Inspection report for The Rise Children's Centre

Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	406981
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2013
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone HMI

Centre leader	Pauline Monaghan
Date of previous inspection	N/A
Centre address	The Oaks, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 1DU
Telephone number	01249 463040
Email address	Julies@therisetrust.org

Linked school if applicable	St Paul's Primary School 126182
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Sunrise Preschool EY368249

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: February 2013

Corporate member of Plain English Campaign 361
Committed to clearer communication

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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at 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
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No.100080

© Crown copyright 2013

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 representatives from the local authority, the management team, centre staff, advisory board members, parents, volunteers, health, education, family learning and social care professionals. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

The Rise Children's Centre is a phase two centre, designated in 2008. The centre is one of a cluster of three centres managed by The Rise Trust which started as an initiative from a local church. The aims of the trust are to '**R**each, **I**nclude, **S**upport and **E**nable'. The Rise runs as part of the Chippenham hub of Children's Centres and many parents from this reach area access services in the other two centres.

The centre is located in Hill Rise which consists of mostly social housing and has a deprivation rating of 31%. There is a higher than average proportion of single parents in Hill Rise with around 39% of families who are economically inactive and reliant on benefits. About 21% of these are identified as lone parents. Instances of domestic violence are high. Beyond the immediate area of the children's centre, there are a number of housing developments which may appear to be advantaged with only 4% of families in workless situations. However, many of the families in these developments experience isolation because they have relocated away from their extended family networks as a result of employment needs. The centre also covers a large rural area where there are a few disadvantaged families who suffer from isolation due to a lack of transport. Most users of the centre are of White British origin but there are an increasing proportion of families settling locally from the Asian sub-continent and Eastern Europe, 5% of whom access the services available at the centre.

There are 785 children aged five years or under living within the centre's reach area and 81% of these are registered at the children's centre. The overwhelming majority,

around 97%, use the services at the centre. Every child under five who lives in the Hill Rise area is registered with the centre and over half of these have been seen in the last three months.

Services provided by the children's centre include health clinics, parent and toddler groups, parenting programmes, family learning and healthy cooking sessions, open-play activities, after-school and holiday clubs, groups for teenagers, adult education programmes, advice on finances and outreach support. Most children enter early years education with skills and knowledge below that expected for their age.

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

This outstanding children's centre serves its community exceptionally well, delivering high-quality services that enhance the lives of children and families. The very motivated and enthusiastic team is led by a manager who is fiercely proud of her 'matriarchal' role within the community. She is totally committed to ensuring that the children and families in the reach area of The Rise have every opportunity to reach their full potential. She strives relentlessly to create a community of 'wise men and women' and inclusion is at the heart of the centre and all it does. It is evident that all who come into contact with the centre, either by accessing services in the centre itself or in any of its outreach work, are extremely welcome and their individuality is highly valued. Parents explain that everyone is made welcome in the centre by the staff who are non-judgemental and never patronising towards them. As one parent commented, 'I don't know where I would be without you guys.'

Staff place a very high priority on safeguarding families and work exceptionally well to assess needs and help those who are most at risk. They take timely action to ensure the safety of the families they work with and are extremely effective. The partners who work with the centre share information very productively as a team and issues are picked up and dealt with very quickly. One professional partner explained that they always have total confidence in The Rise and know that the documentation

they receive from it will be extremely detailed and relevant to each individual case.

Families have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and the centre's initiatives greatly improve their lifestyles, healthy eating and exercise. Children's behaviour and social skills rapidly improve through attending the centre's activities. As a consequence, they are well prepared for school and their speech and language skills are much better. Parents improve their parenting, literacy, numeracy and employability skills by attending the highly relevant courses and many are successful in seeking employment. However, although the Saturday morning 'Little Builders' and football sessions for fathers are well attended, very few males get involved with the family learning courses which are held during the week. Parents enthusiastically share their views about the centre and know how they are shaping the services and activities through their involvement in the advisory board.

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

Management of the centre, its use of resources and staff are outstanding. It is a highly inclusive environment where respect, equality and diversity are successfully promoted. Partner agencies value the role of the centre in supporting the most vulnerable groups in the area and play an important part in ensuring that the needs of the area are met. The enthusiastic and highly supportive advisory board has strong representation from local schools, key partners and parents ensuring a secure focus on addressing local issues and challenging incisively decision-making. The capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding because the exceptional leadership and management have identified the actions necessary to continue the marked improvement to the current high levels of outcomes and provision. The accurate and self-critical self-evaluation has informed the latest development plans which contain challenging targets. The centre's success in engaging with the most-hard-to-reach groups in the population further enhances its ability to improve the support service it provides.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the proportion of males who access the family learning courses during the week by working with partner agencies to develop more activities which interest and engage them.

How good are outcomes for families? 1

An overwhelming majority of families are engaged well with the health services offered from the centre and they have developed a very good awareness of how to lead healthy lifestyles. Of particular success with targeted groups, have been the improvements noted in the physical, emotional and mental health of users and the promotion of positive relationships at the centre. There is a very strong focus on outdoor activities and making use of forest school skills. This helps parents recognise that everyday objects and occurrences can be used to support their children's healthy development. The centre also takes part in a a scheme which enables parents to earn vouchers for free activity sessions such as using the local swimming pool. Parents now have the knowledge and skills to cook low-cost healthy meals for their families which help to overcome the high proportion of children in the reach area who are malnourished. The centre ensures that those who attend the pre-school and after-school club eat a freshly prepared and nutritious meal. The weekly 'Fun with Food' sessions and 'Happy Healthy Foodie Fun Days' are extremely popular with families who enjoy learning about eating healthily and improving their eating habits. Following a healthy lunchbox project run jointly with the local housing association, one parent commented that, 'I didn't know that home-made pizzas were so good' and vowed never to buy any more from the local take-away. Regular ante- and post-natal clinics, child development support groups, and advice about weaning contribute to excellent health outcomes. Young pregnant mothers have their own fortnightly centre-based appointment and are supported by specialist outreach workers. The proportion of mothers initiating breastfeeding is above both local and national averages.

As a result of the centre's activities, children are very aware of safety, particularly their own, and behave accordingly. Prior to enjoying a forest school skills session outside, the children were reminded not only about wrapping up warmly to protect themselves from the cold, but also how to play safely with outdoor materials. Parents' health and safety awareness is emphasised at the point of registration at the centre when they are given induction packs which contain accident prevention leaflets and a fridge magnet reminding them to keep hot drinks out of their children's reach. Both staff and volunteers show a thorough understanding of safeguarding. The centre works extremely well with other agencies to support children in need, looked after children and those subject to a child protection plan. The Common Assessment Framework, known as a CAF, is exceptionally well used to ensure effective sharing of information, rigorous assessment and swift referral. Outcomes for those families whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable improve quickly as support is rapid, effective and well focused.

All children make at least good progress from their starting points and are very well prepared for transition to school. The enthusiasm and expertise of the early years advisory teacher ensure the provision of high-quality education and learning experiences for all children, including disabled children and those with special educational needs. Individual progress is tracked carefully and additional support is given where required. Parents and children clearly enjoy the many high-quality

activities offered by the centre, particularly in the development of communication, language and literacy skills and personal, social and emotional development. A recent initiative to encourage parents to read books with their children has already been a great success. Following the first session one parent commented that, 'I started to enjoy reading books and my confidence has grown a lot in reading. My bookcase was used for storing rubbish but is now being used for books.' As a result of this focused work, the proportion of children achieving at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least six points scored in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development is now much higher than the national average at 73%. The achievement gap between the lowest 20% and the highest performers has decreased significantly to 24.5% which is narrower than the national average.

Parents improve their skills, knowledge and confidence through high-quality learning activities. These include parenting courses, personal development programmes and accredited and non-accredited courses for literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, and food hygiene. Their progress is exceptionally well supported and monitored leading to high-level completion rates and their longer-term achievement is tracked and celebrated with certificates and parties. Of particular note are the parents who have successfully achieved qualifications through the centre and are now employed by The Rise Trust. Parents have also been successful in regional awards which involved a celebratory trip to Weston-super-Mare for the winner. Local childminders use the facilities for the benefit of the children in their care and appreciate access to the wide range of toys and play resources. Although fathers eagerly attend the Saturday morning 'Little Builders' and football session, few males take up family learning opportunities at the centre to extend their academic skills.
Both parents and family support workers report that children's behaviour and their relationships improve markedly following interventions by the children's centre. Inspectors observed excellent behaviour and mutual respect among children and families attending the centre. Parents report greatly increased self-confidence and keenly contribute to decision-making and governance by active participation as volunteers, as members of the advisory board and through their exceptionally high response rates to the regular centre evaluations. One group of parents has formed an 'enterprise club' that took responsibility for organising a family fun day to raise money for the centre. Not only did this count towards a qualification they were working towards, but £1200 was raised to fund a sensory garden and this well-organised family day of fun was enjoyed by all who attended. As parents commented to inspectors, 'this helps us put something back into the centre'.

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	**1**

How good is the provision? **1**

A wide range of services are imaginatively delivered across the reach area and these reflect the very specific needs of the local community. For example, the centre offers a range of activities to support individuals who have experienced domestic violence, with life-changing results. The centre promotes a holistic, integrated approach to service provision, effectively meeting a range of needs of families whose circumstances make them very vulnerable. Resulting action plans are carefully tailored to suit the individual needs of the family and case studies provide powerful examples of the positive outcomes which result. This, combined with a range of targeted and universal services, all of which have a clear purpose, ensures outstanding impact across many areas of families' lives. Vulnerable families sing the praises of the centre and say that their lives have changed for the better because of the excellent support they have received. One parent explained that the centre has 'brought her out of the bubble' she found herself in.

The large majority of adults engaged with the centre are taking part in purposeful learning either directly at The Rise, at one of the other hub centres or in one of the outreach centres. Families and children thoroughly enjoy the varied programmes on offer, which have a strong focus on children's learning through play. Programmes and special events emphasise the development of communication, language and literacy skills and personal, social and emotional development. One parent told inspectors that these sessions had 'helped to open her eyes to the things I can do with my children'. Effective tracking of progress shows that both families and family support workers recognise improvement in the vast majority of those engaged.

The excellent relationships between centre staff and families in the community make the centre the first port of call for those seeking advice and guidance. The centre is then able to provide highly effective, personalised support itself, jointly with others, or to signpost families to the most appropriate agency within its extensive network of partner agencies. All parents comment extremely positively on staff friendliness, the support they receive and on the significant improvement in their children's behaviour. A parent commented to inspectors that she feels, 'welcome at anything', because, 'it doesn't matter who you are'. Another parent explained that she considers the centre 'like her second family'.

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 persistent in its efforts to improve life chances for children and families within the local community. It is highly skilled and provides high-quality professional supervision, coaching and training opportunities for all staff which enhances the quality of their work. The outreach workers and early years staff are well qualified for their roles and together they work successfully to include all families in centre services. Volunteers play a full part in the delivery of services and are trained and included as if they were employed staff. Management is held to account by the local authority's use of the annual conversation. Rigorous evaluation using a range of information informs the centre's improvement plans and is clearly link to the overall aims of The Rise Trust, the local authority and those of key partners. The super advisory board which meets every eight weeks to discuss the management of the three centres provides an exceptional amount of support and challenge to The Rise.

The centre has successfully reached almost all of the families in its area, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Staff use resources extremely well at the centre and have created a warm and inviting indoor environment and an exciting outdoor area for active play and learning activities. The excellent deployment of staff and use of resources and venues across all three Rise children's centres, coupled with increasing participation rates and outstanding outcomes, mean that value for money is exceptional.

Equality and diversity are central to the work of the children's centre and ensure that all who come into contact with it are aware of how highly valued they are. It strives and is successful in ensuring children and families with particular needs, including disabilities, and groups, such as pregnant teenagers and young mothers, are fully and meaningfully included in centre activities.

Robust safeguarding procedures, including the detailed completion of Criminal Records Bureau checks, staff training, clear systems and an exceptional knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, contribute to the safeguarding of children and families. The comprehensive procedures in place ensure that

information about children and families is shared appropriately and effectively implemented. Case recording is meticulous and all cases are robustly monitored by management and staff to ensure that the services provided to families are, and continue to be, the most appropriate.

Close partnerships with health professionals, social services, childminders and the trustee of other local charities result in the highly positive inclusion of the most disadvantaged groups in the area. The achievement of young parents and isolated families is rapidly improving as barriers to their participation are broken down. Disabled children and those with special educational needs or children who are looked after are carefully tracked and supported to ensure they continue to make the best progress.

Centre users are extremely satisfied with the services they receive. The availability of a 'listening ear', where post-it notes can be used to record parental views, and the 'you said – we did' comments sheet ensure that users know the centre values feedback.

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 secure 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

The findings from the most recent inspections of the children's centre's pre-school in November 2012 and the adjacent primary school in December 2012. Inspection reports from nearby childminders and local primary schools in the area were also considered.

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. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected The Rise Children's Centre on 30 and 31 January 2013. We judged the centre as outstanding.

Your children's centre serves your community exceptionally well by delivering high-quality services, in partnership with a range of other services that enhance the lives of you and your children. The very motivated and enthusiastic staff team is led by an exceptional manager. You all see her very much as the 'matriarch' of the community who is exceptionally well focused on ensuring that you all have every opportunity to reach your full potential. You told us how everyone is made welcome in the centre and we totally agree with you.

The centre has an excellent approach to safeguarding and the clearly documented procedures and processes in place are thoroughly known and expertly implemented by staff. Centre staff and partners work really hard, as a joined-up team, to ensure your families, particularly for those of you whose circumstances make you potentially vulnerable, receive the best services to meet your unique needs. You told inspectors how the centre is a lifeline to some of you particularly when times get tough. We found that action was taken quickly and that different people and organisations worked exceptionally well as a team to support both you and your children. You said that you appreciate the advice and help of the family support workers and have welcomed home visits and the opportunity to go with someone to a group until you build your confidence and make new friends. In fact, a lot of you who are bringing up children on your own told us how happy you really felt on the days when you had an activity to attend at the centre. Safety is given a very high priority within the centre and staff work extremely hard to improve your understanding of how to keep your children and families safe.

The centre does a really good job of preparing you and your children well for school. Local schools report that the activities you attend at the centre to help you to develop your children's speaking, listening and reading skills and promote good

behaviour enable them to settle quickly into Reception classes. Many of you have taken advantage of the numerous training and volunteering opportunities available and we know that this has given you confidence to successfully seek employment. However, more mums than dads use the centre and so we have asked the managers to find ways of increasing the number of males who use the family learning opportunities at The Rise.

The centre has spent a lot of time ensuring that you are involved in making decisions about its direction and the different services it provides. We know that you feel genuinely respected and listened to and that you are actively involved in the governance of the centre, providing lots of challenge, which help it go from strength to strength.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come and speak to us. We are very grateful and we wish you all very good luck for the future.

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