

# Inspection report for Warrington Road Children's Centre

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Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	411045
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Centre leader	Eileen Stein
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Warrington Road Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Warrington Road Bambini Day Care Centre EY435549

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 senior managers, children's centre workers, health and education professionals, representatives from Jobcentre Plus and the Citizens Advice Bureau, and representatives of the local authority. Inspectors also spoke with users of the centre. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Warrington Road Children's Centre is a phase one children's centre which was designated in 2006. It shares its site with a maintained nursery school and a neighbourhood nursery which offer fully integrated childcare and early education. These two provisions are subject to their own inspections. The reports of these inspections are available on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). A wide range of services is delivered by the centre including child and family health services, family support and outreach which provides targeted early interventions for families. There is also provision for adult learning, employment support and links to Jobcentre Plus and a range of activities for families and their children. Since January 2011 a health-visiting team has been co-located at Warrington Road.

The centre is located in the Halton View ward of Widnes and the reach area for the centre also includes Appleton and Farnworth wards. The centre is in East Widnes in a mainly residential area with good transport links. The area is fairly mixed and has relatively high levels of social disadvantage in the Appleton ward and some more affluent communities in the Farnworth ward. Across the reach area 31.9% of children live in workless households and a similar proportion of local families are dependent on benefits. Halton is an area with poor health and high levels of unemployment with a low skills base, and these issues provide key priorities for the local authority. The reach area is predominantly made up of families of White British heritage. A smaller number of families come from a very wide range of ethnic heritages.

The centre is managed under the strategic direction of the local authority, with governance provided by one advisory board which represents four children’s centres. The Warrington Road Children’s Centre manager also has responsibility for Kingsway Children’s Centre and the staff team also cover both children’s centres.

Children’s levels of skill, knowledge and ability on entry to early years provision are in line with those 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**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**2**

## Main findings

Warrington Road is a good centre. The excellent partnerships with a wide range of professionals have led to rapid improvements in outcomes for families. Children make excellent progress in developing their skills. The promotion of purposeful learning and development is outstanding. The strong focus on language development has resulted in particularly good gains in this aspect of their development. The centre places a high priority on developing parents’ skills so that they can effectively support their children’s learning. Staff also access good-quality training that focuses on improving their understanding of how young children learn.

The centre provides a very welcoming environment and good attention is paid to keeping families safe and healthy. The number of mothers who initiate breastfeeding is below the national average, although a range of support mechanisms ensure those who do start breastfeeding are usually able to keep it up. There are good improvements to other health outcomes including a sharp reduction in the number of obese children in the Reception Year. There is a good emphasis on helping children and parents to be aware of how to keep themselves and their families safe. The centre provides a wide range of good-quality activities. The soft play and sensory rooms are used particularly well to provide a welcoming and safe environment for children across the borough who are in the process of having their needs assessed.

Relationships with staff are particularly positive. Parents feel so comfortable in the centre that they describe it as ‘feeling like being at a friend’s house’. Equality and diversity are well

promoted and good attention is paid to safeguarding. Staff support parents' emotional needs well. Parents value the high-quality support from staff in times of crisis. The centre has also helped parents to develop their confidence in their own abilities and to raise their aspirations. Employability courses ease the transition into working life and the centre helps parents to become more actively engaged in education. They are also helped to manage their finances and provided with timely advice about benefits or debt.

Parents' views are valued and acted upon. The Warrington Road Family Group encourages parents to be involved with the work of the centre and to develop enterprising behaviour. Those who attend recognise that the centre is at the heart of the local community. Although the centre has recently increased the level of engagement with families across the reach area, staff know that there is more to do to encourage families from the Appleton area to make full use of the services, and particularly those families with circumstances that make them vulnerable. Nonetheless, leaders and managers have worked well to develop good provision that effectively meets the needs of those that attend the centre and the capacity for further improvement is good.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the initiation rates for breastfeeding.
- Improve levels of engagement for families in the Appleton area, paying particular attention to those families whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those whose children have been identified as children in need.

## How good are outcomes for families?

2

Health outcomes are good and improving. Although the well-attended breastfeeding group and peer supporters have helped to increase the number of mothers who sustain breastfeeding at six to eight weeks, only 48% of local mothers initiate breastfeeding compared to the national figure of 73%. This figure falls to 31% in the Appleton area. By six to eight weeks the proportion of mothers breastfeeding has fallen to around 23% but the difference between those initiating and sustaining breastfeeding is similar to the national picture. The centre works extremely well with its partners to promote fitness through programmes such as 'Fit for Life'. It has also supported healthy eating through the 'New Shoots' initiative that provides affordable fruit and vegetables for local people. This is reflected in the recent steep decline in the proportion of children in Reception who are obese. Conception rates for teenagers have fallen and the support groups for teenage parents have been reinvigorated because young parents' views have been carefully taken into account.

Families feel very safe in the centre, saying it has 'a nice relaxed atmosphere'. They extend their awareness of dangers within the home. Free or heavily subsidised safety equipment is provided through a local scheme known as 'HELPS' and there is a close working partnership with the local fire service. All this makes sure that families become more safety conscious and, consequently, the number of emergency admissions to hospital is falling. The centre has a high level of engagement with families involved in the Common Assessment Framework. Referrals are carefully assessed through the integrated working support team which ensures that families are able to access a carefully tailored package of care. Procedures to identify families where concerns about children have reduced have improved but the centre knows that there is more to do to make sure the maximum numbers of children with circumstances that make them potentially vulnerable are accessing a good range of children's centre services. However, there is a good level of engagement with families whose children have a child protection plan and with looked after children.

Children make outstanding progress from their starting points and their achievement is outstanding. The percentage gap between the lowest-achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest has reduced significantly and is now down to 22% compared to the national figure of 30%. Local children are achieving above-average scores in many areas of their development including their language for communication and thinking. This reflects the very strong partnerships with educational providers brokered by the early years consultant teacher and the emphasis on equipping parents to help their

children. Many developments have focused on improving children's speech and the good attention paid to using the outdoors to promote learning has boosted the achievement of boys. The most vulnerable two-year-old children in the area access high-quality free early years education through an active partnership with the on-site childcare settings. Parents whose children have taken advantage of this scheme say that their children's development has been 'amazing'.

Parents describe how everyone using the centre treats each other with respect, regardless of their social background or ethnic heritage, and children always behave well when they attend activities. The Warrington Road Family Group gives parents an opportunity to contribute to decision making and to develop enterprising behaviour through their dynamic involvement in fundraising. Parents are also involved in volunteering through acting as 'community parents' or 'breastfeeding buddies'. Some users are encouraged to enhance their employability and to practise skills that may have become rusty by acting as volunteers in the centre. Parents are encouraged to make the best use of their money through courses such as 'money management' and have access to good-quality financial and employment advice via close links with Jobcentre Plus and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Courses that are run in the centre encourage parents to improve their levels of confidence and literacy and numeracy skills. Local unemployment rates are falling, bucking the national trend, as local schemes are successfully helping the long-term unemployed back into work.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships, and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment.</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

**2**

Over recent years the number of families accessing the services provided by the centre has increased. For example, last year over 74% of local families used the services, a 13% gain on the year before. Target groups are well known to the centre and families' needs are carefully assessed through an effective multi-agency approach. However, only 58% of families with children under five years in the Appleton area, the most disadvantaged part of the area served by the centre, use the services that are provided. Until recently less than a

third of families with children classified as being in need accessed services at the centre. However, children's social care has improved the way they share information with the centre so this situation is rapidly improving. While outreach successfully meets the needs of the majority of the families in the area, some of the most disadvantaged children and their families, particularly those located in the Appleton area, sometimes miss out on valuable support.

The centre provides a wide variety of exciting activities including popular baby massage sessions and 'Little Monkeys' which provides family 'stay-and-play' sessions and is described by parents as 'brilliant'. It is very effective in raising levels of attainment for young children because the activities provided are of a very high quality. Children's learning and development are carefully checked. Data are used particularly well to pinpoint where children's skills are weaker. Staff development is focused on enhancing these weaker areas and staff become very proficient at supporting all areas of children's learning. Specific programmes for promoting language and communication, together with a strong partnership with the speech and language service, have also boosted children's progress in speaking and listening. The 'Early Learning Group' encourages school readiness and many other groups also promote the development of social skills, emotional resilience and good attitudes exceptionally well. These make certain that children are very well prepared for starting nursery school. There are also excellent opportunities for parents to learn how to support their children. For example, there is a course that contains a specific unit that teaches parents about the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Sensitive and much-appreciated support is provided for families in times of crisis. Case studies and conversations with parents illustrate the positive impact of personalised support. Staff are said to be 'very approachable' by parents and they feel confident to ask for help when it is needed. One-to-one support has helped them to manage their children's behaviour more effectively and to better organise their daily routines. Records of contact with families are very detailed, making it easy for managers to check whether support is making a real difference to families' lives.

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.</b>	<b>2</b>



## How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The centre is well managed by an experienced leader who is well supported by a committed staff team and by leaders from the local authority. Governance and accountability arrangements are clear and well understood by staff. Data and local information are used well to evaluate and plan the delivery of services. The 'team around the family' model means that the centre is able to prioritise target groups and those families who need the most support. All those who work in the centre have high aspirations and this is reflected in the good-quality work they do and in some outstanding areas of practice. Regular meetings between senior managers in the locality and quarterly reports of data from the local authority allow managers to keep a close check on the impact of the centre's work. The advisory board is providing an increasing level of challenge. It is continuing to develop its work by creating sub-groups to provide an even greater focus on outcomes for families. Parents are usually well represented on the advisory board, although this may vary a little from time to time depending on their individual commitments. Parents express their views through the popular Warrington Road Family Group and their opinions are then brought forward for consideration by the advisory board.

The centre provides a very welcoming, high-quality environment. It is well used by local families and provides good value for money. The centre promotes equality and diversity effectively and there is good inclusion of disabled children and those with special educational needs. Arrangements for safeguarding are good. Careful checks are made on staff members' backgrounds during the recruitment process. Staff have a good awareness of their duties relating to safeguarding and promoting families' emotional health and well-being. Referrals are made to the appropriate agencies when needed and staff training helps to raise their awareness of domestic violence. Excellent partnership working has been pivotal in securing good and rapidly improving outcomes for local families. There are many strong links including those with the co-located maintained nursery school and childcare provision, and with the health professionals who are located on site. The early years consultant teacher provides a high-quality training programme that is available to the private and voluntary sector. This has helped local children to often make outstanding progress in developing their skills.

These are the grades for leadership and management:

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision.</b>	<b>2</b>

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

Inspectors took into account the inspection reports relating to Warrington Road Nursery School early years provision which was inspected in November 2011 and the inspection report for Warrington Road Bambini Day Care Centre early years provision which was inspected in January 2009.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Warrington Road Children's Centre on 7 and 8 February 2013. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank all of you who spoke to us during the inspection. We found the information that you supplied extremely useful. We visited a range of activities, looked at the centre's plans and documents, and spoke to staff as well as parents and grandparents.

The children's centre provides a good range of services that are helping you to improve many aspects of your lives, including your abilities to keep your families healthy and safe and to manage your money. The impact the centre is having on outcomes for families is rapidly improving because of the outstanding quality of its partnership with professionals from other agencies. All of those that are involved with the centre are working hard to make sure that they provide a good service for local families. It is clear that there is lots of fun and enjoyment in the centre. Some super activities are provided and these have a big impact on your children's development and well-being. The centre is especially good at helping children to develop their language skills. In fact, the centre's work ensures that your children's achievement and enjoyment are outstanding, as are their learning and development. Throughout the inspection, those of you we met were keen to tell us how you and your children have benefited from activities like 'Little Monkeys' and the 'Early Learning Group'. You said that they had helped your children's confidence and language development as well as providing you with opportunities to make new friends. The strong partnership with the speech and language therapy service helps because the drop-in services make it relatively easy to get help and advice if you are concerned about your child's speech.

We noticed that the centre is good at helping you to keep fit and healthy. However, the rates for breastfeeding are still low in your area and we have asked the centre to improve this. Relatively few mothers start breastfeeding when their babies are born, although the centre provides good-quality support for breastfeeding mothers through the breastfeeding support group and 'breastfeeding buddies'. The centre is very committed to keeping families

safe. This includes providing safety equipment that is either free or heavily subsidised. A good partnership with the local fire service strengthens this excellent work. Staff are quick to get involved if there are any safeguarding concerns and make swift referrals to the appropriate agencies. The centre is helping parents to express their views and the Warrington Road Family Group is often involved in successful fundraising activities. You told us that everyone is made very welcome in the centre, irrespective of their background, and that there is a good commitment to challenging prejudice. The centre provides a delightful group that helps children, where there are concerns about delays in their development, to access soft play and makes sure they have a wonderful time.

Although the numbers of families who access the centre is growing, fewer families come from the Appleton area than other parts of the locality. This means that some families, including some of those with circumstances that make them vulnerable, are missing out on the valuable support that the children's centre can provide. Those of you who receive personal support are delighted with the way you have been helped during difficult times. You described the workers as 'brilliant'. The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the centre is good. The centre is well managed by an experienced leader who is supported by an enthusiastic staff. Together, they work well as a team to make sure that activities are of a high quality and effectively improve outcomes for children and families. They listen to the feedback given by those who come to activities and use that information to improve the quality of provision when necessary.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).