

# Inspection report for Partington & Carrington Children's Centre

Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	365716
Inspection dates	30-31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Tim Vaughan HMI

Centre governance	Trafford Council
Centre leader	Janet Barker
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Trafford MBC EY286057 Sure Start Partington & Carrington 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.

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

The inspectors held meetings with the head of centre, senior leaders, a range of centre staff and representatives from the local authority. Discussions were also held with parents and carers, members of the parents' forum, members of the advisory board, partners, volunteers, local childminders and service users. They observed the centre's work including in the on-site nursery and at an outreach site, accompanied a home visit and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Partington and Carrington Children's Centre developed from a Sure Start Local Programme, which was built on the site of an existing family centre. The centre was designated as a phase one children's centre in May 2006. The centre is located in the Partington and Carrington area of Trafford, which is economically and socially disadvantaged, with two local super output areas being in the 20% most deprived in the country and three others being ranked in the top 30%.

Most local families are of White British heritage and a small number from other ethnic heritages. 53% of children aged nought to four live in workless households. 26.14% of eligible families benefit from the Working Tax Credit. The majority of local housing is privately owned and most of the rest is social housing.

The centre provides the full core offer and has an on-site, 50-place nursery provided by the local authority. There are also links to other local providers. Children's skills, knowledge and understanding on entry to the nursery are well below the expected levels nationally for three- and four-year-olds. The proportion of children attending schools in the area who are known to be entitled to free school meals is almost double the national average. The proportion of local children with special educational

needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.

The centre works closely with partner agencies and provides a multi-agency office space to support this. The operations manager for the area health team is based at the centre. The centre delivers a range of outreach services from other local premises including schools, a community centre, a healthy living centre, a leisure centre and a local church. An advisory board oversees the work of the centre.

## 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**

<b>2</b>
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### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

<b>2</b>
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## Main findings

This is a good and improving centre which, under the current head of centre, has come a long way in a short period of time. Structures of management and governance are strong, evaluation is rigorous, priorities are focused and partnerships are effective. As a result, the provision being made on site and increasingly through outreach is good and outcomes for children and adults who use the services are good.

‘I’d hit rock bottom. If it wasn’t for the centre I don’t know where I’d be. The member of staff was so caring and understanding. Not once did she judge me.’ Comments made by this parent and others illustrate that families feel accepted and valued and why the centre is effective. Staff accept people as individuals and focus on their needs and how services can work together. The partnership with social care is particularly strong around family support, as is the link with the midwife working on site. Staff and other adults consistently give high priority to safeguarding across the centre and there is a good level of training for all workers and volunteers.

Excellent support to local families about healthy eating from a Sure Start dietician is long established and, as a result, obesity in local young children has been reduced. The manner in which this support is given is changing due to new commissioning arrangements and the centre has clear plans in place to maintain as much advice and support as possible.

The on-site nursery has worked hard to improve following a good inspection judgement in 2007. Consequently, the Early Years Foundation Stage has become a key strength of the centre. Working within an excellent learning environment, staff demonstrate a good understanding of effective practice through the quality of their interactions with children. Children's learning and progress are recognised and very well celebrated in displays and progress records that are shared with parents. The quality of learning for children using the crèche room is also good. The roles of the nursery manager, new head of centre and the qualified teacher have been central to achieving this emphasis upon high quality provision for children across the centre.

The centre meets its core offer well. Equality and diversity is a key priority and is fostered well. This is because the head of centre has a clear and ambitious vision for integrating services and for challenging staff to work in new and innovative ways. Staff and the local authority consistently commented on her creativity of thinking and her commitment to improvement. Together with other senior leaders she has worked effectively to get the centre to this point. Provision for users is having a positive impact on their lives. As one parent commented, 'Local people need the centre.' Surveys by the centre show that there is strong satisfaction with what is delivered.

Families who are known to the centre are supported effectively and demonstrate good outcomes. Services are increasingly well used but, at the present time, the level of registrations does not reflect this.

With the achievements that have been made in the past year by centre leaders and through effective local authority support and realistic and challenging targets, there is a good understanding of centre strengths and priorities. Staff feel valued and included in ongoing development of the centre. Partners are also becoming more involved in the oversight of the centre. Clear plans matched with a vision for improvement are also in place for centre development. In addition, the introduction of a new, universal Early Years Pathway has led to increased home visits, stronger engagement with families and an increase in key workers allocated to families. As a result, and along with its other strengths, including the rigorous self evaluation, the centre demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Improve the range and appropriateness of services by:
  - increasing the number of local children and families registered with the centre
  - increasing the registrations of children aged under two years of age.

## How good are outcomes for users?

2

Outcomes for parents and families are good. This is because services are well-integrated between centre staff and partners including midwives, speech and language therapists and the on-site nursery. Workers share the aim of providing services in new and improved ways. Delivering provision from the centre has removed barriers, increased engagement and meant that families whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable are referred quickly.

Obesity has been reduced due to ongoing advice and relevant courses. For example, a six-week cook and taste course led to improved diet among participants and their families. Healthy menus in the nursery have also been enhanced through the support of the Sure Start dietician and the nursery has achieved healthy setting status. Breastfeeding rates are improving because of the work of trained breastfeeding peer supporters, the centre's engagement with the Baby Friendly Initiative and good use of data to identify target areas of the locality. Through high quality outdoor play and soft play and swimming sessions at the local leisure centre, levels of physical activity by parents and children are good.

Parents feel safe in the centre and they behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. Good use of local accident data by the centre is improving the safeguarding of children. As a result, local hospital admissions of children have decreased. Safety equipment has been widely promoted and subsidised by the centre. Parents have welcomed this, and one said, 'It made a difference'. Other parents commented that the 'Keep me safe' course had enhanced their parenting skills. Evaluation of the outcomes of the centre's Incredible Years course indicates a strong increase in the well-being of participants at its conclusion. Parent comments such 'The centre is a vital part of my week' and 'The centre has given me inspiration' illustrate that isolation is being addressed.

The centre effectively supports families with issues such as mental health, domestic violence and parenting. Children on a child protection plan get good support because of the close links between agencies and effective use of the Common Assessment Framework. The average length of involvement with family support cases at the centre is 11 months, which illustrates the commitment of staff to helping parents over time. Consequently, many parents report positive changes to their lives. For example, a family who approached the nursery when in crisis was supported by a worker with housing, food, access to nursery, child safety and safe adult behaviours. Another parent commented to inspectors that without the centre she would not still be alive.

Opportunities for parents to play, have fun and learn together are well established and successful. For example, a young parents' group has led to improved interactions with children and greater enjoyment of supporting babies' and young children's progress. The outcomes attained by children at age five who have used the centre have improved over the last three years. Importantly, this has occurred at the same time as the narrowing of the attainment gap between groups of centre children.

Good work between the local authority Early Years consultant, the centre and other local early years providers has led to these improvements. Local childminding provision is mostly good or better and has benefited from support by the centre.

Children using a range of services within the centre show good behaviour and relate well to one another. This is enhanced in the centre nursery through an effective key person system to support individuals and groups. A Parents' Forum was started in 2008 and has recently been further developed. Parents have welcomed the opportunity to share their views. Clear evidence was seen during the inspection that the centre values formal feedback. The centre also takes parental complaints into account, such as in August 2010 when parents were unhappy about the change of day for a group session. Parents are involved in the governance of the centre and as a result have developed their skills and confidence.

With the high quality nursery, crèche provision and groups, children using the centre building and outreach are able to make good progress in their skills for the future. For parents, the information, advice and guidance provided are leading to increased confidence, qualifications and employability. The centre has supported the local college to consult parents about needs and then successfully promoted courses at the centre, local library and primary school. As a result, an increased number of local parents have accessed entry level courses such as healthy eating, information and communication technology, cake making and mathematics in the past year.

The centre promotes volunteering on site as a way of helping parents gain new experiences and this has led to four parents becoming actively engaged with the centre. For example, a local father, after being vetted, was given the role of using his photography skills to record specific centre events and activities to help the centre to document its work. The centre also signposts parents to other volunteering opportunities in the area. Recently, Jobcentre Plus has been running group sessions at the centre. This is already leading to higher participation in advice sessions by local parents. Forty of the fifty lone parents who have accessed this support in the past year have then returned to work. The centre has improved local access to information through job information boards and an electronic access point and these are well-used.

*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>
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## **How good is the provision?**

<b>2</b>
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All centre staff, partner agencies and the local authority have a good understanding of the issues facing the families who live in the Partington and Carrington areas. The needs of families are assessed sensitively and appropriately to ensure tailored services are provided to suit their individual needs. Effective partnership with other agencies means that further assessments, such as those carried out under the Common Assessment Framework, and assessments of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well informed. This was illustrated by one of the centre partners who commented about assessment work saying 'The centre welcomes comments from us, and they don't see it as criticism.' The approach to assessing children's needs in the nursery is excellent. As a result, children's learning and development are being carefully tracked and staff and parents are more aware of what children need next.

Learning and development are highly valued across the centre. The on-site crèche is well-used and as one parent said 'The crèche means that there is less of a barrier for me to attend courses.' Good use has been made of resources and local authority funding to develop the learning environment and staff:child interactions. Consequently, the learning environment gives good support for learning across the centre and staff support learning well. Good use has been made of analysis of Early Years data to target training for centre staff from the qualified teacher. Furthermore, the 'Every Child a Talker' programme has resulted in greater understanding for local practitioners and improved communication and language among children. This work has complemented other activities such as the popular 'Buttons' story and rhyme time at the local library which have increased parent skills and confidence. A local childminder commented, 'Before this centre was here childminders were quite isolated.' Support for parents' learning and development is good and the achievements of those using the centre are celebrated.

The vision established by the head of centre is firmly focused upon the centre reaching out to meet the needs of all local children and families. This has meant that services are being adapted to need, for example, the centre is making increased use of outreach sites for 'Stay and play' sessions. Acknowledging that there is some traditional resistance in the community to engagement with services, the centre has established effective partnerships with a range of organisations both in the delivery and management of services as well as broader community development initiatives.

According to data on the registration of local families, the proportion of children reached by the centre is 31.69%. There are also few children registered who are under the age of two years. However, this masks the fact that many unregistered children and families are using the centre. For example, 60% of the 197 children

using the sensory room over a recent two-month period, were not registered with the centre. Participation data (including registered and unregistered users) indicates that overall use of the centre is improving as is the frequency of use.

The quality of care for young children and parents across the centre is good. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that all users, including the most vulnerable are very well supported. Information about smoking, drugs and alcohol is widely promoted and highly visible. For families in crisis, suffering from domestic violence for example, centre services have led to many positive changes in parent behaviour and well-being. High levels of worklessness remain a challenge and the centre and local authority are currently increasing the support available to local people.

*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>3</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?**

<b>2</b>
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In her short period of time in post, the new head of centre has led the centre to become good and improving. This has been achieved through her vision for reaching the whole community, challenging staff to work in new and more flexible ways and managing change over time. As one of the other senior leaders said 'The head of centre is dedicated to achieving things for local people.' Members of staff acknowledge the head of centre's skill in moving their work forward with fairness, diplomacy and a belief in the value of each individual. Complementing this approach, there is ongoing work to promote community cohesion and a community-wide approach to improvement such as through the City Region initiative to which the head of centre contributes.

Senior leaders bring different and complementary expertise to the leadership team which enhances oversight of the centre. The role of the qualified teacher is particularly successful and well established and this has helped child and adult learning and development to be highly valued across the centre. The assistant head of centre has been in post for six months and has brought additional expertise to the centre around family support. There is a shared view of centre strengths and priorities. This has been achieved through good communication between leaders, regular monitoring and shared planning. The approach taken to centre development is focused upon overcoming challenges as a team and using individual strengths.



Staff have become much more evaluative under the new leadership and evaluation is systematic, accurate and well used in setting priorities. Evaluation across centre activities is strongly linked to the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda and clear case studies are carefully documented. Planning structures have been strengthened and are now comprehensive and target focused.

Support from the local authority in line managing the head of centre is excellent and well established. There are focused quarterly discussions about developments, useful feedback is given about improvement planning and well developed performance indicator summaries are provided. A local authority Early Years consultant is the new chair of the advisory board and has already agreed a focused action plan to steer improvements to governance in relation to partner links to centre targets and involvement of the board in centre practices and challenges.

Partnership working is embedded well in the centre in the oversight, planning and delivery of services, especially with Social Care. This means that support to families whose circumstances make them vulnerable is very effective. Good referral systems enable swift access to services for families experiencing challenge, and streamlined service delivery enables the centre to avoid duplication of support.

Parents feel valued and listened to and express a high level of satisfaction with services. Parents are engaged in shaping services through involvement in the advisory board. Productive partnership has also been established through the Parents' Forum. A wide range of approaches are used to draw upon local views including comments boxes in the centre foyer and participation in the regular evaluation of courses.

The centre achieves its' aim to be 'welcoming, valuing and respectful towards all local children and families'. For example, the achievement gap between groups of centre children has narrowed over each of the last three years. There are clear policies on promoting diversity and tackling discrimination. The centre implements these policies well and the centre makes a good contribution to community cohesion with its celebration of the different cultures and festivals within the community. Inclusion is well promoted and children with disabilities from a wide geographical area regularly attend a Trafford Educational Development Service session at the centre.

Resources are well managed and the impact on outcomes is good. Much attention has been given to making the environment safe and welcoming. Effective use of space has meant that the centre services include a crèche, sensory room and soft play room and each of these are good quality and well used. This has also allowed for meeting different needs, for example the soft play room is the resource most used by local fathers. Account has been taken of making services sustainable, for example, parents are charged for the use of the popular soft play room. Parents said to inspectors that this was not a barrier to access for them.

The centre has a clear safeguarding policy, as well as policies regarding a range of

related issues such as intimate care, home visiting and lone working. All staff have been appropriately checked and criminal record bureau checks are fully in place. All staff have undertaken basic training in safeguarding and some have further training as requested, for example in relation to emotional abuse, neglect and domestic violence. This is valuable because of the wide range of child and family needs that staff support. For example, several children being supported are subject to child protection plans and currently many children using the centre are being supported through the Common Assessment Framework.

*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>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>2</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**

EY286057 Trafford MBC Sure Start Partington & Carrington nursery was inspected in November 2007 and judged to be good.

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 Partington & Carrington Children's Centre on 30-31 March 2010. We found that the centre was good overall.

Thank you to the many parents who took time to speak to us and tell us about your centre. As I told some of you I would do, I am writing to say what we found out about the centre.

We were pleased that you and your children are provided with good groups and activities at the centre. To have a sensory room and soft play room is a great resource and it was good to hear that these are well used. We were not making a full inspection of the nursery but did look at this part of the centre. During our visits it was good because the rooms are very well organised, staff are good at playing and talking with children and children's progress is celebrated well. We judged that the nursery is a key strength of the centre.

It is was good to find that the centre is increasingly providing groups at a range of places such as the library and local primary schools in order to make support more accessible for the whole community. To know that staff also make visits to you at home was good. To find that there is a Parent's Forum was really pleasing. This is a centre for children and families and to have such parental involvement in important roles helps to make the centre fit for the needs of children and families in Partington & Carrington. Just as important is the good range of professionals from different organisations who work together to provide services through the children's centre. We found a strong commitment from these workers, who want to work in better and improved ways to support families in your community.

We were pleased that so many of you wanted to tell us what a difference the centre has made to your lives. You said it has made you more confident, brought new friendships, helped you to be happier and better parents and helped you to access training and employment. It has also helped your children in their learning and development. Two parent comments show the impact of the centre: 'They went above and beyond to help me' and 'I don't feel so alone now that I've had the opportunity to meet other parents in my community'.

We feel that the centre can improve further by increasing the number of children and families who register with the centre including increasing the number of registered children under the age of two years.

Thank you once again for your help.

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