

# Inspection report for Golcar, Cowlersley and Milnsbridge Children's Centre

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Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	383446
Inspection dates	23 - 24 February 2012
Reporting inspector	Priscilla McGuire

Centre leader	Mrs Samantha Smith
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Beech Early Years Infant and Junior School 107692
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Not applicable

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.

**Report Published:** March 2012

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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.

An inspection of the co-located/partner primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with staff, members of the advisory board and the family forum, parents, partners including those representing the health services, the police, charities, citizens' advice bureau and schools.

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

## Information about the centre

Golcar Cowlersley and Milnsbridge, (GCM) Children's Centre is a phase two centre in Huddersfield which was established in 2007 and achieved full core offer status in 2009. It is situated next to Beech Early Years Infant and Junior School. The reach area covers three distinct communities of Golcar, Cowlersley and Milnsbridge, with different levels of deprivation and also pockets of affluence. Golcar is in the top 10% of most deprived areas. Most families within the reach area are of White British heritage. However, there are some families from minority ethnic backgrounds. Of the 1119 children within the GCM reach area, around 19.3% live in households that are dependent on workless benefits. Worklessness is a key social issue in the area. The number of adults without qualifications is slightly lower than the average for Kirklees. Families live in a mix of privately owned, privately rented, social housing and local authority owned properties.

Governance of the centre is provided by the local authority which is supported by an advisory board. The centre offers health services, early learning provision, advice and guidance services, family support and adult learning provision. Most provision is offered

from the centre's main premises in Golcar but some services are offered at community venues. Children's skills and knowledge on entry to early years provision are variable across the reach area and in the most deprived parts of the reach area are lower than 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**

2

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

## Main findings

GCM centre provides a good service to families and is a well-managed centre. It offers a warm and welcoming environment to the extent that some parents describe it as 'a second home'. One parent said: 'We're lucky to have the centre here'. The centre knows its community well, understands the needs of families and this results in mostly good outcomes for families.

Through its locality management structure for children's centres, the local authority provides good support to the centre. It also provides good quality data which is used well by the centre manager and staff to assess needs and also to monitor the impact of provision. The self-evaluation process is rigorous, inclusive of staff and parents and leads to improvement. The good quality leadership and management, together with the effectiveness of the self-evaluation process, means that the centre has good capacity to improve.

Parents comment positively about the new friendships they have formed since they started attending the centre. For families who have experienced social and emotional isolation, the opportunity to make friends is something they value. From data and local knowledge, the centre has recognised poor emotional health as a local priority and works well with a range of health professionals to improve both the emotional and physical health of families. Obesity rates are low in the reach area, nevertheless, parents benefit from programmes that develop their understanding of healthy eating.

Parents and children enjoy attending the centre. Children in the reach area achieve well across the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, there is little formal tracking of individual children's development while they are at the centre or after they leave and progress to

school. Parents' personal and social development is good. However, the proportion of parents participating in training to enable them to progress to employment or further education is low.

The quality of guidance, care and support to families is excellent. Support needs are sensitively assessed. The individual needs of families are taken into account when support and guidance are planned. The centre has established effective relationships with a wide range of partners from different sectors. Communication sharing with these partners is good and they share a strong sense of purpose with the centre to improve outcomes for families. Their commitment to working with the centre to provide services and as members of the advisory board is strong.

Through good links with partners, the centre provides an effective package of safeguarding for families. They also receive good advice about home safety. The promotion of equality is good and inclusion for all families is actively promoted. The centre diligently implements effective actions to engage key target groups, such as teenage parents and families with disabled children and those with special educational needs.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Implement systems to ensure routine monitoring and recording of the individual children's progress and development.
- Review adult learning provision to ensure that adults have good opportunities to develop employability skills and to progress to further education.

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

<b>2</b>
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Through data and local knowledge, the centre has identified poor emotional health as a priority. In response, the centre's effective work with health professionals, such as health visitors, midwives and nurses contribute well to the improving emotional health of families, particularly in relation to issues such as postnatal depression. From their attendance at 'infant massage' sessions, many parents now understand techniques they can use to improve the health of their babies. Breastfeeding rates are lower than average but the centre is making a concerted effort to promote breastfeeding through peer support sessions offered at the 'Baby Bistro' sessions and through guidance from health visitors. Obesity rates are low but parents benefit from learning how to prepare and eat healthy foods. They also benefit from sessions, such as 'Movers and Groovers' which promote physical activity.

The centre's safe and secure environment is highly valued by parents. Case studies show that when emergencies arise, families view the centre as a place of refuge. Staff use the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) well to respond to the needs of families in

conjunction with their partners. They also offer good support to looked-after children and families with children who are subject to child protection plans. Parents have a good understanding of how to keep their families safe as a result of their participation in good quality parenting and first aid programmes.

'I feel my child's interest in stories and singing has developed even further and now he loves to look at books.' This comment from one parent represents the views of many who talk positively about the way the centre promotes learning for children. Both children and their parents develop good skills and enjoyment from participating in activities, such as 'Stay and Play' and 'Movers and Groovers'. Data show that the proportion of children who achieve the 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and, at 61% for 2011, is above the average for the rest of England. Centre staff organise joint activities with schools to promote good outcomes for children in important areas such as communication, language and literacy skills. The centre has yet to develop systems to monitor and track the progress of children while they are at the centre or when they progress to school. Adults' personal development is good. By attending courses at the centre, some parents have gained their 'first ever' qualifications.

Through their roles on the 'Family Forum', parents make a good contribution to decision making. Members of the group who have representation from some of the centre's key target groups, such as young parents and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are enthusiastic about the many opportunities they have to contribute to the centre's role as a 'hub' in the community. They talk positively about the fact that as a group they 'have a voice' and contribute to wider local discussions about the future of children's centres across Kirklees. Parents are well represented on the advisory board and also contribute well to the centre by volunteering. Children's behaviour is good.

The centre has well established links with staff from Jobcentre Plus and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Data show that during 2010-2011 the confirmed benefit gain to parents as a result of an assessment of their benefits entitlement was around £26,000. Some parents have developed good work-related skills from their work as volunteers. However, low numbers of parents participate in education and training programmes designed to develop their employability skills or to help them progress to further education.

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>	2
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	2
<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>	2

<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>	2
<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>	3

## How good is the provision?

2

Staff use good quality data to accurately assess community needs and local intelligence and information from partners to keep up to date with changes in their community. The range of provision is, therefore, well matched to community needs. At 63%, participation rates are good and demonstrate that the majority of families benefit from the centre's provision. Data show that the centre has also engaged well with families from the most deprived groups. It has reached 78%, the large majority, of families within the 10% of most deprived groups. The centre provides a good balance between provision that is universal for all families and services that are targeted at specific groups such as young parents, the groups with circumstances that make them most vulnerable and fathers. The participation rates of all the young parents in the reach area are very high at 100%. Outreach provision is well organised and used to target hard-to-engage groups within the reach area.

Planning for learning for both adults and children is good. One parent said: 'My child explores more now – being here opens up his mind and his imagination.' Staff use an 'activity planner' to ensure activities are clearly matched to priorities. They also link the Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes to activities for children, such as 'Stay and Play.' For adults, good quality learning programmes with clearly identified learning outcomes ensures that they make good progress in their learning and development. Many have benefited from structured programmes that are designed to develop their confidence and raise their aspirations.

'Life was really hard before I came here' was the comment from one parent who felt the centre provided high quality support at a time when it was most needed. Family support services are exceptionally well organised both from the centre and within the local authority. Parents, particularly from the most vulnerable target groups, benefit from an exceptionally wide range of professionals who provide expert advice and guidance on health, education, the police, housing, legal services, charities and other organisations. As a result of the excellent support they have received, parents feel empowered or have gained the confidence to change their lifestyles. Others have left abusive relationships or have developed the skills to cope with challenging circumstances.

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>	2
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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>	2
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.</b>	1

## How effective are the leadership and management?

2
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Leadership and management of the centre are good. At all levels, leaders, managers and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities, are highly competent and are passionate about their work. They have distinct roles but view the support of families as a shared team responsibility. Strategic direction from the local authority is effective and communication about local priorities is good. The centre receives good support from the local authority which holds it to account through robust performance management that includes the annual conversation. Local authority staff also provide good support which enables staff to accurately interpret complex data, using a very useful section in data reports on 'the story behind the baseline data.'

Partners and parents are well represented on the advisory board which both supports and challenges the centre. As a result of good leadership and management, value for money is good and resources, such as accommodation and staffing, are well used. Self-evaluation is rigorous and evaluations and ambitious target setting are used effectively to drive improvement. The centre also uses the local authority's 'outcome based accountability' system to ensure activities are targeted appropriately and that impact of provision can be monitored systematically.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Data show that the centre has been very successful in engaging 100% of the families in the reach area whose children are disabled or who have special educational needs. This has been achieved partly through practical changes made to promote inclusion, such as the creation of a sensory room. In addition, the 'Little Stars' group offers targeted provision for families with disabled children. Although reach area data is not available, data at local authority level shows that the achievement gap is narrowing between the bottom 20% of children who achieve 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest. Dedicated activities are organised for another key target group, fathers, and this has led to an increase in their participation rates.

Data and local knowledge show a high incidence of reported and unreported domestic violence. In response, the centre works well with a range of agencies including the police and charities, to reduce the risk of harm to families affected by domestic violence. Staff are appropriately trained in a range of safeguarding topics, relevant to the needs of children and vulnerable adults. In addition, a 'safeguarding champion' for the locality provides additional guidance and advice to staff on safeguarding matters. Appropriate Criminal Record Bureau and other recruitment checks are carried out.



'I can do my job properly because of the centre' was the view from one of the centre's partners. Other partners from a range of private, statutory and voluntary organisations talk positively about the productive relationship they share with the centre. Satisfaction rates are high and feedback from families is very positive. The centre views parents as partners and actively seeks to involve them in decision making. Because of the wide geographical spread of the reach area, outreach work is carefully planned to ensure families from harder-to-engage groups can participate in centre activities.

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>	2
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes</b>	2
<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>	2
<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>	2
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	2
<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>	2
<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>	2

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

The inspectors took account of the inspection report for Beech Early Years Infant and Junior School.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Golcar, Cowlersley and Milnsbridge Children's Centre on 23 February 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Many thanks to those who took the time to speak with us during the inspection. Like you, we found the centre to be a very friendly place. We felt very welcomed at the centre and it was good to see your work and that of your children on display around the centre.

We know from talking to you that when you face difficult times, the centre is there to help you. We think that the way your centre supports families is excellent. The arrangements to support families are exceptionally well organised. This includes the way the centre works so well with other organisations. These help staff to provide high quality support and also guidance from a range of experts for families.

Your centre has been successful in encouraging families from all sorts of backgrounds to take part in activities. We were pleased to see from the statistics that we looked at, that many dads now attend the centre with their children. From what some of you told us, we know you appreciate the way the centre promotes equality and encourages families who live with all sorts of challenges to use the centre.

You also told us that you feel safe at the centre and from the evidence we gathered, we know that safeguarding is something that the local authority, the centre manager and staff highly value. When problems arise which could affect your safety, staff do everything they can to make sure risks to families are reduced or removed.

You and your children also benefit from the range of health activities that are offered, such as the health visitor sessions and we know this is contributing to the improving health of families. We read in your evaluations about the benefits some of you have gained from attending 'infant massage' sessions. Some of you have also gained good support with breastfeeding.

During our visit we were able to observe some of the activities and we could see how much you and your children enjoy attending the centre. We know from evidence we gathered during our visit, that children are making good progress in developing skills and knowledge. We have asked staff to monitor this progress better because we believe this will help improve their planning for activities and will also benefit many more children.

We also know from talking with many of you that the centre helps adults as well as children to develop their learning and skills. Some of you told us about the confidence you have gained since you started attending the centre. Others told us about qualifications you had gained or about the progress you have made as volunteers. We think this is an area the centre can develop further so we have asked staff to do more to help parents gain skills that can lead to employment or to further education.

Once again, many thanks for talking with us during the inspection. We wish you and your families all the best for the future.

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