

The Children's Village

Graiseley Lane, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, WV11 1PE

Inspection dates	2–3 July 2015
Previous inspection date	29 July 2010

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
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.

- As a result of highly effective planning and the actions taken by the conscientious staff, most families are registered with the centre.
- Children and families make good use of the centre's services and the support provided, until their needs are met. Families' needs are thoroughly assessed. This ensures that problems are 'nipped in the bud' before they escalate.
- Partnership arrangements are highly effective. Through effective and collaborative arrangements with partners, such as those from health and social care, information sharing and the referral system works particularly well, as does signposting to specialist services.
- Through effective use of home visits, social media and 'zoning' that matches specific staff to specific geographic areas, the centre successfully promotes its services. Staff do their best to ensure that any barriers to access are minimised or removed.
- Leadership, management and governance are good. Effective and rigorous monitoring of the centre's performance ensures continuous improvement in the quality and impact of the centre's work. As a result, there is good capacity to improve.
- Safeguarding is promoted well. Centre staff work particularly well with a range of partners to minimise the risk of harm to families whose lives are affected by domestic abuse or other circumstances that make them vulnerable.

It is not outstanding because:

- The centre's monitoring of the progress that children make is not well enough developed. This limits leaders' ability to identify 'next steps' to help children improve. The lack of tracking also impedes the centre's ability to fully demonstrate the impact of its work
- Not enough parents participate in adult learning courses or take up volunteering opportunities.
- Too few parents are represented on the locality board or are involved in formal decision-making

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Implement robust tracking systems that:
 - ensure that children's progress is monitored over time so that the centre can more fully demonstrate the impact of its work on reducing inequalities
 - ensure children's individual development needs are identified early on and next steps are planned.
- Work with adult learning and other partners to increase the number of parents who access accredited courses particularly in English and Maths and who participate in volunteering.
- Further develop opportunities for parents to be involved in decision-making through membership of the locality board and through a parents' forum group or equivalent

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 centre managers and staff, local authority managers and representatives from partner organisations such as health, schools, social care and the voluntary sector. They also met parents and members of the locality board.

The inspectors observed the centre's work and observed activities such as 'Stay and Play', and looked at a range of relevant documentation such as the centre's self-evaluation report, case files, action plans and evaluations.

Inspection team

Lead inspector, Priscilla McGuire	Additional inspector
Karen Cooper	Additional inspector
Janet Stacey	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

The Children's Village is a standalone centre in Wolverhampton with an additional delivery site based at a previously designated children's centre, Ashmore Park. Governance and overall management is provided by the local authority with the support of a locality board which assists governance. Most staff are employed through an arrangement with Bilston Nursery school which is subject to its own inspection. A report for the school can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>. In March 2014 a new locality manager was appointed who has strategic responsibility for the centre. Two locality operational managers have day-to-day responsibility for the management of the centre.

The centre is located within one of eight localities within Wolverhampton in the north east of the city. Services offered include health, family support, adult learning and early years activities. The centre which has been inspected previously also has a nursery which is subject to separate inspection arrangements. Reports can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

There are approximately 2,900 children under the age of five years living in the area served by the centre. Children's skills in early years education are lower than typical on entry. Most families in the area are White British and live in mainly social housing or privately rented housing. The area has over double the city average of single parent households and lone parent benefit claimants.

The centre has identified the following as priority groups: families whose lives are affected by domestic abuse, teenage parents and families with children subject to child protection plans, families with looked after children and with children assessed as in need.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Centre staff know their community well. Over the last year, they have worked hard to register as many families as possible. Their efforts have paid off because most families are now registered with the centre and have good access to services, which they use until their needs are met.
- Staff and their key partners that represent organisations such as health, education, social care and the voluntary sector, make good use of referrals and signposting procedures. This ensures that the needs of families from priority groups including children subject to child protection plans, or in need are matched well to the most appropriate services.
- The centre's 'outreach' strategy is highly effective. In addition to providing home visits for priority families and using social media, the centre's large reach area has been divided into geographical 'zones'. Each family support worker is matched to a specific geographical 'zone' and promotes centre activities within the zone and makes links with key partners and with families. This practice of 'zoning' has been key to the centre's success in rapidly increasing registration and participation rates of priority groups and other families.
- Services for families, including those expecting children are good. Through the work of midwives who work well with the centre to provide a service, expectant families have a clear 'progression' pathway. They access antenatal support which they then follow up with parenting support that they receive when they attend a 'nurturing' course offered by the centre.
- Staff work extremely hard to monitor families after the initial contact has been made with them or if they do not participate regularly in activities. Rigorous procedures are used to ensure that no one slips through the net, particularly families who are identified as most in need of support. As a result,

there has been a rapid increase in the number of families from priority groups who access services. This includes teenage parents and those living with domestic violence.

- The centre successfully promotes take up of free early years places. As a result, most three and four year old children take up free places and the large majority of two year olds also take up their free entitlement.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The quality and range of services provided by the centre is good. They are relevant to families' needs, promote their well-being and increase their life chances. There is a good balance between services that are open to all families and those that are targeted at those in need of additional and specific support.
- Families' needs are very accurately and speedily assessed. Multi-agency meetings and the 'Early Help Assessment Tool' are used extremely well to ensure support is carefully matched to meet families' needs. As a result, intervention is timely and effectively prevents problems from escalating.
- The centre's work within the local community is highly effective and involves productive work with a wide range of partners. For example, through close partnership with local health professionals such as the family nursing partnership, the centre ensures that all teenagers who are expecting babies and other young expectant parents are well known to the centre and readily access services.
- The centre maintains good links with the home safety team and the local fire services. As a result, families are provided with good quality information, training and support that helps them understand how to minimise and prevent hazards in the home. Families also benefit well from accessing other aspects of safety training such as first aid training. In addition, through good links with the environmental health team, the centre helps parents deal with issues such as poor housing conditions.
- The centre provides good practical support for families who face some very difficult and challenging circumstances such as those with mental health issues or living with domestic violence. The high quality support helps parents reduce the risk of harm to themselves and their children.
- By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, data show that children achieve more positively than their peers across the rest of Wolverhampton. However, tracking systems are not sufficiently developed to enable the centre to identify the extent to which its services have an impact on children's learning. In addition, the lack of monitoring of children's progress restricts staff's ability to accurately identify the next steps for children's development.
- Parents participate well in informal adult learning courses such as baby massage and parenting training. However, despite their best efforts, not enough parents enrol on more formal, accredited courses such as English and Maths. In addition, opportunities for parents to participate in a structured volunteering programme are in the early stages of implementation.
- Through activities such as promotion of healthy eating, the centre contributes well to keeping obesity rates lower than the city average. Breastfeeding rates are improving but not yet high enough. However, the centre closely monitors data about all relevant health incomes and works well with health partners to promote breastfeeding. For example to encourage mums to persevere with breastfeeding, the centre provides a strong and active breastfeeding support group.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Leadership and management arrangements are highly effective. This is demonstrated by the rapid improvement the centre has made over the last year in registering families and enabling their good access to services. It is also seen in the successful re-structuring of services. Staff are well supervised and appropriately qualified for their roles.
- The process of managing a series of significant changes within the centre has been very effective. New and existing staff have worked well together to make improvements in work practices. Improvements have also been made to ensure staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and that there are clear and well understood lines of accountability.
- Governance through the local authority with the support of the locality board is effective. The centre's performance is closely monitored. For example, regular staff meetings, rigorous self-evaluation and robust staff supervision helps keep a firm grasp on the centre's effectiveness. Data is also scrutinised well to monitor the impact of the centre's work, to ensure it reduces inequalities and to compare its performance with other centres within the city. Managers take corrective and decisive action to deal with any under-performance. This includes for example, removing staff from their roles if necessary. As a result of all of these actions, the centre has very good capacity to keep improving.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority. Vetting procedures for new staff are thorough, and the skills of staff are kept up-to-date with on-going safeguarding training. Staff work closely with partners such as those from social care, to reduce the risk of harm to children. This ensures that the needs of children subject to child protection plans, in need plans or are looked after, are well met.
- The centre's work to tackle domestic abuse helps to minimise the risk of harm to children and families. Effective support is provided both for victims of domestic abuse but also through the 'CALM' programme, effective training is provided to promote behaviour change in perpetrators.
- Families are highly satisfied with the quality of services. Parents express much appreciation for the good support they receive. However, parents' views are mainly considered informally. There is no parents' forum or equivalent group at the centre and the representation of parents on the locality board is currently in its early stages of development.
- Partnership arrangements are highly effective and enable the centre to offer a wide range of good quality services. Staffing resources are of a high quality and provide a range of expertise and experience that helps meet families' needs well.

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	23170
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	464710
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2,900
Centre leader	Lisa Raghunanan
Date of previous inspection	29 July 2010
Telephone number	01902 553945
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