

# Landywood Children's Centre

Holly Lane, Great Wyrley, Walsall, WS6 6AQ

<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 June 2015
<b>Previous inspection date</b>	Not Previously Inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
		Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	3
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This centre is inadequate.

- Recent cuts in the centre budget mean that the centre is not adequately resourced to deliver the range of services to meet the needs of the large number of families living in the wide geographical area it serves.
- Information about children and families subject to social care supervision is not shared routinely and this means the centre has only partial information about those in greatest need. Designated staff have yet to receive appropriate safeguarding training.
- There are too few opportunities to help parents develop their learning and skills or to prepare them for going back to work.
- Slightly more than half of families are actively engaging with the centre and the number of workless families and lone parents who use the centre services is too low.
- Parents are not involved enough in shaping services and are not represented on the advisory board
- Leadership and management are weak. The new lead agency is not yet meeting its legal obligations for safeguarding. Systems for monitoring the performance of the centre or the impact that services have on improving the lives of children and families are under-developed.
- The new governance arrangements are at a very early stage of development and have yet to be effective. However, key partner members are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are keen to support centre improvements.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- The centre and its partners work well together to provide early help and high-level care for families it knows about including those with additional learning needs, disabilities and serious medical conditions. Support for children's early communication delay is a particular strength through the 'Talk to Learn' project.
- Development plans are well-conceived and effective in supporting the centre's capacity for improvement.
- Strong links with early years' settings support the centre in meeting children's learning and development needs and prepare them effectively for starting school.

- A high proportion of eligible two-year-olds have taken up their early education places.

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

- Improve resources, particularly staffing and accommodation, to fully meet the needs of children and families living in the area served by the centre.
- Improve the safeguarding arrangements at the centre by:
  - ensuring that all legal obligations are fully met
  - working closely with the local Specialist Safeguarding Team, Targeted Services and Locality Coordinators so that relevant information about the children and families subject to social care supervision is routinely shared
  - ensuring that the new centre manager has oversight of the work carried out with families to make sure that children are safe from harm
  - arranging suitable training for the named designated person
  - carrying out a risk assessment of lone working for centre staff.
- Improve access to services by ensuring that the large majority of all target groups , particularly workless and lone parents, sustain engagement with appropriate centre services
- Raise the status and importance of adult learning and skills development by:
  - identifying the needs of parents especially those from workless and lone parent households
  - developing partnerships with local adult learning and skills development providers to match needs
  - increasing participation rates in adult learning programmes, especially in basic literacy, numeracy computing courses and vocational courses
  - working with employment organisations to help parents seek careers advice, sign up for courses and look for employment
  - tracking those parents who are signposted to training and education programmes at local colleges and community learning centres to ensure their readiness for work is improved.
- Strengthen parents' involvement in planning future services and their involvement in the advisory board.
- Make effective use of all available information to measure the centre's performance, keep track of the impact activities have on fully meeting the needs of all priority groups and to inform improvement planning.

### **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 representatives from the local authority, local support teams, health partners, other schools and pre-school settings, adult learning, training and employment services groups, children's centre staff, parents and members of the advisory board.

The inspectors visited a range of activities such as the 'Baby Yoga', the two 'Diddi Dance' sessions and the 'Keeping Safe' parent information session. The centre leader and the local authority attended all team meetings.

The inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the self-evaluation form, local authority performance framework and centre development plans, a sample of case files, parents' satisfaction evaluations, safeguarding practice, policies and procedures information and a variety of files on the range of activities delivered.

**Inspection team**

Catherine Stormonth, Lead Inspector	Additional inspector
Christine Blowman	Additional inspector
Aileen King	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Three South Staffordshire children's centres were closed recently to form one cluster area served by the Landywood Children's Centre which was opened as a combined centre in April 2015. It operates from purpose-built premises on the same site as Landywood Primary School (URN 124190) and Landywood Neighbourhood Nursery (URN EY273060) both of which are subject to separate inspection arrangements. Their reports can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>. Staffordshire County Council has commissioned Inspired Parenting as the lead agency.

The centre serves the families living in Landywood and Featherstone and the villages in both the Perton and Brewood area and Wombourne and Kinver area. It is governed by two advisory boards on both a strategic county and a more localised district operational level. The manager from Inspired Parenting oversees the work of the centre manager and part-time administrator. The centre provides early education, health services, family support and parenting and adult learning courses.

There are 4,519 children under five years of age living in the area served by the centre. The majority of families have White British heritage. The area comprises a mix of economically disadvantaged households and those that are more affluent. The proportion of children living in poverty and workless households is low. Children generally start school with skills and abilities typical for their age.

The centre has assessed priority groups as: workless households; lone parents; children subject to a child protection plan; children in need and those with an 'Early Help Assessment'.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

### Requires improvement

- Access to early childhood and family services is improving but is still too low because nearly half of all children under five years are not active in using centre services. A recent intensive focus on the most deprived wards has improved engagement levels considerably so that three quarters of priority children benefit from services and activities. There are still insufficient lone parents and workless households sustaining their engagement with centre services and this requires improvement.
- Good partnership working with health visitors ensures the large majority of families with new babies are registered and have access to services like the breast feeding support group and baby massage classes. Expectant parents have good access to antenatal services. This includes the small number of pregnant teenagers. 'Well Baby' clinics are well attended across the reach area.
- There are clear referral routes for partner agencies to identify families where there are concerns to ensure that they get the services they need. Health visitors, early years settings, schools and the families themselves are often referred to the Pre-school Learning Alliance to support early concerns.
- The large majority of children from more vulnerable families including those experiencing domestic violence, substance and alcohol misuse, mental illness or a disability are in regular contact with the local support teams on an individual basis. Harder to reach families are supported in partnership with health teams and other agencies which is proving effective.
- Health visitors carry out both one year and two-year old development checks which have identified a range of both moderate and severe additional learning needs and disabilities. These children and

their parents are referred to and are receiving specialist care. Those children with communication difficulties are supported by local speech and language services and make rapid progress.

- The centre works in partnership to ensure that most eligible two-, three- and four-year old children take up their free entitlement to early education. The 'Think 2' project has been particularly successful at rapidly increasing the placement of two-year olds in good quality pre-school settings in the last year.

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

### **Requires improvement**

- Not enough children and families from target groups use the centre's services and this requires improvement.
- Some parents access parenting courses and others such as first aid and home safety but there are too few courses to extend their further education and skills and this requires improvement. The centre is working with South Staffordshire College to arrange free taster family learning sessions but has yet to develop courses that will help parents improve their chances of getting a job. There are not enough opportunities to help parents seek careers advice or look for work.
- Parents confirmed with inspectors that they were unaware of how the benefits of work experience could enhance their personal skills and development. There are insufficient opportunities for parents to be informed and participate in volunteering activities at the centre or within the wider community.
- The Pre-school Learning Alliance organisation works in collaboration with the centre to provide support in family homes to support minor aspects like better child parent interaction, home learning environment, routines and developing healthy and safe lifestyles. More complex needs are referred to the Local Support Teams who support families when there are behaviour issues, parenting problems, emotional well-being difficulties and financial, housing and domestic violence emergencies. The quality and impact of these services are good.
- Families in the greatest need are subject to the effective new 'Early Help Assessment' which has replaced the Common Assessment Framework and is a rigorous process. These are carried out effectively by the 'Families First' targeted services team. It is clear in the case files seen what outcomes are expected as a result of staff actions.
- Evaluations of the impact family support work indicate that the majority of participants are significantly benefitting. Children who are subject to child protection plans and those deemed to be in need who are known about are well supported by a wide range of services and there is evidence of 'stepping down' when families are able to cope.
- Overall, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception year rose significantly last year and is above levels seen nationally. The 'Talk to Learn' project made a major contribution to helping children improve their speech and communication and is helping reduce inequalities.
- Despite the concerted efforts by health partners and staff to support and encourage breastfeeding, rates are not at the level seen nationally. A peer breastfeeding support team are trained to help and support new mothers but so far this has not had the anticipated impact.

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

### **Inadequate**

- Resources are insufficient to meet identified priorities and the needs of families living in this very large South Staffordshire community. There is only one full time newly appointed centre leader with part time administration support. This makes it very difficult to keep the centre fully open each day, manage and quality-assure activities, work with key partners and develop and plan activities in community venues. The local authority agreed funding for the centre with the new lead agency 'Inspired Parenting'. Cuts to the centre budget have caused some services to be severely reduced.
- There is a strong focus on preventative services and family centred support at the local authority level is good. Key information about this support however, is not shared routinely with the centre and this undermines effective collaborative work to support those most in need and gives rise to unnecessary risk. Suitable training for the named designated person has not yet been arranged and she is uncertain about her duties or legal obligations for safeguarding.
- Arrangements for safer recruitment and health and safety are effective and follow the adjacent school's linked policies, procedures and practice. There is however, no risk assessment for staff working in the centre alone.
- The operational district advisory board has only met once in its current form and the more strategic county advisory board have yet to meet to define its terms of reference and remit. Parents are not represented on the board and there are limited checks on the centre's performance currently.
- Following a period of significant change, the local authority has moved forward in working effectively with commissioned partners and has established a set of reliable statistics about the local population. A 'Performance Framework' reflects how the local authority effectively monitored the previous three children centre cluster.
- The lead agency and centre staff have yet to set up new systems to use information to monitor the new centre's performance, keep track of what impact activities have on meeting the needs of all priority groups and to inform improvement planning.

**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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	21736
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	464711
<b>Managed by</b>	Inspired Parenting on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	4,519
<b>Centre leader</b>	Raminder Dhaliwal
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 415632
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