

Pheasey Park Farm Children's Centre

Wimperis Way, Great Barr, Birmingham, West Midlands, B43 7DH

Inspection date

30–31 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:		
		Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Good	2
The quality of practice and services		Good	2
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a good centre.

- All families are registered with the centre and a large majority of families, including those from most target groups, are regularly accessing services.
- The centre is a focal point within the community and parents' satisfaction levels are high. Parents are regularly involved in helping to shape services and influencing decisions taken.
- Assessment of the needs of families, especially during times of crisis, is well managed. Safeguarding is given high priority and centre staff, together with other professionals, ensure that children who are in most need, including those subject to child protection, are protected.
- A wide range of good quality services is provided which is helping to improve families' lives. The majority of families are accessing early childhood services. Leaders ensure a good spread of provision across the reach area through well planned outreach activities.
- Leadership, management and governance are good and improving; thereby ensuring the centre's overall effectiveness is good. Priorities are well chosen by supportive local authority leaders. Staff development and support for managers are effective, as a result of many positive recent changes.
- Partnership working is strong, especially with schools, the voluntary and community sector and health professionals. Staff are confident when directing parents to a wide range of local agencies, knowing that their needs will be addressed.

It is not outstanding because:

- Not enough fathers are regularly accessing children's centre services. Leaders recognise that the centre does not fully meet the needs of this priority group.
- Checks on children's learning and development and the progress adults make when they access further learning opportunities are not detailed enough to enable the centre to see clearly how much progress they make.
- Local authority targets for reducing childhood obesity levels and increasing breastfeeding rates are not being achieved quickly enough. A few targets in the centre's development plan lack precision, which makes it difficult for leaders to measure the impact of the actions they have taken.

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 senior leaders and managers in the local authority, health, education and social care partners, parents, representatives of partner organisations from the voluntary and community sector, outreach workers, early years practitioners, volunteers and representatives of the governing board and advisory board.

The inspectors visited the centre, linked school and other satellite sites.

They observed the centre's work, including a joint observation of the Messy Play and Yummy Mummy sessions, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including centre policies and procedures, case study files and parent satisfaction surveys.

Inspection team

Alan Comerford-Dunbar

Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector

Christine Field

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Pheasey Park Farm Children's Centre opened in 2007 in a purpose built building. The centre is a stand-alone centre and is part of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council. The centre is co-located with Pheasey Park Farm Primary School (URN: 104219), which is subject to a separate inspection. The centre's governance is through the school and the children's centre advisory board, which is a sub-committee of the governing body that manages the day-to-day running of the centre with representatives from the community, professional agencies and parents.

The centre meets its core purpose by providing a range of supporting services including health, adult courses and workshops. Families that use the centre have access to school facilities including a swimming pool. Outreach work takes place in family homes or at nearby community venues to support a range of people who care for children in the community. Childcare is provided onsite and is subject to a separate inspection. The report can be seen at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Currently, 457 children under the age of five years live in the reach area, all of whom are registered with the centre. The centre also works with families who live in Birmingham and Sandwell because of the proximity of the local authority borders. The large majority of families are of White British heritage. Some 5.4% of families live in workless homes and 20% are eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Most children enter early years provision with a range of skills and knowledge that are typical for their age.

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?

- Establish a system to track the progress made by children during their time at the centre and when they move on to other early years settings, and that of adults who access centre services, so that the centre can measure the impact of its work.
- Increase the number of fathers who attend centre activities, by:
 - using the wide range of data available to ensure this group is followed up to find out why fathers are not fully accessing services
 - identify existing good practice in other local children's centres and implement it as appropriate in this centre
 - running 'pilot' activities suggested by men, ensuring that effective evaluation of the 'pilot' identifies whether or not it is successful
 - marketing and expanding successful activities and continuing to run other 'pilot' activities until engagement with this target group has increased sufficiently.
- Build upon the centre's work with health partners and educators to:
 - improve obesity rates
 - further increase breastfeeding rates.
- Establish clear and measurable targets in the centre development plan, by which leaders can check the progress being made by the centre towards achieving its targets, and the impact of actions on improving services and outcomes for families, especially those from target groups.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- All families living in the reach area are registered with the centre, with a very large majority actively accessing services. Leaders make very good use of information about families served by the centre so most target groups attend activities. However, activities fail to attract the majority of fathers to

the centre, although leaders have appropriately consulted with fathers to find out why more do not use the centre. As a result, two fathers have agreed to act as volunteers to run groups for men aimed at healthy eating and also exercise, although it is too early to judge the impact of these initiatives.

- Access to early years services by families is good. Highly supportive antenatal classes are regularly held at the centre and also the satellite site housing health professionals. Expectant mothers are invited to utilise the swimming pool located in the school grounds, which encourages healthy exercise for mothers and a relaxed opportunity to mix with other parents. As one mother stated, 'What a resource, what a bonus.'
- The centre is clearly a hub of the community, as well as working in the centre, most centre staff also live in the reach area and have done for several years; as a result, they know their families extremely well. Universal services are well attended and the provision of targeted services, such as a group for parents concerned about autism and a group specifically run for eight women from Bulgaria, are highly valued by parents. Most targeted children take up their free entitlement to early education, especially disadvantaged families with two- and/or three-year-olds.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Although low in numbers, those who are in most need and other key target groups, such as women living with domestic abuse, develop a very good understanding of how they can remain safe. This is because staff make good use of the multi-agency referral forms to identify and respond effectively to reduce the risk of harm. Case study evidence demonstrates the centre's success in taking appropriate and timely action to keep children safe.
- Leaders think carefully about the most appropriate location to run activities. As a result, the good quality provision is delivered across a wide range of partners in the community. This ensures that attendance at sessions is good and families are extremely positive about the high quality of services as well as their accessibility. As one mother said, 'Someone has thought carefully about all this.'
- Children are well prepared for school as a result of their attendance at the centre and involvement in good quality activities. The gap between the lowest attaining children and their peers is narrowing year on year and is well below the national average at 20%. However, staff do not sufficiently check the impact of activities on individual children or adults who attend learning opportunities, so they are unable to confirm the impact their work has on individuals or sufficiently track progress.
- Strategies are in place to support local health initiatives such as reducing obesity and improving breastfeeding rates and oral health. However, leaders are aware of the need to improve outcomes relating to these areas. A large majority of children receive immunisations across the centre area and obesity rates are at national and local averages, but have recently risen. Initial and sustained breastfeeding rates are low, although they are improving.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Leadership, management and governance arrangements are good as a direct result of the clear direction and support provided by the new head teacher of the linked school and the local authority. Robust arrangements are in place to monitor the centre's work, evaluate its performance and ensure that it runs smoothly. The centre manager is now an integral part of the governing body as a result of recent changes, and staff receive regular supervision and have appropriate access to training which enables them to respond professionally to the challenges that their work presents.
- The centre monitors and evaluates its services well through consultation with parents and the parents are fully involved in helping to shape services as well as being an integral part of the advisory board and governing body. Relationships among families and with staff are extremely positive. The centre's ethos ensures that parents from different social backgrounds feel welcomed and involved in centre life.
- Safeguarding arrangements are appropriately robust and policies and procedures are well written and carefully followed by staff and managers. Staff are vigilant and parents understand the

importance of adopting safe practices. Staff's good knowledge and detailed record keeping play an important role in meetings with other professionals about children who are subject to the Common Assessment Framework arrangements or child protection plans. Case studies demonstrate that the centre's involvement has helped to reduce the level of support needed for some highly vulnerable families.

- The centre is extremely well resourced and staff work well with a broad range of partners within the reach area. Careful consideration takes place to decide which venue is most suited to run activities. Resources are used effectively to meet the majority of targets; as a result, outcomes to narrow life chance gaps for most target groups are improving well.
- Partnership working is strong, especially with schools, local faith groups and community organisations. This ensures that the activities of all groups within the local area dovetail each other effectively and there is no overlapping of activities. Parents appreciate the flexibility and use of different venues; as one mother said, 'It's much more convenient.'
- Data and management information are used well by leaders to deliver high quality provision that is sensitive to the diverse needs of the local community. Self-evaluation processes are robust and the report accurately judges the centre's strengths and areas for improvement. However, although leaders have identified the right priorities for improvement, some of the targets in the centre's development plan are not precise enough to measure the impact of actions taken and, consequently, are taking too long to achieve.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
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.

Select details

Unique reference number	22373
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	421487
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	457
Centre leader	Barbara Butlin
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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