

# Fibbersley Park Children's Centre

Noose Lane, Willenhall, WV13 3BB

**Inspection date** 2–3 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
		Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Outstanding	1
The quality of practice and services		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is an outstanding centre.

- At 95%, the proportion of local families with young children registered with the centre is high; over three quarters of families from the most disadvantaged area regularly benefit from services. Innovative use of a range of venues to ensure services are well located means the centre has comfortably exceeded the challenging targets set by the local authority for engagement with all its groups.
- Inspirational leadership enthuses everyone to have high aspirations for families, including those in greatest need, who very significantly improve their lives as a result of the centre's high-quality family support services. The strong emphasis placed on nurturing home-grown staff expertise and the very effective deployment of all resources are central to the centre's outstanding effectiveness.
- Exactly the right balance between services open to all and bespoke support packages for the most in need makes a demonstrable difference to improving families' well-being. Staff are expert at recognising and responding to specific needs, such as those of young parents needing to extend their positive parenting skills, lone parents and those who are workless who are seeking employment. A high number of fathers attend a monthly club that includes exciting activities that help strengthen family bonds.
- Children who attend centre services, especially disadvantaged two-year-olds and those who need additional support make exceptional progress. This is because of excellent learning experiences, the close tracking of progress, and extremely well-forged links with partners such as local mainstream and special schools, nurseries, childcare providers and specialist agencies.
- Excellent links with health, education and training professionals, and from within the voluntary sector, support the centre in achieving its challenging goals. The local authority checks the centre's performance closely and regularly asks centre leaders to share best practice across the borough.
- Priorities are well chosen and include increasing breastfeeding rates and reducing childhood obesity. Things are moving in the right direction but the targets in place to drive greater success could be even more precise to further strengthen, otherwise very rigorous, monitoring.

### Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre leaders, family support workers, officers from the local authority, health and education professionals, parents, volunteers and representatives of the management committee. Home visits were undertaken with family support workers, and observations of activities were undertaken jointly with senior leaders, including visits to the shop and chart centre. Inspectors looked at the centre's self-evaluation, action planning, delivery plan, a sample of case studies, safeguarding procedures, management committee minutes, the annual user survey responses and a range of other relevant documentation.

### Inspection team

Christine Field	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Susan Walsh	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

The centre opened in 2007 as a purpose-built, phase two, stand-alone centre with a satellite centre situated in Willenhall town centre where the family support staff are based. It delivers or supports access to a range of services to meet its core purpose. The centre also delivers some services from community-based facilities such as the pavilion in the park, clinics and the Chart Centre. A new venue to further extend outreach services in Rosehill, the most deprived neighbourhood, is currently being refurbished. The centre is open Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm all year round.

The centre shares a site with Fibbersley Park Primary School and is managed by the school's governing body on behalf of the local authority. Registered childcare is provided on the same site which was inspected in 2012. A management committee of the governing body, which is shortly to be renamed 'advisory board', oversees the day-to-day running of the centre. The centre leader, who was appointed in September 2011, shares her time between this centre and Bentley Children's Centre which she is also responsible for in the locality, and which was inspected in 2011.

There are 1,132 children under five years of age in the centre's reach area. Children enter early years provision at levels typically well below those expected for their age. The centre serves a very disadvantaged community in which there is a fifth of families in receipt of out of work benefits and eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Most families are of White British heritage with a small percentage from other ethnic groups. The centre has identified its main target groups as expectant mothers, lone parents, workless families, fathers, disadvantaged children and vulnerable families.

The local authority is undertaking a review of service delivery for its 18 children's centres; this review will be concluded in September 2013.

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

- Set more precise and measurable targets and clear milestones to assist the centre's ongoing priority work, particularly to increase breastfeeding at six to eight weeks and reduce childhood obesity, and sharpen leaders' monitoring and review.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Outstanding

- Families identify the warm welcome, friendly staff and high-quality services as being key reasons why they attend the centre. For example, a large majority of fathers engage with the centre with many thoroughly enjoying the 'Dads and kids' group held monthly and flagging how well it cements family bonds and raises confidence.
- Excellent communication with health partners means that the centre is kept well informed about expectant parents and all new births in the area. This enables the right support to be planned and delivered, including home visits by centre staff and weekly sessions run from the centre and neighbourhood clinics, to ensure families' well-being and a healthy start in life for young children.
- Innovative use of a range of buildings located across the area with services matched precisely to meet local needs leads to high engagement levels with local families. For example, the centre's refurbishment of a shop in the town centre provides a highly accessible family support drop-in for lone and workless parents, while the Chart Centre enables adult learning and positive parenting courses to run successfully because of the on-site crèche. A grant has just been secured for further extending the centre's reach into Rosehill, the most disadvantaged neighbourhood, by utilising an existing youth club and upgrading the environment for children's and families' use.
- The centre works extremely effectively to support early years settings in the local area. Identifying

disadvantaged two-year-olds and looking closely at their specific needs has led to the large majority of children taking up places. The very close links with specialist services means that these children receive the best quality support possible to assist their early learning and development.

- In recognition that future demand for places is certain to increase, the centre is already well advanced in planning the enhancement of its outstanding childcare provision. The very large majority of children aged three and four take up their free entitlement to early education.

### **The quality of practice and services**

Outstanding

- High-quality sessions such as 'Teeny Weenies' for one- to three-year-olds led by experienced staff, and the right balance between services for all and targeted support, have a significant impact on children's progress and their readiness for school. This is especially so for children identified as having developmental delays or special educational needs and for two-year-olds who receive free early education. Regular reviews show that most children who access the centre make exceptional progress from their well below average starting points, with an impressive 90% achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- The centre's excellent attention to breaking down barriers is clearly reflected in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results for the reach area, which show an improving picture to levels above those seen across the borough and nationally. Additionally, the number of children living in poverty is reducing and central to this has been the centre's support for enhancing parents' education and skills and helping those who are unemployed get back into work. Volunteering opportunities are well promoted and taken up readily, with some going into careers in childcare as a result of the staff's extremely positive role models.
- Well-targeted courses build many vulnerable parents' confidence and equip families, including young and lone parents, to better manage their children's behaviour. Comments such as: 'It is nice to know that it is not just me having problems with my children; I now know how to praise and encourage them to do well.' demonstrate the positive difference they make. Parents are usefully invited to the centre to explore the longer-term impact. As a result, one family with a child with complex needs attended a residential weekend to enable further support with the help of the centre.
- Weekly meetings between the many partners involved in delivering children's services in the area enable the timely sharing of information. Concerns are explored thoroughly, with approaches and solutions agreed jointly through highly effective use of the Common Assessment Framework procedures. This results in the needs of children and families at risk being well known and the early help they require is targeted precisely because of the excellent collaboration.
- Family support work is a major strength of the centre's services, and results in exemplary care, guidance and support. Staff are highly effective when helping families, especially in times of crisis. They tap into specialist services very quickly in order to respond to families' often complex problems, which routinely include bad debt, poor housing, domestic violence and a breakdown in relationships. Case studies provide striking examples of the significant impact the centre's work has in helping families to build resilience, overcome challenges and improve their lives.

### **The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management**

Outstanding

- Staff and senior leaders share in the pursuit of excellence and the strategic leader's relentless drive to make everything the best it can be. The leadership team has a deep understanding of the community and a passion for providing services that are relevant and vibrant and result in the high engagement of families and young children. They place great emphasis on supervision and the management of performance, which the staff say is 'second to none'; many of them have assumed increasing levels of responsibility and career progression as a result of leaders' excellent nurturing and development.
- The management committee, which includes six parents, measures the centre's performance against local and national information and asks challenging questions such as, 'Are our services meeting target groups' needs?' Together with the governing body they keep a close check on all

that goes on and strive to continually improve provision and so reduce inequalities between families. The local authority keeps good oversight through its monthly monitoring of participation rates, the annual conversation meeting and user feedback. It frequently draws on the leadership team to share best practice with other centres.

- Parents and children are consulted very frequently and effectively so that most families contribute to the life and development of the centre. There is 100% satisfaction with centre services and how well they meet families' needs.
- Safeguarding is given the highest priority and arrangements ensure that families are well looked after when they attend activities. The centre's robust use of the Common Assessment Framework procedures and its work with children subject to child protection plans, looked after children and those in need ensure they are extremely well protected.
- Self-evaluation within the centre is a robust process with development planning sensibly highlighting the actions to be taken to bring positive change, for example in increasing sustained breastfeeding and reducing obesity. Despite outcomes showing improvement, the lack of sharp targets and clear milestones limits the otherwise very useful monitoring, including impact reviews.
- Astute resource allocation and its very effective use, for example the development of community outreach facilities such as the town centre shop and effective marketing of what is on offer, have been critical in involving more and more families. The inclusive nature of the centre's approaches is valued enormously by parents who flag that 'the excellent relationships with staff keep me coming back for more'. The exceptional progress young children make is just one indicator of the centre's outstanding effectiveness in promoting equality for all.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	Practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for children and their families and as a result inequalities are reducing rapidly and gaps are closing.
Grade 2	Good	Practice enables most children and their families to access good quality services that improve children's wellbeing and achieve the stated outcomes for families.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	Performance is not as good as it might reasonably be expected to be in one or more key areas.
Grade 4	Inadequate	The needs of children and families in its area are not being met and/or the leaders and managers are not providing sufficient challenge to bring about improvement to the quality of services.

<b>Unique reference number</b>	21161
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	421460
<b>Managed by</b>	The governing body of Fibbersley Park Primary School on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,132
<b>Centre manager</b>	Andria Holmes
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 366220
<b>Email address</b>	FibbersleyPark@childrenscentres.walsall.org.uk

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