

# Inspection report for Fairfield Children's Centre

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Centre leader	Mrs Elizabeth Klavins
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	119086 Fairfield Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY136957 The Duckling Club

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.

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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 one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the senior leadership team, representatives from the local authority, representatives from the governing body, health services, frontline workers, representatives from local childcare providers and school, parents and other users of the centre's facilities. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Fairfield Children's Centre is a Phase 1 centre located in Hyndburn Borough Springhill ward, approximately one mile from Accrington town centre. The centre is co-located with Fairfield Nursery School and The Duckling Club, which provides integrated care and education for families. A satellite facility has recently been established at Moorend Primary School in Oswaldtwistle to accommodate services for families in the wider catchment area.

Families in the area experience significant issues relating to long-term unemployment, substance misuse and low levels of literacy and numeracy and there is an increasing prevalence of domestic violence. The area is ranked in the top 30% most socially deprived and disadvantaged areas in the country with 27% of families receiving working tax and other benefits compared to 21% across Lancashire. Most children enter early years provision with skills and knowledge lower than what is usually expected, particularly in their personal and social development and speech and language skills. A large majority of children speak English as an additional language. The community has a significant Asian Pakistani population who reside alongside a smaller proportion of White British families. In addition the centre serves a growing Polish community and an established traveller community living on three local sites.

The centre received designation in 2005 and it provides the appropriate range of services including The Duckling Club childcare facility. A maximum of 66 children under eight years may attend The Duckling Club. There are 100 free, eligible part time places in the nursery school. The provision also provides a holiday play scheme during the summer school holidays. As with the nursery school, separate arrangements are in place to inspect this provision and reports can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The delivery of extended services has been delegated by the local authority to the headteacher of Fairfield Nursery School. The work of the centre is monitored by the Governing Body and the local authority. The day-to-day management of the centre is undertaken by the headteacher alongside her senior leadership team. A child minding Network Coordinator is employed and line managed by the Centre on behalf of three Hyndburn Children's Centres.

The centre provides a range of services and activities alongside partner agencies such as health professionals, schools, the speech and language service and the Traveller Education Service. The Fairfield outreach team provide targeted family support alongside Sure Start Hyndburn which provides services on a commissioned basis.

## 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 head of centre, governing body and the local authority provide a secure strategic steer for Fairfield Children's Centre. Good leadership and management ensures all services the centre provides are targeted well to meet the needs of the families it serves. However, procedures to sharply measure and improve all aspects of its effectiveness are not fully embedded. The centre has some good systems in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of services over time but practice is not consistent and not all partners provide outcome focused evaluations of their service. A strong senior leadership and staff team, intent on improving the lives, opportunities and aspiration for families in the reach area and beyond, confirms parents' views that this children's centre '...plays an important part in their lives'. As a result, the centres capacity to sustain further improvement is good overall.

Outcomes for families are good overall and outstanding in some respects, as a result, children and parents are leading healthier and happier lifestyles. Families engage in a wealth of good quality activities and services, such as 'Baby Massage' and sensitive one-to-one support via the outreach team. Parents report improved emotional well-being due to the accessibility of specialist agencies to address significant problems relating to substance misuse, domestic violence and mental health issues. A key strength of the centre is the provision for children's learning and development, which is outstanding. Equally, the priority given to educating parents about their child's development and well-being is impressive. Their enjoyment and achievement is outstanding as a result of high-quality provision for all children and wonderful activities in groups such as Baby Club and Toddler Group. However, adult learning and volunteering opportunities and pathways to further education and employment are less well developed.

The centre provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Staff are exceptionally sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of the families they serve, which ensures they establish a foundation of trust on which to build their active and meaningful engagement. Tailored provision and a strong home visiting programme ensures families receive services personal to their needs. Families keep themselves exceptionally safe and parents willingly make self-referrals to services such as positive parenting, as a means of preventing their difficulties escalating further. In addition, the Parent Child Empowerment Programme (PCEMP) ensures all families registering with the centre receive a programme of home visiting both before and after the birth of a child. Centre data confirm 100% take up of this service. Referral routes to services and multi-agency support ensures intervention and prevention strategies work hand-in-hand and provide effective tailored support that promotes stability and independence. In the main, safeguarding protocols are secure, are clearly understood by all and systems to ensure best practice are now more evident.

Opportunities for families to make a positive contribution to centre life are meaningful so parents feel confident about sharing their views and opinions. Increasing membership by parents on the governing board ensures they are able to play a more active role in centre management although parents' strategic role in driving improvement is still in its infancy.

Inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice is at the heart of the centre's work, hence the firm sense of welcome and belonging, described by families. As a result, the centre is engaging the most vulnerable individuals and groups including 100% of young parents in the area and children with disabilities and/or learning disabilities. Gypsy Roma Traveller families are now welcoming centre staff onto traveller sites. However, the newly introduced information management system is still being embedded, as a result, the collation and analysis of meaningful data about the engagement of some target groups such as lone parents, is problematic.

The secure links with families accessing services in the reach area, good or better outcomes, and the value given to its services within the community, confirms that the centre's overall effectiveness is good.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the collation and analysis of data and information, particularly about the engagement of target groups, to inform the evaluation of outcomes more meticulously and accurately, and, in conjunction with the local authority, governing body and centre partners, use data and information to set ambitious targets in the centre improvement plan.
- Improve pathways into training or employment for parents and provide a wider range of volunteering opportunities.

## How good are outcomes for families?

<b>2</b>
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Outcomes for families are positive due to a good range of provision designed to provide effective support to those who need it most. Comments such as; 'I'm a better parent now because I've learnt so much,' and 'I was embarrassed to go out with my children because of their behaviour, but that's all changed,' reflect the sense of pride that parents and carers feel about their achievements. The number of parents no longer smoking in the home and families accessing dental care are good. Furthermore, cooking sessions, family lunch club and Baby Group Tone and Walk are reducing obesity levels in the area and the centre is successfully helping more mothers to sustain breastfeeding for a longer period of time.

Parents demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and their children safe following their engagement in services such as the in 'b-safe, b-sure' sexual health programme and home safety promotions provided by the Accident Prevention Service. Outcomes for children in need, those on child protection plans or who are looked after, are exceptional. Sensitive and patient one-to-one support by outreach workers ensures that the positive steps taken to secure significant changes in the lives of children most at risk are sustained and progressive. Tiny steps are recognised as mountains to climb for some. Patient and encouraging support, alongside careful guidance and action planning ensures home life for children in need remains stable and continues to improve. As a consequence of sensitive family support, parents willingly engage with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process and positive parenting courses, which prevents difficulties escalating. Parent's comments such as 'I want to learn how to stop bad behaviour before it starts, which is why I'm here,' confirm this.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make significant gains in their learning and development ensuring a year-on-year improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile scores and a narrowing of the achievement gap. Their enjoyment and achievement is outstanding. A screening programme for Asian Pakistani heritage children ensures gaps in their learning, particularly in their speech and language skills, are successfully identified and supported at an early stage. Equally, services for children with special educational needs

and/or disabilities are cohesive and well-coordinated ensuring they too make good strides in their development. Transitions into any part of this integrated provision are smooth and successful as parents report 'My children knew the staff months before they started, so starting nursery was easy.' School readiness is a key priority hence the increasingly strong outcomes for children's communication, literacy and personal and social skills.

Parents show a significant increase in their understanding about how to support and build on their children's skills at home due to a wealth of family learning opportunities. Comments such as, 'PCEMP visits were brilliant, I learnt so much; they didn't give me advice, they made me think about what was wrong so I could find my own solutions' confirm this. Parents consistently evaluate services and a growing number play an active role in reviewing and shaping services through representation on the governing body and children's centre committee.

Parents report that volunteering opportunities relating to breast feeding peer support and 'Bump Start' increase their self esteem and confidence. Teen parents in particular, have been able to pursue their own career paths through the 'Care to Learn' programme as childcare places enable them to undertake accredited and higher level qualifications as a pathway to employment and economic stability. In addition, network childminders have significantly increased their own qualifications resulting in improved outcomes at their own inspections. However, outcomes are not clear for families referred to Job Centre Plus.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target 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 children and parents, including those from target groups, 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 parents, including those from target groups, 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, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment.</b>	<b>2</b>

## How good is the provision?

**2**

The provision to help children learn, develop and gain skills for the future is outstanding. High-quality childcare is replicated across all services ensuring that opportunities to promote children's development are maximised. The intimacy of Baby group allows young babies to explore using their senses whilst parents learn about the benefits of experimental play with natural materials and exciting creative and imaginative play experiences. Termly 'Family Fun

Trails' set challenging treasure hunts for parents and children to enjoy together and PCEMP visits provide valuable opportunities to enhance parent's knowledge of child development, health and well being.

Speech and language interventions such as 'Lets' Talk' and targeted support from the speech and language therapy team have been instrumental in improving children's speech and language skills and subsequent transition to school. In addition, the newly established 'Best Start' initiative and the introduction of Nurture Groups has established positive links with Springhill Primary School which improve personal, social and educational outcomes for children transferring to Reception class.

Provision for adults is less effective due to a narrow range of volunteering opportunities and a less-developed variety of training and accredited courses. Previous access to English speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses has resulted in some good outcomes for participants. However, these are now provided externally which is proving difficult for parents to access. The centre has plans to address this. Women from the traveller community have benefited from driving theory courses which also support their literacy acquisition in addition to securing some active, on site engagement. Equally, parents from the Polish community have successfully integrated into centre life.

Well-established inter-agency work with health professionals, Children and Parent Support Services (CAPSS) and schools, combined with family support and intensive outreach work, provide a secure bridge between support and formal services. Referral pathways are generally well-embedded across partners ensuring swift and tailored interventions for those in need. Provision for contact visiting is now well-established within the centre. The use of CAF processes and some innovative assessment tools enable swift assessment and tailored support for all families with specific needs.

The care, guidance and support families receive are outstanding. 'Nothing is too much trouble' and 'The welcome visits at home are the best', confirm this. Parents consistently speak highly of the centre and the immense impact on their lives. For example, 'If you need a hand to hold or a shoulder to cry on, they are there for you, they don't tell you want to do, they don't judge you, they just help you to work it out'. Participation rates across most services are high and routinely include families from Asian Pakistani heritage, young parents, grandparents and fathers in particular as well as many families from outside the reach area. A concerted approach to increasing engagement has led to 74% of new registrations being within the designated reach area.

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

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



## How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Careful planning involving leaders, staff and most partners, and a strong sense of commitment to the community, are behind the success of this children's centre. The senior leadership team are strong role models who provide seamless, high-quality provision. Accountability arrangements are secure and clear lines of responsibility and robust supervision exist. The priority given to the continuous professional development across all tiers of staff ensures families benefit from a wide range of expertise. Comments such as 'They always manage to help whatever the problem,' confirm this.

The governing body, local authority and parents are firmly behind the senior leadership team, as are partners. A rigorous annual conversation led by the local authority and increasingly detailed termly reports to the board ensures that the centre receives firm challenge in relation to its performance. Development plans are precise and firmly focused on the right priorities although performance measures are not embedded in robust and challenging targets preventing the centre from demonstrating the full impact of its work over time. In addition, systems to evaluate service provision are inconsistently applied. Consultation with parents is enhanced by 'Participatory Appraisals' and a 'listening' ethos and active engagement on the board, although the role of parents in driving improvement in general is still developing.

The building is well maintained and financial management is secure. The centre is intent on providing sustainable services so careful needs analysis informs the development of new groups such as a unique group for lone fathers and another for young mothers with learning difficulties. As a result, outcomes are good or better ensuring the centre provides good value for money.

Safeguarding procedures are good. Building security is robust and risk assessments are used across all services, minimising the risks of harm. Visitors are familiarised with the health and safety arrangements and the busy reception area is well managed by competent staff who implement their duties with due care and concern for centre users. The centre are provided with evidence to confirm the suitability of their partner agencies and Criminal Record Bureau checks are undertaken as required for centre staff. A system to update Criminal Record Bureau checks every three years has recently been introduced.

Partnerships with health professionals are particularly strong, resulting in their active engagement in the 'Bumps, Birth and Beyond' programme and the routine delivery of ante-natal services on site. Furthermore, the centre has done exceptionally well to secure a local General Practitioner's involvement on the governing body, which strengthens the strategic role of health in governance. The successful 'Helping Hands' childminder network enhances the range and quality of childcare available to families. Equally, firm relationships with the Learning Disability Team and the Sure Start Hyndburn Family Intervention Team and children's social care partners ensure vulnerable families and those most in need receive timely and effective interventions.

The promotion of equality and diversity is central to the work of the centre and this is securely evidenced by strong outcomes for children and adults with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Equally, the growing number of fathers attending a wide range of sessions rather than separate groups confirms the strength of belonging they feel. 'I'm happy to attend the same things as everybody else, that's what I like best about it'. However, the collation of pertinent and accurate data about the engagement of all target groups is not fully refined.

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 effectiveness of evaluation and its use of ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>2</b>
<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>	<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 partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose</b>	<b>2</b>
<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>	<b>2</b>

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

Inspection outcomes for Fairfield Nursery School and Duckling Club have been considered as part of this inspection

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Fairfield Children's Centre on 19 and 20 October 2011 and we judged the centre as good overall with some very important outstanding features.

As part of our inspection we visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with a number of you, staff and centre partners who work with you. We found that the centre provides a safe and welcoming place for you and your children and those of you we spoke with said that the centre had helped you to make some important changes in your lives by stopping smoking in your homes and by learning to manage children's behaviour in a more positive way. As a result, parents said they now have better relationships with their children and they enjoy playing together much more.

We also found that all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make excellent progress in their learning and development due to the wonderful opportunities in the children's centre nursery and the fabulous activities in Baby Club and Toddler Groups. Parents too, show a significant increase in their understanding about how to support and build on their children's learning at home because of the family learning and positive parenting programmes they engage with. However, we found that opportunities for parents to learn more skills which would help provide a pathway to further education and employment were less well developed. So we have asked the centre to think of more ways to help you with this.

It was good to see so many of you using all the activities and services because this shows that the centre understands what you need. Attendance levels at Toddler Groups, positive parenting courses and the 'Family Fun Trail' show how much you value your children's centre and why you continue to return. Comments such as 'It's a place for everybody, staff are brilliant and I couldn't do without it', show the appreciation you feel. However, the centre need to gather more information about the children and parents in the area in order to plan services that are right for everybody.

We found that the centre provides outstanding care, guidance and support to all families, but particularly those who may be potentially very vulnerable or who may experienced prejudice because they choose to live their lives in a different way to others. As a result, the centre is beginning to encourage all groups of people, including Traveller families, young parents and dads to engage with a wide range of centre services.

We found that the centre provides a good range of activities and services, including those which promote your good health. The impressive 'Birth's Bumps and Beyond' programme ensures expectant parents are well looked-after in their pregnancy and receive lots of valuable information about breast feeding and safe sleeping practices to keep the new baby safe. In addition, cooking sessions, the family lunch club and 'Baby Group Tone and Walk' are beginning to reduce obesity levels in the area and the centre is helping more mothers to sustain breastfeeding for a longer period of time.

The centre provides exceptional support for people in very difficult situations or crisis and they make sure they are appropriately protected and supported. Parents we spoke to demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and their children safe by following road safety advice, addressing issues about bullying and by taking up home safety advice provided by the Accident Prevention Service (APAS). The centre's family support and outreach services work really well with their partners to make sure lives

improve for the better. Parents and carers we spoke with described how staff have helped them to seek help with problems, such as post natal depression, substance abuse and domestic violence. 'This place is a life saver,' confirms the strength of feeling parents have about the centre.

We also found that parents and carers provide their views about services after courses and activities and some of you play an active role on the governing body and children's centre committee. The centre knows it is important to seek your views about how to make services even better which is why parents are encouraged to play a role on these management groups. However, they are still developing ways to ensure that your views link firmly, to action plans for the future. You told us that the centre is managed very well and we agree with this. We found that day-to-day management of the centre is undertaken by an experienced senior leadership team who has high expectations of staff, partners and of the families in the community. The team know the community well and they provide lots of services and activities which meet your needs.

The head teacher of Fairfield Primary School, the local authority and the governing body regularly review the services and activities to make sure they continue to match your needs. However, they need to make sure they collect all the right information so they can continue to develop more services and activities in the future and we know they are trying hard to involve you in that important work.

We would like to thank everyone who came to speak to us, we are very grateful for your help and we wish you well for the future. The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).