

Inspection report for Woodside Children's Centre

Local authority	Dudley
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Woodside Community School URN 103817
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Rhymes Nursery EY382012 Little Bears Nursery EY387625 Bumble Beezzz EY258816 Silver Bells EY286929

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 an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre leaders, centre staff, members of the management board, partner agencies and parents. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's self-evaluation document, data provided by the local authority and the centre, documents and policies, and minutes of meetings.

Information about the centre

Woodside Children's Centre is co-located on the site of Woodside Community School in the borough of Dudley. Until December 2012, the centre was under the governance of the school. The centre is led by the centre leader on behalf of the local authority. The centre fulfils its core purpose through a range of integrated services relating to health, family support, and adult training. The centre has service level agreements with three early years providers within the area. All three settings are inspected separately. Childcare provided on-site is managed by the local authority and is also inspected separately.

The centre's management board supports the centre's governance and accountability arrangements. The membership of the board is drawn from a range of partners including health, education, adult education and family learning, library services, Job Centre Plus, police, maternity services, the local authority and parents.

The centre's staff team consists of a centre manager, a leadership team, family support workers, early years professionals and an administration team.

Woodside was designated as a phase 2 children's centre as part of the Sure Start Local Programme in December 2008. It is one of 20 centres in the borough. It serves an urban population. The centre has been purposely designed to offer multi-agency

office and community development space. Much of the centre's provision is planned collaboratively with community partners to maximise services for families.

The proportions of families who claim benefits or are workless are above the national average. Parts of the reach area are ranked within the most socially and economically disadvantaged areas in the country. The large majority of families living in the reach area are white British. Approximately 35% of families are from other minority ethnic backgrounds. There are an increasing number of families who have moved to the area seeking asylum.

Within the reach area, there are 940 children who are under five years of age. Children enter early years provision with skills, knowledge and abilities that are below those expected for their age.

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 provides high-quality services which are responsive, enabling and inclusive. As a result, most outcomes for children and their families are outstanding and the provision and leadership and management are outstanding in all respects.

'These genuine staff, bend over backwards to support families and to see things through to completion', commented one parent, who spoke passionately about the excellent care, guidance and support families receive at this outstanding centre. Membership of the centre has increased year-on-year and impressively, now stands at 92.3% of families living in the area. Engagement with teenage parents is a notable success with 86% of those living in the area in regular contact. The partnerships with Bromford Housing and the 'Respect Yourself' teenage parent team are exemplary. Together with the centre team, they very successfully targeted support for young parents to help them develop confidence; reduce feelings of isolation and help them build strong trusting relationships. As a result of the excellent support provided, an increasing number of young people are in further education, or developing essential workplace skills and experience through the volunteer

programme at the centre.

The highly effective and skilled leaders have safely steered the centre through a period of significant transition. The centre reverted back to the control and leadership of the local authority from the commissioned leadership of the co-located school in December 2012. Leaders have supported the staff team extremely well during this anxious time and staff remain highly motivated and enthusiastic.

Outcomes for families are significantly improved as a result of their engagement with the centre. Data shows a staggering increase in childrens achievement, over the last two years, in their learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Also, the centre has contributed significantly to the improved health of families as a result of well-planned health promotion activities and the provision of high-quality health services on-site.

The excellent range of services and learning activities are making a huge difference to the lives of families, and especially those families made vulnerable by their circumstances. A total of 28 parents have participated in the highly professional, and well-planned, 10 week induction and training programme for volunteers. Many of these individuals have achieved additional success as they have gone on to further education or into employment. Impressively, one parent volunteer, who leads on a number of key projects at the centre, including the coordination of the toy library service, received a nationally recognised award for their volunteering work in 2012.

The leadership of the centre is excellent. Leaders at all levels share ambitions for this highly successful centre. Agreed targets and objectives are routinely exceeded by a significant margin. For instance, the percentage of fathers engaged with the centre has increased by over 150% in the last year, as a result of concerted and determined efforts by staff and volunteers. Over 240 fathers are registered with the centre. Safeguarding arrangements are very secure and extremely thorough. The centre has equality, diversity and inclusion at its heart and this is evident in all aspects of its work. Leaders know the centre's strengths and areas for further development very well and they take a highly pro-active approach to driving improvements. They are determined to increase the part parents play in the governance of the centre; and are determined to plug any gaps in data to show the number of parents who are active learners and those moving into employment living in the area. As a result, the centre has outstanding capacity to improve.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- extend the use of available data to demonstrate the impact of adult learning courses, provided away from the centre, on individuals employment opportunities and families' economic well-being
- enhance further parents' contribution to the governance of the centre so their views are fully taken into account.

How good are outcomes for families?

1

There have been significant improvements in the health of families, as evidenced by very impressive data collation and analysis. For instance, 100% of all mothers in the reach area, who are actively engaging with the centre, initiate breastfeeding. At 6 weeks, 61% of mothers continue to breastfeed their babies. At 93% the engagement of families in health services provided at the centre is excellent. The percentage of women smoking at the time of giving birth has halved in the last year and is now at 12.9%. The proportion of children who are considered obese at the end of reception is considerably lower than the national average.

Children make huge leaps in their learning and development as a result of the excellent childcare provision available to them. The most recent Early Years Foundation Stage profile data for the area shows an extremely positive and improved picture of children's achievement. There has been a dramatic increase in the percentage of children achieving the expected levels at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. For instance, in 2010 32.6% of children achieved the expected 78+ points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile; in 2012, this figure leapt to 93.8%. There is also powerful evidence that the gap between the highest and lowest achieving children has narrowed considerably from 26.7% in 2011, to 18.2% in 2012. Early years provision within the reach is predominantly outstanding, with no provision judged less than good. This is due, in part, to the excellent support, provided to early years settings by highly skilled early years teachers, working at the centre in partnership with the school.

The safety and security of children and families is of paramount importance to all leaders and staff. The use of rigorous risk assessments, high levels of security, the excellent use of the Common Assessment Framework and Team Around the Child processes, all contribute to the highly effective safeguarding arrangements at the centre. There is a very strong and determined focus on preventing harm to children, and the effective early identification of child protection concerns means that children and families receive the help they need promptly. All groups, and most learning activities, provide invaluable information and support to parents about how to keep their children safe. Several parents have completed paediatric first aid and are in a good position to ensure their children receive immediate first aid if they become injured. Children subject to child protection plans are very closely monitored at the centre and by partner agencies. Case studies provide very convincing evidence that the early help is making a significant and positive difference to the welfare of children.

Woodside is a highly inclusive centre and parents' views and comments are routinely used to evaluate its effectiveness. There is a parent representative on the management board and the 'Parents Voice' meeting is an increasingly popular forum where parents can make their views known. However, the number of parents involved in these meetings is relatively few. Childrens views are captured effectively through observations, of their play and learning, conducted by staff. Children's comment, interests and learning and development needs are used to inform planning of activities during 'Stay and play' and other groups.

The economic well-being of families is good because of the excellent opportunities that enable parents to develop self-esteem and confidence. Adult education activities at the centre and the volunteer programme provide opportunities for parents to equip them with the skills, experiences and aptitudes needed for essential employment readiness. While 37% of parents are engaged with very credible learning and development activities at the centre, there is no data available to show how many parents are active learners at other educational settings, or how many of these have moved into employment.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	1
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	2
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	2

How good is the provision?

1

The excellent provision and the high levels of engagement with families result from the leaders and staff's incredible efforts to know and understand the needs of the community and those of families considered to be in greatest need. The on-site library provides an excellent community resource and supports children's and adults learning success. The highly prized partnership with the health visiting services has led to most families accessing a range of health services via the centre.

The timetable of activities supports the outstanding outcomes for families. For

instance, one-to-one support, translations services and English as a second language (ESOL) classes play a vital part in helping families new to the area, including asylum seekers, to settle, make friends and become part of the community. In one area the centre provides an invaluable 'Stay and play' service to a significant Pakistani Muslim community; with 90% of the group attending from this population. The centre continues to reach out to those families who prove to be particularly difficult to engage with by providing services within their communities. For example, the toy library is run from a variety of locations, and home visits are routinely carried out, by the highly skilled and dedicated family support workers, to ensure no family is excluded from the excellent services provided.

All parents who expressed a view spoke with very high regard of the work of the centre, its services, staff and leaders. The care, guidance and support all families receive are excellent. Parents explained that they are assigned a named member of staff as their care worker and that they are extremely well supported by other staff. One parent spoke of their named worker; 'I can go to them to discuss anything'. Another parent said; 'This is a fantastic centre, the work that they do is amazing and they have made an immense difference to the lives of families in this area.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

The highly skilled and experienced centre leader plays a pivotal role in the overall leadership and governance of the centre. She is extremely well supported by leaders from the local authority and also via the highly effective management board, which emerged from the previous school governing board. Those members of the board who made their views known were unanimous in their passion, ambition and commitment to the centre and for improving outcomes for families. One member said; 'This is the best children's centre I have ever been in. Everything about the centre is welcoming and interesting'.

Clear and highly effective development plans support the centre's drive for excellence in all they do. Leaders make exceptional use of available data to support their evaluation and analysis of the effectiveness of the centre. All staff receives first-rate professional support, regular relevant training opportunities, and performance management systems are well-embedded and are very effective. The centre's

success is shared by the superb partnerships which have been established with high quality providers of services and professional agencies.

Safeguarding arrangements at the centre are extremely well-established. Centre staff, leaders, members of the management board and parent volunteers have all attended relevant child protection training in recent times; their commitment to safeguarding the well-being of children is universal. Everyone involved with the centre has undergone checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children and families; the record of these checks is very well maintained, and staff recruitment processes are very rigorous to root out any unsuitable applicants. Families living with, or who have experienced, domestic abuse receive sensitive, high quality help as the centre works extremely well with key professionals, including the local women’s refuge. Significantly, many families attend this centre from outside of the reach area because of the high quality provision available.

Significantly, the centre is exceptionally successful at engaging with the most disadvantaged families. The centre provides exemplary support and services to the wide community, including; teenage parents, fathers, Asian families, disabled parents and asylum seekers. Children with disabilities have their needs met exceptionally well in high quality childcare provision, on-site and within the reach, where they make outstanding progress from their starting points. Within the centre, photographs depict a wide range of family situations, including same sex parents, and provide a very positive visual commitment to inclusion which is mirrored in all aspects of the centre’s performance.

The engagement with families in areas of high levels of crime and reported incidents of intimidation has been prioritised by the centre. This has resulted in 100% of all families with young children living in these areas engaging routinely with the centre and accessing community policing services via the centre. This total commitment and determination to support the most vulnerable families is present in all aspects of the centre’s work.

The centre provides outstanding value for money and is making a substantial difference to the lives of children and their families living in the area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	1
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated,	1

illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
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	1
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	1

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

Little Bears Nursery was inspected in 2012 and was judged to be outstanding. Bumble Beezzz was inspected in 2011 and was judged to be outstanding. Rhymes Nursery was inspected October 2012 and was judged to be outstanding. At its previous inspection in 2009, the nursery was judged to be satisfactory. Silverbells Pre-school was inspected in 2009 and was judged to be good. Woodside Community School was judged to be an outstanding school in 2008.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Woodside Children's Centre on 9–10 January 2013. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Thank you for coming into the centre and for being so willing to talk with inspectors during the inspection. You were unanimous in your praise of the work of the centre and centre staff. You were really keen to tell the inspectors about how well staff have supported families, helped to raise your self-esteem and confidence and have encouraged you to achieve. The care, guidance and support of families and children are excellent. This is largely as a result of the extremely successful close partnerships that staff forge with you and the way they engage you in the work of the centre. The outstanding partnerships the centre has developed with other providers and professional agencies ensures that you access high-quality services as quickly as possible. Key partners, who spoke to inspectors, all spoke about the excellent work the centre was doing and importantly how they too play a part in the success of the centre. All said they hold the centre and the work of its staff in very high regard and told us about the excellent partnerships that exist between different agencies.

Your children's centre is highly valued and is relied upon for the well-being of large numbers of people. It plays a vital role within the community and for bringing families and community groups together. Many of you said that your involvement with the centre has resulted in you making friends and has reduced feelings of isolation. The centre is exceptionally welcoming and inclusive and ensures that all families are greeted warmly and gain access to high-quality services. The outstanding leadership and highly successful teamwork mean that families are provided with a range of excellent services tailored to meet their particular needs.

The centre is making a very positive difference to children's well-being and learning. In particular, it is making a significant difference to helping children to experience a safe and healthy start to childhood. It is very reassuring that all parents say that they feel safe at the centre and excellent safeguarding arrangements help to protect children from harm. Children are making excellent progress in their learning in the early years as they access high quality childcare provision on-site and within the area. This is helping them to prepare for their next phase of their education.

Leaders and managers understand the needs of the families extremely well. They take great care to monitor that staff are doing a good job and make sure that all staff receive excellent supervision and support. They use your feedback and their own analysis to ensure that services on offer are making a positive difference to people's lives. They show that they are determined to improve the lives of families even more.

Inspectors have asked the centre to make some further improvements to the excellent work that is already being done. We have asked the centre to explore how more parents can be involved in the governance of the centre; and to review the use of available data so that they can see how many parents are attending adult education away from the centre and how many of these individuals have gone on to gain employment.

Thank you again for helping us with the inspection. It was good to meet you all and we wish you all the very best for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.