriers which could prevent children and families from accessing the centre and services. Significant improvements have been made in the last 18 months to the range, availability and accessibility of services and activities for children and families as a result of improved leadership. These developments are having a positive impact on outcomes for children and families. Leaders share a clear vision and commitment to developing the centre's services and are supported by a dedicated but small team of highly reflective and professional staff. They are very motivated and staff morale is high. As a result, the centre's capacity to improve is good. Outcomes for children and their families are good overall and there is clear evidence of continued improvement. However, the lack of some relevant data means that the centre is very reliant on case studies and internally collated evidence to demonstrate good health outcomes.

Parents who made their comments known spoke of their high regard for the staff. They say they receive sensitive, personalised care, guidance and support. One parent said, 'There is always someone there to help.' Under the new leadership partnership, arrangements have flourished.

Governance arrangements are good. The advisory board is a relatively recent and positive addition to the governance arrangements of the centre. Parents are represented on the board and meetings take place regularly. The board shares the ambition and drive of the senior leaders. It is becoming increasingly effective. Leaders accurately evaluate the effectiveness of the centre, but action plans designed to drive further improvements lack clear, specific and measurable targets.

Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding, and there is a particularly strong culture of child protection within the centre. Children subject to child protection plans receive high-quality support as a result of the strong inter-agency working arrangements. Parents attend paediatric first-aid courses so that they are able to respond appropriately if their children are injured. Families made vulnerable by their circumstances receive good care, guidance and support from experienced staff.

Parents say they feel very safe at the centre and are very happy and confident to leave their children in the care of staff. The centre provides a safe place where families enjoy the activities on offer.

The range of adult education and learning and development opportunities provided at the centre is generally exciting and varied. However, currently there are few activities which enable parents to achieve nationally accredited qualifications or employment.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the centre's development action planning by:
 - ensuring that there are agreed timescales and clear targets against which to measure success
 - collating and using accurate and relevant data to provide evidence for improved outcomes for children and families.

- Reduce the number of workless households and those dependent on unemployment benefits by providing more education and training opportunities for parents to gain nationally accredited and recognised qualifications.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

There is a very strong focus on improving the health of children and families. For instance, 73% of all activities at the centre are designed to improve individuals' good health. Healthy eating activities are very popular and include parent-and-child cooking sessions. Breastfeeding is a priority and all breastfeeding mothers registered at the centre receive invaluable encouragement, advice and guidance from breastfeeding supporters. Breastfeeding take-up rates have almost doubled in the last two years, although remain below the national average at 54%. Child obesity data available at the centre were found to be unreliable. There is an increasingly positive picture of families' health. Levels of immunisation are high at 96%.

Safeguarding arrangements are excellent. Exemplary procedures ensure that children are safe and protected. Staff work very effectively with key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children and families. Children subject to protection plans receive effective and timely support. Staff use the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes extremely well to secure improved outcomes for children and families. Parents are very appreciative of the centre's focus on their families' safety. Risk assessments are rigorous and thorough. First-aid training is available for parents and home-safety packs provided to families help raise children's and families' awareness of risks and dangers in the home and their communities.

When children start attending the early years provision, many make rapid progress from their starting points. Over time, children make good progress during the Early

Years Foundation Stage. The percentage of children living in the area achieving at least 78 scale points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is well below the national average at 51%. However, the gap between the lowest and highest-achieving 20% has decreased significantly year on year. The gap is now on a par with that seen nationally.

Parenting and nurturing programmes are very popular with families. These are leading to significant gains in parenting confidence and skills, which is having a positive impact on children's behaviour. One parent commented that she has grown considerably in confidence since attending the centre. Another said that attending the activities at the centre had; 'Helped (my child's) confidence that is why I bring (him/her)'. The 'Stay and Play' and drop-in sessions provide valuable opportunities for parents and children to play and learn together. Parents make highly prized and increasing contributions to the life of the centre as volunteers and members of the advisory board.

Many parents are involved in learning activities. The few, but increasing, number of volunteers at the centre are provided with training opportunities and are well supported to develop their confidence and skills. The economic well-being of families is improving because of the quality learning activities and workshops such as the 'Money Skills' groups. The Citizens Advice Bureau, a much-valued partner, supports families to maximise their incomes by ensuring they claim benefits to which they are entitled. For instance, in the last year, 55 families benefited from a share of total income maximisation of £33,000. Unemployment in the area is high with around 250 children living in homes dependent on workless benefits. Despite the positive focus on learning and development, there is limited evidence to show how education and training activities have helped to increase individuals' prospects of employment.

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	2
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	2
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?

2

An improvement to the range, quality and accessibility of services and activities provided has led to a significant increase in centre membership and participation rates. Membership reflects the target groups across the community. The quality of services is good and improving because of the effective inter-agency partnerships and the regular and valued feedback from families. Activities to encourage healthy lifestyles are a strong feature in the timetable of provision. As a result, some parents commented on the positive changes they have made to their families' nutrition, diet, and physical activities. Activities such as baby massage, baby yoga and 'Bumps to Babes' help to secure strong attachment and the emotional well-being of parent and baby. This ensures that children get a good start to their early learning. Adult and family learning activities are well attended, and several parents commented that they eagerly seek out new learning opportunities at the centre.

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction and appreciation for the support they receive. One parent commented: 'It is fabulous here, everyone is so friendly. I can't rate (the centre) any higher.' Case studies provide convincing evidence of how staff help families through difficult times and how their lives would be less fulfilled without the centre's help. Home visits, help with transport, and direct one-to-one support are just some of the effective ways that staff reach out to families to actively engage them in the life of the centre. The centre successfully targets its support to those considered in greatest need and provides flexible, good-quality services to meet their specific needs.

Families made vulnerable by their circumstances are prioritised for premium provision, such as childcare funding for two-year-olds, and take-up is growing. Speech and language support across the reach area is having a positive impact on children's communication and language development. Children at risk of communication and language delay receive additional support quickly. This ensures that they make rapid initial progress which enables them to catch up with their peers. Families using the centre say they feel safe and their needs are met very well. The use of tried and tested assessments, such as the Common Assessment Framework, family reviews, and Early Years Foundation Stage assessments, are effective and ensure that services and interventions are improving outcomes. Families who are in receipt of intensive support are consistently encouraged and supported to contribute to the process of assessing and reviewing their achievements.

The much-improved range of learning and development opportunities provided at the centre and via partners is popular and take-up rates are good.

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	2
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	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The governance and accountability of the centre are good. The centre has undergone considerable regeneration under the new leadership team. Staff are ambitious for the children and families and inspire confidence. Parents have responded positively to the changes over the last year or so, and many are increasingly inspired to become involved in the centre as volunteers and members of the advisory board. There is a strong commitment to develop further the role of the advisory board to enhance its ability to challenge and support the leaders. The effectiveness of the board has yet to be fully experienced at the centre but early signs of its impact are encouraging.

The significant improvements to the leadership and management of the centre and provision have resulted in good outcomes for children and families. These developments have been supported by regular action planning and evaluation of progress. However, there is a lack of specific targets against which the centre can measure its success. There is a strong focus on performance management and quality assurance of the staff and centre's work. Positive professional development opportunities are appreciated by staff and support their levels of enthusiasm and motivation. The large majority of families are actively involved in services provided by or commissioned by the centre. Staff target families who are not engaging with the centre and membership has increased significantly.

The centre is very inclusive. Those families in greatest need are quickly identified and receive prompt and effective support and access to additional services. The whole staff team is committed to developing and implementing professional practice which is inclusive and non-judgemental. One parent commented on the open and non-discriminatory attitudes that prevail throughout the centre. The centre plays a key role in celebrating diversity and difference. For instance, it organised a community-wide Carnival, a multicultural celebration which was attended by very large numbers of families throughout the wider community. Target groups are well represented and posters and information are available in various community languages. Children with disabilities and special needs receive appropriate and timely support at the centre but also at the various specialist services within the area.

The welfare and protection of children are at the heart of this effective centre. Staff recruitment and selection procedures are rigorous. All staff have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check and these are updated every three years. All staff

have excellent safeguarding knowledge and use this to very good effect as they support families living with domestic violence, drug and alcohol dependency, and mental ill-health. As a result of staff's expertise and the outstanding safeguarding arrangements, families report that the support they receive is invaluable and helps them to regain their emotional well-being.

The centre manages available resources very effectively and they have a positive impact, as reflected in the good outcomes and provision. As a result, the centre provides good value for money.

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	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
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	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	2

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

Inspectors took into account the findings of the inspection of Time for 2's which took place in 2009. The provision was judged to be good.

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We inspected the Coseley Children's Centre on 15–16 August 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank all of you who took the time to come in and meet with us and tell us about your centre. We can see that you appreciate the support and advice the staff give you and that you love meeting other parents and making new friends. Many of you said how safe and happy you and your children feel at the centre and that staff are always friendly and helpful. The safeguarding arrangements are outstanding because of the staff's determination to promote and protect the well-being of children and families. Centre staff are very good at helping you to keep your homes as safe as possible and we know several of you have received home-safety packs and some of you have attended paediatric first-aid courses.

The centre is providing you with important support at times of crisis, and staff and partner agencies are helping you to manage your money, ensure you are receiving the benefits to which you are entitled, cope with debt and resolve housing issues. It is good to know that a few of you are volunteering at the centre, and we are keen to see the volunteer programme expand even further. Children make good progress because of the good-quality childcare provision on site. Those of you who attend the 'Stay and Play' sessions and family learning activities join in your children's play and develop your knowledge and understanding of how children learn.

We were impressed with the warm, friendly and inclusive atmosphere that you help to create in the centre. Several of you told us how staff never judge anyone but are always welcoming and supportive. We saw how well the centre staff work with other partners, for example the local schools, to support children's transitions to school. The speech and language support available on site is helping children to make good progress in their communication and language development. In addition, the great many activities provided to encourage and support children's and families' good health are very encouraging. We were able to join a few of the families who participated in the 'Buggy Walk'. Despite the heavy rain, those few of you who attended were determined to enjoy the physical activities and outdoors with your children. We were impressed with your commitment to your physical good health.

We have asked the centre leaders to make some improvements which we think will enhance the good work they are doing. We have asked them to improve the accuracy of data to support their evidence that health outcomes are good and improving. We have also asked that action plans have clear and specific targets which should be used to measure the centre's success. We have asked the centre leaders to ensure they provide you with a wide range of training and education activities to enable you to achieve nationally accredited qualifications and to support those of you who are keen to develop careers or employment opportunities.

Thank you again for helping us with the inspection. It was good to meet you all and we wish you all the very best for the future.

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