

# Inspection report for Hillside Sure Start Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	386932
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 October 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Quinn

<b>Centre leader</b>	Tracey Demers
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected.
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Pennyhill Primary School 135215
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Sunny Skies Day Nursery EY377047

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.

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This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre management team, the local authority, health professionals, representatives from the partnership board and parent focus groups, front-line staff, parents and other partner agencies.

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

## Information about the centre

Hillside Sure Start Children's Centre was designated in March 2008 as a phase two centre. The centre meets the full core purpose by providing a range of health, outreach, family support, return to work and childcare services. Services are delivered from a range of schools, church halls and community centres within the area. The centre's reach covers four areas including the estates and communities of Yew Tree and Tamebridge, Charlemont Farm and Bustleholme, Wigmore, and Hall End. Some areas within the reach are quite a distance from the centre and the motorway forms a barrier, which makes it hard for some families to access the centre. The centre therefore provides some outreach services at a satellite facility called 'The Brambles' in the Yew Tree area.

On the 1 August 2012, the management of the centre transferred from Pennyhill Primary School, which is the co-located school, to Barnardo's. Sunny Skies Day Nursery is also located on the site and is managed by the school. Both Pennyhill Primary School and Sunny Skies Day Nursery receive their own inspections. The

cluster manager has been in post since 1 October 2012 and she manages one other children's centre at Great Barr and Hamstead. The current partnership board supports the cluster manager and centre coordinator and provides governance. The cluster manager, coordinator and partnership board comprise the management team.

The centre's reach covered 969 families with children under 5 years old and 2011 census data shows this figure has increased to 1123, most of whom are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of children in households dependent on workless benefits has risen to almost 30%. The most recent data show 75% of families receiving the childcare element of working tax credit.

Most children enter early years provision with skills, knowledge and abilities that are below those expected for their age, especially in language and communication and personal, social and emotional development. There are a small number of disabled children and children with special educational needs. There are also small number of looked after children in the area and children with a child protection plan and children in need.

## 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

Hillside Sure Start Children's Centre is an outstanding centre. The work of the centre is highly effective and results in outstanding outcomes for the large majority of families in the area. Parental comments are overwhelmingly positive; 'The staff love all of our children,' commented one parent and parents comment that the knowledge the staff have of their children is used exceptionally well to ensure their safety and ongoing achievements.

Staff place a very high priority on safeguarding families and work exceptionally well to assess needs and help those who are most at risk. They take timely action to ensure the safety of the families they work with and are extremely effective. The partners who work with the centre share information very productively as a team and

issues are picked up and dealt with very quickly in full cooperation. One professional partner commented that, 'if families are supported by staff at this centre they will be safe.'

Staff promote breastfeeding extensively and as a result breastfeeding rates are showing steady improvement. Mums comment that they would not have sustained breastfeeding if the centre staff had not been so supportive and available to help. Families have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and the centre's initiatives greatly improve their lifestyles, smoking cessation, healthy eating and exercise. Children's confidence, behaviour and social skills rapidly improve through attending the centre's activities like the playgroup. As a consequence, they are well prepared for school and their speech and language skills are much improved. Parents improve their parenting, literacy, numeracy and employability skills substantially through highly relevant courses although their on-going successes are not always tracked precisely enough. Parents enthusiastically share their views about the centre and know they are shaping the services and activities that are provided.

Staff provide outstanding practical help, guidance and support for families. In times of crisis, families receive fast and beneficial advice, and are referred to external organisations where appropriate. The centres number one priority is to make sure that early intervention supports families before issues escalate. As a consequence, outreach work is exceptionally effective and the staff use their vast knowledge of the area and families very well to ensure the centre meets all of the needs of its key target groups.

Management of the centre, the use of its resources and staff are outstanding. The cluster manager and coordinator have high expectations and set ambitious targets for the centre. There is a strong shared vision and they demonstrate an excellent awareness of what the centre needs to do to improve and prioritise actions clearly within service delivery planning. The enthusiastic and highly supportive partnership board has strong representation from local schools, key partners and parents ensuring a sound focus on addressing local issues. Its members incisively challenge the centre's decision-making and focus accurately on meeting the needs of the area. The transfer of management to Barnardo's has been seamless and this is largely because the team are so strong. These features demonstrate the centre's excellent capacity to sustain improvement.

The centre is a highly inclusive environment where staff strive to eliminate any potential access barriers. They promote respect, equality and diversity successfully and organise very popular sessions that have high levels of participation. The excellent collaboration with partners and parents, highly effective use of resources, and on-going focus on sustainability ensures the centre provides outstanding value for money.

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

## Recommendations for further improvement

- Develop ways to track the longer-term outcomes for centre users who attend training.

## How good are outcomes for families?

<b>1</b>
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Children make outstanding progress from their starting points because provision is of high quality. The early years qualified teacher provides excellent support to the centre early years staff enabling them to track the progress of children in detail and provide additional support quickly where necessary.

A variety of excellent programmes significantly improve children's communication, language and literacy, enabling their very good achievements in personal, social and emotional development. Local schools comment on the centre's excellent impact on improving children's readiness for school and their skills and abilities when they have attended children's centre sessions. Because of this focused work, the number of children achieving at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least six points scored in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development is now much higher than seen nationally at 73.3%. The achievement gap is closing rapidly and at 32.2% is only slightly wider than that seen nationally.

Children routinely learn about risks when they attend the playgroup or the 'Stay and Play' sessions. Childminders use the centre to meet and use the facilities for the benefit of the children in their care. The centre works very well with other agencies to support children in need, looked after children and those subject to a child protection plan. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is exceptionally well used to ensure effective sharing of information, rigorous assessment and swift referral. Outcomes for those families whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable improve quickly as support is rapid, effective and well-focused. Staff, volunteers and parents show a thorough understanding of safeguarding.

Parents improve their skills, knowledge and confidence through high quality learning activities, including parenting courses, personal development programmes and accredited and non-accredited courses, including literacy and numeracy skills development. Their progress is exceptionally well supported and monitored leading to high-level completion rates although their longer-term achievement is not always tracked precisely.

A very wide range of activities and services are well attended and successfully improve physical, emotional and mental health and good relationships at the centre. Ante-natal services, baby clinics, child development support, and advice about feeding and weaning contribute to excellent health outcomes. Obesity figures for children in Reception Year are below the national average at 6%; however, the centre is not complacent and maintains healthy eating and healthy lifestyles as a

high priority. The number of mothers initiating breastfeeding is above the national average at 76%. The centre gathered this information from a Breastfeeding sample of mothers within the community.

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>	<b>1</b>
<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>1</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>1</b>

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

**1**

The centre promotes an effective, integrated approach to service provision, very effectively meeting a range of needs of all families using the centre whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable. Action plans are carefully tailored to suit the individual needs of the family and case studies provide powerful examples of the positive outcomes that result. Home visits are conducted with sensitivity and a clear focus. These features combined with a range of targeted and universal services, all of which have a specific or precise purpose, ensures outstanding impact across many areas of family's lives. Vulnerable parents sing the praises of the family support workers and say that their lives have changed quickly for the better because of the excellent support they have received.

The provision to help children learn and develop is outstanding as reflected in the very positive Early years Foundation Stage Profile. A wide range of services and activities are imaginatively delivered across the reach area and these reflect the very specific needs of the local community. Activities are very well located. For example, the centre offers a range of activities to support individuals who have experienced very low self-confidence and isolation, with life changing results.

The centre has made substantial progress in reaching out and making contact with families across the local area that it serves. There is a steady increase in the number of registrations and engagement figures at 75% are also rising steadily. There is a high level of trust and respect at the centre and parents say that they feel empowered and comment on the real difference the centre has made to their own

confidence and learning. The celebration of achievements is also an integral part of the culture of this welcoming and inclusive centre. For example, a display board highlights adult's achievement and the work of some of the volunteers with colourful photographs and certificates.

Overwhelmingly parents told inspectors that when they have most needed support and care, the response from the centre has been exceptional. 'I am now safe and my child is safe' said one parent, whilst another told us how the centre had 'changed her life and she would never thought she could leave the house and meet people.' The advice and guidance offered is outstanding with a variety of partners visiting and working from the centre on a regular basis. Family support workers have a wealth of knowledge and they are able to advise and sign-post parents very effectively to partners and agencies where they can receive personalised support. Extremely productive relationships with relevant external agencies ensure that assessment is rigorous and the timely support and advice for families of disabled children and those with special educational needs and for looked after children.

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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</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?**

**1**

The centre has successfully reached a high percentage of families in the area and is continually evaluating how to reach more families, for example children in foster care. Staff use the centre's resources well and have created a warm and inviting environment which includes a small library and seating area, health and family rooms and play areas. Some of the main rooms have been refurbished as staff felt they were not inviting and homely. Parents comment that the rooms are of high quality, warm and comfortable. The excellent deployment of staff, effective use of resources and wide range of venues, increasing participation rates and outstanding outcomes mean that value for money is outstanding.

Leadership and management at all levels are excellent and strive to provide a full programme that has outstanding impact on families' lives. The use of the main building is maximised as many partners such as health professionals, Citizens Advice Bureau staff, childminders, training providers and the care provider and school on site are fully involved in service delivery. The centre uses all available information, especially the views of parents, to extend and evolve the services across the area. The family support workers and early years staff are well qualified for their roles and



together they work successfully to include all families in centre services. Volunteers play a full part in the delivery of services and are trained and included as if they were employed staff.

The centre has established robust and effective governance and accountability arrangements. Line management responsibilities within the centre and with partners are clear. Transfer of management, policies and procedures to Barnardo's has been very well handled and service has continued with no disruption. Managers and staff are very positive about the changes and are excited about the future of the centre. Partners' and parents' self-confidence is raised considerably through having their views acted upon through their representation on the partnership board.

Partnerships result in the highly positive inclusion of the most disadvantaged groups in the area, reflected in the high reach figures... The achievement of young parents and isolated families, is rapidly improving as barriers to their participation are broken down. Children with disabilities, with special educational needs or children who are looked after are carefully tracked and supported to ensure they continue to make the best progress. Equality is highly promoted in all respects and discrimination is not tolerated.

Safeguarding is at the top of all staff and volunteers' priorities and results in the high-level protection for all centre users. Vetting checks include all staff and volunteers, and visitors' arrival and departure is carefully monitored. Staff are well trained in child protection procedures and play a full part in core child protection groups so that families quickly step away from the need for formal protection plans.

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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>1</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>1</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>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the</b>	<b>1</b>

reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	
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## Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The inspection findings for Pennyhill Primary School and Sunny Skies Day Nursery were used to inform this inspection.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Hillside Sure Start Children's Centre on 17–18 October 2012. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

During the inspection we looked at your centre's improvement plans and many other documents. We spoke with a range of partner agencies, centre staff and representatives from the centre partnership board. We also spoke with parents and family members using the centre during the inspection. Thank you for your welcome and for speaking so openly to us. Our discussions with those of you we were able to meet helped us considerably in finding out about the centre's work. You were very positive about everything the staff do to help and support you. Typical views were: 'Staff have made such a difference to my life and my children's lives,' and, 'Staff love all of the children.' Your children achieve very well at the centre and staff carefully track their progress to ensure they continue to do well.

Many of you commented on the friendly welcome you receive to introduce you into the centre. Staff have successfully increased the number of families using the centre's services as they have extended activities to venues closer to the different communities in your area. This is just one example of how staff are continually finding ways to improve services. There is an excellent capacity to improve further because staff know exactly what has to be done next. Barnardo's have now taken over the children's centre's management and this transition has been very smooth and effective.

The staff ensure that you have outstanding support and guidance, particularly in times of crisis. You say that you enjoy the training offered to you and we have asked the centre to track your progress to ensure you continue to do well. Staff promote your healthy lifestyles well and breastfeeding extensively. As a result breastfeeding rates are showing steady improvement. Mums comment that they would not have sustained breastfeeding if the centre staff had not been so supportive and available to help. Children's confidence, behaviour and social skills rapidly improve through attending the centre's activities like the playgroup.

Parenting courses really help you to understand how to support your children's development and learning. The centre collects useful data on the success of its activities and uses them to develop new services. You are confident to ask for help because you feel safe and secure in the centre. The centre holds safeguarding of children as a high priority. Your views are sought regularly and your ideas are taken seriously so that you have considerable influence on how your centre is developing.

Management of the centre, the use of its resources and staff are outstanding. The cluster manager and coordinator have high expectations and set ambitious targets for the centre. The enthusiastic and highly supportive partnership board, of which some of you are members, provides lots of challenge. These features will help the centre go from strength to strength.

Thank you once again for your time and we hope that you will continue to benefit from the services that the centre provides.

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