

# Inspection report for Chapel Allerton Children's Centre

Local authority	Leeds City Council
Inspection number	373070
Inspection dates	23 – 24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Lorraine Rowson-Clark HMI

Centre governance	Leeds City Council
Centre leader	Gillian Trow
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	URN 512561 Chapel Allerton 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.

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 an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, staff members, advisory board members, a range of providers, partner agencies, users and local authority officers linked to the centre.

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

## Information about the centre

Chapel Allerton Children's Centre is a phase two centre, located north east of Leeds in one of the 70% most deprived areas in the country but with significant pockets of families living within the 30% most deprived super-output areas. It was designated as a children's centre in August 2007 and all services are delivered on site. The local authority is responsible for all aspects of the governance and management of the centre, including the day-to-day running of the centre and its strategic development.

The local housing is densely populated and is a mixture of private, social housing and rented accommodation. There is new housing development in the area which is mainly apartments. Within the centre's reach area there are a number of small businesses, three supermarkets, a sports centre and two health centres. There are high levels of crime in the area, with theft from vehicles and burglary being the most reported types of crime.

The centre serves a community which is very diverse with a mixture of White British Black Caribbean, Black African and Asian heritages. There are also an increasing number of Polish families moving into the area. The centre's area has 593 children aged under five years, 51% of which are registered with the centre. There is an Early Years Foundation Stage day care setting available on site which is run by the centre. Most children enter early years provision with a range of skills and abilities expected for their age. There are a small number of children and families registered with the centre with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Since August 2009 the centre has had a number of changes to the centre manager. The current acting manager has been in post since March 2010.

## 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

Chapel Allerton Children's Centre is a good and improving centre; some of its features are outstanding. The leadership team, together with the centre's staff, advisory board and professional partners have ensured the centre offers high quality provision and services. Staff are fully committed to the centre and the community it serves, constantly striving for improvement. Excellent partnerships between all key agencies has resulted in an extremely well-integrated and cohesive service, enabling the centre to respond swiftly to user needs, thereby ensuring children and families are very well cared for and safeguarded.

Outcomes for users are good overall and are rapidly improving. The centre is particularly effective in keeping users safe and protected and in promoting their enjoyment and achievement. Comprehensive risk assessments of all areas ensure high levels of safety in the centre. All centre staff and key agencies have a shared understanding of how to keep children and adults safe and children are effectively learning how to behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. Children actively engage in the wide range of exciting and stimulating learning opportunities available to them and are becoming confident in their learning and development.

Adult users are effectively signposted to appropriate agencies for advice on benefits, housing, health, and employment opportunities. They are also very effectively signposted and supported in accessing appropriate training, successfully completing qualifications to improve their employment prospects. A small number have embarked on long-term training and development and have successfully secured employment or are undertaking higher education courses to degree level.

Strong leadership and management effectively supervise the work of the centre and ensure that appropriate targets are set for future development. Self-evaluation is used regularly to assess what the centre is doing well and what could be improved further. It is recognised that whilst those accessing services are supported extremely well, there are those in the reach area who are not yet benefiting from the services on offer. Detailed data and the centre's self-evaluation enable the management to evaluate the effectiveness of activities on outcomes. However, these are not sufficiently refined to fully assess how well the centre is making a difference over time to the lives of the families within its reach area.

The centre gives the utmost priority to safeguarding all children and their families and the quality of care, guidance and support provided is excellent. This is because the centre leadership ensures that families, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, benefit from a range of good quality services that are carefully tailored to meet their particular needs. Parents cannot speak highly enough of the quality of care, guidance and support they receive. The centre is fully inclusive to all members of the community and staff show great understanding and respect, valuing difference and celebrating diversity. As one parent commented, 'Everyone is made welcome, whatever their background'. The range of provision on offer meets the needs of users well. However, centre managers are fully aware of the need to give careful consideration to sustainability to ensure the centre is able to meet the needs of those families in the reach area whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

There are many opportunities for parents and users to express their views through feedback forms, questionnaires and surveys. Parents are actively involved in decision making through membership of the advisory board, which also includes partner agencies representatives and members of the local community. The advisory board plays an active role in challenging the centre and ensuring it plans for continual development and improvement in order to meet changing local needs. Because of this, together with effective partnership working and good leadership and management, the centre has good capacity to improve further.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Increase user involvement by identifying and engaging further with families in the community who are not accessing the centre's activities.
- Refine data collection and self evaluation processes to focus more clearly on the impact the centre is having on outcomes over time.

## How good are outcomes for users?

2

Across all of the five areas, outcomes are at least good and are improving strongly. This is because the centre provides a wide range of activities which are developed well in partnership with other agencies and professionals. The emotional well-being of users is greatly improved by their engagement with the centre due to the sensitive support and care they receive. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well and are successful. For example, breastfeeding initiation rates have increased to 92%, with 62% continuing to breastfeed at six weeks. Families benefit from the wide range of activities on offer and are developing a good awareness of adopting healthy lifestyles by learning about healthy eating through the many courses on offer. The 'Baketastic' sessions are particularly well received as parents and carers and children learn together about make healthy snacks and treats.

Children are encouraged to lead an active life by staff in the nursery who are expertly trained in encouraging physical play. The children's outdoor areas are particularly stimulating and offer seamless provision, both indoors and outdoors. Adults are effectively supported by the health trainer who offers individualised one to one support to encourage them to make small improvements to their lifestyles. Users and are also signposted to a wide variety of appropriate professional agencies for help and support, for example, in order to stop smoking, reduce alcohol consumption and for victims of domestic violence.

The centre is particularly effective in ensuring that parents and carers and children understand how to keep themselves safe and free from harm. Family outreach workers offer help and support in making homes safe for young children and offer to carry out the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) checks on the home. Staff model safe practices exceptionally well at all times and the centre is a very safe and welcoming place to be due to the extreme vigilance of all adults and the completion of comprehensive risk assessments of all areas. Very effective use of the Common Assessment Framework ensures that families whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are supported extremely well in order to limit the number of situations reaching crisis point. All users of the centre, including staff from partner agencies, say they feel very safe here and all parents and carers spoken to reported that their children are extremely well cared for. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe and have regard for others and were observed to tidy things away after themselves and help to clear up spillages to prevent slips and falls.

There are many opportunities for parents and children to play and learn together and a range of high quality information and advice is given on all aspects of child development. Parents say the centre has helped build their confidence and self-esteem and they have developed their parenting skills through effective liaison with day care staff and access to a range of courses run jointly with health visitors. All centre staff, including family outreach workers and day care staff have a comprehensive knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and all activities are planned with children's development and learning in mind. Support from the early

years teacher has resulted in more effective planning for children’s learning and a shared understanding of effective assessment in all provision in the reach area, including schools, private day care and childminders. Children are fully engaged and motivated with the activities available to them and their behaviour is good. As a result, data show a substantial increase in the number of children reaching 78 points across the assessment scales of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the gap between outcomes for the most vulnerable groups and others is narrowing.

Children and families develop strong relationships within the centre and show high levels of respect, care and concern for others. There are good opportunities for parents and carers to express their views through regular evaluations of activities, questionnaires, surveys and through involvement in the advisory board. Adults report that their opinions are listened to, valued and in many cases acted upon. As a result, the centre is effectively influenced by centre users and the families in the reach area.

The centre plays an active role in helping to promote economic stability, for example, by supporting adults and young people to access local training courses and signposting to expert advice on budgeting and benefits. Adults report that the centre successfully encourages them to gain qualifications to improve their employment prospects and offers them practical and emotional support whilst they are training. Some adults have successfully undertaken vocational courses and have moved on to higher education, demonstrating a positive attitude to further training and future employment. Many who have accessed training say that the centre was instrumental in helping them find enjoyment in learning and in raising their aspirations.

*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>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>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?**

**1**

The children’s centre is extremely effective in assessing user need and promoting purposeful learning. It provides high quality services with outstanding care, guidance and support. Assessment is used very effectively to determine the needs of children,

parents and users. Consequently, the centre is able to provide a range of support, expertly tailored to the needs of its users. The Common Assessment Framework is very well embedded and the exceptionally strong partnerships with other agencies ensure that assessments of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are robust and effective. The exceptional care, guidance and support ensures there is a strong emphasis on providing emotional support to boost users' confidence and raise their self-esteem. This has a significant impact on improving the lives of families, particularly those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. Sensitive, individualised support is provided to help promote outcomes and in times of crisis, the support is extremely well put together and very effective.

Experienced family outreach workers make concerted efforts to make contact with hard to reach families thorough leafleting, door knocking and being visible at schools and local community groups. As registration rates are not as high as they could be, the centre is correctly targeting this as an area for further development, although it is understood that not all users of the centre services wish to register with the centre. Equally, the centre can demonstrate that a significant number of families in their reach area access services elsewhere for a number of reasons, such as proximity to their workplace and vice versa.

Centre staff are very aware of the difficulties and challenges faced by families within its reach area. For example, the high levels of car crime and burglaries leave families feeling vulnerable. As a result, their needs are given careful consideration and a range of services are in place to support them, such as encouraging Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) into the centre to offer advice to families and make strong bonds with the children. PCSOs are regularly involved in centre activities such as celebration days, fund raising events and open days. This helps to break down barriers so that families form trusting relationships with the police. Parents told inspectors that they can come to the centre anytime to talk to someone and that they feel valued and listened to by everyone they speak to. 'There's always someone here to help' typifies the comments made.

Family outreach workers and centre staff play an active role in identify user need and establishing an effective range of support services to meet needs. There are many examples of good quality outreach and effective support work, including weekly midwifery and baby health clinics, regular stay and play sessions, parenting classes, breastfeeding support, 'Little Borrowers' toy library and the childminder support group. Jobcentre Plus operates a weekly service from the centre and adults are encouraged to take advantage of available training opportunities to increase their employment prospects. Local participation rates are improving, and evaluations from parents and carers highlight how the opportunities provided to them have made a real difference to their lives.

*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>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>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?**

<b>2</b>
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Leadership and management are consistently good at all levels and are exceptional in relation to safeguarding and partnership working. Senior leaders have a clear vision, set the tone, communicate high expectations and have the drive and commitment to ensure that the centre is effective in improving the life chances of all users. All staff demonstrate admirable commitment to the centre and the community it serves; everyone understands how they contribute to the centre's effectiveness. For example, administrative staff know how important first impressions are and ensure all visitors and users are warmly welcomed on arrival.

Strong support is given to centre staff through effective line management and clear supervision arrangements. The local authority, centre managers and, day care managers provide strong leadership. They are very ably supported by a dedicated team that demonstrate a passion to work collaboratively to improve the lives of users. Effective arrangements for performance management and accountability are in place, ensuring centre staff are all working towards a common purpose. The centre has established highly effective working relationships with partner agencies and there are clear contractual arrangements in place between partners. Senior managers at strategic level have been instrumental in securing improvements. For example, new arrangements with the Registrar have ensured that the centre receives accurate, detailed information about births in the centre's reach area.

A key strength of the centre is the outstanding partnership arrangements which ensure that all needs are met. Staff report that relationships with key agencies are excellent, morale is very high and that everyone pulls together to improve outcomes for users. Partner agency staff report that the centre is fully committed to partnership working and works very effectively with them to ensure the needs of families are well catered for. For example, a number of partner agency staff reported that their partnerships with Chapel Allerton Children's Centre are 'exceptional'. Centre leaders have a wealth of experience and skills and the management team is effective in ensuring the centre focuses on activities that are sustainable, building upon existing provision and giving appropriate consideration to reducing costs without reducing the quality of provision. Close accounting and forward thinking ensure the centre is well placed to deal with possible future financial constraints placed upon



them in order to ensure their future sustainability. This results in the centre providing good value for money.

The inclusion of all children and families is embedded in all the centre's work. Staff ensure that all children and adults, regardless of background, aptitudes or other differences, have access to the range of experiences on offer. All information displayed promotes equality and diversity and there is a varied range of resources that reflect equality and diversity of the reach area. Leaflets are available in a number of languages and translators are available for those whose first language is not English. The centre is fully accessible for people with disabilities and links with speech and language therapists, Makaton trainers and special educational needs coordinators ensure the centre is well placed to meet diverse needs of users.

Centre managers have a good understanding of the centre's strengths and where further improvements can be made. Whilst self-evaluation is overly detailed and critical, it accurately identifies the centre's priorities for improvement so that targets are appropriately challenging and are concentrated on the areas which will have the greatest impact. Parents and carers also help to identify priorities by their involvement in the active advisory board. Action plans are specific, sharply focused and have clear success criteria, although sometimes they lack identified time scales. The centre recognises that its data collection and self-evaluation processes are somewhat burdensome and not yet refined enough to demonstrate the full impact the centre is having on outcomes over time.

There are very high quality arrangements in place to safeguard all users. The local authority plays an active role in ensuring that the procedures for vetting staff are extremely robust and a rolling programme of training ensures relevant training is up to date. All staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and are highly vigilant in identifying and responding to any potential dangers that users may encounter through the use of comprehensive risk assessments and a thorough knowledge of the detailed safeguarding procedures. Robust procedures and clear protocols for sharing information, together with exceptional partnership working ensure that children and families at risk and in need are prioritised effectively. Parents and users of the services report with extreme confidence that their children are very well protected and that they wholeheartedly trust the centre with the care of their children.

*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: 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 Chapel Allerton Children's Centre on 23-24 March 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

As part of the inspection we visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's documentation, and talked with a number of children and adults including parents and carers, staff, community representatives and partnership workers. We were pleased to speak to so many of you and to listen to your views. We really enjoyed talking to you around the centre. You expressed your views very clearly and we appreciated you telling us how things really are.

We are pleased to tell you that your centre provides extremely good care and support and a wide range of exciting activities to you and your families. Your centre does some things extremely well, such as the way everybody works together to

make things better for you and the way you are encouraged to keep safe and enjoy the many learning opportunities available to you. You told us how first aid training and ROSPA checks are helping you to make your homes safer for you and your children.

You told us that you and your children are very well cared for, that you are supported extremely well and that you have complete trust in the centre nursery to look after your children well, and we were able to see this for ourselves. You also told us how you have been helped to undertake training which has helped you get back into employment. We were delighted to see that the centre is making a real difference to improving your lives and to hear how much more confident you feel.

The centre's nursery staff work very hard to offer your children exciting and interesting learning opportunities. We saw your children behaving very well, thoroughly enjoying their play and learning in the many exciting activities on offer. They are happy at the centre and are becoming confident learners. You told us how staff have given you very good support and have helped you to increase your knowledge about play and how children. We were delighted to hear that these activities help you support your children's learning at home.

You told us that the staff are always there to help you and that that they are always kind and caring. The centre works extremely well with midwives, health visitors and social care workers to make sure it offers excellent care guidance and support to families and children in need. Many parents and carers told us that coming to the centre had increased their confidence and self-esteem. This is because centre staff are extremely good at helping parents and carers improve their lives and making sure that they access the right services to do this.

The centre is well led and managed. The advisory board has a good mix of professionals from the partner agencies, parents and carers, members of the local community and staff. It makes sure that user views are well represented and that the centre is effectively challenged to offer the best services it can. The centre managers and the local authority ensure that the finances of the centre, the supervision of the staff and plans for the future are strong. It was clear to us that everyone is working hard to make the centre as good as it can be. To help them we have suggested they look more closely at how the activities they provide and the work that they do are making a lasting difference to you and your children. By doing this they will be in a stronger position to show how well they are doing and will be able to plan even more worthwhile things for you.

We have also asked them to encourage more families in the community to come and join in the many activities on offer at the centre. You can help by telling all your friends about the many worthwhile things that the centre does.

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 can see why the staff love working with you and wish you all 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).