

# Inspection report for Derby Street Sure Start Children's Centre

Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	365670
Inspection dates	19-20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Pepper HMI

Centre governance	Local authority
Centre leader	Mrs Pauline Goulding
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY39423 - Derby Street Children's Centre Crèche, EY277722 - Derby Street Neighbourhood Nursery and 105761 - Derby Street Nursery School Unit.

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.

## 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 senior leaders, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with members of the advisory board, parents and service users and representatives from the local authority. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Derby Street Children's Centre operates from a purpose-built site attached to a maintained nursery school. The centre evolved from a Sure Start Local Programme. It was designated a Phase 1 centre in 2006. It provides the full core offer of services and a wide range of supporting services, including health support and adult courses.

Population in the area is mostly White British but in more recent months a small number of families from Europe have moved into the area. The centre serves an area where the majority live in the 30% most deprived wards in the country. Although around 65% are employed, unemployment is rising. Over half of the families are on low incomes with 53% dependent on workless benefits. A high proportion of adults have few or no qualifications.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is delivered through various groups. The centre has a crèche on site which offers up to 22 childcare places for children whose parents are on courses or who need respite care. Derby Street Nursery School Unit offers 39 full-time equivalent places term time only. Day care is fully integrated within the nursery unit providing full day care and education for up to 65 children of which no more than 27 may be under two years of age. Overall, children's levels on entry to early years provision are well below those typical for their age. These inspection reports can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The centre is open from 8am until 6pm, Monday to Friday, 50 weeks of the year. It is also open evenings and weekends as required. The centre has an advisory board which is established and made up of representatives from the local community, professional agencies and parents.

## 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 users and the wider community**

**1**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**1**

## Main findings

This is a highly-effective children’s centre that serves its community exceptionally well. Throughout the inspection all those spoken to were unequivocally positive regarding its impact. Parents say, ‘Without this centre and groups I don’t know what we would do, they are an absolute necessity that benefits all our children.’

The outstanding progress of children and families is the result of superb leadership and management of the high-quality provision across the full range of services. The extremely well-organised centre, crèche and clinics all run very smoothly and calmly which is very reassuring for families who use the services. All families benefit from the centre being attached to the well-established and greatly respected nursery school, which incorporates a high-quality integrated day-care provision. The centre actively promotes equality and celebrates diversity due to its highly-inclusive ethos.

Staff morale is very high at all levels. Excellent partnerships working across the partner agencies ensure the extensive range of excellent services provided are constantly changing to meet the needs of the community. Multi-agency professionals share expertise and their excellent ‘team around the family’ approach results in outstanding outcomes. Parents say, ‘This place is a godsend.’ They are very confident that this is a place where they will be made welcome and they can always seek excellent advice and support.

Health partners foster very early intervention and engagement with the centre, which have great benefits for the users. Families facing the most challenging of circumstances have shown very impressive improvements in their well-being because

of the excellent outreach work of the parent-empowerment worker and the child and family support team.

Safeguarding has an extremely high priority. 'I feel safe here and I know my children are safe.' was a typical view expressed. Parents' very good knowledge of how to promote healthy lifestyles and stay safe is often as a result of attending courses and activities within the centre. A thriving dads' group encourages much greater involvement of fathers ensuring that improvements in parenting skills and knowledge are not confined to mothers.

Outstanding attention is paid to training and development. A great many who want to embark on adult training are extremely well supported by the successful centre. Young parents in particular are extremely well empowered to engage in education and employment working around their children. Pass rates are very high and the centre regularly celebrates achievements. The young-parent support worker provides exceptional personalised support, which is tailored to meet the needs of individuals; consequently, results are very impressive. Children make at least good progress in their learning. This is due to the child-centred approach to their individual needs and the high quality of care and education. Some children are making rapid progress and are at, or exceeding, expected levels for their age and stage of development.

The centre leader and her senior leadership team know their community and reach area extremely well; consequently, users and members of the community have the greatest respect for the work of the centre. The centre monitors carefully the impact of the vast majority of cohesive services they use and have rightly identified that they would benefit from more detailed information from a weaker partner. Whilst Jobcentre Plus is clearly visible in the centre, outcomes for parents accessing their services are not routinely shared with the centre. The leadership and management are very effective in evaluating the success of what is achieved so far and reflective about where further improvements can be made. The advisory board and strong parents' forum holds them to account extremely well. The centre demonstrates excellent capacity for sustained improvement. It is in a strong position to sustain exceptionally high outcomes and continually improve its effectiveness.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- With the local authority strongly encourage Jobcentre Plus to demonstrate more fully the impact of the service they provide at the centre.

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

<b>1</b>
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All parents state they appreciate the very warm welcome they receive on arrival at the centre. They all feel extremely safe. 'I feel very welcome and very safe here.' were typical views of parents. They expressed absolute confidence and appreciation of the staff, with whom they have built secure and trusting relationships, saying,

'Staff make you feel at ease.' or 'Staff are really friendly.'

Powerful messages such as the importance of safety on the roads are cleverly embedded into the minds of parents and carers through shocking visual images which have a dramatic impact. Superb practical tasks help parents and carers to understand how much alcohol and drugs can affect judgements. Parents and carers leave these safety sessions understanding the importance of being a good role model for children and how much more difficult children find it to judge the speed of traffic. Parents say, 'These sessions are really helping me.'

Many parents and carers have had home safety visits and some have been provided with safety equipment; as a result parents and carers possess an excellent understanding of safety prevention issues. Many have made significant changes within their home or in their vehicles to minimise risks to children. Children learn about the importance of safety through excellent role play props like the zebra crossing. Children are encouraged to behave in ways which are safe for themselves and others and even young children learn how to assess risks.

Parents and carers understand the importance of child protection because it is carefully explained to them. Significant and sustained improvement is evident for those children on child protection plans. Multi-agency workers at the centre are highly skilled at identifying any issues. The Common Assessment Framework is used extremely well to support families. Parents describe the children's centre workers as people they can trust when sharing extremely sensitive issues. They say they know workers will be non-judgemental of them and that if they have a child protection concern they can completely rely on the centre to help them sort it out.

The health of families is being improved greatly in many ways. The nutrition team regularly supports the work of the centre delivering powerful messages about the importance of healthy eating. Practical visual aids actually show parents and carers the fat, salt or sugar content of food and drink. This has the desired impact, for example, a typical comment from a parent was, 'I can't look at a particular soft drink now without thinking about that cup of sugar.'

Through an extensive range of sessions like Baby Moves, many parents acquire skills and techniques to relax their babies. This means they are more able to soothe and calm down upset babies without getting worked up, which they know only makes matters worse. Parents express very high levels of satisfaction, for example, 'When I didn't know where to turn, this place saved my sanity.' Parents and carers learn the importance of not having too-high expectations for children and they are shown how to get involved in a child's play through home visits or attending groups. 'It's a pleasure to be here. I work, and I can't wait for a day off so I can come here.' was a typical view of a working parent. Parents report that making suggested changes have made a real difference and had a dramatic impact on their child's behaviour and their relationships with them. Many parents are empowered to understand early learning and the desires and emotional needs of their children, which greatly improve family outcomes. Commissioned services further support children's transition into schools so

that children are in a good position to learn and achieve.

Staff are resolute in their commitment to ensuring that as many parents or carers as possible access a wide range of courses. As a result parents and carers are keenly encouraged to increase their chances of employment and improve their economic well-being. There is clear evidence that family learning is greatly improving outcomes.

Very effective consultation with parents, carers and children results in their frequent engagement in critical reflection and evaluation to shape services.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for users*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

<b>1</b>
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This purpose built eco-friendly centre has won an award for the design of the building. Inspectors saw why many users described the spacious building as having a 'feel-good atmosphere'. The centre is an extremely welcoming, safe and secure environment where children's well-being and safety are given utmost priority.

Outstanding attention is paid to training and development within the centre. The multiple training rooms are very well equipped and house a centre of vocational excellence. There is a high uptake of the wide range of courses on offer. Courses are run for early speakers of other languages as required. The course entitled Parents to Be is a very popular accredited course delivered by Hopwood Hall College working in partnership with the young-parent support worker and the children's centre. Crèche facilities and transport are provided if required. The centre is also well attended when used by Skills for Family Learning, parenting, numeracy and information technology classes.

Parents and carers make very good use of the well stocked toy library. An extensive range of parenting programmes run by qualified early years workers promote personalised and purposeful learning and development like the Pop in and Play and Turbo Tots, a fun physical session. Parents say, 'I have a better understanding of how to play with my child thanks to courses here.'

There are separate timetables of events and activities dependent on the age of the child attending which ensure an extremely wide range of services are provided for parents, carers and children. This demonstrates an absolute commitment to improving life chances of children, parents and carers. The Dadtastic event followed by the Dad, Me and Tea group successfully engages dads, many of whom are working. Parents say, 'I travel quite a way because this centre suits me.'

The health visiting team, and workers at the centre, work in an integrated way to strongly promote and improve breastfeeding rates. Levels of engagement with teenage parents are impressive. For example, some are now volunteers and they act as very good role models, confidently promoting breastfeeding. Antenatal sessions provided by the midwifery team include separate twilight sessions for teenage mums.

Any services that parents value are sustained, for example, when health partners could no longer deliver baby massage, workers at the centre undertook training to deliver this. The crèche has achieved the Golden Grin award which recognises the healthy food cooked on site and discourages eating sugar between meals. An extensive range of cooking and healthy eating sessions provide a wide variety of opportunities to promote and develop healthy eating habits.

This is an inclusive centre. Barnardos and Rochdale Additional Needs Service support families with additional needs to access services at the centre where there is a named disability champion and an extremely well-resourced sensory room. Children's social care and the family support team, based within the centre, work very effectively together. They are extremely competent at assessing family needs. In times of crisis, families feel confident in turning to the centre because they know they can rely on their exceptional support. The numbers of families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are increasing. However, outstanding partnership work ensures that the centre successfully plans to promote better outcomes for all these families.

Children's progress is carefully tracked, with variations in outcomes for boys and girls carefully addressed. Within the centre, children's transition into school is seamless. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile scores show that children reach age-related expectations in most areas. Physical development is the strongest and there are significant increases in communication, language and literacy development. Speech screening reveals a 20% increase of communication development. Additional support is provided as required. Parents say, 'Thanks to this place my child's additional needs were identified and addressed.' The popular speech and language therapist support within the centre provides excellent training for staff, parents and children. Attendances at these sessions have dramatically increased. Families accessing Sing

and Sign sessions reported on the positive impact their increased awareness, of how to support their child’s learning and development, has had.

Inspectors observed the wonderful community spirit fostered at the story-time session at Heywood library, which promotes community cohesion very well. Children listen well to familiar stories and handle books independently and carefully when they tell stories themselves. At the library, a wide age range of people come together to socialise and share their views and experiences. ‘It’s a vital to help each other and look out for each other.’ was a typical view expressed.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	1
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>

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

<b>1</b>
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The centre exemplifies high-quality practice. The centre leaders, team and partners are enthusiastic, highly skilled and trained. They demonstrate excellent commitment to the success of the centre. Governance and accountability arrangements are extremely well established. There are very strong links between the strategic planning, development plans and individual work plans. All workers have areas of responsibility which they address with sheer dedication, determination and drive. Performance management and quality-assurance systems are extremely rigorous. Peer observation is extremely effective in promoting high-quality interaction.

Excellent relationships within the senior leadership team enhance everything they do. The centre leader manages change extremely well and, despite efficiency cuts, services have been further enhanced. Sharing of staff knowledge and resources guarantees outstanding value for money and has had many positive benefits. For instance, timetables of activities and events are now arranged in conjunction with the nearby Woodland centre to prevent the duplication of any services and to target users’ needs more accurately by offering them more choice.

The centre leader uses all available information to successfully interpret data quarterly so that she has a very clear picture of what is happening in the reach area. She has requested more information from Jobcentre Plus to enable the centre to clearly demonstrate the impact of their work. She knows when information is useful, and when any data is inaccurate she will challenge it. She has high expectations and



is constantly striving to improve provision to ensure it is responsive to local need. She works hard to plan and evaluate the impact of services and to improve, or at least maintain, previous goals. Targets are ambitious but realistic and they continually drive improvement and inspire others to narrow the gap for the most disadvantaged by intervening early to break down any barriers to positive outcomes.

The highest priority is given to safeguarding. For example, robust risks assessments and a single central record are in place which underpins effective recruitment procedures. There are exemplary protocols and partnerships in place with relevant key agencies, particularly in terms of child protection. The centre goes the extra mile to ensure all users are included in the services on offer. For example, staff determined to engage families conduct relentless door-knocking exercises to ensure they can break down any barriers of isolation some may experience. The centre is highly inclusive and it promotes diversity well. They recognise that more work can be done to increase the engagement of families who care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and plans are firmly in place to do so. Excellent partnerships have been forged with the community, for example, the local general practitioner. This has led to jointly-promoted health events, sessions within the surgery and the signposting of parents to the centre.

The parents' forum is a very strong and enthusiastic constituted group who have helped tailor several services delivered at the centre due to thorough consultation about the community needs. For instance, they have reintroduced the food-bag initiative, due to popular demand. Parents are shown how to cook a healthy meal for their family and they are then able to purchase a low-cost bag of all the ingredients so they can cook the meal at home. The forum raises funds to continually improve the high-quality provision. They support the centre well and are very confident to challenge it to do even better.

*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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision</b>	<b>1</b>

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

Derby Street Children’s Centre Crèche was inspected within the last 12 months and it contributed to the children’s centre report and judgements.

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 Derby Street centre on 19-20 January 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

We were very impressed with many aspects of your children’s centre and your excellent attendance at the centre shows a very high percentage of families enjoy the opportunities on offer here. Those of you we spoke to told us how very welcome you feel at the centre and how much you appreciate the support the workers at the centre have given you. You told us how you have built trusting and extremely positive relationships with the staff. A great many of you described the centre as simply, ‘brilliant’.

The midwives, health visitors and centre staff all work extremely well together and with others partners to combine their professional experience and expertise. They put you and your children at the heart of all they do. As a result excellent partnership working is in place, which ensures that you and your families receive the very best support and resources possible. Some of you told us about the dramatic differences attending the centre has made to your lives. We enjoyed reading individual stories in the articles in the Parent to Parent magazine which further demonstrated the positive changes the centre has helped you make.

You told us how much you look forward to attending the centre which provides an excellent range of high-quality services that are helping you to learn new skills and improve your relationships with one another. It was evident during the inspection

how much you appreciate the warm welcome the centre provides and your raised awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles.

We recognise that excellent leadership and management make the centre so successful. We agree that the centre provides excellent care, guidance and support, and attention to safeguarding children is exceptional. This is because the centre has high expectations for you all and safeguarding is a very high priority. We believe that the high levels of satisfaction which you expressed are due to regular consultation with you by the centre. This is because they value and respect your views and they use them to change and improve the services provided for you so they are tailored to meet your needs.

Some of you have trained to be volunteers and have helped run groups which have been very successful. In particular, the young-parents group is a very good example of this. Many of you have attended courses to develop your knowledge and skills which have increased your confidence and self-esteem. Many of you have gained qualifications and have returned to work. We have asked the local authority to improve the information the centre receives from Jobcentre Plus so they can further show how their work is enabling more of you to gain paid employment.

We were impressed by the work of the parents' forum.

Thank you very much for your welcome and openness with the inspectors. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and 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).