

# Inspection report for Shiregreen Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	383718
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	not applicable
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	EY333241 Shiregreen Children's Centre

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## 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 early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with representatives from the local authority and the National Health Service, centre staff, representatives from the advisory board, representatives from services that work in partnership with the centre and users of the centre. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

This is a phase one children's centre designated in 2006 and providing the core offer to the Brightside and Shiregreen Ward. The centre serves one of the 30% most deprived parts in the country. Within the reach area there are seven super output areas. There is childcare provision within the centre catering for 27 children. This was last inspected in November 2009. The centre provides a range of services, designed to support families and young children in partnership with First Start Children's Centre and Tinsley Green Children's Centre. The centre is managed by a centre manager who is accountable to Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust and Sheffield local authority for the delivery of services within the centre. There is also an advisory board shared by this centre and First Start Children's Centre that represents families that use the centre and service partners.

The large majority of the population are White British. The minority ethnic groups living in the area are predominantly of Somali, Asian or Polish heritage. The skill levels of the majority of children on entry to early years provision is below typically expected levels. Approximately half of the children in the area are in families who are dependant on workless benefits. The rate of teenage pregnancy is higher than in the rest of Sheffield.

## 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 families**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**2**

## Main findings

The overall effectiveness of the children's centre is good. The excellent care, guidance and support and the good quality of provision and leadership have resulted in good outcomes for nearly all families. All the parents and carers spoken with and the many evaluations of its work demonstrate how effective the children's centre is in improving the lives of families in the area. As one parent reported representing the views of many others, 'I feel very proud of the changes I have made to my life and to the lives of my children. I know that it wouldn't have been possible if there hadn't been the children's centre'.

The centre successfully engages with the large majority of its families, particularly the groups in most need of help. For example, all the teenage parents in the area benefit from the services of the centre to keep themselves and their children safe and healthy and the large majority embark on family learning courses that are improving their parenting skills. At the last inspection of the childcare provision in the centre, outcomes were judged to be good. The current centre assessment information demonstrates that children have continued to make good progress and nearly all leave the childcare setting with skill development that is at the expected levels. One strong feature is the provision and outcomes for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, nearly half of the children that benefit from childcare have speech and language difficulties. Assessment information shows that the very effective provision provided by the centre in partnership with the speech therapy service has ensured that by the time these children leave the centre their language development is at expected levels. Outcomes for the economic well-being of parents and carers are good as a result of the very broad range of courses that prepare them for further training, voluntary work and for employment in childcare and administration work. However, the opportunity to gain employment in other professions is limited because the links and partnerships with employment agencies are not as effective as they could be.

The capacity for sustained improvement is good. The evaluation of the centre's work by the centre manager and her team is very thorough. A culture of review and evaluation has been very well established. All providers and centre workers are

rigorous in ensuring that activities, courses and services are tailored to meet the desired outcomes for families. The evaluation of the centre's work is underpinned by a very useful action plan with a clear set of priorities to improve lives. Some of the statistical information that the centre is provided with makes it difficult for centre leaders to demonstrate how the activities and services are contributing to improved outcomes across the wider community. Procedures and policies for safeguarding and promoting equality and diversity are good.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Establish stronger links with employment agencies to offer a greater variety of job opportunities to users.
- Work closely with the local authority so that the centre can clearly demonstrate how provision is improving outcomes across the wider community.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

<b>2</b>
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Robust procedures are established that ensure that families whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable are safe, developing healthy lifestyles and becoming economically secure. Children who are looked after or who are subject to child-protection procedures are very well cared for by the centre and partner services. Very productive relationships are established with parents and carers so that centre staff are able to monitor closely the welfare of children. Parents and carers demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibility to keep their children safe and appreciate that the centre will ensure that they are doing so. Behaviour by all centre families is good. Children play well together and adults are respectful and polite to each other.

The mental health of parents and carers is improved well by the services offered, for example, the counselling service. As one parent reported, 'When I first got involved in the children's centre I was very depressed and having difficulty interacting with my children. I now have a much more positive outlook and I am more trusting and confident with people'. A good proportion of parents and carers are learning about how to prepare healthy meals for their families and also how to develop sustainable lifestyles. For example, on the centre's allotment this year a hundred families have taken part in activities to learn how to grow their own food, then prepare and cook it. They have also learnt the benefits of recycling. Users take responsibility for maintaining the allotment and designing future improvements. This has been particularly beneficial at engaging some lone parents and carers who have experienced isolation.

An impressive feature of the centre's work is in the development of self-confidence in adults. This is demonstrated by the many volunteers who take responsibility for

aspects of the centre's work. For example, a group of parents and carers were trained to do research in the area on the barriers to employment. They carried out this research and produced a valuable report with recommendations that have informed centre leaders on the next steps they could take to improve the opportunities for employment. Adult users are well prepared to embark on higher education and to seek employment because of the comprehensive range of courses that improves their literacy, numeracy information and communication technology and social skills. The great enjoyment of families in learning is demonstrated by the high numbers who attend these courses. Those who want to, are effectively supported in gaining employment in child care and administration. Those spoken to report that without the help of the centre they would never have been able to gain this employment.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

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

## How good is the provision?

**2**

The centre has good procedures to ensure that when families register their needs are identified and services offered that they could benefit from. Consequently, the large majority of families with young children in the area are engaged in the wide range of services offered by the centre either in the centre building, in a partner centre or on one of the sites in the community that are utilised. Centre staff are particularly effective at providing users with training plans to help them achieve their goals and then checking that they regularly attend courses and keep service appointments. Centre staff are skilled at advising other services so that they more effectively engage with families. For example, breastfeeding support services were advised by centre staff of the activities that would be most effective in encouraging mothers in the area to continue breastfeeding.

There are strong partnerships between the centre and most of the partners they work with that are very beneficial to families. For example, local pre-school providers and childminders have been well supported in improving their provision as a result of advice and guidance from the centre staff. Health visitors, as a matter of course, tell new parents and users about the services from which that they could benefit. For

example, the very effective 'parent skill' courses that guide parents on how to manage their children's behaviour. As one parent reported, 'The childcare and parenting courses have helped me with my parenting. I never had a parent to show me what to do, so these courses and the support from staff have shown me how I can help my children'.

One reason for the high engagement rate of users is that they are extremely well cared for by centre staff. Centre staff are highly skilled at nurturing adults and children who thrive in this warm and secure environment. For example, a group of confident parents and carers reported that as a result of their engagement with the centre, they had gained employment or were embarking on higher education, that their children were doing well at school and that they now no longer needed the centre's services. All of these parents had experienced difficulties or disadvantages in their lives before their engagement with the centre.

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	<b>2</b>
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	<b>2</b>
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.	<b>1</b>

## How effective are the leadership and management?

**2**

The advisory board is proficiently led by centre parents and carers. They have a very clear understanding of the needs of the community and effectively challenge partner agencies to ensure the high quality of services are sustained. One important characteristic of the good value for money offered by the centre is the determination of centre staff and the advisory board to ensure that financial constraints have minimal disruption to the services for users and good outcomes are maintained.

Supervision procedures are rigorous and hinged on the evaluation of outcomes for users. The local authority and health service have adequate and improving procedures for checking the work of the centre and holding leaders to account for their work. Centre leaders evaluate effectively the impact of provision on individual users. However, they have difficulty in some cases to relate the provision to the improvement overall in the community. For example, local data shows that the obesity rate of children was higher than in the rest of Sheffield. Very effective provision has been tailored to improve healthy lifestyles, such as the cooking courses and engagement with the allotment, and the most recent data show that the obesity rate has reduced considerably. However, while centre staff understand the impact on their families, they have had difficulty linking this provision to the improvement in the obesity rate for the community overall.

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. Procedures for vetting staff are secure and staff are very well trained to ensure the safety of users. There are strong partnerships with social services and housing agencies to ensure swift and effective intervention to secure the safety of families when they are in crisis. The outcomes for the large majority, particularly those from target groups such as from workless households or single parents experiencing isolation, have been improved because of engagement with the centre. The centre has also successfully included the minority ethnic groups within the community and the large majority of families engage in the services of the centre. As well as this they regularly organise events celebrating a range of religious festivals promoting the contribution of different cultures to the community.

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	<b>2</b>
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	<b>2</b>
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	<b>2</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>2</b>
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	<b>2</b>
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	<b>2</b>
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	<b>2</b>

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

The most recent inspection report of the Shiregreen childcare provision was considered during the inspection.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Shiregreen Children's Centre on 21 and 22 September 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank those of you who spoke with us. Your views were very helpful to the inspection. The wide range of services and activities on offer is helping lots of you to improve your parenting skills, and prepare you for employment, further training or voluntary work. Your children in the childcare provision at the centre are well looked after. They are developing their skills well and their behaviour is good. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families are very well supported by the centre staff. Those of you who are experiencing difficulty in your lives are well supported to keep your families and children safe and healthy. Coming to the centre has helped you to overcome feelings of isolation and has boosted your confidence so that you are planning the next steps to improve the lives of your families. We watched you thoroughly enjoying the activities, such as 'Ready Steady Go', the mathematics course and the work on the allotment, where you were able to learn with friends and play with your children. We were impressed by the large numbers who volunteer to work in the centre or the community such as attending the parents' forum and advisory board. Some of you reported how much you appreciated the help received to gain employment and were rightly proud of your achievements. We decided that the centre could establish stronger links with employment agencies, such as Jobcentre Plus, to broaden the range of employment opportunities on offer.

The centre has been successful in making sure that most of you in the area who could benefit from its services know about them and take part in them. You told us that one reason why you like coming to the centre is because of the extremely caring, helpful and friendly staff who work there, and we agree that this is an accurate picture of the team. They try their best to help you to make improvements to your lives. For example, the outreach workers work well with other agencies such as the health service and social services to make sure that the help is just right for you and your families. The centre has helped childminders and other providers of childcare in the area to make improvements that your children are benefiting from.

The centre has a good plan which shows where it could make some improvements. It also checks carefully that activities, courses and other services are just right for you. The advisory board is very good at making sure that you receive good quality services from the centre. While the centre is good at checking that its services meet the needs of all of you and is improving your lives it is not yet as good at demonstrating how this is contributing to the overall improvement of the community.

The centre leaders have been successful in safeguarding the families that use the centre. They show that they know well the different groups in the community that benefit from the centre's help and can demonstrate how successful they have been in including most of you in their activities and services.

We have asked the centre to make some improvements by:

- establishing stronger links with employment agencies to widen the job opportunities available
- ensuring that the centre can demonstrate how its services are contributing to overall improvements in the community.

Many thanks again for making us feel so welcome and we wish you and your families a successful future.

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