

Inspection report for Chickenley Earlsheaton & Shaw Cross Children's Centre

Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	383580
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Reporting inspector	Jean Webb

Centre leader	Jessica Day
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	130939 Chickenley Community Junior, Infant and Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY340083Chickenley, Earlsheaton & Shawcross 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.

An inspection of the registered 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.

An inspection of the co-located primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior managers from the centre and the local authority, parents and carers, members of the advisory board, local schools and a number of partners including: Early Years Foundation Stage staff; Action for Children; health; and Jobcentre Plus.

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

Information about the centre

Chickenley, Earlsheaton and Shaw Cross are areas on the outskirts of Dewsbury. The children's centre merged from two separate centres into one during summer 2010. The former phase 1 Chickenley and Earlsheaton Children's Centre was designated and delivering fully operational services from September 2006. The former phase two Shaw Cross Children's Centre was delivering fully operational services from December 2009. The main centre is situated in Chickenley on a campus site which includes a community centre and Chickenley Community School and local authority run childcare provision. The Shaw Cross Centre outreach site is based in a small extension of the Shaw Cross Infant and Nursery school. The centre is managed by Action for Children, which is commissioned by Kirklees

Metropolitan Council. There is a separate advisory board consisting of key partners and a separate family forum.

Half of the children in the area live in the 30% most deprived nationally. The greater proportion of deprivation is in Chickenley and Earlsheaton with one area falling in the worst three percent nationally. There is a small pocket of deprivation in the Shaw Cross area. A large majority of the population are White British heritage. Attainment on entry to Early Years Foundation Stage is below expected norms, particularly in terms of language development.

Worklessness is high in Chickenley and Earlsheaton, at over double the Kirklees average; 34% of families live in households dependent on workless benefits. Antisocial incidents by 10–17 year olds are high. Children and parents and carers have low aspirations. The infant mortality is nearly double the national average, with high rates of 'still births' and low weight babies.

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 Chickenley Earlsheaton and Shaw Cross Children's Centre is good. It provides exceptionally good support to children and families and provides high-quality learning services which in turn leads to high levels of enjoyment and achievement for children and families. Other outcomes are good and the level of engagement of the most vulnerable families is good and improving. The centre has effectively identified where it needs to improve and is demonstrating its ability to make these improvements showing its capacity to improve is good.

The centre's reach area has a number of health issues affecting it, including high infant mortality and low birth weight. Past events have created distrust in the community towards any locally provided services; the centre has worked successfully to break down these barriers and is now engaging with the community very well, particularly the harder to reach groups. A healthy lifestyle approach is embedded throughout all activities with plenty of opportunities for physical activity. An excellent parents' booklet and DVD, developed in

collaboration with Action for Children and Kirklees Metropolitan Council, forms the basis of all the learning and development for children and their parents and carers. The result has been a significant increase children's attainment the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is now higher than in all surrounding local authorities.

There is a good uptake of services provided by the centre, particularly by those from more deprived areas. The services have been developed and continuously reviewed to meet the needs of users well. An active family forum represents parents well, but the link with the advisory board is not sufficiently clear. Learning and development is promoted exceptionally well and most parents and carers complete courses they begin. The outcomes of these services are evaluated well, showing excellent achievement of the outcomes planned. The care, guidance and support for users are outstanding, brought about by the extremely well-planned care package and working relationships of all partners. The centre is very creative in using innovative practice to engage and care for users and overall have outstanding provision.

Leadership and management are good and are particularly strong in the way it has developed and worked with partners. Safeguarding has a high priority and is embedded well in all services and partnership arrangements. Staff are highly motivated and committed to providing an excellent service. There is good professional supervision and development, which is well integrated with the children centre remit. There are clear and challenging targets set by the centre manager and although they are shared with staff they do not form part of the formal action plan or business plan approved by the local authority. The local authority sets no targets, but manages performance through the regular meetings with Action for Children.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Further improve the opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to the advisory board by:
 - making sure parents and carers understand the role of the advisory board and are supported appropriately to attend
 - making sure the family forum is clear about its role in relation to the advisory board.
- Ensure there are clear success criteria for outcomes agreed with the local authority by:
 - making targets explicit on the main action plan so all those working together to provide the children's centres service are clear on rate of progress
 - referring to these targets in all reports and updates of any action plans.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Outcomes are good overall. Being healthy is promoted well in all services and a majority of children and their families take part in activities that either increase their physical activity or encourage a healthier lifestyle. The 'Big Cook Little Cook' activity is particularly popular. Parents demonstrate a much better understanding of how to be more healthy by making simple changes in their life, as one parent said, 'It has taught me that cooking from scratch does not take ages - so you don't have to rely on processed food'. Breastfeeding is supported well; mothers use special chairs purchased for this purpose. There are trained breastfeeding peer support mothers present every week at the 'Baby Bistro'. Obesity rates for children of reception age are a little above the Kirklees average and have only decreased slightly despite the work of the children's centre.

Children are safeguarded well in the centre and in their homes. Vulnerable families, identified by the family support worker, receive safety packs. Partnerships are very effective at highlighting and following up any cause for concern. Parents and carers feel the centre is a safe and secure place and their children demonstrate that they feel secure, using all parts of the play facilities well. The staff constantly reinforce safe practices during sessions and when giving individual advice and guidance. The Common Assessment Framework is used well to ensure a full range of protection. The incidence of Child Protection Plans (CPP) being required has reduced significantly.

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile scores are significantly higher than three years ago, and there is a reduction in the gap between the lowest achieving children and the rest. Children and their families are prepared for school extremely well, with the 'Ready Steady Go' programme. Communication and language skills are greatly improved through innovative projects, such as the 'Talking Families' project and the 'Bookstart' scheme. Parents and carers are much more skilled in supporting their children's development. Children and families get a great deal of enjoyment from the activities. Take up of places for two-year-old children is very good. A majority of parents and carers take on further learning opportunities.

Children express their preferences and interests well in a variety of innovative ways, such as a book of 'talking' photographs that children select and record their voice to describe the type of play. Families contributed to making 'The Child's Journey' DVD and booklet. There is a well-established and active family forum that helps to plan events and raise money for the centre. However, not all members of the family forum are clear about how the advisory board works and there is no regular representative at the advisory board. Parents and children take part in the selection and interviewing new staff. A few parents have taken up opportunities for volunteering. Parents and carers improve their financial situation with advice on benefits and housing. The number of households dependent on workless benefits and also families without any qualifications has decreased.

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	2
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The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, 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 parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	2
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.	2

How good is the provision?

1

The centre promotes learning and development exceptionally well and in a way that reaches target groups. This is partly due to the use of an excellent resource 'The Child's Journey,' which has key themes of attachment, communication, movement and play. This resource is used both at the centre and in the home. The four areas demonstrate practical ways in which parents and carers can understand their child's development. The accompanying booklet and DVD is given to all new parents. Sessions, such as 'Weekly Baby Massage' and 'Song, Rhyme and Story time,' reflect these themes. Staff also effectively use a specially designed pack of cards giving suggestions to families on how to support children's development in these four areas at different ages. Children's learning is celebrated very well and recorded in the 'All About Me' books. Parents and carers contribute to these books and value them highly.

Parents and carers are given a wide choice of learning opportunities and these are well attended. Families are assessed carefully to make sure they are offered the most beneficial courses. Priority is given to target families. Fathers have their own group and plan and organise their own activities, such as trips to the seaside and a wildlife park, with the support of the centre. There is a full timetable of summer activities in the school holidays, which include activities for older children. All sessions are continuously reviewed and changed after consultation with families. A community link worker follows up those families not accessing the centre in target areas and visits families to encourage their engagement, which has resulted in good reach of target groups. Marketing and publicity for events is planned carefully and a social networking site is used to reach families. Since its development in 2010, there has been increased use of the site.

The support and care of users is outstanding. Specialist staff roles, such as the maternity and newborn family support worker, are in place to respond to the special requirements of target groups. Support is particularly well integrated with health services and all first visits to the home include both a health visitor and family support worker. An individualised package of support is put together for each family using a combination of different partners. This is aided by a well-designed electronic tracking system 'E-Aspire' to record children's and their

families' needs and the support they are receiving. Families feedback on how the support has impacted on them and comments, such as 'I can't thank the staff enough, they have given me my life back, I feel so much happier,' are typical of how much users appreciate the support they have.

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	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	1
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Leadership and management are good. The local authority and Action for Children work together very effectively to ensure a clear strategic direction for the children's centre along with well-documented systems for professional supervision and performance management. The advisory board works well in its role of challenging the centre and agreeing actions and targets. The merging of the two original children's centres was managed very well and full pre- and post-consultations were made to make sure Shaw Cross reach area felt part of the new centre. Self-evaluation makes good use of data available from the local authority and locally to accurately identify areas for improvement and also those families that are particularly vulnerable. At centre level, targets are used well with staff to improve provision but these are not agreed at local authority level or recorded as part of the main action plan.

Safeguarding is given high priority across the centre. Staff are well trained and confident in their role in dealing with possible child protection situations and to recognise potential risk factors. They emphasise on-line security very well. Policies and procedures are used well and protect staff as well the users. Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed to the recommended requirements. Partners work well together to identify risks and make referrals when required. There are robust risk assessments and the environment is safe, secure and well maintained.

Partnership working is exceptionally successful and all services are completely integrated in ways that impact extremely well on families, particularly those from target groups. Partnerships with local schools have made tremendous differences to children's achievements and transition to school as well as increasing family learning and supporting vulnerable families. Partnerships with health services are also extremely effective in addressing the needs of families that require support with physical or mental health issues. The children's centre have developed a number of excellent working relationships with partners, such as the 'Chickenley Partnership Board,' which is a multi-agency approach to reducing inequalities in the Chickenley area. A multi-agency 'One Stop Shop' runs weekly

from the centre involving a range of partners, including health, housing and the Citizens Advice Bureau and this also enables partners to have a completely streamlined approach to supporting families.

The centre is working diligently to raise awareness of diversity in an area which is predominantly White British. Sessions are planned around raising awareness of different cultures and there has been an increase in volume of those from black minority ethnic groups accessing the centre, although the numbers involved are very small. Play activities and resources to promote equality and diversity are embedded well. A good response was made by the centre to the differences in the attainment of girls and boys by changing the play room activities. Action for Children is committed to using data to show equality impact although this is not a requirement. The disability network ensures all children with a disability are supported appropriately and referred to local specialist help. Children with disabilities attend the centre and take part in centre activities. A recent audit has improved access to the outside of the building. Value for money is good.

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	2
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
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	1
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.	2

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

Information from the concurrent Ofsted inspection of Chickenley, Earlsheaton and Shaw Cross full day care has been taken into account when writing about early years' provision and outcomes for children in the report.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Chickenley Earlsheaton & Shaw Cross Children's Centre on 13 Oct 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

During our visit we evaluated your centre's work and the quality of its resources, as well as its plans and documents. We talked with a number of you and the professionals who work with you. Your centre does some things especially well. For example, the exceptionally good quality care, guidance and support offered to you. You and your children also experience high levels of achievement and enjoyment, as a result of the high quality learning opportunities. Your centre works exceptionally well with other services and partners, such as health services and local schools. You told us how safe you feel in the centre and how assured you are of your own children's safety.

You really enjoy and value the quality of the activities your centre offers during the week and in school holidays. We observed how much fun your children have and how exceptionally well they are progressing educationally and in their personal and social skills. Some of you contributed to 'The Child's Journey' booklet and DVD and the main messages of attachment, communication, movement and play are continually reinforced at the centre. You have lots of opportunity to pursue further learning and some of you progress to higher level courses and volunteering. Your centre does a great deal to support mothers who want to breastfeed and also offer opportunities for cooking healthy food and taking part in physical activities. A large majority of families in your centre's area are registered with the centre and have had a least one visit. The centre has done well in reaching the majority of potentially vulnerable families and making sure they benefit from the centre's services. Your centre is trying hard to reduce the high infant mortality rate in the area.

Your centre offers tailored individual support to families in their home and coordinates this exceptionally well with other partners. You told us how this has made all the difference to your life and well-being. You are continuously asked for your opinions and suggestions and your centre listens to you and acts upon your feedback. They also take time to find out what activities your children prefer in very innovative ways. They help you to capture your child's learning in the 'All About Me' books. Some of you are part of a family forum and help to organise events and raise money. However, not all of you are fully aware of how the centre's progress is checked and targets set.

The people in charge of running your centre are doing a good job. They are working hard to increase the engagement of families whose circumstances make them vulnerable even more and also increasing the acceptance and awareness of different cultures and ethnic minorities. Your centre is doing this well by including activities that raise awareness of different cultures. They are doing a lot to include dads as well as mums. Staff are very well trained and prepared to carry out their role. They give safeguarding a high priority.

Your centre is good at reviewing where they are and highlighting what they need to improve. We have every confidence that they will continue to carry on improving their services. They work really well with the local authority to plan ahead for the year and your centre manager makes sure that staff are clear about the targets your centre needs to achieve. These targets make sure there is value for money in terms of the benefits gained from different actions. However, these targets are not part of the centre's action plan for all to see and the local authority does not set specific targets.

We have asked the manager and the local authority to look at how they can make things even better. These are the most important things to do. Firstly, to ensure that you are clear about how your views are presented to other partners in the advisory board and the children's centre managers. Secondly, to ensure that everyone is aware of the targets the centre has set themselves so everyone is clear about how well your children's centre is improving.

Thank you very much for your welcome and for your frankness with inspectors. We are very grateful and wish you every success in the future.

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