

# Inspection report for St George's and Priorslee Children's Centre

---

<b>Local authority</b>	Telford and Wrekin
<b>Inspection number</b>	404534
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 October 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Dudley

<b>Centre leader</b>	Scott Jones
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Centre address</b>	London Road St Georges Shropshire TF2 9LJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01952 387183
<b>Fax number</b>	01952 387183
<b>Email address</b>	scott.jones@telford.gov.uk

<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	St George's Church of England Primary School
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Little Dragons Daycare Centre EY413204

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.

---

**Report published:** November 2012



Corporate member of  
Plain English Campaign  
Committed to clearer communication

**361**

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

No.100080

© Crown copyright 2011



## Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

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

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, members of staff and professionals from key partner agencies. Discussions were held with members of the advisory board, parents, and representatives from the local authority.

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

## Information about the centre

St George's Children's Centre is located to the north of Telford town centre. It is a phase two children's centre, which was designated in March 2007, and began delivering the full core offer in April 2009. Provision is delivered from Parish rooms on the school site. In April 2012, following a reorganisation of all children's centres in Telford and Wrekin, St George's Children's Centre began operating as part of the Hadley Castle locality alongside four other children's centres. All staff are based at the Hadley Learning Community; there are no staff based permanently at the centre. Staff have a generic job description to provide support to children and young people aged 0-19 and their families. All five of the centres in the locality are managed by the early intervention group manager, subsequently referred to as the centre manager. He is responsible to the local authority for the running of the centre. There is an advisory board of professionals which will become the new stakeholders' group for the centre, with new terms of reference. This will in turn have representation on the locality advisory board which will provide the statutory governance for the five children's centres in the area. A parents' panel is also planned for the locality with parental representation from each children's centre.

The centre provides family outreach work and a weekly session of 'Playing Together'. The centre works with health and education partners. Childcare and out of school activities are provided by the privately run Little Dragons Daycare Centre, and

nursery education is provided by St George's C.E. Primary School, both of which were judged to be good at their last Ofsted inspections.

There are 763 children aged under five living in the reach area, of which 13.9% live in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. Approximately 15% of four-year olds were living in households dependant on workless benefits in 2008, however, more recent figures are not available. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities are generally below those expected for their age when they enter early years provision. Most of the families in the area are of White British heritage, with a few from minority ethnic groups.

## 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**

**4**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**4**

## Main findings

St George's Children's Centre is inadequate. It does not meet the needs of the local community and too few families use the centre. Outcomes for families are inadequate overall and this, coupled with poor participation rates, means the centre does not provide sufficient value for money. A small amount of effective outreach work is undertaken in the area but overall too few families from target groups use the centre and its resources. Data about the characteristics of the local area are not sufficiently localised to ensure the accurate analysis of the needs of children and families who live in the area.

What the centre provides is insufficient to meet the needs of the local community, for example, there is only one 'Playing Together' session a week operating from the centre. In addition, there is a small amount of mentoring support and developmental support is available for children with additional needs in the private day-care and school nursery on the site.

The small number of families who do use the centre feel that they are given appropriate support in times of crisis. Case studies also demonstrate that those families receiving intensive support through outreach services are making progress in their personal development. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for families across the reach area to learn and develop.

With the exception of helping families to stay safe, outcomes are inadequate. Information is shared between partner agencies, particularly concerning safeguarding matters; this ensures that vulnerable children and families in the reach area are kept safe. Support to a few children with additional needs in nursery and day-care provision, is beginning to have a positive impact on inclusion. However, too few people are using the centre so that the skills and personal development of families are not improving in a meaningful way. Similarly, families are failing to become healthier or gain employment due to the limited range of activities to promote healthy lifestyles and the lack of opportunities for adults to improve their skills and economic stability.

Parents are not involved in decision making or governance and limited work has been done to capture their views. Some evaluations of a few activities have been carried out but there is no systematic process of evaluation and review. Relationships with the community are limited, and this is exacerbated by the lack of a staff presence at the centre unless an activity is being delivered.

The complete restructuring of the service completed in April 2012 led to wholesale staff change, which is only just beginning to have a positive impact on the centre. Much work has been done to ensure staff know their roles and responsibilities and lines of accountability are clear. Priorities for development have been identified with partners but the implementation of plans is still in the early stages. The range and quality of data available to the centre are variable; hindering the centre's ability to ensure planning is focussed accurately to meet local needs. As a consequence, the centre's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Engage with families in the local and wider community so that participation in the centre is widened to encompass those children and families who are most in need of intervention and support.
- Work with the local authority and partners to establish more effective ways of gathering information and data that is specific to the centre's reach area in order to inform target setting and analysis.
- Increase the level of parental involvement in the decision making and governance of the centre.
- Increase the range of services, activities and opportunities provided, in order to improve outcomes for families in the reach area by:
  - extending opportunities for adults to access training and learning that will lead to employment
  - building on existing health partnerships to provide services to encourage healthy lifestyles
  - increasing opportunities for families to enjoy learning and achieve educationally.

## How good are outcomes for families?

4

Outcomes for families are inadequate. Too few families use the centre. Those that do are positive about the support they receive, as one parent said, 'All my experiences here have been positive.' Health clinics are offered at other children's centres in the locality and some families access these services. However, the centre has little evidence of the impact of health provision on the lives of families in its area. The numbers of women initiating and sustaining breastfeeding rates are below the national average at 64% and 32.9% respectively. There is no evidence available to indicate that the centre is contributing to addressing the local authority's above average national obesity rates for children entering Reception Year.

The centre helps families keep safe through their effective partnership work with health, social care, police and Family Connect. Family Connect is the local authority's amalgamated family information service and multi-agency safeguarding hub; staff from the service have a role as part of the multi-agency 'triage service' dealing with enquiries. Incidents of domestic violence are responded to quickly and additional support is allocated through the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). The success of this approach is demonstrated in the reduction of repeat referrals. Staff's active involvement with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Team Around the Child (TAC) procedures lead to families in the area being effectively protected. There are currently three children on child protection plans being supported by centre staff. However, plans have been in place less than a month and it's too early to judge the impact of the centre's work. Parents who attend activities say they feel safe in the centre.

The proportion of children achieving 78+ points in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, with six points in all areas of communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development rose from 51.4% in 2010 to 63.4% in 2012. However, there is very little evidence of the centre's contribution to these improvements. 'Playing with Language', a programme to support speech and language development during the summer term, helped some children and families to communicate better. Children and parents have fun together in the weekly 'Playing Together' session, but lack opportunities to learn and play together at the centre otherwise. Few parents are given the opportunity to participate in adult education courses or training.

Parents are not currently involved in the governance or decision making at the centre. The current advisory board has no parental representation and the proposed parent panel has not yet been set up. Families receiving family support that are identified as needing help to deal with debt management or other economic issues are referred to Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) for support. No opportunities for adults to undertake training to improve their skills are currently being provided by the centre, and insufficient numbers of parents are being helped to make positive choices for their future training and employment. Job vacancies are advertised in the centre but there is no evidence of the information being used to seek 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>	<b>4</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>3</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>4</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>4</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>4</b>

## How good is the provision?

**4**

The quality of provision is inadequate. The centre is not assessing the needs of families in the reach area precisely enough and therefore cannot match its services to local needs. For example, there is no information on the number of lone parents or children in workless households in the area. Some planning of provision has begun, based on free school meal data, but has not yet been implemented. Partners have begun to input into the planning of services, but not yet in their delivery and review.

The overall participation rate for the centre is very low at 10.8%. Attendance at the one weekly session delivered from the centre is also low, averaging four or five children. A small amount of outreach is undertaken and case studies show this to be highly effective. Eight children receive family support and a small number of children are supported in the day care and school provision on site. Staff associated with the centre support a few children's learning well but there is a lack of provision for parents' learning and development. Some parents have completed courses at another centre within the locality, but no adult learning provision is currently offered at the centre.

The few families who use the centre feel well supported by the new workers. Case study evidence demonstrates how a small number of families receiving family support services have shown real progress across most outcome areas. Parents feel they are given appropriate advice and support in times of crisis. As a result of the care and support they receive, these parents become better equipped to overcome personal barriers. Parents feel empowered to make changes in order to improve the quality of their lives.

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>4</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>

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

**4**

The centre has been through a period of upheaval because of a restructuring of the service which has led to a complete change in staffing in the locality. The staffing restructure was completed in April 2012; however, the changes to the governance arrangements in the locality are still underway. Governance and accountability arrangements are clear and understood by all staff, thanks largely to improved supervision and staff development. Key partners are now engaged in planning provision to meet broad priorities. Users have not been engaged in discussion about the changes, they are not represented on the current advisory board, and the proposed parent panel has not yet been established.

Leaders and managers recognise many of the centre's inadequacies as reflected in their self-evaluation report. New managers are strongly focused on improving services and outcomes. They have produced an improvement plan which addresses some key priorities for the centre. However, planning is not based on the robust identification of target groups. Although evaluations are carried out for some activities, this process is not yet systematic and fails to direct the necessary improvements.

The very low participation and low attendance rates mean that the centre does not offer value for money. Staff have a broad remit, they work with children nought to 19 and their families, and operate across the whole locality. Currently, demand on staff time to provide support for individual children and families with circumstances that make them vulnerable leaves limited resources to provide additional services in the children's centre.

The centre is appropriately focused on safeguarding and takes all the necessary steps to keep children safe, including the recruitment of appropriately trained staff to ensure that those at risk of harm receive well-targeted support and guidance. Multi-agency work is effective in ensuring that children receive early and appropriate intervention to keep them safe. Record keeping and monitoring of cases where there are concerns about a child's welfare is good. Systems to record Criminal Record Bureau disclosure checks for staff and safeguarding training are robust. Staff are appropriately trained in a range of safeguarding aspects such as domestic abuse, child protection and safeguarding for managers

Work with partners is satisfactory and improving. Plans for health partners to



undertake two-year health checks in the centre and the provision of mentoring support in privately run day care and school nursery provision, are two examples. The gap between the children in the lowest 20% of those who achieve the 78+ points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest has improved from 37.3% in 2010 to 21.4% in 2012. However, there is little evidence of the centre's contribution to the narrowing of this, or any other inequality gaps for families in the area. Managers have some awareness of different groups within the area but plans to provide services to those groups in greatest need have not yet been implemented. Therefore the centre's contribution to the promotion of equal opportunities is inadequate.

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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>4</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>4</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>4</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>3</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>3</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>4</b>

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

Inspection reports from St George's Church of England Primary School and Little Dragons Daycare Centre were taken into consideration.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Complaining about inspections*, which is available from our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Summary for centre users

We inspected the St Georges Primary School & Children's Centre on 17–18 October 2012. We judged the centre as inadequate overall.

Many thanks to those of you who took the time to talk to us during the inspection. We appreciate your honesty in telling us about your experiences of using the centre. We agree with you that the centre is a safe place for you and your children. We know that staff take seriously the safety of children and families, and work with other agencies to make sure that families are kept safe. We also looked at some case studies which demonstrated that the centre cares for families, particularly in times of crisis.

As you are probably aware, not many families from the community use the centre. We would like this to change. We have asked managers to ensure that more families, from all sorts of backgrounds and circumstances, use the centre. We have also asked that staff find out more about the community so that they can provide activities that are appropriate for local families.

We know that there has been a major restructure of children's services in Telford and Wrekin, and staff working at the centre have changed. All staff have new roles and they know what their new responsibilities are. They already work closely with the school, Little Dragons Daycare Centre, and health visitors. Staff have plans to work with even more agencies to ensure you get a wider range of services at the children's centre. As members of the local community, you are part of the centre's future and you should have the opportunity to have your voices heard. We have asked staff to make sure that you are able to do this in the future. The new parents' panel which staff are setting up is one way they are doing this.

Those of you that attend the 'Playing Together' session and were involved in the 'Playing with Language' programme were able to tell us how much you have benefitted from taking part. You told us that more families would use the centre if there were more activities and we agree with you. We have asked staff to provide opportunities for you to do training that could lead to employment, join in activities that will make you and your families healthier and learn and have fun together.

Once again, many thanks for contributing to the inspection. We wish you all the 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).