

Welcare Redhill Children's Centre

Welcare House, 24 Warwick Road, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 1BU

Inspection dates

27–28 May 2015

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.

- Proactive staff and strong partnerships in the local area have ensured that most young children are registered with the centre. An effective system to contact families of newborns has led to over 90% being registered.
- The centre uses detailed knowledge of the area, derived from Welcare's long-standing work locally, to identify the children and families who need support most. Consequently, the large majority of those groups are registered and access services.
- Priority children and families who are referred for one-to-one support engage especially well with centre staff. High levels of care, guidance and support are provided by trusted children's centre staff. This, combined with well-established partnerships with other services such as health, housing and social care, has a positive impact on those families.
- A higher proportion of Reception-age children are at a healthy weight than is typical nationally; the percentage of babies aged around two months who are still being breastfed is much greater than the national average.
- A large group of community volunteers provides high levels of support to the centre.
- Day-to-day management of the centre is effective; resources, supplemented through Welcare's charitable status, are used effectively to reduce inequalities and to support families in need. The local authority provides regular and effective monitoring and support. Well-developed partnerships add value to the quality of services and practice. All this combines to provide the centre with a good capacity to continue to improve.

It is not outstanding because:

- Not enough children from areas in most need use services regularly after they register. The centre has not fully established the reasons for this.
- Opportunities for adults to extend their education, training and move on to employment are limited. The tracking of adults' progress is under developed; this limits planning of future services.
- Targets set in the centre's development plan, self-evaluation documents and at reviews are not always consistent, fully measurable or focused enough on engaging priority children and families.
- The advisory group, whilst supportive, is not yet challenging the centre fully. Parents are under represented on this board.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the large majority of children and families in the Timperley Gardens and combined area of the Cromwell Road and Rivers estates use services regularly by:
 - establishing why some families are not engaging as frequently as others after they register
 - ensuring that services provided fully meet their identified needs
 - pressing ahead with initiatives to take more activities directly into these areas.
- Extend the opportunities for adults to improve their education, training and employability by:
 - establishing strong productive links with Jobcentre Plus and adult learning partners to jointly provide services that meet the identified local needs and to exchange relevant information
 - ensuring that any links or courses are well advertised on the centre's activity timetable
 - developing an effective system to track the longer term impact of centre services or where families have been signposted elsewhere.
- The local authority, commissioned service, centre manager and advisory group should ensure that targets set are consistent across all documentation, are measurable and focused on engaging priority children and families.
- Increase parent representation on the advisory group. Ensure that all members are equipped with the knowledge to challenge the centre as well as support it, especially in relation to priority children and families' regular contact.

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 centre manager and staff, representatives from Welcare who are commissioned to manage the centre, and local authority officers. Discussions were held with a wide range of partners including those from health services, housing association and voluntary organisations such as Homestart. The inspectors also spoke to volunteers and parents whose views were taken into account from face-to-face discussions as well as evaluations of services.

They visited several activities taking place, including a well-baby clinic and child development checks. A joint observation of a Playtime session, held in a community venue, was undertaken with the centre manager.

The inspectors looked at a range of relevant documentation. This included safeguarding policies, procedures and practice, self-evaluation processes and the centre's development plan.

Inspection team

Joan Lindsay, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patricia Collis	Additional Inspector
Barbara Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Welcare Redhill is a standalone centre that has been managed by the charity Welcare since 2007, on behalf of the local authority. It is located in a converted three-bedroom house close to the town centre. Some services are delivered in the community at the Age Concern building in Merstham, community buildings, sports centre and church premises. The centre provides early learning opportunities, family support, adult learning and health services through partnership work. There is an advisory group in place to assist with governance.

There are 1,653 children aged under five in the area served by the centre, which mainly covers the relatively densely populated town centre. The number of young children in the area has increased by over 300 in the last three years. The area is economically diverse, with two specific parts ranked in the 30% least advantaged nationally. The percentage of children under five living in workless households is 12% overall in Redhill, which is well below the national average of 20%. However, this rises to 27% in the least advantaged area of The Rivers and Cromwell Road estates. Approximately 14% of families are claiming Working Tax Credit, which is in line with national figures. Two thirds of children come from a White British background. A wide range of other ethnic groups makes up the other third. Children generally enter early years provision at levels in line with those typical for their age.

The centre has identified priority groups needing most support as: individual families referred to the centre for additional support; young children living in the two least advantaged areas encompassing Timperley Gardens and, combined, The Rivers and Cromwell Road estates.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The number of young children living in the local area has increased substantially in the last three years. The centre has improved the number of registrations despite this and now most young children are known. A recently developed system to register new births has had a positive impact on the number of families known to, and accessing, the centre.
- Access to early health services is good, including for those expecting babies. A quarter of the centre's usage is by health partners with antenatal appointments, well-baby clinics and developmental checks taking place onsite. This has a positive impact on families' health, as well as identifying needs at an early stage.
- Priority children and families who are referred to the centre for support maintain their contact very well. Families build highly productive relationships with centre staff, who effectively enlist a wide range of partners to support them with specific issues such as dealing with children with special needs.
- Strong partnerships, developed through Welcare's charitable status and long history in the Redhill area, encourage families at crisis point to access the centre for food parcels, nappies and baby clothes.
- A lower proportion of children from areas in most need attend the centre's activities regularly. Recent initiatives, such as direct mail shots inviting male carers to a family photo session, are having some impact on numbers. Plans to hold one-off events in the community are also designed to increase families' use of centre services. However, the centre has not fully established the reasons for the lower engagement levels of some families.
- Most two-year-olds who are eligible for free early education are placed, all of whom attend settings that were judged to be good or better at the time of their last inspection. There is a high take up of places by four-year-olds, but there is a shortage of places for three-year-olds, so the take up is lower for this age group. However, new settings are opening in the near future which will alleviate the situation.

The quality of practice and services**Good**

- The quality, range and relevance of services are good overall. Planning for sessions is detailed and evaluative and linked particularly well to children's early development. Individual children's needs are taken into account. The recently appointed children's work coordinator has designed an effective system to track children when they come to groups or attend crèches. Learning Journeys show that children are making good progress; parents confirm that their children are prepared well for moving on to school.
- The impact of services on children at the end of the Reception year has improved considerably, so that the proportion who achieves a good level of development is now in line with national levels. The gap between those less likely to achieve and their peers narrowed substantially in 2014 and is better than the national average.
- The centre has increased the number of families it offers direct support to through, for example, the toy library and Bookstart sessions. Families are also supported to help their children learn during high quality sessions, such as Playtime, where staff are effective role models. They provide good guidance for parents to get the most out of activities and how to carry on ideas at home.
- Health services have a positive impact on young children; most are assessed as being at a healthy weight at the end of the Reception year. The centre promotes healthy lifestyles effectively through cooking groups and Walk and Talk sessions. The Baby Cafe', run in conjunction with three other local children's centres, health services and seven volunteer peer supporters, has helped to increase the number of mothers who keep breastfeeding. At 64%, the percentage still breastfeeding at around two months is well above the national average.
- Family support workers and Outreach workers provide high levels of care, guidance and support for children and families who often have very complex needs. They are adept at building the trust of parents who typically state, 'I can't thank them enough for what they did.' Checks on the impact on families show positive results and families are given effective support to get their lives back on track. This was summed up by the comment, 'I was in a dark room; now I see the light and I smile.'
- There is an exceptionally high number of volunteers at the centre. Welcare's policy, however, is that families who are still actively using centre services are not able to participate on a formal basis, apart from as breastfeeding peer supporters. The 37 volunteers are organised well by the centre's deputy manager to ensure their skills and availability are used effectively.
- Parents' views are canvassed regularly through well-attended Say and Play sessions. They have positive opinions of the centre and feel listened to, despite being under represented currently on the advisory group.
- The centre provides some opportunities for families to develop their parenting skills through structured courses.
- However, links with adult learning providers and with Jobcentre Plus are not as well developed as with other partners. As a result, priority families have limited scope to improve their education, training and employability. Where adults have been supported or signposted elsewhere, the longer term impact is tracked inconsistently.

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

- The centre manager provides clear guidance to staff; supervision is robust and targets set for staff are linked to centre priorities. Staff are well trained, particularly in how to reduce the risk of harm to children. They are highly knowledgeable about the local area and are effective in reducing inequalities for priority children and families.
- The local authority provides regular and effective monitoring and support. However, there is recognition at all levels that targets need to be more consistent across all documentation. They also need to be more specific and measurable in relation to the impact of the centre on priority children and families.
- The advisory group has a good knowledge about local needs. However, members have not yet got a strong enough understanding of the information provided in the manager's report to enable them to

be as challenging as possible and to know how to measure the impact on local families. An agenda item always considers parents' views collated from the Say and Play meetings; but, at present, not enough parents from priority families, in particular, attend the meetings.

- Safeguarding policies, procedures and practices are all effective, especially in relation to promoting the welfare of young children and priority families. Staff and volunteers are well versed in what to do if they have any concerns. Children who are subject to child protection plans or are supervised by social care for other reasons are well supported; there are good lines of communication with social workers. Staff play a full role in raising and leading early help assessments and attending professional groups to support families.
- Resources are used effectively to meet families' needs and reduce inequalities. This is especially so in relation to children's early development and for families who need more intensive one-to-one support. Although the staff team is relatively small, it is supplemented effectively by the large number of well-managed volunteers. Churches and local charities supplement the centre's resources very effectively, enabling inequalities to be reduced through providing food bags and toys at Christmas.
- The centre provides a warm welcome and is seen as a valuable community resource by many of its partners. Typical comments from families include, 'They immediately made me feel special.'

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	23470
Local authority	Surrey County Council
Inspection number	455077
Managed by	Welcare on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,653
Centre manager	Julie Mitchell
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01737 780884
Email address	redhill.admin@welcare.org

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