

# Inspection report for Wallsend Children's Centre

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Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	404498
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY281590 Childcare Wallsend EY445842 Wallsend Creche

The inspection of this Sure Start Children's Centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

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## Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the Acting Head of Centre, staff members, members of the advisory board, partner representatives, parents, volunteers and local authority officers linked to the centre. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Wallsend Children's Centre is a phase two centre, designated in March 2007. The centre is one of a cluster of three centres managed by an Acting Head of Centres. The full core offer is made by the centre. Governance is provided by the local authority. This is supported by the advisory board which is shared with Howdon Children's Centre and the Parents of Wallsend group (POW).

The centre aligns closely with the wards of Wallsend and Northumberland. In both wards the population is predominantly of White British heritage with less than 4% identified as being from minority ethnic groups. The reach area is primarily a residential area with most of those in employment travelling outside the area for work. The proportion of those who are economically inactive in the Wallsend ward is 27% and in the Northumberland ward it is 24.7%; the North Tyneside average is 26.2%. Wallsend ward is economically disadvantaged, falling within the 25% most disadvantaged wards nationally while Northumberland ward falls with the 35-40% most disadvantaged wards nationally. The area as a whole has 88% of the population with no qualifications higher than a level 3. There are 948 children under the age of five years in the area.

The children's centre shares its location with the local authority provided childcare provision, Childcare Wallsend, and Wallsend Creche. These are subject to separate inspections and the reports can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). Children enter early years provision with skills, knowledge and abilities which are often lower than those expected for their age particularly in communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development.

## Inspection judgements

**Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

### Overall effectiveness

**The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for families**

**1**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

**The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management**

**1**

## Main findings

This outstanding children's centre serves its community exceptionally well, delivering high quality services that enhance the lives of children and families. The very motivated and enthusiastic staff team is led by a manager who is visionary and wholly determined to ensure that the children and families in Wallsend reach area have every opportunity to reach their full potential. Inclusion is at the heart of the centre and all it does. It is evident that all who come into contact with the centre, either by accessing services in the centre itself or in any of its outreach work, are extremely welcome and their individuality is highly valued. Parents identify how everyone is made welcome in the centre, staff are non-judgemental and are never patronising.

The centre has an excellent approach to safeguarding; the clearly documented procedures and processes in place are thoroughly known and expertly implemented by staff. Centre staff and partners work as a cohesive team to diligently ensure families, particularly those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, receive cohesive and accessible services that meet their unique needs. Safety is given a very high priority within the centre and its associated work, and staff work extremely hard to improve users' understanding of how to keep their children and families safe. For example, after an accident happened in the area which was linked to the use of car safety seats in vehicles, the centre quickly arranged for a safety officer to come into the centre to raise awareness of the proper use and fitting of car seats and of their availability to taxi users.

The meticulous evaluation, planning and assessment used by centre staff lead to the provision of a broad and varied selection of activities and services available to children and families in the area, which are very well used. This range of services is fully supported by consistent and very effective partnerships with other departments, agencies and organisations.

Although outcomes for children and families are outstanding overall those for enjoying and achieving and economic well-being are good. The centre's childcare provision very

effectively uses tracking processes to monitor children's achievement and to fully ensure that all children's individual needs are met. Other centre activities such as 'stay and play' are clearly providing purposeful and enjoyable play and learning opportunities for children and families which are enjoyed and valued by all who attend. However, tracking in these groups is in its infancy and as yet does not fully contribute to showing the full extent of the impact of this aspect of the centre's work. In a similar way, although the centre evaluates every course and activity it provides and receives regular feedback of the impact of partner activities, such as 'adult learning', the systems used are more limited in showing the impact on families in the longer term.

Overall, the first class management of the centre, the tenacity of the staff in their determined approach to their work and the centre's proven track record of improving outcomes for families indicate that the centre's ability to improve is outstanding.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Develop further the tracking of both adults' and children's progress to show more accurately how the centre is helping them to develop their learning and improve their economic stability, particularly in the longer term.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

<b>1</b>
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The centre provides a wide-ranging selection of activities and services in partnership with other agencies, professionals, parents and community members. Healthy lifestyles are actively and passionately promoted in all the centre does. Excellent partnership working with such as the nutrition and dietetics service, health visitors, infant feeding and breastfeeding support, is having a significant impact on improving health outcomes. Breastfeeding, in an area where bottle-feeding has been the accepted way of feeding a baby, is improving and mothers highlight how the 'Up Close' breastfeeding support group is exceptionally good at giving them the confidence to continue. Attendance at courses provided in the centre to improve health is high. Parents say how attendance at activities such as 'basic cooking', 'weaning' and 'fakeaway' have had a real impact on the food they provide for their families. They highlight how they are now extremely conscious of such things as the amount of sugar and salt in foods and of the need to control the amount of food they give their children.

The centre has an extremely strong focus on promoting safety. Families report feeling very safe in the centre and reflect how their understanding of how to keep their children and families safe has been significantly extended by coming to the centre. Staff constantly and consistently reinforce safety messages at every opportunity and model very safe behaviour in their work practices. Very effective partnerships with the fire and rescue service, together with visits by them recently to centre activities, resulted in a further 29 requests for home safety checks. Case studies and personal testimony show strongly how the successful intervention with families has significantly contributed to children coming off and staying off

child protection plans and has radically improved the lives of those involved in the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes.

During the inspection, children and parents were seen to be thoroughly enjoying the activities and training on offer. All staff throughout the centre's activities ensure that children who attend the centre have high quality learning and development experiences, which are securely and innovatively based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. Parents highlight how coming to the centre has greatly helped with their understanding of the importance of play and how to deal with unwanted behaviour which has made them better parents. The Early Years Educator who supports centre staff in their work with children, has a detailed knowledge of the schools in the reach area where most of the centre's children go on to attend. Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores for children in these schools achieving 78+ points with at least six points in communication, language and literacy and personal, emotional and social development show improvement over time.

Centre families made it extremely clear to inspectors that they successfully contribute to the governance of the centre in a variety of ways. They are knowledgeable about the work of the advisory board and of the way in which the parents group 'Parents of Wallsend' (POW) contribute to this. Parents who are members of the advisory board, including the 'joint chair', were very confident in their understanding of the advisory board's role. They gave many examples of how they had challenged the work of the centre and all hold a strong belief that they have a clear responsibility to take the views of all parents to the advisory board and ensure they are listened to. The centre truly values the input of parents into its work and recent joint 'loan shark' training for staff and members of POW has empowered both parents and staff to contribute to providing support for families who may face issues in this area.

The centre works very effectively with partners including the Adult Learning Alliance, Family Wise and Working Homes Outreach Team, to help many parents take steps to improve their confidence, qualifications and ability to enter training and employment. Of the 87 adults who accessed adult education and training in 2011/12, 75.9% were from the 30% Super Output Area and 71.3% were claiming means-tested benefits; this is in addition to the high numbers attending 'softer' courses in the centre. A free and well-used crèche is available to enable parents to attend courses. Parents were very keen to share examples of the qualifications they had gained, such as in English and mathematics, and how these are spurring them on to have ambitions to go on to further training and into employment. The centre actively encourages volunteering and has two parents who are now Community Learning Champions whose role it is to promote the availability of adult learning opportunities in the area.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships, and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment.</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

<b>1</b>
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The centre uses assessment extremely well to identify individual and reach area needs. This is aided by the regular receipt of very informative data. The use of this vital information, along with the very effective use of Common Assessment Framework and the 'team around the child' approach, focuses the centre to provide high quality holistic, integrated services in order to meet individual need. The centre's very strong commitment to involving families in assessment is a significant strength of the centre; this is extremely valued by parents. Parents identify that their attendance at 'Request for Service' (RFS) meetings enables them to be very much a part of the decision-making process and that they feel valued because of it. This approach, reinforced by case studies and personal testimony, shows how the staff provide an outstanding level of care, guidance and support, particularly in times of crisis. Parents overwhelmingly spoke of how the centre and its staff are their 'lifeline' and how they would be lost and in a dark place without the support of the centre.

The blend of universal and targeted services ensures that the wide range of services meets the needs of users very well. Activities range from 'stay and play', 'creative play groups' and 'parenting programmes' to supportive programmes for those suffering from, or likely to suffer, domestic violence. Centre staff and partners are constantly looking for ways to further improve the services available to families. For example, they have recently introduced 'baby-ology', a joint venture with health, to provide support for mothers-to-be and those with babies under three months old with discussions focussing on topics such as mental health and well-being, and managing stress. Achievement is very well celebrated in the centre and staff have exceptionally high aspirations for all who use their services.

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

<b>1</b>
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Leadership and management are highly effective at all levels. The centre focuses its work exceptionally well on sustainable, universal and targeted services. There is an extremely strong commitment to sharing resources, with much sharing of these seen between the crèche, the centre's nursery, health and other services, and other children's centres in the locality. This, along with the quality of the outcomes for children and families and robust financial management, ensure the centre provides outstanding value for money.

Managers at all levels and staff have a clear vision for the centre and an absolute determination to continue to develop the role of the centre in improving the outcomes for children and families in this reach area. Management is held to account by the local authority's use of the annual conversation. Rigorous evaluation using a range of information, informs the centre's performance-plan which clearly links to the overall aims of the local authority and those of key partners. The advisory board meets quarterly and minutes show how it provides an exceptional amount of support and challenge to the centre. All staff are extremely clear of the current management structure in place. Regular documented supervision, which includes role-specific input such as clinical supervision, ensures staff are fully supported in their work. Managers have a strong commitment to staff development and staff have recently done 'Solihull' training to enhance even further the quality of their work.

Robust safeguarding procedures, including the completion of Criminal Record Bureau checks, training and detailed staff knowledge, are in place to securely contribute to the safeguarding of children and families. The comprehensive procedures in place to ensure that information about children and families is shared appropriately, are effectively implemented. The centre is currently working on 40 active cases; case recording is meticulous and all cases are robustly monitored by management and staff to ensure that the services provided to families are, and continue to be, the most appropriate. The centre has a variety of diverse partnerships in place, including those with the local authority's quality improvement team and Wallsend Parks, which successfully contribute to improving children's and families' lives. Partnerships are described by partners as 'brilliant' and 'very, very strong.'

Equality and diversity are central to the centre's work. The centre actively works to ensure all who come in contact with the centre are aware of how highly valued they are. It strives and is successful in ensuring children and families with particular needs including disabilities, and groups such as pregnant teenagers and young parents, and fathers are fully and meaningfully included in centre activities. The centre's effective use of their engagement policy and the commitment of partners to encourage families to use the centre are successfully contributing to the year on year increase in engagement with children and

families including those from the Super Output Areas. The centre is currently engaging with the large majority of children under five years of age in the area and 78% of those children who live in super output areas. User satisfaction is very high with 100% of those who responded to the most recent satisfaction survey satisfied with services.

These are the grades for leadership and management:

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision.</b>	<b>1</b>

## **Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection**

The findings from the most recent inspection of the linked provision Wallsend Childcare and a random selection of the most recent inspections of local childminders, childcare provision and schools have contributed to the centre report and judgements.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Wallsend Children's Centre on 9 and 10 October 2012. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Your children's centre serves your community exceptionally well, delivering high quality services that enhance the lives of you and your children and families. The very motivated and enthusiastic staff team is led by a manager who is visionary and wholly determined to ensure you all have every opportunity to reach your full potential. You told us how everyone is made welcome in the centre, staff are non-judgemental and are never patronising; we whole-heartedly agree with you.

The centre has an excellent approach to safeguarding and the clearly documented procedures and processes in place are thoroughly known and expertly implemented by staff. Centre staff and partners work really hard, as a joined-up team, to ensure your families, particularly for those of you whose circumstances make you potentially vulnerable, receive the best services to meet your unique needs. You told inspectors how the centre is a lifeline to some of you particularly when times get tough. Safety is given a very high priority within the centre and staff work extremely hard to improve your understanding of how to keep your children and families safe. For example, after an accident happened in the area which was linked to the use of car safety seats in vehicles, the centre quickly arranged for a safety officer to come into the centre to raise your awareness of the proper use and fitting of car seats and of their availability to any of you who use taxis.

The meticulous evaluation, planning and assessment used by centre staff lead to the provision of a broad and varied selection of activities and services available to children and families in the area, which are very well used. This range of services is fully supported by consistent and very effective partnerships with other departments, agencies and organisations.

Although outcomes for children and families are outstanding overall those for enjoying and achieving, and economic well-being are good. The centre's childcare provision very effectively uses tracking processes to monitor children's achievement and to fully ensure that all children's individual needs are met. Other centre activities such as 'stay and play' are clearly providing you with purposeful play and learning opportunities which you definitely enjoy with your children. However, tracking in these groups is in its infancy and as yet does not fully show how the centre is helping you to develop your, and your children's, learning. In a similar way, although the centre evaluates every course and activity it provides and receives regular feedback of the impact of partner activities such as 'adult learning', the systems used are more limited in showing the impact on your families in the longer term. We have asked the centre staff and managers to improve this.

We thoroughly enjoyed our time at your centre and believe it will continue to go from strength to strength. We really appreciated your willingness to talk to us; your comments helped us enormously in coming to our judgements. We hope you will continue to benefit

from your centre's services and activities. We would ask you to tell all your friends and neighbours about the outstanding work the centre does and, if they have children under five years of age and don't go to the centre, encourage them to attend and enjoy the benefits that you already do.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).