

# Inspection report for Beever Children's Centre

---

Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	383631
Inspection dates	21 - 22 March 2012
Reporting inspector	Philip Ellwand

Centre leader	Tracey Harrison
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Moorby Street Oldham Greater Manchester OL1 3QU
Telephone number	0161 7708366
Fax number	0161 770 8367
Email address	t.harrison@beever.oldham.sch.uk

Linked school	105627 - Beever Primary School
Linked early years and childcare	EY343156 - Beever Children's Centre

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:** April 2012

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



No.100080

© Crown copyright 2012

## 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 registered Early Years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under section 49 of the childcare act 2006 alongside the inspection of the co-located/partner primary school 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 the centre's management team, the local authority, partnership agencies, the advisory board, the headteacher and governors of the linked primary school, members of staff and families using the centre.

They observed the centre's work, accompanied staff on home visits and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Beever Children's Centre developed from a Sure Start local programme and was designated as a phase one centre in March 2007. It is located in a purpose-built centre in the grounds of Beever Primary School and uses other outreach accommodation across the area. There are five other primary schools in the reach area and three childcare providers. The centre provides crèche facilities for parents accessing support or learning activities. It provides a range of health, social care, family support, education and advice services for families in the St. Mary's ward of Oldham, which is in one of the 30% most deprived areas of the country. There are approximately 1370 children under five years of age living in the reach area. The proportion of children who are in families dependent on worklessness benefits is high at 38%. The area also has high levels of domestic violence and mental health issues. The population of the reach area is ethnically diverse. A large majority of families are of Pakistani heritage and a small minority are of White British heritage. The area has the highest movement of population in the borough, with 12 % leaving the area each year. The numbers of family members for whom English is an additional language is rising. Children

enter childcare and early years provision with experiences and skills well below those usually expected for their age.

The governing body of Beever Primary School currently manages the centre on behalf of the local authority. The governing body of the school also provides registered early years provision for a maximum of 39 children under five years at any one time. It is open from 7.30am until 6pm each weekday for 51 weeks of the year. Staff from the children's centre run the early years provision. The headteacher of the school provides professional line management for the children's centre leader, who directs the performance management of the centre staff. The centre's advisory body includes members of the school governing body, parents, representatives of health, social care, education and local authority partner organisations. It is supported by the active parents' and community forums. The charity, Action for Children, has recently been commissioned to provide the governance of the centre from April 2012. As part of the Oldham East cluster of children's centres, it will be managed through a district advisory board. The centre is part of the 'Early Years Entitlement Model,' a new pilot scheme for enhanced coordination of the health and local authority services support for children under five.

## 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

Beever Children's Centre provides a welcoming and safe environment for its children and families. A typical view is, 'I've a good relationship with all the staff so I can share my personal issues with people I trust and they give me good help and advice.' The centre has developed close partnerships with health providers, social care, the Family Information Service and community outreach teams. It provides robust and well-planned coordination of partnership-working with clear links to meeting both strategic targets and priorities set at a district level. The planning, delivery and monitoring of services are well developed. The number of families accessing and engaging in the centre's services is increasing substantially. This is accredited to the centre's challenging target to contact all mothers within four weeks of their child's birth. Almost 70% of families in the area with children under five years are registered. Of these, 93% are from target groups. However, marketing

does not fully promote the centre to some families who are hard-to-engage, especially those who have recently arrived from overseas, or who cannot access the services directly from the centre.

Staff support children's progress in personal social and emotional development well, enabling them to be ready to learn when they start school. The centre effectively uses specific programmes for promoting language and communication skills as well as reading and writing skills. These have been delivered successfully in some of the early education settings to support children's transition to school. However, the system for assessing speech and language skills on entry to the various settings is not consistent or appropriately tailored to assess children who have little grasp of the English language. This makes it difficult to accurately measure baseline skills across the area to age expectations. The centre recognises this and has put plans in place to address the difficulty. It is too early at present to judge the effectiveness of the changes.

Staff and partners work tirelessly to provide an integrated service of support which successfully promotes good and improving outcomes for families. The community outreach service effectively gives families support which is tailored to their individual needs. Families are encouraged to play an important part in setting targets for themselves and the centre takes good account of their preferences and choices. Staff make good use of data, information from the local authority and partners, feedback from users and their own evaluations to review the needs of target groups and judge the effectiveness of services provided. Self-evaluation is thorough and well supported by evidence. It informs the centre's development-plan and leads to detailed, measurable targets. Accordingly, the centre's capacity to improve is good.

Safeguarding is given high priority. Health and safety risk assessments are prepared well with careful monitoring at all stages of their effectiveness ensuring that any necessary action is taken to protect children. Staff and partners are trained and supported well to identify concerns and report them appropriately. The centre promotes equality and diversity well, with users sharing the centre's commitment to inclusion and respect for one another.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Work with the local authority and with providers of early education to improve further the communication, language and literacy skills of children by:
  - establishing a common system for assessing children's baseline skills on entry to early years provision including children who are at the early stages of learning English
  - extending the use of programmes by early years providers across the reach area.
- Ensure wider take-up of services by hard-to-engage groups by:
  - fuller promotion and marketing of the centre

- extending outreach provision to meet the needs of families who find it difficult to access services.

## How good are outcomes for families?

2

Health and other outcomes are improving in the area as a result of well-planned joint initiatives across the East Oldham cluster group of children's centres. Partners share information and evaluations very well. Their thorough monitoring of the progress made by families leads to good and improving outcomes. Attendance at health clinics provided at the centre and other venues has improved because of the good support received from centre staff. Breastfeeding has increased each quarter over the last two years, and sustained by 20% more mothers than in the rest of the borough. Exercise and healthy eating are promoted well during home visits and many of the centre's activities, such as growing fresh vegetables in the centre's garden. Childhood obesity, although above the national average, is reducing and is now only very slightly above the local target. The number of mothers smoking during pregnancy has reduced and immunisation rates and children's oral health have improved. Early identification of developmental concerns and speedy referral to targeted services are organised as a result of users' contact with centre staff. This includes support for disabled children, speech and language development or behaviour management.

One parent commented, 'Centre staff are like family. I feel my children are safe in their centre.' Safety on the roads and home safety are promoted well, with many parents benefiting from first aid courses at the centre. The previously high rates of emergency admission to hospitals are reducing and are now close to the local authority target. Safeguarding is given high priority and staff provide sensitive and effective support for families at risk of domestic violence. Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes are used well to identify needs and identify the agency best placed to lead the support for children and families. There is robust evidence of improving outcomes for children subject to child protection plans and for children identified as in need of early intervention.

Children behave well in the centre. Parents gain confidence in setting boundaries for acceptable behaviour through effective support and parenting courses. Parents' views are valued by the centre and play an important part in the development of the centre. Parents are active in the advisory group, the school governing body and the parents' forum. Many become volunteers for the centre. Some have produced a newsletter and social media pages to promote the work of the children's centre.

The centre works collaboratively with partners to improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage with specific programmes aimed at improving language and communication skills and personal, social and emotional development. Evaluations from some schools show that these programmes and the early targeted support for individual needs have made a measurable difference in children's readiness to learn. Although for most, skill levels remain below those expected for their age, many children make accelerated progress subsequently. The numbers reaching the early learning goals has

improved and the gap between the lowest 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest has narrowed by five per cent over the last two years. Last year there was an increase of 11% of boys and seven per cent of girls attaining expected levels, and a further increase is expected. The centre recognises that not all children benefit from these targeted programmes because they are not currently promoted by all early years providers. Currently, the baseline assessment system is not used consistently or tailored to reflect the skills of children who have limited English. The centre also recognises this as an area for improvement.

Good support, advice and guidance are received by those pursuing adult learning. Many courses, such as the numeracy and literacy courses and 'Families into Employment' successfully help parents to gain skills and to find work. There is good support for parents to gain experience through volunteering or to go on to further training. Parents are signposted to advice on financial benefits, debt-management and transition to work.

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?**

**2**

The centre has a good understanding of the local area and makes good use of data and outreach activities overall to identify most families in need of support. They work well with partners and registration and take-up of service by target groups is good and increasing. Innovative working with the Imams at the mosque has encouraged the support of men in the centre's work with families. Sessions for improving parenting skills for young expectant mothers whose children may be subject to care protection plans are well attended by them and their male partners. Effective early identification of children's development issues and a good range of support from the centre, partner agencies and specialist referrals improve individual outcomes. The CAF process is robust and well developed and ensures that families do not fall through any gaps in provision.

Purposeful learning is promoted well and activities are planned in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Children’s learning and progress are effectively monitored and shared with parents to further encourage and celebrate learning achievements. Programmes such as ‘Let’s Play Together’ are used successfully to give additional impetus to children’s development where progress is at risk of delay. Adults’ learning and their next steps are well supported. Effective referrals to learning and training providers are organised including organisations which support learners experiencing barriers to learning and employment.

Care, guidance and support are very well integrated across the services and tailored to meet individual needs. The centre highlights to families the range of visits and support to which they are entitled and this approach is encouraging higher take-up of services. Additionally, the centre is identified by families as a trusted helper in times of crisis, as one parent expressed, ‘I learned a lot about the early years when I came with my child, the staff were a great support and can give good advice about anything.’ Other parents emphasised the trust in which they hold the centre and the professionalism and approachability of staff.

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>
----------

Managers and staff have a clear view of priorities with a thorough grasp of areas for improvement. Users have a high regard for the centre and contribute well to the centre’s self-evaluation. Parents and partners are fully engaged in decision-making and describe how well the centre leader prepared them for understanding the key priorities and choices. The centre reviews its work well and makes good use of evaluations by service users and case studies to measure the impact on outcomes for families. The centre leader has energy and determination for which partners, users and colleagues praise her highly. Arrangements for professional supervision are good and link tasks to strategic planning. The headteacher of Beaver Primary School and the governing body together with the advisory group and parents’ forum provide effective support and challenge. The ‘Early Years Entitlement Pilot Project’ provides additional rigour to the working of the centre by ensuring that all families with children under five have contact with the centre and that there is full coordination of visits from the centre and from health partners. The reorganisation of children’s centre working into a district model has helped identify efficiency savings, avoid duplication and streamline provision. Resources are managed well and a good range of outreach and



partner premises provides additional opportunities for families. Outcomes for families are good and the centre provides good value for money.

Managers give the highest priority to safeguarding and good practice underpins all areas of work, including multi-agency working. All statutory requirements are met fully and Criminal Records Bureau disclosures are obtained for all staff and volunteers. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding and understand fully the procedures for raising concerns, for example in relation to child protection issues. The centre collaborates effectively with other key agencies to reduce risk of harm to children.

The centre is inclusive and welcoming to all. It promotes equality and diversity well and adapts its services to meet the needs of families and target groups in the area, including disabled children and their families. Staff promote community cohesion and encourage different sections of the community to respect each other. Parents and volunteers describe how well they work alongside others from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

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**

The inspectors took into account the inspection findings for the linked provision at Beever Primary School and the registered early years provision also called Beever Children's Centre, which took place at the same time as the inspection for the children's centre. The inspection judged provision and outcomes for the early years provision as good.

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 Beaver Children's Centre on 21—22 March 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We enjoyed having the opportunity to talk to many of you. Thank you for helping us find out about your centre and about how it supports you and your families.

Parents described the centre's staff as, 'Brilliant,' 'Welcoming,' 'Like family' and we saw how you and your children value how approachable and supportive they are. We heard about the wide range of issues on which the centre offers useful information and expert advice. Some of you described the serious challenges you have had and how you have trusted the centre to help you to work through them.

The centre has introduced better systems for making home visits, so more of you have a chance to meet staff from the centre at key times as your children grow up. Many of the centre's activities help you and your families to have healthier lifestyles, and promote good guidance about exercise, healthy foods and giving up smoking. We heard how in your area tooth decay for children is a problem and know the centre is helping to reduce this with its partners in the community. We also heard how many of you are helped by the centre to gain confidence and skills in supporting your children's development. The centre staff and partners provide good advice which helps mothers to start and continue breast feeding and then move children on to healthy solid foods. They also offer good advice on how you can help your children to make better progress in their learning and development when they go to nursery or primary school.

Many of you spoke about how the centre staff encourage you to spend more time playing with your children, listening to them and helping them understand boundaries. This has led to some very positive improvements in children's self-esteem and their behaviour. Many of you described how this has also helped to reduce the stresses in your lives and boosted your confidence. We looked at the additional help the centre gives to help improve children's speech, language and listening skills. We saw that there has been some good progress and we have asked the centre do more to measure this progress, so that further improvements can be made.

The centre is inclusive and promotes good relationships between the different communities. We heard how the centre brings people together and some of you described the centre as 'The hub of the community.' Many of you told us how important the centre's work was in

helping you and your children feel safe and we saw how the centre gave great priority to this.

It was good to hear of the successes many of you have had in learning and how some of you have used these skills as volunteers or to go on to further training and work. A good example was the newsletter produced on a course by parents, which has also helped encourage other parents to see what they could learn.

The centre is well managed and the local authority and the school governing body have worked well with the advisory group to set targets for further improvements. Many of you have helped the management of the centre by feeding back your opinions and ideas, or by becoming school governors or joining the advisory group and parents' and community forums. The centre takes note of your views and displays the improvements it has made as a result of your suggestions. The centre has worked hard to increase the registration of families, particularly those facing the greatest challenges. We have asked the centre to promote the centre further and extend its outreach work to include those families who are not currently using the centre.

We would like to thank those of you who were able to speak to us and share your ideas about the centre. We wish you every success for the future.

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