

# Inspection report for Ightenhill Children's Centre

Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	366391
Inspection dates	16 – 17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Gethin HMI

Centre governance	The Governing Body of Ightenhill Primary School
Centre leader	Anna Ebanks
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Ightenhill Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Little People of Habergham

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 additional inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the head of centre, acting centre manager, senior leadership team, members of staff, parent representatives, local authority officers and partner professionals from other agencies. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Ightenhill Children's Centre is situated in the grounds of Ightenhill Primary School in Burnley, Lancashire. It was designated as a Phase 2 children's centre in 2007. A commissioning agreement is in place between the local authority and the governing body of Ightenhill Primary School for the delivery of children's centre services. The centre is situated in the top 30% of areas in regard to levels of deprivation. There are several small pockets of deprivation within the area, including unemployment and families on benefits. There is a substantial number of rented properties in the area owned by private landlords. The large majority of families are of White British heritage with a smaller number of Asian and Eastern European families.

Ightenhill Children's Centre has experienced much change since being designated in 2007. The centre was initially housed within Ightenhill Primary School and moved to its current premises in September 2008. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2011. This post incorporates the head of centre role. The centre manager has resigned and the post is currently being undertaken by the extended services manager. The centre and associated partners provide a range of integrated services. These include health, family support, adult training and information in relation to benefits and training. There are links to seven local primary schools and an agreement with Little People of Habergham Nursery to support service and provision. Most children enter early education broadly in-line with the range of skills expected for their 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**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**2**

## Main findings

Ightenhill Children's Centre is now established in the community following a sustained period of intensive work to raise its profile. It is recognised as providing good support for local families. Users say that the centre staff 'are brilliant'. Senior leaders have high expectations and demonstrate these through excellent communication links with both staff from within the centre and from other agencies. The enthusiasm and commitment from senior leaders is evident and has resulted in a highly cohesive team, where staff feel valued.

Management support through regular supervision and team meetings ensures staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Joint working with the local authority ensures targets for priority areas are identified and agreed. These are carried forward into the development plan. However, the plan lacks clarity in regard to specific targets, including those for groups whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This makes it difficult to measure impact. Users accessing services reflect the make-up of the local community and staff are vigilant to ensure they are engaging with all groups, including those that are hard to reach. The centre is a very safe environment where children are protected through outstanding safeguarding policies and procedures.

The expertise and thoughtfulness of staff in engaging with users has resulted in a thorough assessment of need for all, enabling users to engage in purposeful learning through a comprehensive range of courses. Individual support for users from a range of agencies has been highly effective, particularly in times of crisis. This has enabled users to deal with difficult situations and move forward.

Strong links with other agencies, in particular health and education, result in good outcomes for users. A raft of safety measures and information within the centre make it a very safe environment for everyone. The centre works hard to signpost families to appropriate services that are not provided by the centre, particularly in regard to ante-natal services and Jobcentre Plus. Highly effective work to promote the centre has resulted in a significant increase in users accessing services and learning new skills, and the number of young children making good progress in their

learning. Consequently the centre's capacity to improve further is good.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Add clarity to the development plan by including specific targets and timescales linked to available data for all vulnerable groups.

## How good are outcomes for users?

2
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The health coordinator and public health midwife have established strong links with the children's centre to promote healthy lifestyles. A wide range of courses are available with a particular favourite being 'Bump to birth and beyond' covering issues around labour, breastfeeding, safety and child development. Users commented on how the sessions were 'fun' and 'interactive'. One user stated that the decision to breastfeed was as a direct result of attending the course. The percentage of mothers initiating and sustaining breastfeeding is above average. There has been an increase in the number of children and adults engaged in the vitamin D programme and the free distribution of toothbrushes remains popular with an increase in the number of users being referred to dentists. 'Healthy Heroes' and 'Change 4 Life' promote healthy eating and exercise enabling users to make simple cost effective changes to increase their health and well-being. Innovative activities include 'Art therapy' and therapeutic play which have sensitively supported users around emotional health issues. A comprehensive programme of pre- and post- natal visits is in place and has resulted in an increase in contact with users, the majority of whom remain in contact with the centre. Examples from case studies show how interventions across agencies have enabled users to overcome significant difficulties with one user stating, 'I couldn't have done it without you.' The weekly baby clinic run by the health visitor is well attended and links to a drop-in group run by children centre staff to offer support and advice. Work is on-going to promote access to maternity services within the centre.

Parents and carers have excellent opportunities to learn how to keep themselves and their children safe. All users accessing the centre have to pass through the reception area where stringent security systems operate under the watchful eye of the centre receptionist. Tangible measures such as key fobs and risk assessments protect users and there are clear notices reminding parents and carers to supervise their children at all times. Family support is tailored to individual needs and includes advice on parenting, behaviour management and safety procedures. More parents and carers continue to sign up for the 'smoke-free homes' scheme and the fire service is pro-active in supplying home safety equipment. As part of a focus on infant mortality rates simple leaflets explaining safe sleeping practices for babies have been produced with clear pictures to demonstrate safety measures. Consequently, parents and carers have developed a very good understanding of safety. The number of children on child protection plans is low and the joint working with agencies and families involved in the common assessment framework has been a great success.

The 'Incredible Years' parenting programme has been very successful with the view of one user typifying that of most when reporting that 'it has boosted my confidence'. Accidents linked to road safety have been an issue across Burnley. Since the centre promoted the importance of road safety the number of accidents in the area has significantly reduced. Throughout the centre staff model safe behaviour and parents and carers say that they feel safe within the centre.

There are effective links between the centre's teacher and the local schools and nurseries in both the private and voluntary sector. Regular visits are made to the linked day-care provision Little People at Habergham to give support and advice. A welcome pack with information about the centre is available at all schools providing a wealth of information for parents and carers. Transition arrangements are good preparing young children well for school. All planning and observations are linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage with a current focus on communication, language and literacy. 'Talking Together', 'Every child a talker', story sacks and the lending library are promoting better outcomes for children. 'Baby Stay and Play', 'Ready Steady Play' and the Webster Stratton courses are popular with parents and carers who were recorded as saying that they had 'increased their confidence' and that 'the support we have received has been fantastic' and 'helped them bond'. A childminder group meets in the centre on a weekly basis and the centre's teacher and coordinator work together to support childminders on all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage. A local childminding couple are the first in Lancashire to achieve the Quality Kitemark. The vast majority of childminders on the Quality Network have been judged as good with 12 being outstanding. Over 83% of users say that since becoming involved with the centre 'family life has improved'.

Since the designation date the centre has now become established in the community. Extensive work from staff with the community has broken down barriers and families have recognised the benefits the centre brings. Children behave well and there is mutual respect between staff and users. Good working relationships between staff and users result in a strong bond where families flourish. The increase in confidence has prompted users to hold their own meetings and become increasingly independent. Parents and carers are represented on the advisory board and their input is welcomed. A parents' forum, although in its infancy, is beginning to develop as more users recognise the difference their voice can make. A 'Have your say' book is available to all users and the comments recorded help shape the future development of services.

Support provided by staff helps to promote economic and social well-being, including for those from the most vulnerable groups. The number of lone parents registered at the centre has risen steadily resulting in more families gaining useful advice, support and information. Links are in place with Jobcentre Plus through an advisor, on-site kiosk and job advertisements. The centre monitors the impact of these links. The provision of a free crèche and flexible days and times of courses enable users to access training more readily. The number of users accessing literacy and numeracy courses remains steady. Success stories have included some users becoming volunteers within the centre and others enrolling on training or gaining 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>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>1</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**

The centre is meeting its core offer very well. A significant factor in improving outcomes for users is the home visiting programme for new parents. This provides integrated personalised support for families with children from birth to five years with communication established early in the pregnancy, followed by a home visit at seven months. Three further visits take place following a birth at eight weeks, six months and 12 months. Staff are meticulous in establishing good relationships with families and assessments are conducted in a sensitive manner. The thoroughness and skill of the staff ensure assessments are accurate and used very well to inform service provision. A strength of the centre is the excellent partnership arrangements established across agencies which ensure assessment is rigorous and well-informed.

Users are encouraged to achieve by ensuring services are continually reviewed to meet need. Goody bags, pamper packs and certificate celebration events reward users for their commitment to succeed. Staff are trained to deliver courses of a high quality and encourage users to continue on their success journey. Users say that the courses 'helped me so much' and 'made a difference to me'. Children's learning is purposeful with the crèche providing activities of a high standard along with good resources.

The centre provides a good range of services including a free on-site crèche. Staff ensure they are visible in the community by actively 'door knocking' and meeting parents on the school playground. Those groups who are sometimes harder to engage with have been included with activities for fathers including: Dad's tea time, First Aid, Dad's Big Cook, Little Cook and a dads' event at Burnley football club. These have encouraged and celebrated the involvement of fathers. A teenage lunch club is available specifically for young parents and a play bus for children over two years is accessible in different locations throughout the week. The provision for

children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good with staff forging strong links with the speech and language service and learning Makaton sign language to support those with communication difficulties.

The quality of care for young children and parents is excellent. Family support and outreach work are highly effective and reach the most vulnerable families. Signposting to services, on-going staff training and advice, support and information provided throughout the centre is of a high quality. Information relating to sexual health and domestic violence is visible but sensitively displayed. Families in crisis suffering from mental health issues and poor housing, for example, have benefited through swift intervention. One poignant comment stating 'Thank you, you have all saved me more than you will ever know' demonstrates the value of the centre's work.

*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>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>1</b>

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

**2**

Governance and accountability arrangements are clear and understood. The advisory board links to the school's governing body and meet termly. Strategic planning by the local authority is integrated into the centre development plan which is then implemented by senior leaders and front-line staff. Monthly supervision, peer supervision, management meetings, family support meetings, staff meetings and appraisals ensure everyone has a chance to have their voice heard, views taken on and feel valued. Staff are encouraged to prepare their own agenda for supervision and take responsibility for identified priorities.

Leadership is strong, the team continues to grow in strength. It is now reaping the rewards following the hard work since 2007, which has resulted in the centre becoming established and accepted within the community. Team spirit is high, as are expectations with a dedicated commitment from staff to improve the lives of families. The development plan sets out the priorities for improving the centre but the targets for groups whose circumstances make them vulnerable are not always specific and linked to clear timescales.

The centre is effective in ensuring that its services provide good value for money. Care is taken to ensure resources are not duplicated by working in partnership with other services. The building is well used and is a welcoming and safe environment.

Staff knowledge and expertise are increased through input from partner agencies, enabling staff to assess with confidence and make timely referrals.

The range of users accessing services reflects the community and the staff have incisive knowledge in regard to the more vulnerable groups. A commitment to equality of opportunity is strong with inclusion featuring highly in the centre's work. Support is in place for users who do not speak English as their first language and the building is easily accessible to those with mobility disabilities through the use of a lift.

Safeguarding procedures are very robust and a high priority for the centre. All policies and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed. All staff are trained and have a very good knowledge of relevant policies and procedures. A link worker is available to liaise with users who have communication difficulties. Users are aware of the importance of safeguarding and know the important role they play in protecting their children when in the centre. Stringent safety measures, risk assessments, highly effective information and good quality training all combine to ensure children and adults are protected.

Self-evaluation is accurate and the centre knows its users well. At times the self-evaluation document is more focused on provision than impact and could be more succinct. Meetings enable agencies with service level agreements to evaluate their service and feed back to the centre. Partnerships are highly effective and exceptionally well integrated across services leading to very positive outcomes for users. Users are encouraged to contribute to improving services through course evaluations and 'Have your say' books. The children's 'All about me' books show their development through their involvement with the centre. These contribute to setting future priorities to ensure that needs continue to be met.

*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>2</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>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>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>2</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 Ightenhill Children's Centre 16-17 February. We judged the centre as good overall.

We really enjoyed chatting to you in meetings and in groups around and near to the centre. You expressed your views clearly and they were very helpful to us. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution to the inspection.

We are pleased to say that the centre provides outstanding care, guidance and support that helps children to stay safe and enables families to improve their lives. The staff work extremely hard to meet all of you by visiting you at home or by telephoning to get to know you. They work extremely well with health and education providers to ensure the activities are what you need. We were delighted to hear how helpful and supportive you find the staff. Many of you said how you now had more confidence and had learnt a lot about parenting skills which you were now putting into practice.

It was encouraging that more of you are using the centre and are beginning to get involved in the management through volunteer work or through the parents' forum and advisory board. These are important roles so keep up the good work.

To help the centre improve we have suggested that the leaders find better ways to measure more accurately the positive differences that the centre activities are making to you and your families.

On behalf of the inspection team, I hope that families in your area will continue to benefit from the services available to you for many years to come.

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