

# Inspection report for Woodhouse Children's Centre

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Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	383857
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Reporting inspector	Sue Pepper HMI

Centre leader	Nikki Thornton
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Woodhouse West Primary School Coisley Hill Woodhouse Sheffield S13 7BP
Telephone number	0114 2939869
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	childrenscentre@woodhousewest.sheffield.sch.uk

Linked school if applicable	107023 Woodhouse West Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Not applicable

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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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 one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with a representative from the local authority, the centre coordinator and receptionist, and an early years consultant. They met with a front-line worker and managers within the East Multi Agency Support Team (MAST), childminders and their network coordinator, advisory board members, parents and a range of partner agency members.

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

## Information about the centre

Woodhouse Children's Centre is a phase two centre which was designated in 2008. The centre operates from a purpose-built building situated within the grounds of Woodhouse West Primary School which provides nursery provision. The centre works with partner agencies and commissioned services to meet its core purpose by offering services from its base and outreach venues.

The centre is situated in the village of Woodhouse which is to the south east of Sheffield. Amongst more affluent new housing there are pockets of deprivation. The centre community includes the estates in Severnside, Badger and Waterslacks. Recent figures show that the population of children aged from birth to five years of age is 543. Across the centre reach area 30.8% of these children are living in the 30% most disadvantaged areas within England. Unemployment is increasing and 22% of families are out of work. A significant number of families are dependent on working family tax credits. The majority of the population is of White British heritage, with a growing percentage of families from minority

ethnic groups. The proportion of disabled children and people and those with special educational needs is low.

Children enter childcare provision and education with skills and knowledge generally below those expected nationally for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage is delivered through the nursery on site and private and voluntary childcare provision in the area.

Governance of the centre is provided by the local authority in conjunction with an advisory board. The centre coordinator is responsible for three children's centres. The centre is open 48 weeks of the year.

## 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
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### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3
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## Main findings

Leadership and management of the centre satisfactorily coordinate the range of services delivered by several partner agencies. The provision promotes mostly satisfactory or improving outcomes for children and families. Attention to promoting children's welfare and safeguarding them is high priority and a real strength of the centre. Parents say they feel safe and they see the centre as a very welcoming place.

Good knowledge of the local community aids the centre's understanding of the issues some children and families face. The centre is appropriately focusing on the most disadvantaged families in order to reduce inequalities. The uptake of family and adult learning is successfully promoting parental aspirations, self-esteem and parenting skills. Consequently, children and parents enjoy and achieve educationally and they make satisfactory progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Targeted action such as 'Talking Toddlers' encourages improvements in communication and language but more work is required to ensure all children are ready for their transition into school.

Health outcomes are variable but satisfactory overall. Families are encouraged to eat healthily and to be more physically active. Only a small minority of mothers breastfeed and the number of mothers smoking during pregnancy is high. The percentage of children in the Reception Year who are obese is above the national average.

The centre promotes the inclusion of children and their families satisfactorily. Work to increase the number of families registered and engaging with the centre is ongoing. The centre acknowledges that some families who might benefit from the centre's services are not accessing them. However, due to a concerted effort a large majority of children and their families are now registered with the centre. The majority of target groups are participating in services. However, the centre is aware that only a small minority of fathers are engaging in activities and this is an area for further development. Trusting relationships have been formed with those families with whom the centre has worked directly, and early intervention work has made a big difference to improving some users' lives. As a result, users of the centre demonstrate high levels of satisfaction.

The centre is developing and strengthening close working relationships and the effectiveness of its partnership work. Systems to assess the needs of those children and families who are in particularly vulnerable situations due to their circumstances are good. The centre is working with key partners and agencies to address the issue of unemployment but the numbers of parents returning to work is low.

The centre is keen to increase parental membership on its advisory board. Several strategies are used to increase parents' opportunities to contribute to decision making and governance of the centre. A few parents willingly work as volunteers and they run regular play group sessions at the centre.

The centre has accurately identified areas for improvement. Planning has clear, measurable success criteria which are used to monitor improvement and evaluate success. Consequently, capacity for continued improvement is satisfactory.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Improve health outcomes by working with partners to:
  - increase the number of mothers initiating and sustaining breastfeeding
  - reduce the number of children in Reception Year who are obese
  - decrease the percentage of mothers who smoke during pregnancy

- Strengthen links with partners to ensure gaps in young children's attainment in the prime areas of learning are successfully acted upon to promote children's transition into school
- Increase users' involvement by:
  - identifying and engaging further with families in the community who are not accessing the centre's services, particularly fathers and male carers
  - securing greater participation of parents on the advisory board.

## How good are outcomes for families?

3
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Effective early intervention and prevention work helps protect children and prevent some complex situations accelerating. Improved parental confidence helps parents to take charge of difficult situations. Parents described the impact of individual support as making 'a big difference to their life'. Parents receive regular safety advice to help them have a better understanding of how to keep their families safe. Children manage risks well in a safe environment.

The percentage of mother's sustaining breastfeeding is 31.1%. This is well below the national average of 47%. The percentage of mothers smoking during pregnancy is 18.8%. This is above the national average of 13.4%. Methods to monitor smoking are in place but the impact of smoking cessation is unclear. Most children access immunisation programmes. Dental decay is very high and the centre recognises the promotion of good oral health as an important priority. The percentage of young children who enter Reception Year obese is very high at 28.5% compared to the national average of 9.4%. Healthy eating is satisfactorily promoted and parents say they now carefully check labels and the nutritional content of food. Opportunities are available to access courses specifically planned to encourage healthy home cooking. However, this has yet to have an impact on reducing the high levels of obesity in the area.

Parents are confident in expressing their views and they treat each other with respect. They describe enjoying attending the family learning and training courses provided and the changes these have made to their lives. They speak confidently about the benefits of 'Baby Massage' and the manner in which they now manage young children's behaviour more positively. Parents now understand how important it is to reward good behaviour with attention and praise. Some described 'much improved bedtime or mealtime routines'. Others explained how they help their young children to understand and express their feelings and emotions. As a result, parents are developing more purposeful, nurturing relationships with their children.

The achievement gap for children is narrowing well between the lowest performing 20% and the rest. The nursery has been particularly successfully at reducing the gap in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile scores; since 2010 the progress of the lowest-performing children has improved by 20%. Courses effectively promote early communication, language and literacy. A parent said that attending 'Story Power' had helped her to 'fire my child's imagination'. Some strategies to aid children's development have led to greatly improved results. For example, the achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at Woodhouse West Primary School has recently risen dramatically. However, not all children attend pre-school provision. Overall, children are making satisfactory progress.

Adults have access to a wide range of learning opportunities, some of which are accredited, to develop their basic knowledge and skills. Many make the gradual progression from one course to another and achievements are celebrated. Satisfactory support is in place for those who are willing to follow routes which can lead to employment.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	3
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	2
<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>	3
<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>	3
<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>	3

## How good is the provision?

3

The centre is well-known in the area. A few families also travel from out of the reach area to use the centre's services due to the warm welcome they receive. Regular consultation with partners delivering services and parents ensures services and opportunities are flexible and responsive to users' needs.

The compact centre shares its entrance and staff room with the school nursery. Displays are attractive and regularly changed to ensure they are up to date and informative. The centre

has created an enabling environment within their attractively resourced playroom which has its own kitchen facilities and a small outdoor play space. Good-quality resources are attractively set out to invite young children's use. The community room is well used for meetings and to deliver a satisfactory range of adult training courses. Family Learning provides a programme of courses. 'My Family and Me - Living Safely, Living Well' and 'Family Health Matters' promote improving health and lifestyles and ways of supporting children's learning. Attendance on training courses is generally good.

Families receive satisfactory care, guidance and support. Parents have the confidence to turn to the centre in times of crisis or for general help and support. Children have access to both satisfactory childcare and good-quality childcare which promote purposeful learning. The take-up of free educational places for two-year-olds is high.

Health service partners have a specific room where they run ante-natal and post-natal drop-in clinics. They offer parents regular opportunities to discuss children's development and topics such as weaning and the importance of oral hygiene. Midwives, health visitors and the breastfeeding support workers work well together. They provide parents with sound information and advice. A few mothers are beginning to attend the breastfeeding café.

Childminders have their own weekly drop-in session and the centre's partnership with them is strengthening and developing. The number of teenage parents in the area has dramatically reduced. The Salvation Army delivers effective support for them if it is required. Opportunities are available locally for families with young children to become more physically active, for example through attendance at the swimming baths at Brunswick School. In addition, a range of popular courses are delivered for adults such as nail art, jewellery making, flower arranging and first aid.

Successful adult learning work clubs have been run at the centre in the past and this has added value to the work of Jobcentre Plus which provides the centre with regular job vacancies. The centre also links with 'SOAR', a specialist in developing employability skills and providing careers advice. A successful programme of parenting courses is tailored to meet targeted users' needs in the community.

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>	3
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	3
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.</b>	3



## How effective are the leadership and management?

3
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The relatively new centre coordinator has galvanised key partners to have greater purpose. The highly skilled receptionist is pivotal to the centre's day-to-day management. Coordination of a range of commissioned partner agencies is a challenge as budget restraints have impacted on the delivery of some services.

Satisfactory governance and accountability arrangements are in place. All staff are appropriately supervised by their own agency. Contractual arrangements are clear and understood. The advisory board is now well established and developing its effectiveness in challenging and holding the centre to account for its work. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate. Impact data provided for the centre continue to improve. Action planning identifies appropriate high, medium and low priorities, accurately focusing on specific, measurable and ambitious targets to promote continual improvement.

Strong partnerships are evident with the local schools and health partners. East Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) employ named intervention and prevention outreach workers to provide support for those who most need help. They are trained to deal sensitively with issues such as domestic violence and poverty and they empower parents to deal with difficult situations. The Common Assessment Framework is used effectively to target specific, tailored support for families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Good safeguarding practice is adopted across all areas of the centre's work. Recruitment and vetting procedures to check the suitability of multi-agency workers and partners are robust. Security at the centre is good.

Partnerships with parents are developing and their evaluations of services are used to shape and improve services. The centre regularly seeks the views of parents to use their ideas to shape services to meet their needs. Currently, only one parent is a member of the advisory board; the centre is considering developing a parents' forum to encourage more parents to be actively involved in the governance of the centre.

Marketing of the centre is through the 'What's on and Where?' guide which is distributed in the community. Woodhouse West Primary School holds the centre's budget. The sharing of resources, provision and training with partners helps to secure satisfactory value for money.

Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily. Disabled children and those with special educational needs are provided with specific support from within the local area to meet any identified need. Families from different minority ethnic backgrounds are welcomed at the centre and they have access to 'English for Speakers of Other Languages courses' (ESOL). Crèche facilities which run next door to the training room enable those with young children to attend training, reassured their children are nearby. The centre recognises the important

role fathers play in their child's development but the number of fathers currently attending the centre is low.

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>	3
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	3
<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>	3
<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>	3
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	2
<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>	3
<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>	3

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

None

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected Woodhouse Children's Centre on 19 and 20 September 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

This centre provides a safe place for you where you can be sure of a warm and friendly welcome. High priority is given to safeguarding families. Those of you we spoke to told us how much you enjoy attending the centre. You particularly enjoy attending the baby clinic and 'Sticky Fingers', the parent/carer and toddler groups which run regularly from the centre. You told us about the difference attending training courses has made to your lives. You said you trust the centre workers and find them very helpful.

Several of you were positive about the impact of parenting courses which have helped you understand your child's behaviour and development. For example, some of you told us how you encourage more positive behaviour in your children by helping them to explain their feelings by using simple props like faces showing different expressions. Some of you have developed more consistent bedtime and mealtime routines which you find more enjoyable. Some children are entering school with skills below those expected for their age so we have asked the centre to consider how they can further support children's school readiness. We know some of you are now confident to lead groups and have important roles as volunteers which further strengthen the work of the centre. You also enjoy attending events and play groups at the local churches, Southern Light Community or St James and the Salvation Army.

The number of mothers choosing to breastfeed babies is low. We have asked the centre to work closely with their partners to ensure those of you who choose to breastfeed are given effective support. We understand the centre raises your awareness of the dangers of smoking to health. Nevertheless, a high number of adults are smokers. Therefore, we have asked the centre to work with their partners to help expectant mothers in particular to stop smoking if they wish to do so.

Some of you told us you enjoy the 'Baby Massage' which encourages bonding with your babies. Despite some opportunities to increase your physical activity, such as swimming at Brunswick Primary School, the number of children who enter school who are overweight is high. Therefore, we have asked the centre to work closely with their partners to further encourage healthier, more active lifestyles to reduce obesity.

The centre recognises the important role fathers play in their children's lives. We have asked the centre to consult with fathers and male carers to find out how they can encourage more of them to benefit from the services and opportunities they offer.

We would like to thank everyone who was willing to speak to us. We are very grateful for your help and wish you every success in the future.

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