

# Inspection report for Moston Children's Centre

Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	365816
Inspection dates	15-16 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Priscilla McGuire

Centre governance	Manchester Local Authority
Centre leader	Laraine Murphy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Adrian Street, Nr Lightbowne Road, Moston M40 5EA
Telephone number	0161 2196086
Fax number	0161 2747250
Email address	l.murphy2@manchester.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Lightbowne Neighbourhood Nursery  Moston Children's Centre daycare provision

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 additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager and her team, representatives from the local authority linked to the centre and from external organisations including the health services. They had informal discussions with users and visited the early year's provision.

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

## Information about the centre

Moston Children's Centre is a phase one centre housed in purpose-built accommodation in the North West district of Manchester. The centre was originally set up as a Surestart centre in 2004 and offers the full range of the core offer including day care provision. Targeted services and support are also offered. Children's Centres in Manchester are grouped into districts and Moston is within the north-west district. Governance is provided by the local authority.

Five of the six super output areas in Moston are in the 30% most deprived in the country and around 37% of families with children under age five are from workless households. There are a significant number of children with tooth decay in North Manchester and around 45% of children under five have decayed, missing or filled teeth. Moston is currently undergoing an extensive programme of regeneration which includes the development of housing, business, health initiatives and increased opportunities to access training and employment and services offered by children's centres.

The representation of different ethnic groups in the area is changing with an increasing number of residents from the Black African and Polish communities. In recent years, there has been an increase in economic migrants, refugees and asylum seekers moving to the area. There are three primary schools within the reach area,

all of which provide Early Years Foundation Stage learning for children from three to five years of 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 users and the wider community**

3
---

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3
---

## Main findings

Moston Children’s Centre offers a warm and welcoming environment to users and the wider community. Accommodation at the centre is spacious. Display areas are used effectively to promote centre services and to provide signposting to external services and support. Staff are highly respected and their personal commitment to improving the lives of users is highly valued. Support for users is good at both a personal level from staff and also in relation to the quality of services that are provided at the centre. Childcare provision is also good and, since the appointment of a qualified teacher, there has been a significant improvement in the achievements of children. Outcomes for adults are also good with many making significant progress in their personal and social development.

The centre manager has made good use of available data and local intelligence to plan and develop provision. However, data and statistics about the reach area, particularly in relation to health, are limited. This gap in the provision of data is under review by the local authority and the quality and amount of data are improving.

The resources and expertise of partners contribute well to the operation of the centre. Staff from partner organisations have a good understanding of the needs of the community within the reach area. They also understand well the barriers users and the community face, such as limited social housing, worklessness or low levels of confidence. Collaborative work between staff at the centre and partners have a positive impact on users who receive effective guidance, advice and the support they need to improve the quality of their lives.

Safeguarding and safe recruitment are key priorities of the centre. Risks of harm to children are identified quickly and early interventions taken to safeguard and protect children. Key messages about safeguarding are well promoted through actions by

staff and partners but are also reinforced with posters on display at the centre. Inclusion, particularly of disabled children, is good but actions to promote equality and diversity for a wider range of different groups within the community need to be implemented.

The leadership and management of Moston Children's Centre are currently satisfactory but improving. Decisive actions have been taken to improve the quality of leadership and management but it is too soon to assess the impact of these actions. For example, the composition of the advisory board is under review and its role as a decision-making body that can both challenge and support the centre is developing. The representation of parents and carers on the board has yet to be secured. Improvements have already been made to the governance arrangements with a new 'steering group' structure in place which will report to the advisory board. Although there have already been some positive outputs from some of the steering groups, it is too soon to assess overall impact of their function.

Regular evaluations and 'events monitoring' are used to assess user needs and user satisfaction rates. Work to assess the needs of the wider community is being developed through outreach activity. The process of self-evaluation and the use of the self-evaluation form as an effective working tool which is widely shared are also areas for further development.

Taking into account the satisfactory leadership and management, the centre's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. This, together with the actions that have already been taken to raise standards at the centre, indicates that the centre has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Strengthen the role and function of the advisory board and secure parent representation on the board.
- The local authority needs to strengthen its work with the centre to ensure that good quality data is provided in order to inform provision.
- Develop rigorous processes of self-evaluation which are well informed by data, evaluations and user views.

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

<b>2</b>
----------

Outcomes for users are good. Good physical and emotional health is actively promoted. Evaluations and discussions with staff from the health services and with users show that the health of users within the reach area is improving. Staff and the partners they work with have a good understanding of the needs of the local community. Activities and events are organised to meet the needs of parents and

carers who may be at risk of emotional ill health or may already be living with emotional illness.

Although the quality of health data needs to improve, the centre manager has used available data provided by the local authority and a range of other sources to obtain information about the health of the local community. As a result activities have been organised to promote emotional health, oral health, breastfeeding and to reduce obesity. Partnership work with the dental health team has been effective in helping to improve oral health. Guidance and support to help pregnant women stop smoking have also been successful. Attendance rates at the health clinics organised in conjunction with midwives and health visitors are generally good. Parents make good use of the clinics to gain advice and support about their own health and that of their children. Healthy outcomes are overall satisfactory. However, more work is being done to promote healthy lifestyles and, in 2011, healthy eating courses will be offered.

Users feel safe at the centre and safety outside the centre is actively promoted. Staff give advice on home safety through the 'care and repair' scheme. Users have adopted safer practices such as using safety gates and smoke alarms at home as a result of the guidance they have received about home safety. Partnerships with agencies such as the local fire authority also promote home safety by offering users advice, support and free supply and installation of smoke alarms.

Children enjoy attending day care provision at the centre and make good progress, particularly with their communication skills and social development. Children's transition to school is good and this has been observed by parents and carers. Parents and carers can identify the progress their children have made since starting to attend day care and they use learning journeys to record their child's progress at home. One parent said about the day-care provision, 'It helped my child to socialise and learn to share with other children.' Another parent said of her son, 'Before, he used to cling to me all the time and didn't want to leave my side and I didn't want to leave him neither – now he is doing more things on his own without support.'

Children behave well in the centre and parents and carers report improved behaviour of their children at home since attending the centre. The voice of parents is valued and their views inform the development of provision. However, the involvement of parents and carers on the advisory board is an area for improvement. This has been recognised by the centre and plans are in place to involve parents and carers at governance level.

Evidence shows that the appointment of a qualified teacher at the centre has led to significant improvements in children's progress. Parents and carers who use the centre also make good progress. They participate well in education and training courses and some have been encouraged and supported with childcare to return to education. One mother has progressed to university since enrolling on a confidence building course at the centre. Other users have progressed to employment or volunteering. For many users, their personal development has been significant and

many report positive gains in their confidence and self-esteem since they started to attend the centre. Support from the local authority’s Early Intervention Team and the Family Support Worker have been effective in supporting the progress of children on child protection plans. The Common Assessment Framework is used effectively by staff from the centre and partner organisations to identify the most appropriate intervention for families.

*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>3</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 users 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 users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>3</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>2</b>

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

<b>2</b>
----------

Through its effective partnership arrangements, the centre is able to provide good quality support and services for users. Activities include childminder drop-in sessions, ‘Tiny Tots and Toddler Time’ and ‘Bookstart Baby Club’ held at the local library, a pre-English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) course, parenting courses and health clinics. Appropriate support is given to users who have a range of problems that are common within the local community, such as housing problems and domestic violence. Users’ needs are effectively assessed and the appropriate intervention, support or signposting are then provided. The range of services offered by the centre is satisfactory. A team member with the responsibility to focus on outreach work has been appointed to help identify the needs of the wider community.

The impact of the support offered by the centre is summarised by one parent who said: ‘Sometimes, before I started coming here, I felt at breaking point and could have just walked out the door, but now I have a key worker – if it wasn’t for the centre I wouldn’t have had the support I needed.’ For some parents, particularly lone parents, the personal respect they receive from staff at the centre and the opportunity to, ‘have someone to talk to’ is highly valued.

Links with the wider community are being established and used to promote community cohesion. For example, a local residents’ group has worked with the

centre manager to plan and deliver community activities based at the centre. The group also use the centre for regular meetings. Outreach work to engage non-users is still developing and targets have been set to recruit new users.

Courses, events and activities are organised during the week and over weekends to attract a wide range of users and potential users. Opportunities for partnerships are regularly explored by the centre manager and she has been successful in securing productive partnerships with a wide range of organisations from the private, statutory and voluntary sectors.

Links with Manchester Adult Education service and the Children and Parents Service have been effective in creating opportunities for users to develop their knowledge and skills. For example, many parents have benefited from attending the 'Taking control of your life' confidence building course offered by Manchester Adult Education service. One parent said about the course, 'It gave me confidence to ask for a job. Now I work as a lunch time organiser.' Another parent said, 'Now I have the confidence to talk in big groups and not sit and let others talk.' Evaluations from the Children and Parents Service parenting course, delivered across Manchester, including the Moston area, show that a significant number of parents and carers progress from the course into employment, volunteering and education. Evaluations show that partnership working with the library service have also been effective in promoting literacy and helping children enjoy reading. 'Bookstart' sessions delivered at the centre have been well received and led to some users joining the library for the first time.

A 'consultation board' at the centre provides feedback about how the centre has responded to suggestions from users. The Parents' Forum provides regular opportunities for parents and carers to share their views. The forum is well organised and an induction pack has been created to promote the value of the forum and to outline roles and responsibilities of members. Although membership of the forum has lapsed due to changes in parents' circumstances, such as gaining employment, action is being taken to recruit new members.

*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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are the leadership and management?

3

Management arrangements are satisfactory and well understood. Governance is overall satisfactory although the role and function of the advisory board is still developing. However, this has been recognised as an area for development and good progress is already being made to strengthen the role of the advisory board. For example, three steering groups which cover Every Child Matters outcomes around health, economic well-being, and enjoy and achieve have been established as part of the governance structure. A wide range of partners are represented on the steering groups and some positive outcomes from the work of the groups are already emerging. For example, a successful pre-ESOL course to meet the needs of users who do not speak English as a first language was an outcome of work undertaken by the economic well-being steering group.

A business plan and a separate action plan set out the strategic direction of the centre. In addition, a new city wide quality assurance framework has been recently developed by the local authority to set standards for all early years settings within Manchester. However, the implementation of the framework is too recent for any impact to have been seen at Moston Children's Centre. Some evaluations of services are carried out at the centre but the process of evaluation is not sufficiently systematic, rigorous and detailed. It also does not take account of all services that are delivered by the centre. The overall management of resources is satisfactory. However, outreach work to meet the needs of vulnerable groups in the community is a developing area.

There is regular monitoring of the centre's overall performance through the district management structure for all children's centres. The centre manager is well supported by the District Head of Centre who covers the nine children's centres within the north-west district of Manchester. Heads of Centre meetings for children's centre managers within the district are organised to promote sharing of good practice and information sharing. The quality of data provided to the centre is improving but specific data about the reach area is limited.

The centre manager and her team work well together for the common good of users. There is a strong culture of inclusion and the centre is particularly good at ensuring that parents and carers of children with special needs and the children themselves are well supported. The centre is also responding well to the changing profile of the local community and the increasing number of refugees, asylum seekers and different ethnic groups within the local community. However, work on the broader equality and diversity agenda is still developing, particularly in relation to the engagement of fathers.

Policies and procedures to safeguard children are robust. Staff have been appropriately trained and a safeguarding self-assessment tool and action plan are effectively used to review and develop practice. Support is also provided for parents and carers and children who are coming off child protection plans. Staff are also sensitive to the needs of users who are victims of domestic violence and make the



appropriate interventions to protect children.

Partnerships are a key strength of the centre and are used very effectively to provide services and support for users. Partners include organisations and teams within the local authority, the health services, library services, private companies and voluntary sector. Good links with a charity organisation has helped the centre to provide additional resources for residents such as furniture and toy parcels.

The overall effectiveness of the centre, leadership and management and the centre's capacity to improve are currently satisfactory because quality assurance of the centre's activities is still a developing area. Self-evaluation, as a key role of management, and the subsequent action planning with ambitious targets being set for the service also remain key areas for improvement.

*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>3</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>3</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>3</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>3</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 evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>3</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>2</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>3</b>

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

None.

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 Moston Children's Centre on 15 and 16 December. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

During our visit we observed various activities and documents and also looked at some of the evaluations you completed. We also spoke to centre staff and some of the organisations that work with the centre to provide services. We also spoke to some of you and really appreciate the time you spent talking to us.

All of you spoke very highly of the very welcoming environment at the centre and also about the support you have received. We see this support as a real strength of what the centre does and does well. For some of you, it was only through your contact with the centre that you were able to receive the support and help you and your families needed.

You also told us about how much your children, or in some cases your grandchildren, enjoy attending the centre and how safe you all feel when you visit at the centre. We know that the safeguarding of children is something the centre staff view as a priority.

The centre manager and her team have a very good understanding of the challenges that some of you face and are very good at identifying what the centre can best do to help. The staff are also good at working effectively with a wide range of different organisations to give you the support, guidance or training you need. We recognised this partnership work as a strength of what the centre does well.

Children who attend day care at the centre are making good progress in their learning and development. The centre offers different activities and events to help children improve their communication and other skills. Adults who attend the centre also make good progress and some of you have attended courses such as the parenting course, the pre- English for speakers of other languages, and the confidence building course.

We also know that many of you and your families have benefited from the advice and guidance you have received at the health clinics. We saw many posters and leaflets in the centre which promote dental health. The dental-health team have also helped many children to look after their teeth better. We would like the centre to have much more information and data about the health of the local community and other needs so we are asking the local authority to work with the centre to provide this information.

We know that many of you complete evaluations of activities and events you attend at the centre and this is something we think could be extended to include a more detailed evaluation of the impact the centre is having on families who use the centre. We would also like more of you to be involved in the decision making processes at the centre and we have asked the centre to make sure you are represented on the advisory board.

Once again many thanks for your contributions during the inspection and 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).