

Inspection report for Golborne Sure Start Children's Centre

Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	406944
Inspection dates	9–10 January 2013
Reporting inspector	Linda McLarty HMI

Centre leader	Paul Ryan
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Golborne Community Primary School Talbot Street Golborne Wigan WA3 3NN
Telephone number	01942 777620
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	claire.farrimond@wigan.gov.uk enquiries@admin.golborneprimary.wigan.sch.uk

Linked school if applicable	Golborne Community Primary School URN: 106420
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Little Angels Day Nursery EY415060

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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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 centre staff, parents and other centre users, and with representatives of the local authority, the Collaborative Leadership Committee (CLC) and partner agencies.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Golborne Sure Start Children's Centre was designated a phase two centre in November 2007. It is based within Golborne Community Primary School and delivers the full core purpose to a predominantly White British community. The centre serves a community ranked within the 70% most deprived areas in the country. Three of its ten super output areas are within the top 30% most deprived areas nationally, with two of these areas ranking in the top 20%. Of the 945 children aged from birth to five years in the reach area, 75.2% are registered at the centre and 245 live in the 30% most deprived areas, with 111 living in workless households. Health profile data from 2011 shows that 14% of families claim out of work benefits.

Governance is currently provided by a collaborative leadership committee which encompasses the governance of six local schools. The centre leadership reports to this committee through its '0-5' and 'commissioning' working groups.

Most children enter early years provision with knowledge and abilities lower than those typically seen at their age, particularly in their communication, language and social skills. Full day-care is provided on site by a private provider, Little Angels Day Nursery. This was judged to be good in its last inspection and the full report can be found on Ofsted's website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

Overall, the centre is delivering satisfactory outcomes for local families. The coordinator has made a sound start in implementing systems to assess the impact of the centre's work, particularly on their target groups. Arrangements to measure the impact of the contribution of health, social care and adult education partners are at an earlier stage of development.

'I have a circle of friends now I never had before' and 'I have something to look forward to every week' are user comments showing how the centre is reducing isolation. Children are well prepared for school and the achievement gap is narrowing impressively. Adult learning is less effective because too few adults access accredited courses. Adult education partners do not systematically plan and track a clear pathway to ensure that individuals progress towards the skills and qualifications needed to access work. This limits the way centre users develop economic stability.

Health outcomes such as breastfeeding and obesity are affected by the inconsistent amount of accurate, timely information from health partners about the live births in the area. This restricts how quickly centre staff can offer breastfeeding support, which also impacts on addressing the rising obesity rates seen in Reception Year children.

Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes is extremely low, despite this type of assessment being heavily promoted by the local authority and the Gateway 0- to-19 service in Wigan. The involvement of social care partners is not a prominent feature of the centre's work. However, the use of the 'Link Worker Assessment' devised by the centre is used effectively to assess individual needs at an early stage, and to swiftly access appropriate sources of support. Consequently, safety and safeguarding of children and families is good.

There are too few centre parents involved in the governance provided by the CLC and although the staff team makes very impressive efforts to secure user views, parents do not participate enough in decision-making.

Provision is good overall. The centre has limited space, but delivers a wide range of services and activities in community venues, and has raised the number of registrations and engaged users substantially over recent years.

This is an inclusive centre, offering a consistently warm welcome to all. Resources are focussed effectively on those most in need of support, or at most risk of discrimination. The small but effective staff team delivers good quality care, guidance and support based on respectful relationships and informed, skilled outreach work.

The local authority provides strong guidance and support, with effective termly meetings to challenge the centre's progress. The leadership sets itself measurable, aspirational targets which helps the local authority and CLC to gauge the extent of improvement. Value for money is satisfactory because outcomes are satisfactory. However, the capacity to improve is good because leadership responsibilities are shared and the head of centre has developed the leadership capacity of the centre coordinator well. Robust management systems hold staff to account for their contribution to the centre's work, and leaders evaluate their work honestly and plan precisely to improve further.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Health partners to improve the way they share information about live births to enable the centre to contact families swiftly, promote breastfeeding and help to reduce obesity.
- Improve the contribution of centre users to governance and decision making.
- Adult education partners to work more effectively with the centre to increase the proportion of adults in the reach area who access accredited training and improve systems to plan for and track their progress towards qualifications which increase their employability.
- Improve the involvement of social care partners through the systematic use of the Common Assessment Framework process.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

Parents enthuse about the benefits of using the centre, and about the hard work and dedication of the small staff team. The centre is prioritising reducing obesity in the area and increasing the numbers of mothers who sustain breast feeding.. Almost half of all sessions are focussed upon improving health outcomes. Staff also signpost to various health initiatives to reduce obesity by increasing healthy lifestyles, but it is too soon yet to

demonstrate measureable impact on outcomes. Sessions such as 'Baby Massage' are helping parents bond with their babies, and parents report: 'I have learned how to relax baby, he sleeps a lot better now'. Local knowledge is used well, for example, the centre targets its smoking cessation activity at the areas where smoking is most prevalent. Attendance at all sessions is monitored closely at target group level, to ensure parity of access, and non-attendance is followed up systematically. Sometimes missed sessions, for example, baby massage, are delivered by centre staff in the home. Some commissioned health sessions, such as 'Healthy me, Healthy You' are well-attended, but due to capacity issues, are only available three times a year. The centre is engaged with all 15 pregnant teenagers in the reach area.

Counselling sessions promoting positive mental health and programmes supporting those experiencing domestic abuse such as the 'Wave' initiative, are at too early a stage to show measurable evidence of impact. Good arrangements for sponsored respite care helps families in crisis or needing targeted support to overcome particular challenges.

The premises are safe, welcoming, well maintained and regularly risk assessed. All users say they feel safe in the centre. Children's safety is enhanced by good attendance of parents on parenting courses and behaviour management sessions, and the promotion of 'safe sleep' practices. Case studies show that staff persistently follow up any signposting or onward referrals to identify if further support is needed.

Children in the reach area are being well prepared for school, with a very large majority (91.5%) achieving at least 78 points across all areas of learning. A strong emphasis on promoting communication skills has helped most children (82%) to achieve more than six points in their personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy combined. The achievement gap has narrowed from 32.6% in 2007 to 23.5% in 2012, and is now significantly below the national and Wigan average. Outcomes for adults are less impressive because although a majority of adults attend activities which improve their personal development, too few adults access courses which promote strong educational outcomes, skills and qualifications which may lead to paid employment.

Behaviour management and parenting courses are helping parents to use positive strategies to '...catch their behaviour before it gets out of control', as one parent explained. Relationships in the centre are respectful and underpinned by kindness. However, too few adults using the centre are supported into volunteering roles, or engaged in the governance and strategic decision-making, limiting their contribution to the community and to centre services.

Children make very good progress in developing skills for the next stage in their education. Staff promote the well-being of all ages effectively, and centre users say they can approach the staff about any problem, no matter how small. Although the staff regularly signpost users to the Jobcentre Plus office and to the three-weekly onsite sessions, too few adults have been supported into work.

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	3
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
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	3
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.	3

How good is the provision?

2

The centre provides a good range of services and activities throughout the community and compensates very well for the limited space in the centre. Access to services is prioritised for those in targeted groups. A short assessment is used during the initial contact to establish levels of need, followed up by more extensive assessment if required. The staff team have secure knowledge of the profile of users in their area, and use this information to plan services, taking into account user views gained from regular consultations. As a result of the good match of services to need, participation levels have increased faster in this centre than in all others across Wigan.

The learning and development of children using centre services is monitored very well by the Early Years Qualified Teacher, and children achieve well, despite their low starting points. A majority of adults engaged with the centre access courses to promote their personal development, though more could be done to plan and track clear progression routes towards the skills and qualifications which would enhance job prospects. Activities to promote purposeful learning and development for all ages are located across the reach area to maximise attendance, and achievement is celebrated with certificates, verbal praise and in displays of photographs in the centre premises.

The quality of the care, guidance and support offered is good and effectively focussed upon those in target groups. Childcare in the reach area is predominantly of good quality, with good use of evidence-based information, advice and guidance. Signposting is carefully followed up to gauge its usefulness by staff described by parents as 'diamonds' or 'like a telephone directory' because of the amount of research they do to support users.

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	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The local authority has set a very specific direction for the centre's work, which focuses staff on meeting the needs of those most at risk of falling behind, or suffering discrimination. The centre's leadership effectively rise to this challenge by honestly evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the service they provide, and setting themselves measurable targets by which they can assess how far they have improved outcomes for the families in their reach area. Regular meetings with the local authority hold the leadership to account for their contribution to good outcomes in Wigan, and provide support and challenge for the centre leadership by identifying areas for improvement. Shared accountability for improving the life chances of area residents is the cornerstone of the regular staff supervision sessions, and viewed as key to driving improvement.

Staff, partnership representatives and those involved in advising and governing the centre participate in the centre's self-assessment. Although much progress has been made in measuring impact, both by the centre and its partners in recent years, systems are still not yet fully established to unequivocally demonstrate that the majority of outcomes are good and, as a result, value for money is satisfactory. However, the quality of provision has improved substantially in the last two years, and is now attracting and retaining rapidly increasing numbers of centre users. There is compelling evidence of a good capacity to improve outcomes further.

The centre uses outreach work, focussed, informative home-visits and community venues effectively to provide services where the needs are greatest, and to maximise participation from families who would hesitate to attend the centre.

Services are commissioned within the authority's best value principles and using the 'Micro-commissioning toolkit'. This develops the leaders' autonomy when purchasing services, but within close financial guidelines to ensure that services are focussed upon improving outcomes, based on assessment of need.

Equality and diversity are promoted well. The leaders have secure local knowledge of families with circumstances that make them most vulnerable, with attendance to services continually analysed to assess participation and impact on those most at risk of discrimination and/or low achievement. Staff monitor how many representatives from each

group, including disabled children and parents and those with special educational needs, are attending each activity, and non-attendance is followed up consistently to check if the activity continues to meet the needs of all attendees.

Staff are trained to the correct levels to support their safeguarding roles. All staff are trained in the Common Assessment Framework processes, although these are not used frequently enough to have established strong working relationships with social care colleagues. However, centre users are safeguarded effectively. This is because staff prioritise preventative work, using a two-tier Link Work Assessment tool to identify and address needs before they escalate to the level where referral to social services is needed. All onward referrals are carefully followed up. Sound procedures to establish the suitability of staff are in place, with partner agencies aware of their reporting responsibilities.

The centre coordinator has worked hard to forge strong relationships with partner agency representatives. The most productive partnerships are with the on-site school and with local private providers, and are resulting in good educational outcomes for children and smooth transitions to school. Partnerships with health have improved substantially in the last year, and the centre coordinator has successfully negotiated that the midwifery service will now deliver an ante-natal session weekly from the centre.

The leadership accessed professional advice to help them increase engagement levels. The subsequent strategies, for example, initially rewarding regular attendance with vouchers for local shops have helped the centre successfully attract and retain the engagement of the large majority of local families in their services. Satisfaction levels are very high, with regular evaluations of services, activities and courses to help the leadership to know what is working well and what needs to be changed.

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	2
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
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	3

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.	2
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Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The inspectors took account of the findings of the latest inspection reports for the on-site nursery and the schools within a mile of the children's centre.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Golborne Sure Start Children's Centre on 9–10 January 2013. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We were greatly helped to reach our judgements by the conversations we had with those of you who kindly took the time to speak to us, or to let us observe the centre staff working with you. Thank you for this.

We judged the centre's strengths to include how well it prepares your children for school and keeps you and your families safe and protected. We think the centre provides a good range of services, advice, information, guidance and support, and they focus their resources on those who need them most, and where they will do most good. This is helping to equalise the opportunities for those experiencing particularly difficult challenges in their lives.

We think that the local authority support the centre well, setting clear priorities, and supporting these with useful guidance and regular meetings to check the quality and impact of the centre's work. Centre leaders set themselves precise targets by which they, and the local authority, can measure their progress towards improving life for local families.

The leadership and management team have strengthened considerably in the last two years and inspectors are confident they will continue to improve. They are dedicated to making the centre an even better source of help and support, and are working towards better ways of showing the difference they are making to their local community. However, to do this, they need more information from their partner agencies about their contribution to the centre's work. They need more accurate information about how many babies are born in the area, so that they can visit as soon as possible to promote breastfeeding. This would also help the centre to make a bigger impact on reducing the amount of children who enter

Reception Year above a healthy weight. We have also asked centre leaders to work more closely with their social care partners, and one way of doing this would be to make much more use of the local authority's preferred assessment systems.

We have asked the centre to increase the numbers of adults attending courses which would help get you into paid work, and we have asked the adult education providers to ensure that they check that their courses lead to the skills and qualifications which will help you provide a more secure future for you and your families.

Centre leaders have successfully encouraged many of you to be involved in the centre activities, but not enough of you help to make decisions about the centre services. We have therefore asked the centre leaders to increase the numbers of local parents involved in deciding what services to provide, and checking the quality and impact of the centre's work in your area.

Thank you once more for your contribution to the centre's inspection, we really enjoyed meeting you, and wish you every success in the future.

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