

Inspection report for Chapletown Children's Centre

Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	365662
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Joanne Smith HMI

Centre governance	Leeds City Council
Centre leader	Colette Kurylo
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	62 Leopold Street, Chapletown, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS7 4AW
Telephone number	0113 214 5878
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	colette.kurylo@leeds.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY304851 Chapeltown Children's 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.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, senior centre staff, parents and carers, local authority representatives, local school representatives and partner agency representatives.

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

Information about the centre

Chapelton Children's Centre is situated in two buildings in an inner city area to the north-east of Leeds. This phase one centre was designated in 2005. It is governed and managed directly by the local authority. A centre manager is responsible for delivery across the centre's reach area. The centre provides services to a community that is in one of the 15% most disadvantaged areas in the country. Services, delivered by an integrated team and partners, include health services, outreach support, employment and training support, targeted support for vulnerable families, adult and community learning, and activities for children and adults to play and learn together. These are delivered from the centre and from outreach venues. The centre building has accommodation to support counselling sessions, meetings, health services and centre activities. There is onsite early years childcare provision.

The centre covers a wide geographical area and sits on the boundary of the reach area. It is easily accessible, with major transport routes running nearby. The majority of the housing stock within the reach area is rental property. Within the reach area three general practitioners and two health centres serve the population. The vast majority of the population in the reach area is of Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. A growing number of families are seeking the right to remain in this country. Within the community served by the children's centre the majority of

children aged under five years are living in families dependent on workless benefits. Take up of the childcare element of working tax credits is above national averages. Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision across the area with skills and abilities that are lower than those typically found nationally. The centre supports children from two local schools.

The children's centre's designated nursery provider is Chapeltown Children's Centre, and its inspection report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

'The centre is a credit to the community and children thrive in this place', is typical of what parents and carers think about this children's centre. The centre provides exceptional levels of care, guidance and support to its service users. It is highly effective in assessing the needs of individuals and the community and tailors services to meet those needs. Overall, outcomes for centre users are outstanding, particularly in children's achievement. However, provision for adult's learning and development is less tailored due the limited information the centre holds on adults' prior learning or development needs. In an effort to refine services further, the centre routinely asks users to complete evaluation forms and information about children is obtained and updated frequently. Although these evaluations provide some information to the senior leadership team for analysis, is it not always as incisive as it could be. The senior leadership team recognise and acknowledge these areas are not as strong as they could be and are keen to develop the extremely strong practice in the childcare provision across other aspects of the centre. This reflects the centre's outstanding capacity to sustain and enhance its current outstanding performance.

Centre users are heavily involved in the governance of the centre because they are very well represented on the shared advisory board. The chair of the advisory board is a parent who uses this centre and who has experienced a hugely positive impact on her life as a result of her contact with the centre. Parental input into the advisory board has resulted in a far greater understanding of local families' needs highlighting

such topics as housing as pressure points. Subsequent work on these matters with partners has had a very positive impact on families. Parents and carers are extremely happy with the centre and praise staff highly for their sensitivity and approachability. The safety and security of children is without doubt a top priority for all those who work with or in the centre. They are thorough and rigorous in their work with children and families and are aware of cultural traditions that are recognised as abusive. Staff are highly skilled at recognising when things are not going well in a family. When this happens they are swift in their response and because of the exceptionally strong partnerships and multi agency working they are successful in minimising the risk to children. Exceedingly sensitive work is undertaken in support of those suffering domestic violence. Staff are highly aware of the need to retain contact with sufferers and use a number different methods. In addition, parents and carers are extremely comfortable and confident to approach the centre for help when they are in crisis.

The centre is a highly inclusive place where individuals from a wide range of cultures represented in the area are embraced and valued. Their representation in the resources and displays in the centre is exceptional and the centre's work to promote this further afield in the community is very well supported by the resource lending service it offers. Partnerships are especially strong with health workers who are the main source of information and referrals to the centre. This strength is not exclusive to these partners. Very close co-working is also achieved with commissioned services such as the intensive family support team and Citizen's Advice Bureau.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve outcomes and provision by:
 - analysing local intelligence and service evaluations to further refine service delivery and demonstrate impact more effectively
 - increasing the information held about adults' prior learning and achievement to meet their learning and development needs more closely.

How good are outcomes for users?

1

Children's and adults' well-being are given the highest priority and they are very well protected in this safe and secure children's centre. Parents' and carers' views are reflected in the comment, 'I have never had any concerns whatsoever about the welfare of my child'. Children's behaviour is exemplary and they are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Parents and carers are developing a very good understanding of the different ways they can protect their children from harm. A very large majority take up the opportunity to immunise

children against high risk childhood illnesses, reducing the risk of serious illness. They are also very keen to access the healthy start free vitamins on offer to them to improve their children's health. Obesity levels in Reception Year children are high and have been stable at this level for two years. While the centre is aware of this and some of the programmes offered are designed to improve this situation, progress has not been swift enough to effect change. Nevertheless, parents and carers have a growing understanding of healthy eating through the work of the centre, 'They give me plenty of information about what children can eat that is good for them'. Highly effective multi-agency working means that children subject to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or child protection plans are extremely well supported. The number of children who have repeated child protection plans is very low.

Children make extremely good progress from their starting points. Those who have received funding for the two-year old pilot make rapid progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. They are developing exceptionally positive attitudes to learning that continue when they enter school. Adults who use learning opportunities at the centre are highly enthusiastic about their new found knowledge and most are keen to develop and expand on this for the benefit of their family. The learning through play sessions for parents, which are part of the two-year old pilot funding, are particularly successful at inspiring parents to use low cost items to play with their children. Their understanding of how children learn has increased a great deal. They have also taken risks they would not have previously considered when children are playing in the home. As a result, they have allowed children to paint freely on paper covering the entire kitchen floor and play with home-made playdough. In turn, these parents have gained enormously in confidence, they 'feel proud' and have spoken about their experiences in front of audiences of up to 200 parents and professionals at conferences. The centre, however, is unclear how many adults have progressed into further learning opportunities. The number of adults in lower paid employment in the area is high and one of the routes to improving this is through developing skills and educational attainment.

There are very robust systems in place to allow parents and carers to have a say in the centre's work. Displays encourage them to speak to staff or fill in forms and their views are routinely sought at the end of a course or parent and child session. There is an active parents' forum which meets to seek the views of all those who wish to attend. Additionally, there is a very high proportion of parents on the children's centre advisory board, which is shared with a neighbouring centre. The position of chair is held by a parent of Chapeltown Children's Centre. This is a really strong link with parents and the community and it is a significant element in how the centre identifies its priorities. A large majority of the local community who are from minority ethnic groups are registered with the centre and use the services on offer. This is a significant increase in a period of just three months and the result of recognition by the centre that these groups were under-represented.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	1
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	1
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	2

How good is the provision?

1

A very good range of relevant services is offered by the centre. This is the result of the extremely good understanding of the needs of the area that centre staff, partners and the local authority have. Centre users' needs are sensitively and carefully assessed. Teams work very closely together to address need and support families in the best way possible. This unified process starts at the point when the centre receives a referral. A weekly multi-agency meeting is used to discuss the individual cases and a joint decision is made as to which agency will take the lead on the case. This carefully considered decision making allows for the lead agency to involve other partners in their work with the family once a more detailed assessment of need has been completed. When the need is identified, for example, where a growing number of agencies is involved with a family, the CAF process is initiated to facilitate extremely supportive team around the child working. Extremely focused assessment and monitoring of children's learning and development takes place in the day care provision at the centre. These assessment and monitoring processes are shared with private and voluntary providers in the reach area and their use is growing. Children have a very wide range of opportunities to learn, some of these alongside their parents. Adult learning that is not linked to parenting skills is a service that is mainly delivered through signposting to relevant training and learning providers. While the take up of this is good, the centre does not know enough about the learning and development needs of adults who use the centre or whether their learning is sustained once initiated.

Outreach work is highly effective and successful in reaching out into the community to engage them with the centre. There is a relentless process of 'door knocking' to deliver information, to visit those known to the centre and to capture those who are not registered with the centre. The system succeeds despite the transient nature of a community that has high levels of families seeking the right to stay in the country. The needs of the reach area are assessed thoroughly. Services, such as stay and

play sessions, are delivered in community venues that are a distance away from the centre building because it is recognised that distance is a barrier to attendance. In addition, services and courses are skilfully adapted by staff to meet the immediate needs of individuals or groups. It is very well recognised at the centre that culture is a significant force in outcomes for families. It is known, for example, that in the area a round faced baby is cherished and this affects feeding and eating habits. Staff seize opportunities to reinforce messages about healthy eating and portion sizes. For example, when parents were learning about messy play and the conversation turned to how children mess with food.

The information and guidance on offer at the centre is very wide ranging and is displayed in ways to make sure it has the greatest impact. Centre staff and partners have a clear determination to support families. They make good use of a nearly new children’s clothes exchange and provide affordable craft equipment and materials for parents to buy. Their knowledge of local services and agencies is outstanding and is endlessly put to use in their work with families. When parents are struggling, for example, with housing or managing to pay bills they do not hesitate to go to the centre where they know they will be given either practical support or information on who to contact to get the help they need. Where parents lack confidence, for example to attend a group, they are assisted in a non-intrusive way to do this by the centre.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	1
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	2
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	1
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

Very well-established governance and accountability arrangements are clearly understood by all. The local authority has very strong arrangements in place to monitor the performance of the centre against its targets and those of the centre. These targets and priorities are made using a set of data that gives the centre a great deal of information about the community in which it is based. There are however some gaps in the information. While the centre has anecdotal and recorded information, for example linked to accidents in the home, it is not being analysed and used as effectively as it could be to demonstrate need and impact in the area. This is also reflected in the quality of the evaluations used to gather the opinions of users who have accessed services. These are routinely collected, analysed and reviewed by

the senior leadership team. However, they do not always go far enough to give the centre incisive information to help them to refine the particular service or to demonstrate the long term impact it has had. The centre manager is committed to providing a sustainable service and good value for money. In support of this she has worked extremely hard to effectively reduce the cost of the centre. Proposed courses and services are closely linked to the centre priorities and before they are commissioned a bid, including resource need, is submitted and reviewed.

Led by the highly committed centre manager the senior leadership team set very high expectations for staff in terms of service delivery. This is also reflected in the way that the centre works with partners at all levels. They have reached out to schools, private and voluntary childcare providers and childminders in a determined effort to raise the quality of the early years' experiences children have. This has improved outcomes for the work of partners and helped them to develop their practice. Children's experience of the transition from childcare to school is very good because an individually planned process has been designed to meet their and their parents' needs. Relationships between the centre and partners are very highly valued and nurtured. Midwife clinics and Jobcentre Plus are just two of the agencies who deliver services from the centre where this is not possible in other parts of the local authority. This is testament to the determination of the centre manager to deliver a cohesive package of services to families.

Safeguarding children is given the very highest priority. Staff and partners have a good understanding of the procedures to be followed in the event of concerns being raised. Additionally, parents are very well acquainted with whom to speak to if they are worried about a child. Extremely effective systems for sharing information across agencies are in place. This means that the centre can work with families from a very early stage when they begin to struggle, to prevent matters escalating to a point where statutory involvement is necessary. The systems to ensure staff and other adults are suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults are consistently used to very good effect. Safeguarding arrangements meet all the necessary legal requirements. Safeguarding children is recognised as a high risk area by the local authority and the centre. Excellent systems have been put in place to make sure that this risk is reduced, for example, by introducing safeguarding supervisions for staff to specifically review their caseloads with their manager, which is then reviewed and challenged by the next layer of management.

The community served by the centre is extremely diverse. The centre is highly successful in celebrating the breadth of the community and strives to deliver information and services in accessible ways. They willingly adapt their practice and constantly seek solutions to the language barriers in a community where over 100 different languages are used. The centre has an extremely well stocked multi-cultural resource library that is very well used by local childcare providers to raise children's awareness of their diverse community. As a result, there is a real sense of respect and understanding in the centre. There is a very strong understanding of the issues that can create barriers to using services. This is also seen at a strategic level, where equality impact assessments take into account issues, such as income alongside

more traditional barriers such as language. The centre is well placed and the building is fully accessible. Children who have disabilities are exceptionally well supported in the childcare provision, where staff work closely with parents and other professionals involved in their care to ensure their particular needs are met in the best way possible.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	1
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	1
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	1

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

The recent Ofsted inspection report of the centre day care provision was taken into consideration when making judgements on the outcomes for children.

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. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected the Chapeltown Children's Centre on 22 and 23 March 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Thank you to those of you who spoke to us, we enjoyed finding out what you think about the centre. You told us that the centre is extremely good at helping you and meeting your needs. We know that the centre is making a very real difference to your lives and that as a result, you have a much better understanding about how to keep your children safe and healthy. We found that the centre is extremely welcoming and friendly. Everyone who works in the centre understands your community very well. They are especially skilled at making sure that the services and courses they offer are useful to you and your families.

The centre manager works extremely hard to make sure that the centre is providing the services you need in the most cost effective way possible. She does this with the deputy and assistant managers by using the very helpful information provided by the local authority. The managers and the rest of the staff also know your area and your needs extremely well. We have asked the managers to improve on what they provide even more to help you to overcome the challenges you face, by using further what they know and what you tell them when you have used a service.

We found that the centre is very good at working with your children. The staff are extremely knowledgeable about what your child can do and what the staff need to do to help them improve as quickly as possible. This is helping the children who need the most help to catch up with the other children more quickly. We do not think that the centre does this as well for the adults who use the centre, so we have asked the centre to find out what you need in terms of training and learning opportunities. Even though we have asked the centre to do this, we know that those of you who go on courses at the centre, such as the play to learn course, thoroughly enjoy them and you told us that they have helped you to understand how your children learn. You have really appreciated the ideas for low priced play activities to do in your homes.

Those of you who are involved in the parents' forum and the advisory board are very good at telling the centre about what the needs of families in the local community are. Parents on these groups work hard to promote the centre in the community and along with the outreach workers have helped to increase the number of centre users dramatically. The centre is exceptionally inclusive and is a welcoming place where families from the many different cultures who live in your area are all welcomed. The centre is also very good at making changes to the way it is working, either with groups or individuals, to make sure all those who want to take part can do.

A key strength of the centre is how the staff and those from other agencies, such as health workers, work together to provide you with high levels of support and

guidance when you most need it. They are also extremely keen to make sure that your children are safe and well protected. They do this by making certain that all the adults who work with your children are suitable to do so. When staff are working with families who need a lot of support they are helped by their managers to make sure the work being done is the very best it can be.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come and speak to us, we are very grateful and we wish you every success for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.