

Inspection report for West View Children's Centre

Local authority	Lancashire
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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	Alphabet House Day Nursery 309211

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 held meetings with the representatives of the local authority, the management team, centre staff, advisory board members, parents and a number of partners including Early Years Foundation Stage and childcare partners, health, education and social care professionals. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

West View Children's Centre is a phase two centre designated in November 2007 and achieved full core purpose status 22 July 2009. It is situated in the town of Fleetwood in Lancashire. The reach area includes 655 children under five years living in the Rossall and Warren wards. Both wards fall in the top 30% of the most deprived in the country with eight Super Output Areas of which three fall in the top 10% of most deprived areas in the country. Some services operate from the Flakefleet satellite venue based at Flakefleet County Primary School, which is currently closed due to extensive refurbishment. The remaining area of Fleetwood is covered by Sure Start Fleetwood Children's Centre. These centres are managed as one operational unit with all staff and managers working across the combined areas. All services and activities are available to all. Governance of the centre is provided by the local authority, Lancashire County Council, in conjunction with a federated advisory board that has broad representation from partner agencies, parents and the voluntary sector.

The centre provides a range of services, which include health services, social care, family play sessions, parenting programmes, adult education and outreach services. Services also include full day care for up to 42 children aged under five years at the linked childcare provision at Alphabet House Day Nursery. The report of this inspection is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The centre covers a compact geographical area and serves a community which experiences high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Levels of deprivation are high in three of the Super Output Areas. Within the reach of the centre there are significant alcohol and substance misuse and domestic violence issues. The vast majority of the population is of White British heritage with small percentage of Black and minority ethnic groups. The latest data show that 34.3% of children are living in households dependent upon workless benefits. Housing is mostly social or private rental with some residential areas of privately owned housing. All children who live in the most deprived areas within the reach of the centre enter early years provision with knowledge and skills that are significantly below expectations for their age, particularly in communication and language and personal, social and emotional development. The centre has links with five of the primary schools in the Fleetwood area.

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

West View Children's Centre is an outstanding centre. The pursuit of excellence is firmly embedded in all of the centre's activities and it makes a significant difference to the lives of families, regardless of where they live in the reach. Parents were unanimous in their praise for the work of staff and how heavily they rely on the centre. As one mother said, 'I have been coming for five years and would go insane without the centre'.

The centre is extremely effective in raising the aspirations of parents and achievement in learning and development of children from their starting points. Children's readiness for school is boosted significantly through the high quality activities at the centre, linked childcare provision, excellent partnership working with schools, private nurseries, childminders and speech and language therapists. Families, particularly those in need of intervention and support, are improving their economic well-being through the excellent advice, guidance and support offered in relation to obtaining benefits and better housing. Adult learning take-up rates are good. However, the centre recognises more needs to be

done to offer a broader range of courses, including accredited courses to increase further routes into employment.

Excellent working arrangements with health partner agencies result in rapidly improving health outcomes for families in the reach area. However, the centre is not complacent and is firmly focused on further increasing breastfeeding rates at six to eight weeks through their already excellent partnership working. Proactive outreach workers diligently work with families with circumstances that make them most vulnerable. This early intervention has led to a clear improvement for those children subject to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process, looked after children and those subject to a child protection plan. Centre users and staff develop an excellent understanding of risks and how to keep themselves safe.

Leadership and management and governance arrangements are outstanding. The centre exemplifies high-quality practice in safeguarding and equality and diversity and takes a lead role in establishing dynamic working relationships with partners. The Early Years Lead Officer and the Nominated Officer from the local authority are exceptionally well motivated in offering proactive support and challenge to the centre. The outstanding results achieved by the centre and its sophisticated and robust analysis of the services offered and outcomes for families demonstrate the centre's outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Further increase the percentage of children being breastfed at six to eight weeks through the excellent work with health partners.
- Enhance further the economic well-being of families by providing a broader range of courses, including accredited courses.

How good are outcomes for families?

1

Excellent partnerships with health partners such as midwives, health visitors, breastfeeding star buddies and health trainers ensures the centre is having an outstanding impact on health outcomes for families in the reach area. This has resulted in high immunisation rates, low levels of obesity, the strong take up of ante natal and post natal care services and a good success rate for those who wish to cease or reduce smoking. Centre staff are highly effective in engaging with families and promoting these key messages and healthy lifestyle initiatives through all of their universal groups. Consequently, the very large majority of families using the centre have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. The numerous classes, such as the 'From Bump to Birth and Beyond', antenatal classes, baby weighing, weaning groups and 'Mums and Dads 2b' are highly popular and very well attended. The centre staff and partners work exceptionally well on focused priorities. For example, the low rate of sustained breastfeeding at six to eight weeks which was 10.0% in

2010 rapidly increased to 21.8% in 2011. The centre recognises the excellent work in this area so far, and is firmly focused on the importance of continuing this momentum to further increase this figure across the reach area.

Children and adults with circumstances that make them vulnerable are exceptionally well safeguarded. Staff work consistently with the children's social care team and with Children and Parenting Support Service Workers, who are also based on site, to ensure the best possible outcomes for families, particularly in times of crisis. Case studies show numerous examples of where timely intervention from staff, collaborative working and highly effective use of the CAF process and the Team Around the Child (TAC) has made a significant difference to outcomes for users. The impact of highly sensitive, tailored early intervention work helps to prevent complex situations accelerating. Parents are confident to come to the centre for help because they know and trust the centre staff. One couple's comment explained how they had benefited from the excellent integrated working; 'Coming to meetings with all of the people involved and attending groups at the centre has made us into a proper family and increased our confidence'.

The excellent quality play and learning sessions make a positive contribution to children's enjoyment and development. The centre places a strong focus on raising children's attainment. The percentage of children gaining at least 78+ points and at least six points in each of the scales for personal, social and emotional development and language, literacy and communication, has significantly risen from 44.4% in 2008 to 61.7% in 2012. The centre is instrumental in contributing to improving the quality of childcare provision and education due to its innovative work with private nurseries, childminders, and nurseries within the local schools. For example, the centre provides a qualified teacher at the linked provision, Alphabet House Day Nursery. In addition, the initiative 'School Readiness Programme' which focuses on raising the attainment of children from two to five years of age has resulted in higher quality experiences. These early years professionals report they now place an increased focus on raising children's communication and language skills through a higher quality of resources and experiences. One of them explained, 'It has improved our skills, knowledge, practice and we feel invigorated and energised'.

All families spoken to and parental satisfaction reports indicate that all users are highly satisfied with services provided and they feel there is mutual respect and exceptionally positive relationships. Parents are comprehensively involved in expressing their views and participating in decision-making at all levels. For example, each of the regular groups running at the centre has a parent representative who feedback the views of other users to the monthly 'Family Matters' meeting, which help plan and adjust services accordingly.

The volunteering programme is extremely successful in encouraging parents to progress into volunteering at the centre, and many of these parents have made positive contributions to the life of the centre. Over a third of families using the centre are engaged in adult learning to improve their skills, family circumstances and engagement with their children. Others have gained accredited qualifications, such as in childcare. However, as acknowledged by the centre, the breadth of courses, including accredited courses to further involve even more families to further increase their economic stability, has yet to be fully developed.

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	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	1
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	1
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?

1

As a direct result of pro-active work by the centre, the number of families using the centre has increased dramatically from 47.2% in 2010 to 87% in September 2012. The large majority of all target groups are successfully engaged in the centre's services. The leaders and staff have excellent local knowledge of the reach area and consequently, provision is extremely well matched to the needs of the community. For example, a pocket within the Warren area has been exceptionally well targeted by staff and volunteer parents using the Participatory Appraisal (PA) consultation, an excellent visual approach to seek the views of this community and increase their engagement with centre activities. This consultation has resulted in setting up a 'Stay and Play' session and a fitness class in a local community venue to overcome barriers of distance and travel.

The centre plays a pivotal role in the life of the community and provides excellent care, guidance and support. The accomplished partnerships with a host of statutory, private and voluntary organisations results in a wealth of tailored support and advice for all users. The expertise of these partners is used extremely well to support users and to supplement the skills of centre staff. For example, advice about financial matters, benefits, tax credits, housing and support with matters relating to routes into employment. One parent clearly explained how this expert advice, along with support from the centre has benefited her during her times of crisis, 'They have all worked together, by getting in touch with each other, to help keep my family together and have supported me emotionally and financially'. Outreach services are exceptionally well targeted in meeting the needs of the community, including those families with circumstances that make them vulnerable.

The centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families through an excellent range of well received groups. A high level of enjoyment underpins all learning activities and groups and consequently they are popular with parents and very well attended. Many parents report that they have successfully increased their self-esteem, confidence and developed their parenting skills. Some of the centre's success stories include the popular sessions for fathers, which focus on increasing children's speech and language skills and the group for families with disabled children and those with special educational needs.

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	1
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	1
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

Leadership is inspirational. The pursuit of excellence in all areas is demonstrated by an uncompromising, highly successful and well-documented drive to maintain the highest levels of practice and outcomes. The management team is highly skilled and provides high-quality professional supervision, coaching and training opportunities for all staff. The management team, along with the advisory board, is persistent in its efforts to improve life chances for families within the local community. The team is exceptionally successful in inspiring staff to work towards meeting and sustaining ambitious targets across all areas of practice. As a result, they are enthusiastic and dedicated and work exceptionally well to continually improve outcomes for families.

Comprehensive links with strategic planning, development plans and self-evaluation is firmly embedded resulting in excellent outcomes for families. Resources and activities are managed and adapted by a forward thinking team. For example, the recent, temporary closure of the satellite venue has resulted in swift action to ensure all of the groups continue to run at the centre instead. The excellent participation rates and outcomes for users clearly demonstrate the outstanding value for money the centre provides.

Safeguarding arrangements are extremely well embedded in all aspects of the centre's services. Highly effective recruitment, vetting and induction procedures are in place. All staff receive high-quality child protection training and are extremely confident in their role to safeguard children. Safeguarding practice, outreach support, sharing of relevant information with partners and meticulous recording systems ensure the intervention families receive in

times of crisis, including domestic violence, is excellent. The wide ranging and outstanding partnerships has enabled the centre to provide successful collaborative working and services to support families who need it most. For example, health partners report that they hold the centre in high regard and state, 'Partners tend to pilot projects in Fleetwood due to the sense of community and cooperation and commitment from the centre'.

Inclusion, narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile and the rest, and meeting the needs of the hard-to-engage groups, including disabled children and those with special educational needs is consistently given high priority by the centre. For example, children who are entitled to free school meals at Flakefleet Primary School, and who have taken part in the 'Best Start' programme have dramatically improved their success in communication, language and literacy and their personal, social and emotional development scores, from 27% in 2010-11 to 71% in 2011-2012.

There is meticulous attention given to the promotion of equality and diversity as reflected in displays throughout the centre. Community cohesion is also given high priority and families report they feel fully included and valued in all aspects of the centre's work. The exceptionally strong membership on the advisory board includes a dedicated and wide range of partners and parents. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities and constantly contribute to shaping services as they support and hold the centre to account.

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	1
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	1
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.	1

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

Information from the most recent Ofsted inspection for the linked childcare provision, Alphabet House Day Nursery, was used to inform judgements.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the West View Children's Centre on 15 -16 November 2012. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

As part of our inspection we visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with a number of you, staff and centre partners who work with you. We also looked at the comments you made on feedback sheets and evaluations.

We found that the centre provides an extremely safe and welcoming place for you and your children. We were particularly impressed by the number of you who took the time to come and see us and share your stories with us. We noted that many of you have been involved with the centre for many years and you all told us how valuable the centre is in supporting you and your families. This support was clearly captured by one parent who said, 'I could not be without the centre, I have made good friends and it gives me a reason to get up in the morning and get dressed'. All of you that we spoke with clearly described how the centre had helped you to make significant changes in your lives to help improve yours and your families' circumstances.

Those of you who receive the tailored support from outreach and family support workers informed us of the significant gains you have made in your lives and how you can now cope better. We were very impressed in how active you are within the centre and a number of you spoke very highly of the excellent volunteering scheme and how it has given many of you the confidence to go on to college and employment. We have asked the centre to increase training opportunities further by providing a broader range of courses that may lead to an accredited qualification and employment for more of you.

We were very impressed by the excellent care, guidance and support you receive from the centre staff and partner agencies involved. You told us the centre provides you with wonderful opportunities to form friendships and gain advice and support in a friendly and safe place. You particularly praised the 'Little angels group'. You told us that it provides you with an opportunity to observe and try new and interesting activities with your children, regardless of their age, and to make new friends and develop support systems. The centre

places an extremely high priority on raising achievement and children in particular, are making significant progress from their starting points by attending the sessions at the centre and the childcare provision.

Health outcomes are outstanding due to the extremely well developed partnerships with midwives, health visitors and health Trainers. This has resulted in, high immunisation rates, low levels of obesity in Reception age children, the strong take up of ante natal and post natal care services and a good success rate for those who wish to cease or reduce smoking. You told us, and we could see, staff work extremely well to ensure key messages about healthy lifestyle are constantly delivered in all groups. The centre has worked extremely well with breastfeeding partners to increase the number of mothers who sustain breastfeeding at six to eight weeks, which is historically very low in the Fleetwood area. We have recognised this excellent work and have asked the centre to continue working with partners to further increase the breastfeeding rate.

Your centre is led by a management team which is highly skilled and leads a staff team who are enthusiastic and dedicated to continually improving outcomes for you and your families. They are extremely well supported by the advisory board, which includes many of the partners and a strong membership from parents. The centre clearly values your opinions very much and uses your feedback and ideas extremely well to plan future services. The centre staff know the area extremely well and the many problems families are facing. They use this information and knowledge extremely well to ensure the very large majority of families can make use of the centre and its facilities.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed their opinions, came to speak with us and told us how much you love using the centre and appreciate the work of the staff. We agree with the centre and you that it is an outstanding centre with outstanding results. We can see why the staff enjoy working with you so much and wish you every success in the future.

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