

Platt Bridge Sure Start Children's Centre

Rivington Avenue, Platt Bridge, Wigan WN2 5NG

Inspection date 24–25 September 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.

- The leaders of the centre are dynamic and have built up a very good reputation in the community. The centre's good practice and success are due to the very strong drive of leaders, managers and governance to promote continual improvement on their journey to establish an outstanding centre.
- A large majority of those considered to be the families in most need attend the centre services. These meet their individual needs extremely well. Young children and their families access a wide range of high-quality inclusive events and facilities that the centre provides all year round.
- The highly-skilled staff are very passionate about reducing inequalities. They assess family needs very well and carefully monitor individual progress, particularly to help parents improve their life chances and keep children safe from harm.
- Strong partnerships are in place with most professional partners. This ensures parents receive good quality care, guidance and support. Partnerships, particularly with parents and schools, are excellent.
- A clear focus on improving employability skills is having an excellent impact on raising adults' aspirations and confidence levels. Consequently, very trusting relationships have been built with parents and many are eager to support the centre's work through acting as a volunteer.

It is not outstanding because:

- There are no specific performance targets linked to improvement planning in relation to identified health issues, such as a high number of mothers who smoke during pregnancy and a low number of mothers who choose to breastfeed. This makes it difficult for the centre to measure and evidence improvement of child and family health in these particular areas.
- A small minority of families remain difficult to engage and are not benefiting from the services offered by the centre.

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 three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the head of centre and senior leadership team, centre staff, family support and outreach workers and representatives from the local authority. They also met with members of the advisory board, parents and key partners.

The inspectors visited the activities which took place at the centre.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Sue Pepper	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Qaisra Shahraz Ahmad	Additional Inspector
Joan Cawdron	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Platt Bridge Sure Start Children's Centre was designated as a phase one single centre in 2007. It is located in a shared building with Platt Bridge Community School (Academy convertor) and the linked integrated childcare. The childcare provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements and the report can be found on our website at www.ofsted.gov.uk. The board of directors of the academy are commissioned by the local authority to run the centre with the aid of an established advisory board, known as the 'Collaborative Leadership Committee'.

The centre is situated in Platt Bridge in Wigan. The area the centre covers includes Bamfurlong, Bickershaw, Abram and Spring View. The majority of families living in the area are of White British heritage, however, the number of families from other ethnicities moving into the area is starting to increase rapidly. Approximately 1260 children under five years of age live in the community. Most children enter early year's provision with a range of experiences and skills below those expected for their age.

A majority of families live in an area ranked amongst the 30% most deprived nationally, with a few pockets of the community where families are living within the 10% most deprived nationally. There are significant levels of social and economic disadvantage in the area with high levels of unemployment. The majority of parents are in receipt of benefits. Families face a varied range of challenges and issues, including substance misuse, domestic violence and mental health problems.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- The local authority to work with health partners at a strategic level to ensure they set challenging and ambitious targets to evidence improved health outcomes, particularly in relation to breastfeeding and the reduction of the number of mothers smoking in pregnancy.
- Increase registration and participation further to ensure almost all families benefit from the good services the centre offers.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families Good

- The centre is able to identify most families with babies because staff now receive live birth data. Good partnerships with the named health colleague are helping to increase registration and engagement figures. However, centre staff and leaders acknowledge that they have yet to engage with a small minority of users at their centre who still do not participate regularly in activities.
- Staff are committed to raising awareness in the community of the good range of universal and targeted services the centre delivers. They are regularly present at school sites, out in the area, or they use the more personal touch of knocking on families' doors. Family link and playworkers ensure those families who face challenging circumstances quickly get the right specialist professional support and practical help they need.
- Weekly antenatal clinics provide good support for those expecting children. Families new to the area, such as those seeking refuge, members of minority ethnic groups or Traveller families are extremely positive about the warm welcome and good support they receive. Staff know which families need more sensitive encouragement to attend and they increase contact with them by finding out what services they need to break down any barriers.
- Families benefit from the well-established centre and staff regularly consult with them to make sure they are providing the right services to meet their needs. The 'Fairy Poppins' crèche ensures adults can access training, secure in the knowledge that their children are happy and safe. Families particularly enjoy the very good range of interesting summer-holiday activities and low-cost trips, for example, to the seaside or safari park.

- The centre's deputy works exceptionally closely with schools and the linked childcare to select families with young children who need support to take up the free entitlement to early education. Staff carefully assess and accurately check children's individual progress well, particularly the two-year olds who are most in need. The uptake of funded, good quality early years nursery places is high.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- A strong drive is in place to promote healthy eating through, for example, 'Cook and Play', and to encourage more active lifestyles, such as 'Rock and Roll Tots'. As a result, levels of obesity are in line with national averages. There is a high take up of the immunisation programme and healthy vitamins. Despite shocking messages being shared with adults about the dangers of smoke to children, such as the 'chemical soup', the number of mothers who smoke during pregnancy remains high.
- The centre is a breastfeeding friendly environment. Although a support group to challenge the strong bottle-feeding culture in the area regular meets at the centre, only a few mothers are choosing to breastfeed their babies.
- A good range of services focus on developing children's independence and good communication skills such as 'Toddler Talk' and 'Mini Chatterboxes'. Good partnership working helps to identify any children with special educational needs or developmental delay.
- Children's creativity is highly valued and celebrated. Artists have worked with the children to produce modern art work which takes pride of place in the corridors for all to see.
- Children's transition into early education is well planned. As a result, the centre is reducing inequalities and more children are starting school with skills which enable them to engage quickly with the learning environment.
- Good opportunities are in place for parents to improve their parenting skills and self-confidence. Parents who have attended the 'Triple P' are very clear regarding the difference the programme has made to their family lives. It helps them to develop more positive relationships with one another and to learn how to manage their children's challenging behaviour well.
- Several good services strongly promote the exceptional development of adults' employability skills which, in turn, helps some gain employment. The centre is starting to assess and track adult learners using individual learning plans. Adults have good access to a work club, computers to complete job applications and volunteering opportunities to improve their life chances. Opportunities to gain accredited qualifications are increasing; nail art, first aid and the opportunity to train to be a teaching assistant are extremely popular.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Although the centre has seen a significant increase in the number of families in the centre's area and, at the same time, major staff reductions, these have had a minimal impact on the delivery of services. This is mainly due to the resourceful and passionate staff team. Consequently, users have not felt any reduction in services and remain extremely positive about the impact of the centre on their lives.
- There are excellent opportunities for parents to be involved in decision making through the 'Parent Partnership Group', the mothers' group, 'Butterflies' or the dads' group. Groups actively fundraise to increase the range of resources and high-quality experiences families enjoy, for example, soft-play equipment or exciting events such as fishing trips.
- The local authority and other schools in the area rely on the centre to pilot new and innovative ways of working. Centre services are mostly delivered from rooms within the spacious multi-purpose high-quality shared building. Joint working promotes the good sharing of a wide range of resources which includes staff. A parent described the centre as having an 'amazing atmosphere'.
- Having so many services together in one place creates a natural hub for families. However, the centre staff know that not all families find it easy to travel so they deliver some of their services in schools and community venues which some families find more accessible.

- The very strong, highly qualified and experienced leadership team are extremely effective and efficient and they constantly monitor the quality of practice and services. They are well challenged to continually improve by the active and strong 'Collaborative Leadership Committee'. Good procedures are in place for the supervision and the continuous professional development of all staff.
- The local authority sees this centre as their 'flagship'. They oversee the information the centre collates to measure how well it increases attendance and the percentage of parents who access further learning to reduce inequalities. Self-evaluation is mainly accurate and development plans focus on a few appropriate and challenging priority areas for improvement. However, no health-specific targets are set.
- The Common Assessment Framework is used very effectively to safeguard children subject to child protection plans or who are identified as in most need. Good practical support is in place for some very difficult and challenging circumstances which helps parents to reduce the risk of harm to their children.

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.

Children's centre details

Unique reference number	22388
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	427473
Managed by	The directors of Platt Bridge Community School (Academy convertor) on behalf of the local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1260
Centre leader	Sue Darbyshire
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01942 487764
Email address	headteacher@admin.plattbridge.wigan.sch.uk

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