

Pelsall Sure Start Children's Centre

Pelsall Library, High Street, Pelsall, WS3 4LX

Inspection dates	3–4 February 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	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 children's centre is outstanding:

- Information sharing between the centre and its partners is exemplary.
- Highly effective outreach work, including visits to new mothers and babies, have resulted in all children and their families being registered.
- Over the last 12 months, most children under five years of age living in the Pelsall area have accessed children's centre services, including high numbers of families from priority groups.
- Most children under three years old and their parents sustain contact with the centre.
- Almost all eligible two-, three- and four-year-olds take up their free entitlement to early education. Many two-year-olds who are not eligible for free early education benefit in their learning by attending the centre-led 'Terrific Twos'.
- Processes to track children's progress are founded on very good practice. They clearly demonstrate that children make excellent progress.
- Inequalities are narrowing rapidly. In 2014, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception was well above local and national levels. The achievement gap between children living in the most deprived area, Pelsall North, and the rest was very narrow but this is not yet the case for all boys.
- The local authority and advisory board make a significant contribution to improving the lives of local families. Many board members, including the chair, play a major role in the development of the centre as a community hub, and continue to support and challenge leaders to deliver the very best services for families. They constantly seek the views of parents to further strengthen practice.
- Leaders and managers are acutely aware of the centre's strengths and areas for development. They regularly ask themselves if what they are doing works and change provision to meet emerging needs. They listen and act on parents' views. As a result, the centre continues to improve strongly.
- The quality of recording of family support work is good and parents speak highly of the help they receive from the very well coordinated range of services.
- Family support workers make a discernible difference to the lives of families, particularly those who are subject to Early Help Assessments (EHA) and who have experienced domestic or child abuse.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the achievement gap between boys and girls still further by focussing activities even more closely on boys' development in the prime areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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 representatives from health including: midwifery services; teenage pregnancy lead; community nursery nurse; and speech and language therapist. They also met with parents, children's centre staff, leaders and managers and representatives from the local authority and advisory board, including local councillors.

The inspectors visited St Michael's Primary school and observed 'St Michael's Mini'. They also observed 'Book Start', and jointly observed 'Terrific Twos' at Pelsall Children's Centre with the centre manager.

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

Inspection team

Michael Blakey, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Robert Mottram	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Pelsall Children's Centre opened in January 2010 and is one of 18 children's centres in Walsall. It is managed by the local authority and, following the restructuring of children's centres in April 2014, now forms part of Cluster 1 with Greenfield and Brownhills children's centres. These children's centres have previously been inspected and their reports can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>. Pelsall Children's Centre delivers a range of services, including family support, health clinics, and activities for children and their families. The centre facilitates access to adult learning with Walsall Adult Community College, judged to be outstanding by Ofsted.

The centre manager, known locally as the early help manager, has been responsible for the three children's centres since April 2014. At the time of this inspection, the local authority was consulting on further significant changes to children's centres.

The area served by the centre covers seven specific communities to the North West of Walsall, one of which is one of the top 20% most deprived in England. This area is known locally as Pelsall North. The rest of the reach area is relatively more socially and economically advantaged.

There are 473 children under the age of five living in the area. Approximately 13% of children are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of children living in workless households is relatively low at around five per cent. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities when they enter early years education are broadly in line with those expected for their age.

The local authority and children's centre have jointly identified the following groups as those who may require additional support: disabled children; teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers; lone parents; children from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Outstanding

- All families living in the reach area are registered with the children's centre and 95% have accessed a service over the last 12 months, including disabled children, lone parents and children from minority ethnic groups.
- Most of the families with children under three years of age sustain contact with the centre until their children move onto early education at other settings, including those eligible for free places. This outstanding picture of engagement is a direct result of highly effective outreach services and the hard work of staff and partners who work extremely well together.
- The centre has exceptionally reliable information about its priority groups as a result of the timely sharing of information between partners, excellent collaborative partnership work and outstanding registration rates. For example, midwives tell parents-to-be about the children's centre and the centre receives monthly information about all new births in the area from health visitors.
- Expectant parents attend a range of antenatal programmes, including targeted classes for teenage parents, which are commissioned centrally but delivered at the centre. New parents remain engaged with the centre, including through well baby clinics which are also attended by children's centre staff.
- All of the centre's priority groups are very well engaged, as are those families living in the North Pelsall area where there are higher rates of children living in workless households. The centre has contact with three quarters of this priority group.
- The centre's work with the teenage pregnancy coordinator for Walsall enables the centre to plan a wide range of appropriate services that result in this group's very positive engagement until their needs are met.

- The community nursery nurse undertakes development checks at the centre for children aged eight months and 26 months. The information from these checks is shared with the centre if a child or family requires some additional support. The timely follow-up of all children and families who most need support is a significant strength.

The quality of practice and services

Outstanding

- A comprehensive range of high quality services are delivered by the children's centre team and a wide range of partners. Some of these are open to all families, and parents who attend make a donation. The centre also delivers services which are appropriately focussed on providing intensive and tailored support to children and families with the most needs.
- Managers regularly review family case files, identify areas for improvement and help staff to further improve their already very good practice.
- The centre makes a big impact on the lives of children and families, including those from all priority groups. At 68.7%, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception is well above the levels seen across the borough and nationally. The centre has contributed strongly to this improving trend by delivering high quality sessions, such as 'St Michael's Minis' and 'Terrific Twos' which engage high numbers of children in very positive learning experiences, and involve parents and grandparents in supporting their on-going development.
- In the most deprived area served by the centre, 66.7% of children achieved a good level of development in 2014, compared to 69.2% of children living in the relatively more affluent areas. This achievement gap, at 2.5%, demonstrates the high impact of very good partnership working between the centre and local early years providers and schools to narrow inequalities for children who are more disadvantaged. However, although Reception-age boys living locally achieve much better than their peers nationally and well above Walsall levels, narrowing the achievement gap further between boys and girls remains a priority for the centre and its partners.
- Families, including teenage and lone parents, access a wide range of evidence-based parenting programmes and one-to-one parenting advice and guidance. Parents speak passionately about the huge difference that the centre's services have made to their lives, and their children's safety and behaviour.
- Healthy living is promoted very well in sessions, services and through outreach work. For example, during the inspection children were observed being given toothbrushes to promote good dental hygiene. Levels of childhood obesity are reducing, and breastfeeding rates are improving over time
- In the summer of 2014, the centre overhauled its planning and tracking processes. As a result, there are now very effective systems in place which clearly demonstrate that children make excellent progress in the prime areas of learning. These changes are just one example of how the shared leadership and management have enabled this centre to improve rapidly and deliver outstanding services and practice that meet local needs extremely well.
- The centre facilitates access to a range of high quality adult learning opportunities for the small number of families who are seeking employment, and delivers other programmes such as first aid.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have driven significant improvements in access and the quality and impact of services, particularly over the last year, so that these aspects are now outstanding. Resources are used very well to engage children and families and to narrow inequalities.
- Leaders accurately evaluate the effectiveness of services and plan precisely for further improvements. They are acutely aware of what they need to do next and are tenacious in their drive to deliver the very best services they can for their local community. They are supported by an experienced and well-trained team, who receive effective and regular supervision to support them in their work. Team members develop action plans in their own areas of work and use these to drive improvements swiftly. Training and development opportunities enhance further the skills and

knowledge of staff.

- Family support workers provide excellent support to vulnerable families, including children subject to child protection plans and others who are known to children's social care. Very effective joint working with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Team ensures that families who are referred but do not meet the threshold for social care support receive very good early help from the centre. Case files, case studies and discussions with parents clearly demonstrate the very positive impact of this work, particularly for those families experiencing domestic abuse.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are rigorous. Centre staff and volunteers are safely recruited and well trained. They understand about some of the wider issues of safeguarding including child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and domestic violence. As a result, they are able to very effectively support vulnerable children and families.
- Leaders and managers contribute to the wider children's services improvement agenda. For example, centre staff train others across Walsall to use the 'Outcomes Star' tool to help measure the impact of family support and help them to better understand the Early Help Assessment process.
- Partnerships are excellent and, as a result, there are no barriers to information sharing. Information around children's achievement, children's social care cases, new births and 8 month and twenty-six month development checks is routinely shared to provide excellent joined-up services for families.
- The local authority and advisory board provide high levels of challenge and good support to leaders and managers. They ask pertinent questions about the information that is presented to them and help to develop joint plans to move things forward. This helps the centre to focus its resources where they are most needed in order to deliver the best outcomes.
- The centre promotes equality and diversity very well. Families from minority ethnic backgrounds are well engaged and attend activities regularly. The centre makes a wider contribution to promoting community cohesion by providing childminders with ethnically diverse toys for children to play with.

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	22350
Local authority	Wallsall MBC
Inspection number	454040
Managed by	The local authority.

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	476
Centre leader	Deb Guy, Early Help Manager
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01922 653780
Email address	GuyD@walsall.gov.uk

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