

# Inspection report for Aughton Early Years Centre

Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	366190
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Gill Jones HMI

Centre governance	Governing body of Aughton Nursery School
Centre leader	Julie Turner
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	106828 Aughton Early Years Centre
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	504018 Aughton Early Years 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.

## 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 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. An inspection of the maintained nursery 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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with staff, users, local authority representatives, health professionals, a representative from Jobcentre Plus, local community workers including the police and a representative from Rotherham Area Assembly.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including data showing local and national performance indicators.

## Information about the centre

Aughton Early Years Centre became a Sure Start Children's Centre in 2003. It was previously a nursery school. Until 2009, it was one of three designated nursery settings in Rotherham which provided specialised places for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The centre serves a semi-urban and rural area that has experienced the decline of the coal and steel industries over the past two decades. It is a mixed socio-economic community, with pockets of affluence and severe deprivation, with the majority of families falling between these two extremes. A high number of households have at least one adult in employment, although this includes many families who work part time or are in low paid jobs. Levels of employment in the reach area are higher than the Rotherham average, but below the national average. The majority of households are White British.

The local authority commissions the governing body of Aughton Nursery School to manage the children’s centre. It provides the full core offer. The childcare provision on site, Aughton Early Years Centre, is registered to provide care for children under the age of eight and receives its own inspection. Children who attend the centre start with levels of development below those expected nationally.

## 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 an outstanding children’s centre which provides exceptionally well for its local community. The vision of the centre leader and her determination to provide the highest quality care, guidance and support for all children and their families in the reach area is evident in the excellent work of the whole staff team. Highly effective safeguarding of children and their families is at the core of the centre’s work. Consequently, users say unanimously that they feel valued and listened to and that the centre helps them to increase their skills in child rearing by building their confidence and self-esteem. The work of the centre is making a positive difference to the start children are having at school and it is raising the aspirations of adults, providing practical help and support for parents and families towards achieving better futures.

The centre is highly motivated to improve further. They evaluate all aspects of their work rigorously and improve it continuously. It has plans of excellent quality which identify the need to further increase the engagement of users from vulnerable groups, such as lone parents and teenage mothers. They include imaginative ways to continue to improve outcomes for the community against the national indicators for health, employment and well-being. Their assessment of need is excellent. The centre leader, well supported by an ambitious advisory board, forges highly effective partnerships to ensure that the centre meets the needs of the most vulnerable children and adults in the reach. The success and quality of what they achieve has promoted trust with users of the services, with the local community and with multi-agency partners such as health, social care and Jobcentre Plus. Consequently, the

centre is able to help users to overcome many of the difficult barriers to improving their lives.

Outcomes for children and their families are excellent. Ofsted judged the day care and nursery school at the centre as outstanding at their recent inspection. Children who use the centre make outstanding progress in all aspects of their development, but particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in their communication, language and literacy skills. The gap in attainment between the most disadvantaged children and the rest is reducing. Local headteachers report positively about the impact of the centre's work with families in need. Other outcomes, such as increasing the number of mothers who choose to breastfeed and reducing the number of mothers who smoke during pregnancy are also improving rapidly. The local authority sets the centre high targets for improving the health and well-being of its community linked to national and local priorities, which the centre is meeting and exceeding, improving its performance year-on-year.

The centre provides an excellent range of courses, which include baby massage, weaning groups, antenatal and post-natal advice and classes for adult learners in literacy and numeracy. Many parents and carers have gained accreditations, qualifications and moved from volunteering into work. Flexible crèche arrangements enable parents and carers to attend courses at the centre and at local colleges and university. Because the centre has limited space, it provides some activities out in the community in local schools, the leisure centre and parish hall. Regular 'buggy walk and talk' sessions, day trips and residential activities are popular with families, particularly with those who lack confidence to go on their own. The centre constantly seeks opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations to provide well for its community.

The centre is particularly skilled at providing advice and guidance for families who have children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It facilitates a support network for parents, the Encore group, which parents say is invaluable. Comments such as, 'you feel like you belong', and, 'I didn't realise how much I needed to talk', indicate the depth of support provided for families who previously felt isolated from society because of the diverse nature of their children's difficulties. Parents talk about staff 'who are always there for them'. As one parent said 'they will never know how much they have done for my child'.

The leadership and management of the centre are outstanding. All the protocols and procedures that are necessary to provide the highest quality care, guidance and support for users are in place. The leaders are tenacious in their quest for improvement and secure additional funding from various sources, including the Parish Council and local charities, to meet families' needs. This is a centre which knows itself exceedingly well and drives and monitors improvement very effectively. This centre not only serves its local community exceptionally well, it has a far reaching impact on the wider community within Rotherham. It provides an exemplary service.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Further increase the engagement of the most vulnerable groups in the reach area and improve their outcomes against the national indicators for health, employment and well-being by:
  - implementing and evaluating the centre's own high quality plans for improvement.

## How good are outcomes for users?

<b>1</b>
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Evidence is building that where children and families have benefited from contact with the centre, children have a better start to school life. Local headteachers record higher levels of communication and language development and better social skills in children who have attended the centre. Furthermore, the children most at risk of not doing well at school are catching up in their development with other children because of the support the centre provides for them and their parents. The children who leave the centre's outstanding day care and nursery provision are working within the early learning goals and individual tracking evidence demonstrates that almost all go on to reach levels at or above those expected for five-year-olds.

Parents and carers know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and are aware of the needs of their children as they grow. The take-up rate for immunisation in the reach is high and the number of accidents in the home leading to hospital admissions reducing. Courses such as 'aqua babies' are promoting an active lifestyle for babies and are popular with parents. Other activities, such as group visits to outdoor pursuit centres enable parents to learn how to judge risk taking with their own children, by encouraging them to use zip wires and to climb safely. Parents comment, 'I now do lovely things with my children that I would never have had the confidence to try on my own'.

Emotional needs of families are a top priority for the centre. Extensive provision of parenting courses and intervention before crisis point is leading to improving children's behaviour and the effective safeguarding of vulnerable families. Routine use of 'team around the child' meetings and the Common Assessment Framework ensures that those who are most in need receive swift and appropriate support. The willingness of users who have received support to help others demonstrates the success of the centre's intervention. As one user said, 'the centre changed my life and I want to be part of it to help others like me'.

Parents are able to secure practical help and advice on a range of matters, such as income and welfare benefits, debt counselling and equipment to make their homes safer. This support has a material impact in improving their lives. Parents participate

well in feeding back on how effective courses are and in shaping new provision. Parent forums are regular and influential and parents are active members of the advisory board. Many parents who were unsuccessful at school go on to gain qualifications, such as GCSE mathematics and English and the success rate is high. They appreciate support for interview skills and guidance for writing applications provided by the centre. This increases families' self-esteem and helps them into employment.

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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The centre is extremely good in assessing the needs of registered children and their families. The highly skilled family support workers know registered families exceedingly well. The centre has developed excellent relationships with the statutory, private and voluntary services for children and families. Clear protocols are in place for information sharing that put the needs of the child first. The centre introduced early intervention and prevention meetings recently to ensure that all relevant partner organisations gain the knowledge they need to provide swift and appropriate intervention for children in need. The centre's support workers play a key role in these meetings by sharing their excellent understanding of local needs. Health professionals, in particular, appreciate these meetings and say they are ensuring that no child or family 'slips through the net'.

The centre uses its extensive needs analysis effectively to provide opportunities aimed at improving parenting skills and life chances. It provides an excellent range of activities for families and children, which they advertise regularly on the centre's attractive and informative website. The centre offers consultations to parents before they start on courses to ensure they will meet their needs. As a result, the success rate in gaining accreditations is high and evaluations from parents are extremely positive. The centre works well in partnership with Jobcentre Plus. Because this

organisation does not always have sufficient capacity, the centre is proactive in finding additional support from other organisations offering services to prepare adults for work. The centre promotes breastfeeding effectively and mothers appreciate the personalised support offered by skilled counsellors. The centre also provides excellent advice on weaning and signposts users well to food preparation courses, such as 'cooking on a low budget'.

Parents and local schools are very appreciative of the centre's regular Webster Stratton parenting courses. Parents say the course helps them to manage their children's emotions and their own at times of stress. Local headteachers extol the effectiveness of the centre's promotion of partnership working and cite many examples where this is making a difference to outcomes in the community. They described several poignant cases where the centre successfully safeguarded families from crisis by providing quick and appropriate support through the joint action of the centre staff, school and on occasion, local charities. Another excellent example of this successful partnership working was for Halloween. The advisory board worked with the local community to provide a bungee jump and climbing wall. Children of all ages and their families enjoyed this provision which also resulted in a notable reduction in incidents during the evening for the police. The centre is increasingly successful in working with lone parents, including fathers. Fathers willingly take part in family days and are active in groups such as Encore. Some of these men spoke confidently to inspectors about the difference the centre makes to their lives and how it enables them to recognise when they need help.

The centre provides highly skilled outreach workers to support children and families with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They act as mentors and advisors to other centres that are supporting children and families with additional needs. Their focus on ensuring that provision for the under fives across Rotherham, as well as in the centre, promotes equality of opportunity and celebrates diversity is leading to improving outcomes for this specific group of children and their families. Parents praise their work highly and appreciate the staff's 'support and understanding'. There has been an increase in early identification of need and intervention as a result of this work across the borough.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

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<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>	<b>1</b>
<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?

1

The leadership of the centre is outstanding. The centre leader sets exceptionally high expectations of herself and staff to fulfil the centre's priorities. She works closely with the senior leadership team, advisory board, school governing body and local authority to design clear policies and frameworks to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of children and families within the centre's reach. Development planning is excellent. Plans are closely aligned to the local and national priority indicators and all staff are held accountable for their contribution towards improving outcomes. There are clear policies on promoting diversity, tackling discrimination and child protection which staff implement exceptionally well.

Over a number of years, the centre leader has skilfully gathered a staff team who are exceptionally well motivated, some of whom were initially users of the centre. Each of these is a very good leader and willingly takes responsibility for driving and implementing improvements in their area of expertise. They take responsibility for significant caseloads, many of which are sensitive as they are dealing with the most vulnerable members of society. Families who fall prey to domestic violence, drug misuse, poverty and alcoholism are typical of those most in need. Staff understand the needs of these families exceptionally well. They provide strong support and are prepared to deliver tough messages to enable families to become resilient in the face of adversity. They have secured the trust of parents and carers, who rely on the centre to provide advice, guidance and practical and emotional support. Morale is high and teamwork exceptional.

Partnership work is outstanding. When the centre identifies a gap in its provision, it strives to find a partner who will fill it. This started initially with support from Barnados and the Parish Council, but through successful networking, the centre leader has secured support on the advisory board from all relevant local partners. These include: the police; health; the area assembly and the extended school's partnership to name but a few. Many of these partners find additional funding, which enables the centre to provide assisted nursery places for children of families in the reach identified as potentially vulnerable. The advisory board understands the needs of the local community, saying, 'we recognise that families don't come in age bands, which is why we reach out to support whole families, not just under fives'.

Listening to and taking account of the views of all users is effective at all levels of leadership and management. Parents and carers participate fully in the centre's decision-making process. They say they feel 'respected and valued'. Steering groups, such as the early intervention and prevention team are carefully organised and extremely well led to make efficient use of resources. Other groups such as the parent forums and the advisory board provide a platform for local issues to be aired.



The centre knows itself exceptionally well, but holds a modest view of its achievements because it is continually striving to improve outcomes in the reach area, particularly for those who are most vulnerable.

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>1</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**

This inspection was aligned to the section 5 inspection of Aughton Nursery School and Day Care Provision. The judgements made on safeguarding, partnership working and children's progress contributed to the judgements in this children's centre report.

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 Aughton Early Years centre on 25 and 26 November 2010. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

This centre is in the heart of Aughton and is very popular with families in the locality. You told us, 'the centre is amazing', and we agree. The centre leader is passionate about improving outcomes for children and families in the local area. She has successfully built an exceptionally strong staff team who you trust and respect. Many of you told us how the centre has helped you in times of need and how it enables you to build stronger families because of the excellent support and guidance you receive. You explained how the centre helps you to gain qualifications and to build your confidence to enter the world of work.

The centre is making a very positive difference to children's well-being and early learning. Reports from local headteachers and information about children's progress at the end of their Reception Year demonstrate that children attending the centre do well at school. Children who are at risk of falling behind at school and in later life are of a particular concern to the centre. They benefit most from the excellent care and support and are catching up with the achievements of children who have an easier start to life.

Those of you who spoke to inspectors were unanimous in your praise of the work of the centre. You told us how the centre staff provided activities which raise your self-esteem helping you to feel respected and valued. Those of you with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities explained the positive impact that the centre has in enabling you to cope daily with difficult situations. You told us you are better parents as a consequence of some of the parenting skills training you have done at the centre. Staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable and you value their expertise in guiding and supporting you in times of need.

The centre is extremely well run and managed. Staff are constantly trying to improve the services they offer even further. It is successful across the full range of services a children's centre provides. Activities are organised in venues and at times that suit parents. The centre consults you about future plans and you told us that the centre listens to your views. Excellent partnership work ensures that no child or family in the reach remains without the necessary care, guidance and support. Professionals who attend regular meetings at the centre share any concerns and the centre makes sure the appropriate team takes swift action to secure support for the most vulnerable. The safeguarding and child protection arrangements are exemplary. The centre promotes equality of opportunity exceptionally well. It makes sure that it provides equally for families from diverse backgrounds. Local headteachers told us that it was 'a privilege to work with the centre'. They said that it works exceptionally well on so many different levels because its first priority is always to make sure that 'children are well supported'.

The centre has excellent plans for improvement. Inspectors suggest that the centre carries out its plans and continues to provide its exemplary service to the community.

Thank you to those of you who took the time to meet with us. We appreciate your openness in explaining about the work of the centre and how it has made a difference to your lives. We wish you 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).