

# Inspection report for Gisburn Road Children's Centre

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Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	383937
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Reporting inspector	Gillian Bishop HMI

Centre leader	June Banks
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Gisburn Road County Primary School 119265
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Not applicable

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, and a representative from the children's centre sub-committee, various health professionals, frontline workers, local headteachers, 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

Gisburn Road Children's Centre is a phase two Less Deprived Area (LDA) centre providing services for families residing in Barnoldswick, Earby, Kelbrook and Salterforth. The centre operates from a purpose-built community suite within Gisburn Road Community Primary School in Lancashire. The school provides places for children aged three and four years within a maintained nursery provision. Separate inspection arrangements apply for this provision and the Ofsted report can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The centre is situated in an LDA, although local families experience difficulties with small terraced housing, poor public transport due to a rural location and a low living environment and health and disability deprivation index. The catchment area includes three super output areas which are in the top 30% most deprived in the country.

The percentage of children aged from birth to four years old living in households dependent on workless benefits is 20%, compared with 27% for the North West region and 25% of families benefit from working tax credits. Most children enter early years provision with skills and knowledge which are lower than those usually expected, particularly in their personal and social development and speech and language skills. The very large majority of families

residing in local wards are of White British heritage with a small pocket of East European and Asian families.

The centre received designation in 2008 and it provides the appropriate range of services. The delivery of services has been commissioned by the local authority to the governing body of Gisburn Road Community Primary School. A separate children’s centre sub-committee, which includes representation from the local authority, provides a strategic link between the governing body and the centre. The strategic management of the centre is undertaken by the headteacher who delegates the day-to-day running of the centre to a children’s centre coordinator. A childminding network exists, led by a designated childminding coordinator. Partner agencies include health professionals, schools, the speech and language service and children’s social care. The outreach team provide targeted family support within the community.

## 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**

<b>3</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>3</b>
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## Main findings

Gisburn Road Children’s Centre achieves satisfactory outcomes for children and families within the reach area. Parents value the support extended to them and they confirm that they regularly contribute to the improvement of services, although few play a direct role in governance and decision-making processes. The day-to-day management of the centre is sound. Effective performance management arrangements are in place and all staff are supported through continuous professional development, ensuring that they have the right skills and expertise to undertake their challenging work effectively.

Priorities for improvement are accurate and confirm that the leadership team have a clear understanding of community needs and the centre’s strengths and areas for future development. However, the plans are not grounded in precise target measures to enable the governing body to evaluate the centre’s progress and performance over time. Recent actions have successfully increased the engagement of fathers and minority ethnic groups. However, the level of engagement across all target groups, such as teen and lone parents, is not as clear because procedures to systematically measure their engagement and meet

targets to improve their involvement are less well established or evidenced. Consequently, the overall effectiveness of the centre and capacity for future improvement are satisfactory.

Outcomes are satisfactory overall with good outcomes for families' health, safety and emotional well-being. A multi-agency approach to the delivery of health promotions and services has resulted in an improving trend in relation to breast feeding rates, childhood obesity and factors associated with low birth weight babies and smoking.

Children in the Early Years Foundations Stage make good strides in their learning and development and centre data confirms a narrowing of the achievement gap. Good outcomes are embedded in quality activities within 'Stay and Play' sessions, 'Messy Play' and 'Music and Rhyme Time'. More recently, targeted interventions related to Lancashire's 'Best Start Initiative' provide a range of exciting learning experiences for children and their parents to participate in together. However, such initiatives are in their infancy so it is too early for outcomes to be evaluated.

'Positive Parenting' courses show good outcomes for families who participate, but the range of training courses available to parents and opportunities for their involvement in their children's learning are limited. The centre has helped some parents to improve their qualifications and employment potential, although procedures to promote their future economic well-being further and measure the impact are not fully established.

The implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) alongside secure referral pathways and cohesive multi-agency support underpins the safety, well-being and protection of families resulting in good outcomes in times of crisis. Safeguarding procedures are robust and parents feel they and their children are kept safe.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Improve outcomes and the economic well-being of all families by:
  - increasing adults' chances of future employment through access to training and qualifications based on their identified needs and interests and monitoring their effectiveness
  - improving parents' knowledge and skills to support their children's learning.
- Improve leadership and management of the centre by:
  - increasing opportunities for parents to express their views and involving them further in governance and decision-making
  - working with the local authority and other partners to improve the collation and evaluation of data for all aspects of its work to measure impact more systematically and to set precise targets for future development.

## How good are outcomes for families?

3

The 'Healthy Heros' programme promotes the need for physical exercise and includes regular health-related activities. This includes 'Cook and Eat' classes, which parents state have 'encouraged them to cook from scratch in order to control the amount of sugar and salt in their children's food', all of which are having a positive impact on obesity levels. The 'Bumps, Birth and Beyond' programme and the intensity of support for breast feeding mothers, provided by peer support volunteers, has led to securely improving breast feeding rates at both initiation and the percentage of mother continuing to feed at six to eight weeks or more. There is also a positive trend of improvement in the reduction in mothers smoking at birth, teen conceptions and the numbers of families accessing a dentist through the 'Dental Access Scheme'.

The coordination of the multi-agency work associated with children who are subject to child protection plans has, in most cases, resulted in greater stability and independence within the family home; which families have sustained. The effective implementation of the CAF process underpins the initial assessment of need and the successful coordination of appropriate services. Parents report that the 'centre provides a place of safety' and that they 'would not be where they are today if it wasn't for the intensity of the support when a crisis occurs'. Parents also describe how they have adopted new strategies to improve their children's behaviour at home since attending a 'Positive Parenting' course.

The extent to which children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy and achieve is good. Children accessing centre services make good progress in their learning given their low starting points. The high-quality learning experiences across all areas of learning and in activities such as 'Stay and Play' ensure that children become confident and ready for the transition to school. Outcomes for disabled children and those who have special educational needs are also good because professionals and the children's parents work collaboratively to support and nurture their potential. However, children signposted to speech and language support are not routinely tracked so the full impact of this intervention strategy is not known.

Parents confirm that they are confident to raise their views when they feel services could be improved because their requests are acted upon. As a result, they now have the pram shed they requested and an increase in the number of 'Stay and Play' sessions provided. Parents have some opportunities to evaluate their own learning outcomes after activities and one or two parents have just established a parent support group. However, parents are less clear how they can contribute to the centre's governance.

The centre has an established breast feeding support volunteering programme which is helping to provide some parents with the work based experience and some responsibility within the centre. Signposting to Jobcentre services and the Citizens' Advice Bureau alongside information about financial matters provides families with a route to benefit and employment advice, if required. However, take-up of the services and related outcomes are

not routinely tracked. Secure links with the Family Information service and local childcare providers ensure that childcare placements within the area are well utilised.

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>2</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>3</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>3</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>3</b>

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

<b>3</b>
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The safety and protection of all children and parents is paramount. Provision includes both universal and targeted services which facilitate contact with families from the breadth of their reach area. This approach to service delivery, alongside consent to share details and the frequency of contacts with health visitors and midwives, enables the centre to assess family needs at an early point and prevent needs escalating to a crisis level.

Centre data confirm good levels of attendance across centre activities with 'Baby Clinic' and 'Stay and Play' activities proving most popular alongside a growing number of fathers attending the monthly 'Dad's Behaving Dadly' group. Data systems are in place to monitor and evaluate attendance by target groups so they are able to confirm that more teen parents and minority groups are attending. However, data is not routinely interrogated to assess which services target groups are attending or potentially missing out on.

The achievements of adult learners are celebrated, which places value on their success and raises their aspirations. Some parents have benefited from practical courses such as first aid. They have routine access to emotional well-being courses such as 'Cognitive Behavioural Therapy', a unique service which helps parents cope with relationship issues and other everyday difficulties. However, the centre has yet to assess the learning needs of parents more formally and develop a pathway to a wider range of training opportunities such as English for Speakers of other Languages, and English and mathematics. Furthermore, there are few opportunities to fully utilise a large number of computers in the Adult Learning Room, this impacts on parents' ability to support their children's learning.

Good use is made of the outdoor areas to extend children’s learning in the school garden for ‘Muddy Puddles’, providing children with opportunities to explore the natural world. The implementation of the ‘Best Start and ‘Early Years Transitional Project’ is providing targeted provision for particular children such as boys born in the summer, who may require some additional educational support.

Families receive good levels of care, guidance and support and they consistently report that the centre is a welcoming and friendly place to be where staff ‘go that extra mile’ and are ‘only a phone call away’. Parents with disabled children who are receiving outreach and family support stated that multi-agency interventions are swift and effective and ‘all coordinated by the centre just for them’. The wealth of literature, in different languages, provide parents with valuable information about sexual health and domestic violence help lines. New parents receive a ‘pamper pack’ containing safety leaflets such as the ‘Top Ten Tips’ for preventing sudden unexpected death in infancy.

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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

<b>3</b>
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The head of centre, ably supported by the centre coordinator, sets a clear direction for the action needed to improve services and outcomes for families. The governing body values, and invests in the work of the centre in enriching children’s learning experiences as they go through school life. The centre sub-committee provides the central component to this management structure by collating information about its work. However, procedures for governance to interrogate its performance and hold the centre firmly to account are less well developed.

The planning and self-evaluation cycle is improving and beginning to include partners, parents and governors. Action plans provide a sound basis on which to improve and shape future services, although progress towards ongoing plans is not clearly evidenced, thus preventing the centre from demonstrating the full impact of its work. Furthermore, the information management systems do not always provide accurate and meaningful data for the head of centre to work with. Therefore, the quality of evaluation across all its activities and between the centre’s partners is not consistent.

The relationships with key partners such as health and children’s social care are particularly strong. This is due to clear procedures and agreements for sharing information and the



frequency in which midwives, health visitors and 'Children and Parent Support team' communicate, visit and provide services within the centre. In turn, this encourages early contact, good outcomes for families' health and emotional well-being and a good level of user engagement across services. Local network childminders engage well with the centre and provide respite and funded childcare provision for some of the most vulnerable children. Links with seven local schools are secure and enhanced by the contribution of the SWAP (Schools Working alongside Parents) family support worker who helps to identify the holistic needs of local families most in need of intervention and support.

Safeguarding procedures are robust. Security arrangements are effective, ensuring that the transition from one part of the busy building to another is carefully managed. Records and recruitment procedures to ensure the suitability of those employed or visiting and working with families fully meet with statutory requirements. The centre provides cohesive multi-agency support for an increasing number of families experiencing domestic violence through the routine delivery of specialist services. This results in increased confidence and stability for those families engaged.

The centre has an inclusive ethos which is evident in the careful consideration given to making a traditional building equally accessible to disabled parents and children. The use of Braille and a personal approach to nurturing the engagement of these parents is why they report 'I feel valued and respected'. Crèche provision allows all parents to consider enrolment on courses such as 'Positive Lifestyles' and school holiday provision enables older and younger siblings to participate in activities together. However, provision to enhance families' learning, development and economic stability are still in their infancy, thus inhibiting stronger outcomes. Consequently, the centre provides satisfactory value for money.

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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</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>3</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>3</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**

None.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Gisburn Road Children's Centre on 8 - 9 March 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's plans and documents and talked with a number of you, and the staff and volunteers who work with you. We found several good features. For example, the wide range of health promotions and the availability of midwives and health visitors on site ensure that parents get health advice when they need it. There is also a good increase in the number of families now registered with a dentist and receiving dental advice for their children. The centre provides well for breast feeding mothers because they have well trained staff and volunteers to help them continue breast feeding their babies for much longer. Furthermore, parents consistently told us that the centre 'is safe and welcoming and a great place to get information, help in a crisis and a place to make new friends'.

We found that children and parents thoroughly enjoy 'Stay and Play', 'Baby Massage' and 'Healthy Heros Cook and Eat' sessions. We also found that the centre provides good quality activities for all children, helping them to make good progress in meeting age related goals by the time they finish reception year. New activities such as 'Muddy Puddles' provides activities in the outdoors where children can investigate the world around them, even if it means scaring parents with the worms they collect! However, the benefits of such activities are not always clearly identified and there are not enough specific activities and courses to help you help your children, with learning at home.

We know that some of you have attended first aid training and 'Positive Parenting' courses and this has helped you to feel more confident and calm when dealing with children's behaviour and/or injuries. The centre told us that some of you have attended mathematics and English courses and this has helped you when seeking work or further training. However, we found that the centre does not consistently record information to show the progress you make over time and there are too few opportunities for parents to undertake training to suit their particular needs. So we have asked the centre managers to consider these issues in the future development plans.

We found that that many of the groups are well attended. The centre were able to show that people from various backgrounds, cultures and those who are most in need of support, are increasingly using the centre, too. 'This is a lovely place, there is always somebody to help you, I don't know what I would do without it' are typical of the good things parents had to say about the centre and proves that they provide good levels of care, guidance and support. You told us that you are happy to share your views about the activities, services and the centre in general. You are particularly pleased that these views have been listened to because the centre have now installed a pram shed at your request. You told us how you complete questionnaires about the success of the activities and how they could be made better and one or two of you have started a parents' group to provide each other with support and discuss how services can best meet your needs. However, it is also important that more of you understand how the centre is led and managed so we have asked the centre to encourage more of you to contribute to the centre's governance.

The leadership of the centre is good and the managers work hard to provide you with the services, activities and protection to meet the wide variety of needs in your community. We also found that they work particularly well with other people such as health professionals and specialist agencies. The centre works hard to encourage fathers to attend through the 'Men Behaving Dadly' sessions and this has helped fathers to join in other activities alongside their partners and children. In addition, the centre provides an inclusive environment for disabled children and adults. This is because the centre use action plans to target their work and improve services for everybody. We have asked them to improve the way they gather and use all the information about families in the reach to continue to improve their services in the future.

Thank you for spending time talking to us and we wish you every success in the future.

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