

# Inspection report for Coppull Children's Centre

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Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	383414
Inspection dates	29 February - 1 March 2012
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Centre leader	Judith Stallard
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	379753 Coppull Primary School
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.

A co-ordinated inspection of the linked 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 centre staff, senior leaders, representatives from the local authority, the governing body, and a range of partners, parents and service users. They observed the centre's work, accompanied staff on home visits and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Coppull Children's Centre in Central Lancashire was established in February 2007 and fully designated as a phase two centre in September 2009. The centre is fully integrated with Coppull Primary School and provides a sensory room, a multi-purpose activities room and space for confidential appointments with clinic and counselling staff.

The governing body of the school manages the centre on behalf of the local authority. The headteacher of the primary school also leads the day-to-day management of the children's centre, with the support of a full-time centre coordinator. The centre has one full-time and one part-time outreach workers, an apprentice outreach support worker and an outreach worker funded under a scheme to improve school readiness. The centre commissions a volunteer coordinator and the primary school and children's centre appointed a qualified member of staff, to lead on learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage in both the children's centre and in the school. There are four other primary schools in the reach area, with three private providers of childcare and seven childminders. Children's skills on entry to early years provision are below those expected for their age.

The reach area has varied levels of deprivation, with one super output area in the top 30% of deprivation. There are approximately 580 children under five living in the reach area, of whom 125 live in the area of greater deprivation. Overall, 17% of children live in households dependent on worklessness benefits. Almost all of the families in the area are of White British heritage.

The centre offers ante-natal clinic sessions, developmental checks with health visitors, family support, early years activities, adult learning activities, counselling, outreach and access to advice and guidance services. The centre also works with the local childminders' network and with Homestart, which provides courses and support for families in the area and a volunteer development project.

## 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
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### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2
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## Main findings

The overall effectiveness of Coppull Children's Centre is good, as are the outcomes for families and children, the quality of provision and the leadership and management. Partner agencies, managers and staff work well together to provide a welcoming and caring environment, which is greatly appreciated by users. 'This is an amazing place – they have a big impact on the community' and 'I feel secure and well-supported,' as two users explained. The centre staff have a strong commitment to improving the lives of families in their area and a good understanding of the area and its needs.

The head of centre gives clear leadership to the centre and is well supported by a centre coordinator and an effective staff team. Partnerships extend the range of services and provide well-integrated support to users. The centre has increased registrations in the last year and has been especially successful in registering families in deprived target areas. Outcomes for families' health are improving overall, but the centre recognises a need to make more progress in reducing childhood obesity. Although the centre is developing a new award scheme to support and extend these initiatives, it is still too early to see any impact. The centre has also been successful in contributing to reducing the gap between the lowest-achieving 20% of children and the rest by almost a fifth. This is significantly better than the

national and county average. However, the use of data on children's skills on entering the Early Years Foundation Stage is not fully consistent throughout the reach area and this limits its usefulness to the centre.

The centre makes good use of evaluations of all its activities and identifies well areas for further improvements. It makes good use of local knowledge and the data it has and has identified ways to share further data with partners, following a local authority pilot project. Safeguarding is given high priority and effective procedures are in place to identify risks and take action to protect children and to prevent harm. The self-evaluation process is thorough and links well to the annual conversation with local authority managers and framing of a development plan, which reflects local priorities. The current draft action plan is robust and reflects the issues for improvement identified by the centre. The centre has coped well with reductions in its budget allocation and has identified project funding to develop its work in improving children's readiness to learn. The governing body for the school and centre has firm arrangements in place to hold the centre accountable for its performance. The quality of leadership and management is good overall. Reviews of casework and thorough professional supervision have supported the centres ability to improve provision and outcomes for users and to provide successful extensions to the centre's work. As a result, the centre's capacity to improve is good.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Work with the local authority and other partners to improve further the centre's ability to precisely target its services and measure its success by:
  - promoting a common measure of children's skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage
  - gathering more timely and precise local data on health, community issues and training.
  
- Build on work with health and other partners to further improve the centre's ability to reduce obesity in children by the age of five years.

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

<b>2</b>
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Good partnerships between health visitors, midwives and centre staff have improved overall health outcomes in the area. The early notification scheme and follow-up visits have increased the numbers of parents attending the centre for ante-natal checks. Through this, the centre has registered more families, particularly those with circumstances that make them likely to be vulnerable. The partnerships provide the 'Bump, Birth and Beyond' courses at the centre to provide very good preparation and support for birth and the early years. As one parent said 'I don't know what I would have done without the centre. It has been a lifeline.' Smoking during pregnancy has decreased well in the area, year-on-year. Immunisations in the area are higher than the county and national averages and teenage

conceptions are lower. Breastfeeding has been promoted well and rates in the centre's reach for initiating breastfeeding are higher than in the rest of the county. New arrangements are in place for further support by volunteers to help mothers to sustain breastfeeding for longer, although it is too early to judge the effect of this. The centre promotes healthy lifestyles well and is beginning to reduce childhood obesity rates, which are slightly higher than average. The centre is using strategies like weaning advice, cookery courses, the use of healthy snacks at all sessions and a broad range of play and outdoor activities. Staff have recently undertaken further training on how to run more effective healthy eating projects. The impact of these strategies is not yet known. The centre is successfully addressing weaknesses in children's speech and language through well-targeted group sessions and training in partnership with speech therapy and other services.

The centre provides good support for the emotional health of children and their families with well-used counselling sessions and a good range of parenting courses and support. Parents feel that they and their children are safe in the centre. Staff promote and model safe practice in the centre and children develop an awareness of safety issues. There is good support for home safety and outreach workers arrange safety assessments and fire safety checks on home visits, providing good information, resources and safety packs. The centre supplies safety equipment, such as stair gates when required. Emergency hospital admissions for children under five have been consistently low. Staff and multi-agency teams support families experiencing or at risk of domestic violence, sensitively and effectively. Parents develop confidence in managing their families and attend courses to improve their literacy and numeracy. 'The centre has helped me feel I am a person again and not just a number.' Staff build trusted relationships with families using the centre's services and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and 'team around the child' processes are well used to ensure families' safety and to plan effective support. No children have been subject to child protection plans in the area for the last 15 months and there is good evidence of the effectiveness of early intervention in an 81% reduction in levels on the continuum of need.

The centre promotes positive behaviour among users. 'My children play well together and with other children since coming to the centre and we have had help in setting boundaries for them, gaining confidence and being helped with depression.' Many adults appreciate that the centre helps them get over problems of isolation, meet others with similar issues and make good friends. An activity group for parents who have disabled children has led to them forming their own group to provide support for others. The centre has many instances of parents advocating the centre's services and taking the initiative to support others, such as the young mums' group, which expanded to support young dads as well. The centre supports families to become more financially stable, with good support for budgeting, referrals and support for debt management and avoidance of eviction. Many of the centre users described the opportunities they had enjoyed to learn about their children's development, gain skills and access courses, which lead to further training and employment. Parents are also active as volunteers, as members of the parents' forum and as representatives on the extended services committee and as the school's governing body.

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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>2</b>
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A strong commitment to good quality care is clear throughout the provision. The centre staff and partner agencies have a good knowledge of the area they serve and work well together to bring services to those most in need of support. There is a good balance of targeted and universal services and the centre and partners work hard to extend the numbers of families registered and using the services of the centre. The centre is welcoming and has succeeded in reaching high proportions of most of its priority targeted groups. It has, for example, increased the numbers of young parents and of men attending the centre. The centre makes good use of the views and preferences of centre users in planning its provision, including a very active parents' forum, case studies, evaluations, drop-in sessions and centre suggestion boxes. Staff work well with the local authority and health partners to respond swiftly and effectively to referrals and provide early intervention. Assessment is used well to form individual support plans for families, with good monitoring of the processes and of outcomes.

Many families mention the good support they have from knowledgeable and caring centre staff. 'Nothing seems too much trouble –they keep in touch by phone to check you're alright between visits.' Staff commitment to good care, guidance and support means they are responsive to the individual needs of families and this helps families improve outcomes. Parents experiencing anxiety about the safety of their children are supported and this enables them to be more confident in playing a more active role in their children's early education. Users thoroughly trust the centre as a place to go to for help or advice in a crisis and staff can refer to a wide range of specialist agencies for specific issues.

The centre promotes purposeful learning well and works with partners to identify a wide range of opportunities. Activities for children are well planned to support their development, especially in speech and language, such as the music sessions, which use rhyme and song to develop vocabulary and counting skills. Training for volunteers is good with a great deal

of centre support and encouragement to take their learning further. Volunteers describe how they are made to feel 'part of the team,' and 'well-nurtured in the centre.' The centre celebrates personal development and achievement in school assemblies and with wall displays.

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

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

<b>2</b>
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The local authority provides good oversight of the centre, with regular monitoring, quarterly and annual reviews. Partner agencies and the parents' forum contribute well to the good governance. Staff and the centre's partners contribute well to the centre's self-evaluation, which is thorough, accurate and linked to strategic planning and to national and local priorities. The local authority provides data about the area and about the centre's performance. Not all the data is up-to-date, or relates sufficiently precisely to the areas in the centre's reach to enable the setting of precise targets or measures for judging the centre's progress. Accordingly, although overall outcomes are good and improving, the data limits the centre's ability to reach the highest standards in all aspects of its work. This is also true for the data relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage, which requires a more accurate and consistent approach.

Day-to-day management of the centre is good, with detailed financial control. Staff are managed well, with good training, case supervision and professional development opportunities. The centre makes good use of external funding to meet priority targets. The centre works effectively with other children's centres in the local cluster and with many partners to ensure a wide range of services and to make the best use of resources. Therefore, value for money is good.

The centre is very welcoming to all and promotes equality well and celebrates diversity. Inclusion of children and their families is central to its work. There is good support for disabled adults and children and their families. Services for target groups in the community are well planned and the centre has been successful in reaching many hard-to-engage families.

Staff, partner agencies and users have a good understanding of their responsibilities for safeguarding and are clear about the procedures for reporting concerns. All staff and volunteers have undergone up-to-date safeguarding training. Volunteers in the centre work closely with a named staff member to give additional support in identifying possible safeguarding concerns and to reinforce appropriate reporting. The centre fully implements



safe recruitment procedures, including full Criminal Records Bureau checks, ensuring that all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults. The centre makes thorough use of comprehensive health and safety risk assessments for all activities. Premises and resources are safe and well used.

Partnerships are very effective and have provided a wider range of activities, support and expertise for centre users. The centre has created a practitioners' forum to share good practice, identify areas of development in services and the monitoring of quality and to extend the development of an integrated service.

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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>2</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>2</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>2</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>2</b>

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

This inspection was co-ordinated with the inspection of Coppull Primary school on 27 February, 2012 and was informed by those findings.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Complaining about inspections*, which is available from our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Coppull Children's Centre on 29 February 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We enjoyed speaking with you, and hearing of the difference the centre has made to you and your families. You told us you feel safe when using the centre, and we judged the centre to have good procedures to keep you and your children safe. We heard how welcoming the centre is, and how well staff respond to your needs. We heard of the range of ways that the centre uses to help you and your family to be healthy, such as outdoor play and walks, cookery sessions, and ideas for healthy food and snacks. The centre provides good support for new families, such as the 'Bump, Birth and Beyond' sessions, and has many ways to help you develop your skills as a parent. We heard of the support many families get in a crisis, and of the help and the advice the centre has for families. It was clear that the centre staff and the partner organisations are trusted and provide valuable support that makes a big difference in many families' lives.

Many of you told us how much you and your children enjoyed play sessions and music groups. These activities are of good quality and support your children's learning and development, especially in helping them be more ready for nursery and school. We heard how the centre can help with speaking and listening and with children's ability to mix and get on with others. There are good links with experts that can help in a wide range of issues, and the centre has been very successful in getting them involved when families need it.

We found that the centre staff and managers are committed to improving the work they do and welcome the ideas and feedback from people using the centre. Many of you have made good suggestions, and have let the manager, the parents' forum or the governing body of the centre know your ideas and opinions. This is very important, as the centre always needs to know what you enjoy and how it can do more to help. Many of you have also been able to give time as volunteers and learned new skills in the process. We judged the centre to be well managed and we judged that it is able to make further improvements. We have made some recommendations to help this. First, we have asked the local authority to help the centre leaders to ensure that all the services for early years education and childcare provision in the area are better at assessing what progress children are making, so planning for improvements is easier to arrange. Secondly, we have asked the centre and its partners in the health services to build on their work in reducing the numbers of children who are obese.

Thank you for telling us about your experiences of the centre, and may we wish you and your families every success in the future.

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