Sunshine Children's Centre
Bluebell Close, Malvern, WR14 3SW

### Inspection date
25–26 September 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall effectiveness</th>
<th>This inspection:</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Previous inspection:</td>
<td>Not previously inspected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to services by young children and families</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The quality of practice and services</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>2</td>
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### Summary of key findings for children and families

**This is a good centre.**
- A large majority of the families, including those who have the highest levels of need, engage in the wide range of good quality services which the centre provides. As a result, the centre is working very successfully with its main target groups of children in most need, disadvantaged neighbourhoods and is particularly accomplished at engaging with fathers and teenage and young parents.
- Excellent local knowledge and good use of other community information ensure that the programme of activities meets families’ needs well. It offers the right blend of group sessions, such as ‘Sensory Babies’ and ‘Octatots’ play sessions, as well as carefully planned home visits that support individual families, particularly in times of crisis.
- Parents value the warm and friendly environment at the centre and really appreciate the very good care and support which they receive from the leader and staff.
- As a result of the centre’s good work to develop their knowledge and skills, children who attend the centre achieve better results across the Early Years Foundation Stage than those who do not. These children are also well prepared for starting school.
- Governance is well established and effective. The centre leader’s highly motivational leadership has created a strong, mutually supportive staff team, whose members share her dedication and passion and have high aspirations for local families. Regular checks on the success of activities leads to good improvements in provision and, as a result, the centre continues to improve well.

**It is not yet outstanding because:**
- Systems are not in place to track and measure the progress made by adults towards achieving their goals where they have been signposted to courses and programmes provided by outside delivery partners.
- Leaders do not gather up-to-date and accurate information about the reach area from health partners and, as a result, the centre does not fully measure the effectiveness of its work.
- The local authority and leaders do not make best use of the information from monitoring to set precise and measurable targets in all aspect of the centre’s work or use this to more effectively guide development plans and decisions.
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 managers, officers from the local authority and Action for Children, centre staff, parents, members of the advisory board and a number of partners including health, education and children’s social care professionals.

The inspectors visited the two sessions held during the inspection, a 'Story Bears' and 'Sensory Babies’ session for adults and children, and also involved the centre leader in all team meetings.

They observed the centre’s work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the centre’s self-evaluation and development plans, parent evaluations, key policies and the centre’s equality and safeguarding procedures as well as a range of other relevant documentation.

Inspection team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tara Street</th>
<th>Additional inspector</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Towner</td>
<td>Additional inspector</td>
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Full report

Information about the centre

Sunshine Children’s Centre is a phase two centre located within Poolbrook House in Malvern, Worcestershire. The building is shared with midwives, Malvern Special Families Disability Play Scheme, Brighter Futures Nursery and a children’s services base. The childcare provisions are subject to separate inspection arrangements and their reports are available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. The centre offers a range of services which include child health services, family play sessions, parenting programmes, adult education, family support services and a sensory room.

There are 862 children aged from birth to five years in the reach area, 35% of whom live in areas classed as being within the 30% most deprived, with the Pickersleigh estate having child poverty rates of 36.6%. Within the reach of the centre, there are significant issues surrounding mental health, isolation, unemployment, domestic violence, substance misuse and low levels of literacy and numeracy. There is a small Black and minority ethnic community, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families. Housing is mostly social or private rental at 80%, with some small areas of high affluence. Levels of unemployment are low with 7.31% of children living in households dependent upon workless benefits. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are significantly below expectations for their age. There are links to the five local primary schools.

The centre is managed on behalf of the local authority by Action for Children, in conjunction with an advisory board that includes providers, delivery partners, parents and members of the local community.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the economic stability of families, in particular those with young children, by:
  - establishing a system to follow up how well adults make progress when they access courses or programmes delivered by partner agencies, and use the information gathered to inform the planning of future services.

- Work with the local authority to increase the rigour with which leaders evaluate the impact of the centre’s work and focus their drive for improvement by:
  - working with colleagues in the health service to ensure the centre receives accurate and up-to-date information for the reach area so that leaders can more effectively monitor the impact of the centre’s work
  - analysing the centre’s own data more efficiently to establish clear and measurable targets in all aspects of the centre’s work by which leaders can check the progress being made towards achieving its priorities, and the impact of actions on improving services and outcomes for families, especially those from target groups
  - identifying in development plans the desired impact of actions on improving the well-being of children and families.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Effective liaison with partners ensures the centre not only knows about all new births within the area, but also gains a thorough understanding of the needs of individual families. As a result, most families are registered with the centre and a large majority of those living in the most deprived areas, including those identified as being in most need, access services at the centre.

- Activity workers deliver a wide range of high quality activity sessions which increases access and engagement of targeted families, such as those subject to domestic violence, and helps identify individual needs. The non-judgemental, warm and friendly welcome is highly valued by parents who highlight the centre’s inclusive approach as instrumental in fostering excellent community
Disabled children and their parents are well supported through good access to a well-resourced sensory room and clear signposting to specialist support groups. Extremely strong links with partners, such as ‘Stonham’ and ‘Support Works’ specialist providers, is helping to increase adults awareness of domestic violence.

Parents benefit from attending activities that help them give their children the best start and programmes that are specifically designed to improve their parenting skills and help them to manage their children’s behaviour successfully.

At 87%, staff have been highly successful in encouraging parents to take advantage of available funding for nursery places for the very large majority of all eligible two-year-olds. In addition, at 98.8%, almost all children take up the three- and-four-year-old entitlement to early year’s education.

Family support workers provide very well-targeted support for families in their own homes which ensures that help is on hand when they need it most. Parents say that they love to visit the centre and always go home with new ideas to support their children’s learning, such as through the ‘Home Learning Links’ activity sheets.

The quality of practice and services

Good-quality services, based on a thorough assessment of individual needs, are provided for the large majority of target groups. Leaders’ timely reviews of the impact of services on improving families’ lives and reducing inequalities leads to on-going adjustments, for example in weighting the programme in favour of targeted rather than universal services. Adults make a valuable contribution to shaping services, for example through the parents’ forum, as volunteers or as representatives of the advisory board.

Effective partnership work with most schools and Early Years Foundation Stage settings in the area helps the children who use the centre to make good educational progress. Data show that these children are better prepared for school and achieve higher scores across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Targeted sessions to boost children’s development, such as the ‘Story Bears’ and ‘Mucky Pups’ groups, have a good impact on improving their skills and, as a result, help to narrow the achievement gap.

Excellent communication and mutually respectful relationships with some partners, such as local police, housing and the ‘Areas of Highest Need Board’, are key features of the centre’s carefully integrated approach to delivering services. As a result, there has been a decline in homelessness and teenage pregnancies. Families in most need are often supported in their own home by staff who give timely help to overcome a range of challenges, including drugs misuse or a relationship breakdown.

Parents develop a clear understanding of their responsibilities in keeping their children safe. Targeted work with partners to provide home safety assessments and free equipment, such as stairgates and fire guards, has seen a reduction in the number of accident and emergency admissions from 19 down to 10.

Antenatal clinics and other health-related sessions held in the centre help raise awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles and provide good support for breastfeeding. Although some health outcomes are improving, others - such as immunisation rates and childhood obesity - are not improving rapidly enough.

Staff signpost families well to the expertise of partners to support and advise them about financial matters, benefits and routes into employment. The large majority of parents have engaged in adult learning, such as childcare, beauty, first aid, food hygiene and preparation for life and work courses, effectively improving their employability skills. The system to track adults’ progress and measure the centre’s effectiveness in this area when they signpost them to outside delivery partners is under-developed.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good
The dynamic centre leader has very high ambitions to make the centre the best it can be and has the full support of the extremely committed staff in meeting local families’ needs. The centre is at the heart of its community and its services are very well used by families. Parents speak very highly of the support they receive, saying it has transformed their lives, helped develop their confidence and improved their parenting skills.

The local authority checks the centre’s performance through contractual arrangements with Action for Children, which manages the centre, and via an annual conversation meeting with the centre leader. However, other than engagement figures for target groups, this process is not rigorous enough about analysing the information the centre has in order to precisely pinpoint areas for future focus or provide measurable targets against which to gauge improvement. In addition, the sharing of information from health partners is not sufficiently smooth and consistent to ensure the centre receives up-to-date information to measure its impact in this area.

Governance arrangements are effective. The advisory board both challenges and supports the centre and keeps a close eye on engagement rates and service delivery planning. The centre leader makes use of her excellent knowledge of the area to plan and deliver high quality provision that is sensitive to the diverse needs of the community. Self-evaluation is effective and accurately identifies the centre’s strengths and areas for improvement. However, although leaders have identified the right priorities for improvement, development plans do not contain specific timelines, targets being set or measurable success criteria, to help them measure the impact of actions taken.

Staff feel valued and well supported in their roles and flag supervision arrangements as being a very positive feature of management. They keep abreast of best practice, undertake useful training to extend their expertise and are well qualified. Staff make good use of the high quality resources and available space to provide a variety of groups including the use of venues in the community.

The needs of children subject to a child protection plan and children in need are particularly well met and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is used well to coordinate effective early support. Well-organised preventative work with partners, such as those from social care, enhances the centre’s ability to help keep families safe. All the required policies and procedures are in place to ensure effective safeguarding practice across all aspects of the centre’s work, including those for recruiting and vetting staff.

The inclusion of families and children is central to the work of the centre. It has worked hard to build positive relationships with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families and this results in them feeling part of the community.
### What inspection judgements mean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Judgement</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for children and their families and as a result inequalities are reducing rapidly and gaps are closing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Practice enables most children and their families to access good quality services that improve children’s wellbeing and achieve the stated outcomes for families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td>Performance is not as good as it might reasonably be expected to be in one or more key areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>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.</td>
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## Children’s Centre details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unique reference number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local authority</td>
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<td>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centre leader</td>
<td>Sue Rogers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of previous inspection</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone number</td>
<td>01684 577442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sue.rogers@actionforchildren.org.uk">sue.rogers@actionforchildren.org.uk</a></td>
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