

# Wordsley Children's Centre

Lawnswood Road, Wordsley, Stourbridge, DY8 5BZ

<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2014
Previous Inspection dates	Not previously inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
		Not applicable	
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 large majority of children and families, including most target groups, have meaningful contact with the centre and engage in relevant services.
- The centre makes a positive contribution to children's readiness for school. Most eligible two year-olds take up their free education in good or outstanding quality settings.
- The good quality services provided by the centre have a beneficial impact on those who use them. Good support work with families facing particular challenges in their lives helps them to lead more positive lives.
- Leadership and management are taking this relatively new centre forward during a period of significant change. Staff morale is high and everyone shows strong commitment to further improving the centre's effectiveness.
- The local authority provides effective governance, support and challenge.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Not enough lone and workless families are using the centre, and those that do are not being helped to improve their further education or return to work in sufficient numbers.
- Learning journeys are not being used well enough to show children's achievements and the progress they make as a result of attending activities and services.
- The advisory board has yet to agree revised terms of reference, review its membership and strengthen the parent's representation in decision-making.
- Arrangements for performance management are not as robust as those for supervision.

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

- Ensure that at least the large majority of lone and workless families engage in relevant services.
- Extend the services available to enhance parent's education, skills and employability, and increase the take up, particularly by those who are out of work.
- Develop learning journeys by drawing on local best practice, to ensure that they provide an accurate and useful account of how well the children who access centre services are achieving.
- Strengthen governance by reviewing the remit, membership and challenge role of the advisory board and getting more parents involved in its work.
- Sharpen performance management arrangements so that all staff are set measurable targets and have regular review meetings with their line manager to check on progress.

## 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 centre leaders, staff, parents, childminders, grandparents, partners, officers of the local authority, and members of the advisory board.

The inspectors visited activities held at the centre and at a local pre-school, and carried out two observations jointly with staff.

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

## Inspection team

Lead inspector, Christine Field

Additional inspector

Aileen King

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Wordsley Children's Centre is managed directly by the local authority and shares a site with Belle Vue Primary School, which is subject to separate inspection arrangements. Despite its stand-alone status, some staff, managers and the advisory board are shared with Kingswinford and Wall Heath Children's Centre, which is also subject to a separate inspection. Reports can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The centre offers a range of services to meet its core purpose, is open all year round and uses evenings and Saturday events from time to time, to meet the needs of the community. Wordsley Children's Centre is currently part of the Dudley remodelling process and will form part of the new Brierley Hill cluster.

At the time of the inspection there were 880 children under five years of age living within the reach area, which is mixed economically and socially. Only one community falls into the 30% most deprived nationally. Most families are White British. Data shows that 14% of children live in homes where no-one is working. Children's skills and knowledge on entry to early years provision is generally at the level expected for their age.

Target groups identified by the centre are: children and families living in the most deprived area, teenage parents, workless households with young children and lone parents.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families **Good**

- Overall, the large majority of children and families, including those living in its most deprived neighbourhood, use the centre's services regularly. Engagement is 100% for children with disabilities and teenage parents. In contrast, only 30% of lone parents have meaningful contact with the centre, of which a high proportion are also not working.
- The strong partnerships with health professionals, for example in running ante-natal clinics at the centre during the day and one evening a week, mean that staff have close contact with 'soon to be' parents. The family support team visits all new births within the first eight weeks of a baby being born to register the child and provide information on services and offer emotional support to new mothers.
- 89% of two year olds take up their entitlement to free education, and the centre supports the wider family as part of its response to meeting their needs. All two year-olds are enabled to receive a positive start in good or outstanding quality early years settings or with a childminder.
- The centre circulates an annual survey to canvass local views about its services, and seeks to find out why some families are not yet using them. In recent months a main focus has been on the local authority's consultation about remodelling children's centres. Wordsley parents fought successfully to overturn the decision to close their centre.

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

- The quality of services is good. The centre is working pro-actively with partners to achieve the right balance between sessions open to everyone and targeted family support. There are a wide range of services for children, but those available to adults seeking to enhance their education learning or skills, particularly those who are out of work, are more restricted.
- The centre makes a positive contribution to helping children prepare for nursery or pre-schools. Activities such as 'Busy Bees' Toddler group aim to promote early learning experiences which focus strongly on communication, physical and personal skills development.
- Staff undertake useful observations of children's learning and development, often in conjunction with partners. However, learning journeys comprise little more than photographs and brief comments and as such the opportunity to track children's achievements, and capture the child's and parents' views in the process, is missed.
- At 59.4%, the proportion of children living in the reach area achieving a good level of development at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage in 2013 was above national levels. Data shows that at 66.6% a higher proportion of children who accessed children centre services, and who live in its most deprived community, achieved a good level of development than their peers living in the reach area.
- Parents benefit from a positive parenting programme that nurtures their skills and helps them gain confidence in setting boundaries for their children and encouraging good behaviour. They have a firm grasp on how to look after their children's well-being from participating in health-related activities and first aid and other courses.
- Sessions such as 'Healthy Kids', which include family cooking and physical exercise, contribute to the

good and improving health outcomes. At 7.5%, childhood obesity levels are below those seen nationally and elsewhere in the borough.

- Case files are maintained to a high standard and reflect the good quality work taking place with families, many of whom have complex problems to resolve. Leaders routinely audit the case files, and this helps to ensure that best practice is the norm. As a result of the good care, guidance and support provided, children and families are developing positive emotional well-being.
- User satisfaction levels are high. Feedback from families shows the positive impact of the support they receive. This is summed up by one parent as being 'exactly what I needed to get me through a tough patch'.

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

**Good**

- Leaders are steering the centre sensitively through some major changes, including children centre clustering arrangements which are on the horizon. Staff are upbeat about the future opportunities and show strong commitment to doing their best for children and families. The rising registration and engagement of children and families are features that demonstrate its success so far.
- Leaders are realistic about the centre's strengths and weaknesses. With local authority support, they have established a well-prioritised action plan and tight timelines to set a challenging pace to on-going improvements.
- Supervision arrangements work well; staff feel well led and supported. Staff identify that a 'Can do' attitude prevails and that leaders make sure that any personal or professional needs are met. Their performance is monitored carefully through regular reviews. However, performance of managers is less rigorously monitored; for example, not all have been set specific targets.
- Safeguarding is given high priority. The Common Assessment Framework procedures are used effectively to ensure that integrated multi-agency approaches lead to children being well protected. Looked after children, and those subject to a child protection plan or 'in need' are equally well supported. The centre promotes that 'safeguarding is everyone's business', and works effectively to ensure that all users uphold its expectations.
- Governance is well established and, since taking on its direct management, the local authority has monitored the centre's performance and regularly checks that what it expects is being delivered. The advisory board has not met since November, and for some time parents and some partners have not attended regularly. New terms of reference have been devised but have yet to be formally agreed.
- Partnership work is strong and underpins some of the good outcomes for families. For example, the Citizens Advice Bureau has worked to help families access over £60,000 of unclaimed benefits over the last year. Resources are used efficiently and effectively to support the centre's good capacity for further improving its effectiveness.

## 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.

## Centre details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	23682
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	450408
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	880
<b>Centre leader</b>	Calcyta Walters
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 817178
<b>Email address</b>	calcyta.walters@dudley.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

This template is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130186](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130186).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

No. 130186

© Crown copyright 2014

