

Inspection report for Woodville Children's Centre

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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	Acorn Grove Nursery EY280214

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 additional inspector and one early years inspector. The inspectors visited a range of provision across the centre. They also held meetings with senior managers from the centre, parents, staff and volunteers, members of the advisory board and parents' forum, a number of partners including health and social care professionals, childcare partners, voluntary and community groups. The inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Woodville Children's Centre is situated in the Cheetham ward in the north west of Manchester. It is a phase two children's centre and was designated in 2008. The centre works in a cluster of three children's centres that collaborate to provide learning and development services for all families living in the Cheetham and Crumpsall wards. The latest figures for September 2012 show that 840 children under five years of age live in the reach area. Of these, 70% access services at the centre or in other early childhood services and 87% are registered.

The childcare provision is made by Acorn Grove Nursery which was last inspected in 2010. The report of this inspection can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. Health services are provided by midwives, speech and language therapists, health visitors, clinical psychologists and community nursery nurses. Several community and voluntary groups and projects such as Home-Start and NEESA Well Women work closely with the centre.

Woodville makes the full core offer to three Super Output Areas in the Cheetham ward which are all in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. The area is ethnically diverse with a large majority of South Asian families and is densely populated with high levels of poverty and poor health. Over 70% of children under five have English as an additional language and there are over 60 different community languages spoken. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills, knowledge and abilities well below those

expected for their age. Additional social issues affecting the area are a transient population and poor dental hygiene. A total of 20% of children aged from birth to four years live in households dependent on workless benefits. Almost half of the working age population in the centre's reach area claim benefits and 7% of families benefit from the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. The proportion claiming job seekers allowance is higher than the national average.

Governance of the centre is provided by Manchester City Council in conjunction with an advisory board shared with the two other children's centres in the locality cluster. This is made up of representatives from professional partnerships, the local community, parents and centre staff. The centre uses a parents' forum as an additional means for parents to contribute their views to the development of the centre. A head of centre manages the children's centre with the support of a centre leader.

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

The centre is well regarded as the hub of the local community and provides services resulting in good and improving outcomes for families in all areas. It has improved rapidly during the year following the appointment of a new head of centre. Outcomes, quality of provision and leadership and management are good. The head of centre has helped unify the many different agencies using the centre. Families benefit from the collaborative working which is very effective. Partners work particularly well together to support children who are at risk and provide early intervention. The number of registered users and the number of families reached have significantly increased over time. The centre attracts families from diverse ethnic backgrounds and harder-to-reach groups and recognises the need to involve more fathers and families from White British backgrounds.

The centre is a very safe place and all staff, including volunteers, comply with stringent safeguarding checks. Diversity is celebrated well and there is zero tolerance of behaviour or language that might lead to conflict. Many parents discover a growing belief in their own abilities through participation in centre activities. One parent commented typically, 'Sure

Start was a life saver for me, it opened up so many new opportunities for learning after three years of being stuck at home.’ Some parents now volunteer or have found employment.

The centre effectively promotes healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating and initiating and sustaining breastfeeding. Courses to help parents improve their parenting skills and to better manage their children’s behaviour are particularly successful. Guidance and support for families with circumstances that make them vulnerable is particularly strong. The parents of disabled children or those with special educational needs are supported well in helping them prepare for early years education or transition to school.

Children and parents are encouraged to evaluate activities and to suggest improvements. Parents actively express their views through the parents’ forum, the advisory board and through working groups that focus on particular outcomes, such as health. Not all monitoring methods sufficiently track adult progression in relation to their learning. The quality of available data has improved considerably. However, systems to more consistently obtain accurate and current data to fully inform self-evaluation and development planning are a clear priority for the centre.

Managers and the advisory board members know the key strengths and areas for improvement and more precise action plans are leading to further improvements, including the promotion of children’s language and communication skills. The proportion of children making good progress and developing their personal, social and emotional skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile improved considerably from 40% in 2011 to 55% in 2012. The secure links with families accessing services in the reach area and good outcomes confirms that the centre’s overall effectiveness and capacity to sustain improvement are good.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the quality and use of data to assess the centre’s impact by:
 - obtaining accurate, centre-specific and current data on all performance outcomes from the local authority and partner agencies
 - using data more fully in self-evaluation and development planning to more closely monitor the impact of the centre’s work.
 - developing monitoring tools to more accurately track adult learners’ progression.
- Develop effective ways of increasing participation with fathers and families from White British backgrounds.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

All parents appreciate the easy access to health services at the centre and the number of children who access them has increased considerably. Consequently outcomes are good and improving. Programmes to promote healthy lifestyles are successful and the rates of dental decay are reducing. Healthy eating and physical exercise are promoted strongly and obesity levels for children at local schools in the Reception Year have decreased and are now broadly in line with the national average. The centre has trained five breastfeeding support workers resulting in good support and high levels of sustained breastfeeding in the area. Good use is made of local research on post-natal depression to inform focused support, in particular, for women of Asian heritage.

Children behave well and develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Parents regard the centre as a safe place to play, learn, get support and have fun. Good inter-agency family support activities are particularly helpful to parents with mental health problems. Currently there are no children that are subject to a child protection plan and the few whose needs are assessed through the Common Assessment Framework process are supported very well. Parents who receive tailored support from the psychological service confirm they are less subject to depression and are better able to manage their children's behaviour. Group activity leaders act as good role models for families whose children have behavioural problems. As one parent commented, 'I don't feel that it is only my child who needs additional support. It is good to talk to others in a similar situation.' Good and thorough advice is given to parents on children's safety in the home and local data from health visitors suggests that this contributes effectively to the reduced numbers of admissions to hospital through preventable accidents.

Good diagnosis of need and successful programmes contribute to improved outcomes in children's communication, language and literacy skills. They make good progress from their starting points to the time they start school. The large numbers of Asian heritage mothers using the centre improve and extend their English language skills because of the good support they receive from staff. Children and parents improve language skills together through all play activities and centre services. Growing numbers of children from the Woodville area access and benefit from funded childcare places for two-year-olds and the early education grant. Specific childcare programmes help children prepare for entry to school and there are secure systems in place to track children's progress and learning.

Throughout the centre children establish beneficial relationships and their views are captured well through observations. They learn to pay attention, listen, play together and develop good social skills. Activity leaders give parents helpful ideas they can use at home with their children to extend learning. The emotional well-being of mothers and their children is significantly improved through courses which promote positive parenting skills. Parents are invited to make comments on all activities and evaluate how well their family needs are being met. These views are used effectively to inform future planning.

Multi-agency guidance and support from the centre helps parents improve their economic stability and independence. Some parents lead group activities within the centre or are training for this role. Others volunteer to offer family support. Many users attend family learning courses which gives them greater confidence to progress to further training. For

example, case studies show that several have progressed to higher level programmes in English language or childcare. The centre offers advice on money management and access to benefits. Job vacancies are displayed in the centre and centre staff accompany parents to Jobcentre Plus interviews. The centre has yet to develop an effective method of tracking parents' progression to further support training or learning.

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.	2

How good is the provision?

2

The needs of children and families, and the services they require, are assessed sensitively. Centre staff work together well with partners to share their local knowledge and identify the needs of families. Ongoing robust assessment coupled with the Common Assessment Framework process supports families whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and children with special educational needs. Partners collaborate well to intervene early so that identified needs are effectively addressed.

Almost all families are from priority target groups and the centre meets their needs well through the range of services. Outreach workers make home visits to families that are harder-to-reach or are new to the area. The centre is reviewing its approach to involving more fathers and families from White British backgrounds.

The centre promotes learning and development well through a welcoming environment which gives families easy access to a wide range of services. High quality resources, including two sensory rooms, attract and engage children's attention. Provision for early learning through fun and active play is good. Targeted sessions support families with particular needs, such as parents whose children present challenging behaviour or those who want to improve their skills in speaking English.

Overall, parents and children receive good care, guidance and support. Joint home visits often with a partner agency ensure that family support is carefully focused on families'

needs. Parents, including those with disabled children or special educational needs, speak positively of the impact of guidance and support on their lives. Children benefit from good quality childcare in the community which promotes purposeful learning. The centre works closely with Women's Aid to support families and young parents at risk of experiencing domestic abuse. Early intervention supports families' emotional health and well-being effectively.

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

Clear governance and accountability arrangements are in place. The service provision planning by the head of centre has focused successfully on improving outcomes. Day-to-day management arrangements are good and all users endorse the priorities of the centre. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and the centre knows well its priorities for further improvement. The use of data for the centre, including from partners, has improved considerably. However, data is not yet used most effectively to clearly show the full impact of the centre's work. The centre systematically collates evaluations from users about learning activities but systems to track the progress adults make are underdeveloped.

The well-developed partnerships are particularly productive. Multi-agency collaboration leads to good practices in safeguarding children. All partners are able to refer families to a full range of services which are tailored to meet individual needs. The centre regularly involves the community in special events. The sharing of resources, provision, accommodation and joint training within the cluster and with partners helps to secure good value for money.

Good safeguarding practice is adopted across all areas of the centre's and partners' work. Staff recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and security at the centre is very good. All staff have attended recent safeguarding training and the centre carries out an annual safeguarding risk assessment. NEESA, a voluntary partner that offers strong support to South Asian Women, helps identify any safeguarding concerns and refers them effectively to outreach workers. This enables targeted support to be put into place.

The centre is highly inclusive of all children and families and works effectively to promote a culture of equality, tolerance and respect amongst the diverse community. Disabled children, and those with special educational needs, receive specialist support to meet their needs. Families from different minority ethnic backgrounds are supported well by workers

who between them speak some of the languages spoken within the community. Crèche facilities enable parents with young children to attend training. The gap between the lowest achieving children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and others has decreased by over 2% between 2010 and 2012, and there are secure strategies in place to continue to reduce this further.

Parents' views on the provision have led to new activities being offered and improvements to the centre. The advisory board is well established and offers good challenge to managers on the centre's performance. Parents are active in helping shape services. For example, a parent has taken on the role of chair on the advisory board. This ensures parents are kept well-informed of the outcomes of these meetings; suggestions for improvement are taken forward and used effectively to further improve outcomes.

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 secures improvement in outcomes	2
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	2
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

The inspection findings of Acorn Grove Nursery have contributed to the children's centre report and judgements.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Woodville Sure Start Children's Centre on 7 and 8 November 2012. We judged that this is a good centre overall.

The centre provides you with a very safe place where you can be sure to receive a warm, friendly welcome. There are many good features of its work. Significant strengths are the arrangements to keep children and families safe and to provide them with good opportunities to learn new things and to improve their spoken English. Children have been helped to improve their speech and language and behaviour.

We would like to thank the many parents who spoke to us during our visit telling us how the centre had helped them improve their lives and those of their children. Your views were very helpful. Everyone we spoke to was full of praise for the centre staff and its partners. These are some of the typical things that parents said, 'The centre has made me feel much less isolated and I now have someone to talk to.' 'I became a volunteer because the centre gave me much more confidence in what I could do.'

So that more families can benefit from the services we have asked the centre to renew its efforts to involve more fathers and White British parents. We have also asked the centre to use data better so that they can more clearly show what impact the centre is having on improving the lives of families and also to keep better records of adult learning and progression.

The centre manager has made a great difference in making everyone, including all the partners and families, feel that they matter and are a real part of the centre's life. Workers know your community very well and they are very enthusiastic about helping you improve your lives. You told us that all staff and volunteers work hard to involve your children in stimulating play activities. You particularly enjoy joining in with your children in the play sessions. We know that the centre's work helps you improve the safety of your children at home. The work with partners has helped you improve your children's behaviour and their speech and language. Health workers, social care workers and voluntary organisations work closely with centre staff to provide good services to meet all of your family needs. The links

with health professionals are particularly good and make it much easier for you to come to ante natal sessions and baby clinics and to get useful information on how to keep your children healthy.

The care, guidance and support offered by the centre are very good, especially for families with children with special educational needs or other families who need extra help. The outreach work in the community is very successful in helping parents who find it difficult to come to the centre or are not sure who to ask for help. Some parents have attended further training in speaking English and childcare to gain skills that might help them secure employment in the future when opportunities arise. You value the advice you get on benefits and on how to manage your money. Your children learn and develop new skills and become more confident in getting ready to start school.

Thank you again for coming to talk to us. We enjoyed visiting your centre and wish you and your families our best wishes for the future.

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