

Inspection report for Wensley Fold Children's Centre

Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	410358
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Centre leader	Laura Matthews
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Wensley Fold Primary School URN 119412
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	St Mary's Nursery at Wensley Fold Children's Centre EY362904

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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the head of centre, staff, service users, partner representatives, representatives of the local authority and representatives of the body commissioned to provide the centre services.

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

Information about the centre

Wensley Fold Children's Centre operates from purpose-built premises in Blackburn. It was designated as a phase two centre in 2007. The centre is adjacent to Wensley Fold (VC) Church of England Primary School. The local authority commissions the governing body of the primary school to provide the centre services and employ staff. Wensley Fold Children's Centre provides the full core offer of integrated childcare and early learning, health, family support and outreach and links to Jobcentre Plus. The centre has an on-site nursery which caters for 89 children aged from birth to five years. Crèche provision is regularly provided to support families in accessing services. The nursery is subject to separate early years inspection arrangements. The inspection report can be found on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The population of the reach area is predominantly of Asian heritage. For many families, English is an additional language. Recent figures show that 1161 children under five years live in the reach area and 24% of these children live in families dependent on workless benefits. The centre is within the 30% of most deprived areas in the country, with two out of its three wards being amongst the 10% most deprived areas. A high proportion of children enter early years provision with skills below those expected for their age. The centre has an established management board which is made up of representatives from the local community, professional agencies and parents.

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

Staff have created a welcoming and inclusive centre which parents describe as being, 'the heart of the community'. Positive, harmonious relationships between centre users demonstrate the high level of tolerance and understanding amongst families of differing backgrounds and ethnicity. Parents feel comfortable to drop in to attend services and to make use of the on-site café and children's library. They comment on the excellent levels of care and support that they receive from staff.

Parents have a high level of involvement in the governance of the centre. They are well represented on the management board and on the sub-groups of centre users, partners and centre staff which are part of the management structure of the centre. Parents are also actively involved in the Wensley Fold Rainbows group, which has a voice in developing fundraising ideas for the centre. As a result, parents feel valued and highly active contributors to the life and development of the centre.

Families using the centre benefit from the very broad range of services, many of which are open to all families and some which are targeted at the specific needs of target groups and vulnerable families. For example, a drop-in session has recently been provided for victims of domestic violence. Services provided include a broad range to promote children's communication and literacy skills. The promotion of these skills is also a key focus of the close partnership working with the on-site nursery and Wensley Fold Church of England Primary School. As a result, children make very good progress in this area of learning in particular and are well prepared to develop this learning further on transition to school.

The centre is well led and managed. There is a shared sense of purpose and vision and staff are enthusiastic in their commitment to provide a good quality service and drive further improvements. Centre leaders know the community well and can demonstrate that target groups are involved in the centre's services and that outcomes are good overall. However, it does not always make best use of data to develop the most accurate picture of target groups and the extent of their engagement in services. Leaders and managers have a good

awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the centre. Lines of responsibility and accountability are clear. Development planning reflects the most important priorities for the centre, although measurable targets and clear success criteria are not consistently evident.

In recent years, the centre has made improvements to the percentage of families engaged in services, the location of services in order to meet the needs of families who are hard to reach, and has increased children's progress in communication, language and literacy. This demonstrates the centre's good capacity for improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Make better use of data to ensure that the centre's knowledge of its target groups is more accurate, and use this information to further inform and adapt service provision.
- Refine development planning by consistently including measurable targets and clear success criteria to increase the effectiveness with which the management board and other accountable bodies can hold the centre to account.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Parents are fully involved in decision making about the centre. Through their membership of the management board and sub groups, they take an active part in driving centre improvements. The parent group 'Wensley Fold Rainbows' also contributes suggestions for improvements to services and engages in regular fundraising events. Parents' views are routinely sought and services adapted to meet needs.

The centre increasingly plays a significant role in the life of the community. The on-site café and welcoming and comfortable foyer area are a busy and lively focus for parents to drop in to. Weekly visits from the community police, who give advice and help to parents, further contribute to the centre's role in the life of the community. Relationships between centre users and staff are harmonious and respectful. Community police report that incidence of racist problems are extremely rare. The behaviour of children using the centre is extremely positive.

Health outcomes are well promoted. Figures for obesity have shown a reduction from 10% in 2008 to 7% in 2011. The breastfeeding support group and high quality information given to parents have resulted in an increase in the percentage of mothers sustaining breastfeeding to 39% which is above the national average. The centre has been accredited with the 'Smile for Life' for the promotion of good oral health.

Staff are well trained in child protection and Common Assessment Framework (CAF) procedures and are proactive in making use of these. Case study evidence indicates good progress for children who are subject to a child protection plan. Data show that children's level of achievement in Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores has increased in recent years. Children make particularly good progress in communication, language and literacy as a result of targeted work by the early years teacher and the good quality language development sessions held at the centre. Local schools report that children are well prepared for transition from nursery.

Case studies demonstrate that some families using the centre are improving their economic stability and independence. Parents receive good quality advice on debt management from Credit Union which has led to improved economic stability for a number of families. Through

advice from the weekly job club, parents who are seeking work are helped into employment. Through a positive partnership with St Mary's College, parents access numeracy and literacy courses which promote their skills.

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	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?

2

Centre users benefit from a very broad range of good quality services which effectively promote positive outcomes. Parents are enthusiastically involved in the varied drop-in sessions such as 'Shake, Rattle and Drum', 'Messy Play' and 'Baby Massage'. Provision effectively engages families from all target groups, and the centre can demonstrate that a majority of families from the most deprived parts of its reach area are engaged in services. The centre knows its community well and adapts its provision to meet local needs. The 'Job Club' and 'Parent and Toddler Group' sessions have recently been provided at community venues in order to meet the needs of families living in the part of the reach area separated by a steep hill from the centre.

Parents greatly value the broad range of activities provided. They speak highly of the language and speech courses and how these have benefitted their children's learning. Parents praise the support they receive in times of crisis. A typical comment by parents is that, 'the centre is an absolute life saver'. They receive high quality advice on a range of issues such as debt management, employment and contraception.

Parents benefit from the courses provided such as literacy, numeracy, and first aid which promote their learning and outcomes. Their achievements are celebrated. Children benefit from high quality provision at the nursery and effective learning sessions at the centre. Parents learn how to support their children's learning through sessions such as '101 Things to do with your Toddler' and 'Baby Signing'. An increasing percentage of fathers are engaged in the centre and the centre's early evening dads' and male carers' group and Saturday morning football sessions are aimed at increasing this engagement further. The

range of services to promote healthy eating and physical development is effective in promoting parents' understanding and has good take-up rates.

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.	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

There is shared passion and vision to promote the best possible outcomes and drive further improvement amongst those involved in the leadership of the centre. Leaders have a good understanding of the needs of the local area. Governance arrangements are clear and well understood. There are clear lines of accountability so that members of the senior leadership team, management board and the sub groups have a secure understanding of their roles and how they link with strategic planning. As a result, the centre promotes good outcomes for centre users.

Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and successes of the centre and have rightly identified the need to reach out further to those families who have yet to be engaged by the centre. The centre has been proactive in door-knocking on over 400 households in the centre's most deprived area in order to successfully engage more families in the centre's work. The centre can demonstrate that it is effective in engaging target groups in the services of the centre, but data are not always well used to gain the most precise picture of these groups and their engagement. The centre's development plan accurately identifies a number of key priorities for further improvements, such as implementing a targeted group for disabled children. The development plan includes some targets but measurable targets and clear success criteria are not always evident.

The centre welcomes and includes all families. It is aware of the different groups it serves, and is proactive in ensuring that all are welcomed and valued. For example, the centre employs several staff who are fluent in the first languages of centre users, including Polish and Urdu. As a result of this positive approach, the centre is successful in engaging families from all ethnic groups within the community. The centre can demonstrate that it is closing the achievement gap in communication, language and literacy. The centre works closely with the majority of the disabled children in the reach area.

Parents report a high level of satisfaction with the centre and their views are used to shape services through their involvement in the 'Wensley Fold Rainbows' parents' group and

through membership of the sub groups, which contribute to leadership and self-evaluation. Effective policies and procedures are in place to safeguard children and families using the centre, including robust vetting procedures. Staff attend regular training in child protection and a clear referral system ensures that families' needs are met in a timely way.

The centre has strong partnerships with local schools and other professionals which positively impact on outcomes. For example, close links with speech and language therapy workers help to ensure children's good progress. The centre provides good value for money. It uses its resources effectively and provides good quality provision leading to good outcomes for families.

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 outcome of the inspection of Wensley Fold Children's Centre Nursery on 27 November 2012 has been considered as part of this inspection.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Wensley Fold Children's Centre on 28 and 29 November 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We enjoyed our visit to your centre and meeting so many of you. We found that the centre offers a warm and welcoming environment, and makes sure that everyone is valued and included in its services. You spoke about the excellent level of support that staff give you, and how you have found friendship and support through attending the centre.

You told us that staff take your views into account and alter services if you ask. We know that some of you are members of the management board or sub groups and so have a voice in how the centre is led. Some of you are members of the 'Wensley Fold Rainbows' group and enjoy contributing to fundraising and social activities such as the Christmas party. You told us that you enjoy the very good range of services provided, which give a chance for you to socialise and to support your children's learning. The centre is successful in giving new mothers good support to continue breastfeeding. We know that you have particularly benefited from sessions such as 'Play, Share and Learn' and '101 Things to do with your Toddler', which help you to develop your child's learning at home. We know that the centre has helped some of you to attend literacy and numeracy courses at the centre, to become volunteers or to find jobs.

We found that the centre has strong partnerships, particularly with the on-site nursery, Wensley Fold Primary School and other local schools. They all work together to make sure that children make very good progress in their speaking and early reading skills. Leaders have clear plans to make further improvements, and to make sure that more people are able to benefit from the centre's services. We have asked leaders to make better use of data to make sure that they know even more about who is living in the area who would benefit from coming to the centre. We have asked that they use this information to make sure services are even more suited to families' needs. We have also asked the centre to make sure there are clearer targets in planning so that the centre knows better how well it is doing.

We would like to thank everyone who came to speak with us. It was a privilege to be able to talk with you. Your honest and open discussions helped us immensely with the inspection. We enjoyed spending time at your centre and wish you and your families the best for the future.

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