

Inspection report for Chorlton Park Children's Centre

Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	367779
Inspection dates	14-15 June 2012
Reporting inspector	Rachael Flesher HMI

Centre leader	Miss Jacqueline Harden
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Barlow Hall Primary School Darley Avenue Chorlton Cum Hardy Manchester M21 7JG
Telephone number	0161 2457013
Fax number	0161 2457013
Email address	j.harden@manchester.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Barlow Hall Primary 105484
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Chorlton Park Children's Centre Playgroup EY375640 Lighthouse Centre 500127

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.

Report Published: June 2012

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



No.100080

© Crown copyright 2012

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 Inspector's and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, centre staff and representatives from professional partnerships, the advisory board and the local authority. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Chorlton Park Children's Centre provides services for families in the area from two sites. The main site is situated in the grounds of Barlow Hall Primary School on Darley Avenue in a large housing estate. The secondary site is situated on Nell Lane on the edge of another large housing estate. Both sites are in the Chorlton suburb of Manchester approximately four miles southwest of the city centre. The centre was designated in April 2008 and is a phase two children's centre.

The centre serves families living in one of the 30% to 70% most deprived areas in the country with approximately 70% living in the 30% most deprived areas. The majority of families are of White British heritage, with approximately 20% of families from minority ethnic groups including Indian, Pakistani and Middle Eastern. For some of these families, English is an additional language.

Families may face issues of poor housing, unemployment, crime, financial problems, domestic violence and drugs and alcohol misuse. Approximately 225 children aged up to four years old are living in households dependant on workless benefits. There are approximately 215 lone parents in receipt of benefits. On average 16% of families benefit from the childcare element of working tax credit.

The majority of children enter early years provision with skills below those typically expected

for their age, particularly in relation to communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development.

The centre is governed by the local authority and has an advisory board made up of representatives from the local community, parents and partner professionals. The centre also has a family forum.

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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

Chorlton Park Children's Centre is a satisfactory centre overall with good safeguarding arrangements. The centre's safeguarding policies and procedures are robust and embedded among staff and effectively promote the safety and welfare of children and adults. This is further enhanced by the good information sharing and referral processes between partners and the centre ensuring the right support is provided swiftly to vulnerable families. The centre adequately promotes equality and diversity and the inclusion of children and families.

Leaders and staff are committed to bringing about improvement and engaging more children and families in the centre services and activities to improve outcomes. The centre has successfully registered approximately 70% of all children and families in the reach area. However, only 45% of all children and families in the reach area are engaged in services to improve their outcomes. The engagement of families from key target groups and those whose circumstances mean they are identified as in most need of intervention and support varies but overall is adequate. Although, provision is matched to the needs of the children and families who attend it is less clear if it matches the needs of the wider community to encourage their attendance. Those who attend are making progress from their often low starting points, they enjoy the activities and feel supported and participation rates are overall sound. As a result, the centre is meeting the needs of and improving the outcomes for a satisfactory range of children and families from the reach area.

Processes for monitoring and demonstrating the impact of the centre services and activities on the outcomes for children and families, and challenging the centre's performance, are not fully developed. The families' forum and advisory board are not fully established and are not at present providing sufficient support and challenge to the centre in order to contribute to decision-making and drive improvements fully. Plans for the future are appropriately targeted and the centre has a satisfactory ability to continue to improve the engagement and outcomes for more families based on what it has accomplished so far.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase the engagement of, and thus improve the outcomes for, more children and families from the reach area, including those from target groups and those identified as in most need of intervention and support, in services and activities by:
 - the local authority resuming the arrangement for providing all children's centre with live birth data
 - locating and making contact with more families from key target groups
 - ensuring provision is matched to what children and families in the area need and want through wider consultation.

- Improve systems for monitoring the performance of the centre, including using available data and other information to set measurable targets and to enable the centre to demonstrate readily the impact services and activities are having on the outcomes for children and families in the reach area.

- Improve partnerships and governance and accountability arrangements by:
 - enabling more parents to contribute to the decision-making and governance of the centre through increasing their participation in the families' forum and advisory board
 - ensuring all key partners regularly attend and contribute to advisory board meetings
 - enabling the advisory board to drive improvements and appropriately support and challenge the centre
 - demonstrating the performance and effectiveness of the centre in improving outcomes for children and families through the centre leader providing accurate, robust evidence to senior managers from the local authority and members of the advisory board.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

Users state they feel safe at the centre and their children are safeguarded. Their homes are safer due to the accident and fire prevention advice and equipment provided by centre staff and partners. Staff work well with other partners to support those children subject to a child protection plan, those involved with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes,

and looked-after children following any referrals to centre services. There is evidence to demonstrate improved outcomes for these children.

Children accessing centre services make at least satisfactory progress from often low starting points in developing skills that will help them in the future. The principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage are embedded across the provision and children's learning and development is well promoted. Children attending the centre's playgroup are developing their independence skills, making good progress and are well prepared for school. However, the centre has limited evidence to demonstrate the impact other centre services and activities are having on children's learning and development and transitions arrangements although not fully embedded are adequate overall.

Parents and children value and enjoy the opportunities to play and learn together for example, through the well-attended stay and play sessions. They are developing their parenting skills stating: 'I gained confidence in being a mum and seeing my child progress. It really works' and 'I understand about the importance of praise and encouragement'. Parents using the centre state they enjoy the services and activities, feel supported and are enabled to make progress. The centre routinely seeks their views through session evaluations and questionnaires and uses these to shape services to ensure they are meeting their needs. However, not enough parents are regularly contributing to the decision making and governance of the centre through the families' forum and the advisory board.

A good proportion of mothers sustain breastfeeding their babies at six to eight weeks due to the good support they receive from centre staff and health professionals. Healthy eating is promoted across the provision and some parents state their families are eating healthier meals and snacks. New birth visits had begun to improve the engagement of new parents and their babies in services earlier. However, following a local authority decision the centre has not received any live birth data since January 2012 and this has impacted significantly on improving the engagement of families. Nonetheless, attendance at ante-natal focussed sessions such as baby massage, health visitor drop in and baby led weaning sessions is good and improving outcomes. As some users stated, the baby massage sessions have 'improved sleeping routine' and 'helped me bond with my baby'. They value these services being delivered at the centre stating the centre and services are 'accessible', 'friendly' and a 'lovely environment'. However, the centre has limited information to demonstrate the impact of other provision on healthy outcomes and not all those accessing health services are from the centre reach area.

Some families are improving their economic stability and independence through the advice and guidance provided, to help them with financial issues and ensure they are accessing all the benefits they are entitled to. A few parents have been supported in finding suitable 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	3
--	----------

The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	3
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
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	3
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.	3

How good is the provision?

3

User's state the centre provides a safe, warm and welcoming environment and staff are approachable and friendly. A range of case studies demonstrate how the centre has supported some families facing difficult issues or during times of crisis and how their outcomes have improved as a result of this intervention and provision. Staff have helped to increase parents' confidence and reduce social isolation with many stating they have 'made new friends'. Outreach workers are supporting those in most need by providing home visits and individualised support.

Assessment is used well to ensure the services meet the needs of those using them. However, this is not as successful in ensuring the centre is identifying and meeting the needs of the wider community to encourage the participation of those not currently accessing services. Referrals and effective information sharing between the centre and partners, particularly health professionals, ensure they are aware of the most vulnerable families and their needs and target individualised support accordingly.

The centre has successfully engaged with the majority of users in some of the target groups, for example, families with children aged up to three years and families from minority ethnic groups. However, the engagement of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, teenage parents, lone parents and fathers has been less successful. Nevertheless, those that are engaged are often the most vulnerable families from the most deprived areas and a fair proportion of families are participating in services overall.

The centre has helped to raise the aspirations for some parents and enabled them to improve their educational and personal development. Case studies demonstrate how a few parents have made very good progress from their low starting points, for example, accessing further education and running their own sessions at the centre. However, these are very few in number and only some adults are accessing the opportunities to progress to further training, education and employment.

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

Governance and accountability arrangements are not fully embedded. The centre works well with key partners to ensure that information is shared and provision and services are responsive to the needs of children and families in the community. Partners state they feel welcome, supported, value the face to face contact with centre staff and rely on the centre leader to keep them well-informed. They also state the good systems for information sharing ensure referrals are swift and accurate. However, the attendance of these key partners and parents on the advisory board is infrequent. Self-evaluation correctly identifies strengths, areas for development and sets priorities that link back to strategic planning. However, the centre leader lacks a thorough understanding of the centre's performance. Data is not being fully utilised to set measurable targets. In addition current monitoring systems do not enable leaders and managers to demonstrate readily the impact the centre services and activities are having on improving the outcomes for children and families.

Good safeguarding arrangements are in place. The centre ensures all those who may have unsupervised access to children are safe and suitable. Staff receive good quality up to date training and professional supervision to enable them to carry out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and their families. Risks are thoroughly assessed and minimised to promote the safety of users and staff.

Those using the centre services are fully included and valued. However, all target groups are not fully engaged and therefore the gap is not being narrowed sufficiently for all target groups. Diversity is celebrated through events and activities and appropriate support is provided to families accessing services for whom English is an additional language. Those using the centre reflect the diverse community it serves. The centre appropriately targets resources and services where they are needed most to promote improved outcomes. The centre space and resources are adequately utilised. Staff and partners have successfully engaged a satisfactory range of families in services and activities. As a result, the centre provides satisfactory value for money.

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	3
---	----------

The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
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	3
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.	3

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

The findings from the most recent inspection of the children's centres linked early years provision, co-located primary school and other early years provision and primary schools in the reach area were used to inform the judgements made during this inspection.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Complaining about inspections*, which is available from our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected Chorlton Park Children's Centre on 14 and 15 June 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you to those of you who contributed to the inspection. Like you we found your children's centre to be welcoming and friendly. Your centre is safe and staff work well with other professionals to ensure that your children and vulnerable adults are safeguarded and protected.

Your children are making at least satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and development and those accessing the playgroup provided by the centre make good progress and are well prepared for school. You value the opportunities to play and learn together with your children, for example, through the well attended stay and play sessions. You are developing your parenting skills, as some of you told us: 'I gained confidence in being a

mum and seeing my child progress. It really works' and 'I understand about the importance of praise and encouragement'.

New parents value the range of ante-natal provision and a good proportion of mothers breastfeed their babies to six to eight weeks and beyond. Some of these parents stated that baby massage sessions have 'improved sleeping routine' and 'helped me bond with my baby'. Others stated that ante-natal services are 'accessible', 'friendly' and in a 'lovely environment'. You are encouraging your families to take up healthier lifestyles and ensuring you and your children are safer in and around your homes. For some of you your economic stability and independence is improving and a few of you have been supported in finding suitable employment. This is due to the activities and support provided by your centre services. Appropriate support is provided when you are facing times of crisis. As a result, for those of you who are accessing the centre services your outcomes are adequately improving. However, your centre has only engaged less than half of all children and families from your community in the services and activities designed to improve their outcomes. Your centre has been asked to improve this.

Your centre routinely seeks your views through regularly asking you to complete evaluations and questionnaires and these are used to shape services to ensure they are meeting the needs of your families. However, not enough of you or the partners are regularly contributing to the decision-making and governance of the centre through the families' forum and the advisory board. Your centre has been asked to improve this by getting you more involved and their partners.

Processes for monitoring and demonstrating the impact of the centre services and activities, and challenging the centre's performance are not fully developed. The families' forum and advisory board are not fully established and are not at present providing sufficient support and challenge to your centre in order to fully contribute to the decision-making and driving improvements. Your centre has been asked to improve this. Plans for the future are well-targeted and your centre has the ability to improve the engagement and outcomes for more families based on what it has accomplished so far. We wish you all the very best for the future.

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