

# Inspection report for Hollinwood Children's Centre

Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	365687
Inspection dates	10-11 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Pepper HMI

Centre governance	Barnardo's
Centre leader	Wayne Thomas
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	St Chads Centre, Lime Green Parade, Limehurst, Oldham, Lancashire, OL8 3HH
Telephone number	0161 633 8417
Fax number	NA
Email address	Wayne.thomas@barnardos.org.uk

Linked school if applicable	
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY268451 Sure Steps Nursery

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. 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 one early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with centre staff and senior managers, the advisory board, health professionals, local community partners, user groups and parents. They observed the centre's and partners' work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Hollinwood Children's Centre operates from a purpose-built site. The centre is housed under the same roof as the library, police, housing department and a general practitioner. This includes associated health services and a chemist. The centre evolved from a local Sure Start programme. It was designated as a Phase 1 centre in 2003. It provides the full core offer of services through the early years and community engagement teams and volunteers. Adult training courses are on site or within the reach area. Parents are signposted to a range of universal and specialist services.

The population in the Hollinwood ward is mostly of White British heritage with a small percentage of minority ethnic groups. This is an area of high social and economic deprivation, the majority being within the 30% most disadvantaged. The area also has the highest proportion of single-parent families in Oldham and unemployment is high.

A high proportion of children enter early years provision with skills below those expected for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage is delivered through various groups. The local authority provides an on-site early years setting. Sure Steps Nursery provides full day-care and education for up to 57 children under five years of age of which no more than 17 may be under two years. The nursery is

subject to separate Early Years inspection arrangements. The inspection report can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Barnardo's has a service level agreement with the local authority to manage the centre. It is open from 8am until 6pm, Monday to Friday, 50 weeks of the year. It is also open on Saturday mornings. The centre has an established advisory board. It is made up of representatives from the local community, professional agencies and parents. The chair and vice chair are 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**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good children's centre which promotes good and improving outcomes for children and families across all five areas. Parents typically said, 'It's great, a good centre'. Elements of the leadership and management are outstanding, for example, ambitious targets and integrated provision, inclusion, partnerships and user engagement. Consequently, the centre and its staff have an excellent reputation.

Highly-skilled and trained workers at the centre have the determination and drive to reflect on what is already in place and continually strive to improve family services. Self-evaluation of the centre's impact is mostly accurate; however, some areas of leadership and management are even more effective than they were judged. The early years and engagement teams are innovative and constantly working hard to find more efficient and effective ways of working. This commitment demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

This is an extremely inclusive centre due to outstanding attention to equality and diversity. Workers at the centre are acutely aware of some racist attitudes, underlying feelings of mistrust and inner fears felt by a few in the area. Any racist incidents are tackled extremely well. The centre was described as being 'exceptionally good at making everyone feel very welcome'.

Attention to safeguarding is good. Parents said they '...feel very safe' at the well-

established centre and that '...all the grounds where children play are completely secure'.

Outstanding partnership work promotes the sharing of specialisms, ideas and a strong commitment to improve opportunities for children and their families, which produces good results. Families in real poverty have maximum support from the early years team, family services and engagement workers and other partners. Early intervention and preventative work often averts the escalation of some issues. This is when the centre's 'Think family' approach is at its best, resulting in timely and effective practical support for those families whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

The centre has a strong, enabling approach to finding the right support and help for all. The centre workers understand their community well and the barriers that some residents have to face. They ensure that services are relevant and accessible, taking into account the entire family. As a result, parents said 'The centre has helped me tremendously' or 'I couldn't live without the centre'. The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services, and use their views to shape the range of provision, is outstanding.

Parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with what they described as a 'one-stop-shop', where they can conveniently access a range of services under one roof. Other parents spoke highly of the groups which the centre runs out in the wider community at venues with which they are extremely familiar.

The exceptionally strong volunteer programme further complements and extends the good impact of the centre's work. Systems in place to evaluate short-term outcomes of users of the centre are evident, but the long-term evaluation of some core partners' services is not rigorous. The advisory board is starting to strongly establish itself in order to make sure services are relevant to the needs of local families and they are beginning to challenge the centre.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Ensure the advisory board provides the centre with continual challenge about the impact of their effectiveness with service users.
- Make sure that the impact of Jobcentre Plus and similar services on families' long-term outcomes is more rigorously evaluated.

## How good are outcomes for users?

2

Parents have built trusting relationships with workers at the centre. 'The staff are brilliant, we love coming here and we go to other groups they run too' was a typical view expressed. Excellent attention to those families referred to the centre leads to good results. Children in need and looked-after children are successfully identified and supported well. Some parents described feelings of depression like 'drowning' and they described how the centre had helped by, '...throwing a lifeline, like there was hope for survival, light at the end of the tunnel'. Parents said, 'I found the outreach worker telling me about the groups very helpful, I don't think I would have gone to the centre if I didn't have that home visit'. Outreach workers are highly skilled and intuitive; they sensitively work with parents in their own homes. They clarify the support requested and liaise well with other services to ensure effective sharing of information and good support.

Children's understanding of how to keep safe is developing very well due to staff actively engaging with them and providing them with gentle reminders. They regularly practice how to evacuate the building in an emergency. Children have a particularly good awareness of road safety, for example, that 'Cars take a long time to stop'. Positive involvement with the police helps to counteract the negative attitude some residents have towards them. Some families feel much safer in their own homes now, after initial assessments have led to the centre providing them with safety equipment.

Overall, health outcomes are improving for users. Although the uptake of breastfeeding is low, recent results look more promising. Parents said baby massage helped to, '...chill babies out when they are crying'. As a result, many said this meant spending time with babies was much more enjoyable. Smoking cessation sessions have successfully helped a good percentage of adults to cease smoking. Obesity issues are targeted through access to a particular service, which looks at tackling eating issues with families. This has had some positive results.

In practical sessions, parents are encouraged to select healthy options and they learn about food labelling. Parents and children have been actively encouraged to swap sweets and chocolate for fruit. Taster sessions encourage parents and children to develop a taste for a wider range of fruit.

Parents' feedback from the group organised specifically for women, and aimed at improving their health and well-being, has had a good effect, helping parents to have a safe outlet for their feelings.

Key workers know children extremely well and they tailor learning and development opportunities to meet children's individual needs. Activities offer sufficient support and challenge. As a result, children are developing good skills for the future across all six areas of learning. Parents stated they enjoy attending the 'Jelly Tots' and 'Jelly Babies' groups because it means they can dedicate time to play with their children and have the opportunity to experience messy play, often for the first time. Parents also learn practical tips like how to make low-cost musical instruments at home and

the benefits of singing action rhymes with their children. Consequently, parents have a better understanding of the importance of communication and contribute more to this aspect of their child's learning. Headteachers of local schools stated that it was clear which children had attended the centre because they had higher levels of language skills and that their personal, social and emotional development was more advanced.

Many parents confirmed that the centre's parenting programme had made a great difference to their confidence and gave them new ways of dealing with children's challenging behaviour. Parents said they had '...learnt not to shout and scream at their children, that you can be firm with your child without being aggressive' and '...that babies pick up on emotions'. This has led to much calmer homes. Some parents were very reluctant to engage in the programme at first, but once they understood how new behaviours could be learnt through implementing change, they engaged more fully. As a consequence, parenting skills have improved and some reported their child now has a good bed-time routine.

Parents and carers gain confidence in the centre due to its open and welcoming atmosphere. As their self-esteem improves they are able to express how proud they are of their achievements. Some parents have risen from difficult circumstances to become actively involved as volunteers or as members of the advisory board. Excellent volunteer training and work placements have led to many users developing their skills and experience. Volunteers said, 'I was treated with the greatest of respect and I gained confidence and self-worth'. Volunteers act as 'Community welcomers' and they are well-trained by Barnardo's to encourage those less confident to join in activities. Once families engage with the centre a high percentage continue to access 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>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 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>2</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?

2
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Good assessment systems and high expectations ensure additional support is provided for those families who are most vulnerable, or hard to reach. The Common Assessment Framework is used well to ensure swift support is given where most needed. Specific help is provided to promote speech and language development which has led to measurable improvements in children's communication skills.

Staff report that assessment is supplemented well by 'Learning journey records established in the nursery which are now being used at other groups, this enhances the sharing of information when children attend several settings'. The 'Parents and Children Together' group provide some parents with good quality additional support which is personalised to meet the needs of individual children and families.

The range of services and activities is meeting the needs of users in the reach area well. The role of men is promoted through positive male recruitment. Every opportunity is used to try to engage fathers and as a result, dads sometimes attend outings. A monthly dads' group now runs on Saturday mornings. Staff act quickly on requests for alternative services and ensure that families play a full part in setting up and running such activities. The centre has developed stronger links with childminders and they have provided valuable support for a private provider of childcare who was struggling to meet the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. The newly-developed outdoor area provides many good opportunities for children to take part in growing fruit and vegetables while promoting physical activity. Families now also have the opportunity to work on a local community allotment and actively learn how to grow fruit and vegetables which further enhances healthy lifestyles.

Good quality day care is provided in the nursery on site. Out-of-school provision and clubs meet local needs and have had a positive impact on children's behaviour. The arts and crafts experiences which run from the library celebrate children's creative skills. Children are actively involved in decision-making in the area. For example, when new zebra crossings were planned the safety officers consulted with children and workers at the centre about where these should be placed.

Adult training is highly rated by some who said, 'It's one of the best in Oldham'. Lifelong Learning provides excellent training opportunities to promote the speaking of English and the culture of families from minority ethnic groups is extremely well respected. Women based at the nearby refuge are less isolated through attending activities and meeting new people on courses. Crèche facilities run from training venues which women can easily access. 'I didn't know that upper and lower case letters were the same, this used to confuse me' and 'Now I know about past and present tenses, speaking is better' were some comments expressed by parents following their attendance at English classes.

Ante-natal and post-natal baby clinics and drop-in sessions provide plenty of

opportunities for parents to meet professionals and receive good quality care, guidance and support. There are many attractive displays of information and guidance in the centre. Displays promote the benefits of breast feeding effectively, as shown by the recent rise in breastfeeding in the area. The baby bistro facilitates breast feeding and weaning with the aid of peer support. Parents said they, '...found weaning information very useful' and 'Recipes and tips about puréeing were great'. The 'Bumps, Babies and Beyond' courses offers advice on family information services and promotes good sexual health, self-care advice and oral health.

*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>2</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?**

**2**

The local authority has a clear, ambitious vision for the centre's future with clear lines of strategic accountability between the authority and the delegated management by Barnardo's. Centre leaders inspire the confidence of the wider team and partnerships, leading to integrated provision. The senior leadership team are settled and they work very well together, communicating high expectations and their genuine passion about making a difference. This enthusiasm is also apparent in most partners, which lends itself to good working practice throughout the reach area. Supervision and appraisal systems are well-established. Team meetings enable staff to have an input into the planning and co-ordination of services.

Data are used effectively to influence the development of provision. Internal quality assessments monitor record-keeping and decision-making. This promotes the 'Think family' approach extremely well. Although the centre manager was not available at the time of the inspection, parents spoke extremely highly of his approachable, positive manner and effective support. Joint outreach visits with family support and other partners set agreed action plans with parents.

Established evaluation of most services monitors impact in terms of the difference made to families' short-term outcomes. The timings of regular meetings have been sensibly adjusted to make sure the findings from one group can feed more effectively into another. Financial monitoring is carried out through the completion of monthly monitoring and quarterly reports. Staff are active participants at community and extended schools' meetings. Joint community events and activities with several local schools in the holidays promote the sharing of resources, expertise and finance



which leads to good value for money.

Volunteers said the '...volunteering project is empowering and enabling and a vital part of the centre's role in getting volunteers into paid employment through access to training and developing skills'. This training has led to excellent results, a third of the centre's workforce started as volunteers.

Attention to safeguarding is good. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place and good attention is paid to promoting safe working practice. Regular training keeps centre workers up to date regarding legislation and good practice. A wide range of policies underpins effective guidance. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is used extremely successfully to safeguard and support families whose difficult circumstances make them vulnerable. Parents said, 'I would recommend a CAF to others, it helped me to feel listened to and I know things will get done'.

The centre actively promotes outstanding awareness of equality and diversity and statutory duties are exceeded. The Equalities Ambassador is a dual language speaker and further strengthens the very strong focus on equality for all, through robust action planning. Regular topics on festivals and community celebrations provide superb opportunities to learn about different cultures and beliefs.

Outstanding partnership work promotes early intervention and a more 'holistic view' of families' needs, for example joint working based on the CAF. Several good strategies are in place which the centre is developing for tracking long-term outcomes, for example, the transition project and tracker documents. Good links have been made with local schools which promote effective partnerships and seamless transition. Where partnerships are fully integrated they are held to account for their impact on long-term outcomes. Feedback from weaker partnerships, for example, Jobcentre Plus and others who give advice regarding employment, is less evident. The advisory board is multi-agency and includes a wide range of strong partners, and their ability to challenge the centre's work is developing.

The parents' forum is a relatively new group called 'The Parents' Voice' and this group offers strong support for the services the centre offers. Parents' ideas have led to several positive developments and changes in services. For example, the 'baby signing group' became the 'Jelly Babies' group and the age range of children who may attend has been extended to meet more families' needs.

*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 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>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>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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>2</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**

The inspection of the early years nursery provision on-site, Sure Steps Nursery was conducted at the same time 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 Hollinwood Children's Centre on the 10 and 11 February 2011 and we judged the centre as good overall, with some outstanding features in leadership and management.

Some of you told us, 'I would be lost without this place'. You expressed high levels of satisfaction with the centre and your regular attendance shows how much you value the good quality provision and resources. We can see why most of you are highly-satisfied with the services provided.

The centre is well-established in the community and the workers have formed many outstanding links with partners. The health visitors, midwives, nurses and family support service and engagement team combine their professional experience, knowledge and skills extremely well to meet your individual needs. They work closely

together to assess any difficult situations. They know what support they, or others, can provide for you in times of crisis and have built trusting relationships with you and your families. A few of you told us that the centre has had a major impact on your life. The centre has high expectations for you all and they are determined to provide you with the very best support they can.

Many of you told us you appreciated the fact you can easily access several services under the one roof whilst others prefer the regular groups which run from familiar venues nearer where they live. Any families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are given quick and efficient support. Excellent outreach work is extremely well supported by the Barnardo's trained volunteers, who act as 'Community welcomers.' Together they provide very effective support to help those who lack confidence to attend groups for the first time.

This is an extremely inclusive centre where everyone is highly valued and difference within the community is very well celebrated. Attention to equality and diversity is outstanding and any discrimination is tackled very successfully. The promising support group for parents with children with autism and Aspergers Syndrome is now extending to include parents of children with other special educational needs and/or disabilities. The centre provides a safe place where families can be sure to receive an extremely friendly welcome and good quality care, guidance and support. Those of you we spoke to told us you appreciated the, 'positive' attitude which is promoted. Safety schemes have helped some of you to get practical support, for example, with safety equipment.

The centre successfully promotes healthy lifestyles. We can see 'Fruity Fridays' have a positive impact because many of you tasted fruits which you have not tried before and you understand the benefits of eating more fruit, not only to promote good health but also to save money. We know many of you have enjoyed attending the baby clinic. Those of you who have joined the baby massage groups were positive about the benefits of using massage to improve relationships with your baby. Some even reported improvement with your baby's colic problems or sleep patterns.

The centre now works in close partnership with many local schools and they have clear routes to aid seamless transition onto children's next stage of learning. You said that groups, such as 'The Jelly Tots', have helped increase your understanding of the importance of play and how young children learn and develop. The 'Rhyme Time' at the library encourages sharing books and singing rhymes which can support your child to develop better speech and listening skills.

The 'Pathways to Parenting' and 'Parents and Children Together' courses have helped to develop your confidence and self-esteem and taught you better ways of managing your children's behaviour. It was a pleasure to see some of you have joined the advisory board or the 'Parents Voice' group and to hear how well some of you are now actively involved in decision-making, and therefore in the centre's success. We have asked the centre to further develop the challenge the advisory board provides

to ensure that the centre's effectiveness is continually questioned and that good quality services are maintained or further improved.

Family events in the community are extremely popular and further develop an excellent community spirit. Many of you have trained to be volunteers and have been successful in working towards employment. We have asked the centre to make sure that partners who provide services to help support you to gain paid work supply the centre with information on the impact of this work. This will help the centre to identify how much they are helping some of you to participate in further education and training which can lead to employment.

We would like to thank everyone who was willing to speak to us. We are very grateful for your help and wish you every success in the future.

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