

# Inspection report for Sale West Children's Centre

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Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	384078
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2012
Reporting inspector	Sheila Iwaskow

Centre leader	Miss Jackie Deeny
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	c/o Coppice Library Coppice Avenue Sale Cheshire M33 4ND
Telephone number	0161 9122431
Fax number	0161 9762351
Email address	jackie.deeny@trafford.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
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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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
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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 additional inspector and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior managers, centre staff, parents, members of the advisory board and a number of partners including; health, education and children's social care professionals.

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

## Information about the centre

Sale West Children Centre is a phase two children centre which was designated in March 2008. The centre is a hub-and-spoke model based within Coppice Avenue Library in the Sale West area of Trafford. The centre hub is a purpose built single-storey extension to the rear of the library building and is accessed directly through the library itself. The centre fulfils its core purpose by offering or signposting families to a range of services and activities which include health services, family support, family play sessions, information and advice services, parenting programmes and family outreach services. The centre also works in partnership with three privately owned day nurseries and has links with two local schools.

Services are delivered at the centre and off-site at a number of different venues including the library, community centre, local school, church, college and clinic. Sale West is ranked as the sixth most deprived out of the 16 children centres in Trafford. There are seven super output areas and, of these, one is among the 10% most deprived in the country, another two are among the 20% and 30% most deprived. Most of the families are of White British heritage with 7% being from other ethnic groups.

There are 749 children aged from birth to four years living in the Sale West reach area. Levels of deprivation are mixed throughout the area. In two of the super output areas, 40%

of the children live in poverty while in another area fewer than 3% live in poverty. The majority of housing is privately owned with the rest being privately rented or social housing. Within the reach areas, levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and burglaries are low. Unemployment is high with 27% of children living in households dependant on workless benefits. In addition, 25% live in households accessing the childcare element of the working tax credit. Many of the children from the reach area enter early years education with knowledge and skills that are slightly below expectations for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development.

Governance of the centre is provided by Trafford local authority in conjunction with an advisory board that includes providers, delivery partners and some members of the local community and users that attend the centre.

## 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

Sale West Children Centre is a good centre. The centre is held in high regard by its key partners and centre users. A typical comment from users was, 'The centre has had a wonderful impact on my life and that of my daughter'. Management and staff working within the centre show high levels of commitment to the centre's work and morale is high. Partnership working with a wide range of professionals is effective which ensures that services are well integrated and cohesive. Centre staff and key partners are committed to ensuring that vulnerable families are well supported and that their individual needs are met.

Through the wide range of activities and services provided by the centre, families have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their children safe and healthy. New mothers are actively encouraged to breastfeed and are well supported in developing their parenting skills. The centre is also committed to further reducing obesity rates which, are already well below the national average. Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Staff attend regular training and are clear about their responsibilities. All necessary policies and procedures are thorough, reviewed regularly and are clearly understood by staff, partners and centre users.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning from their starting points. The qualified teacher and the local authority have worked effectively with local private providers and childminders. Together, they have successfully improved the quality of provision offered to young children. Good opportunities are available for parents to play and learn together with their children, for example through 'Stay and Play' sessions and 'Little Counters'. A varied range of courses is available to adult learners to develop basic skills, such as confidence building, money management and communication skills. However, at present the range of opportunities offered is still too narrow to fully support adult learners to access further training or employment. Families play an important part in shaping services within the centre. Good opportunities are available for them to express their ideas and opinions informally, but not at a strategic level. All families, including those who speak English as an additional language, or disabled children and families, have equal opportunities to access services and activities.

The local authority and centre leaders have a good understanding of the centre's strengths and priorities. Key partners, centre users and staff evaluate effectively the impact of the centre's work. Much has been achieved to improve outcomes for families since the centre leader came to post. Clear objectives in the centre's development plan reflect the needs of centre users and vulnerable families. As a result, the centre demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Develop further the range of activities and services offered to adult learners to support them in accessing training and employment.
- Extend parent representation on the advisory board to enhance parents' influence in decision making at a strategic level.

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

<b>2</b>
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A good range of services is available to develop families' awareness of a healthy lifestyle. The promotion of breastfeeding is given high priority by the centre. A weekly breastfeeding support group, together with displays and videos played in the centre, actively supports mothers to breastfeed. Particularly noteworthy is the commitment of trained volunteers who regularly offer advice and support on the benefits of breastfeeding to mothers in a local hospital who have just given birth. As a result of this concentrated approach, the centre has exceeded the target of 41% of children being breastfed at six-to-eight weeks set by the local authority. A varied range of ongoing initiatives and activities, such as weaning groups, effectively work to develop families' awareness of healthy eating and help to combat obesity. In addition, advice from centre staff and health professionals, along with courses such as 'Birth and Beyond', successfully support mothers and fathers in developing their skills as parents.

Centre users feel safe. Standards of behaviour of adults and children within the centre are good. Parents benefit from parenting programmes which help develop their confidence in managing their children's behaviour. Good use of the Common Assessment Framework and effective multi-agency working, including the work of 'Family Support', ensures that the diverse needs of vulnerable families are well met. As a result, the number of children subject to a child protection plan has decreased significantly over the last three years. Initiatives such as 'National Safety Week' and 'Baby Saver' courses have successfully improved parents' awareness of issues relating to safety.

With the support of the children's centre teacher, the centre has been successful in narrowing the achievement gaps between different groups. Families clearly enjoy the varied range of activities provided such as 'Rhyme Time' and 'Baby Massage'. Courses such as 'Keeping up with your Child' have given parents an appreciation of how their children learn and the different ways they can support and extend this learning at home. The children's centre teacher works alongside colleagues from the local authority to support local childcare providers and childminders. Data clearly show the impact of all this support. Children achieving 78+ with at least six points in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development have increased over the last three years by 5.92% from 61.5% to 67.42%. In addition, the percentage gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile over last three years has reduced by 3.87% and over the last year by 7.17%. These improvements are helping to support children's future educational and personal success through the development of key skills.

The results from a recent parental satisfaction survey show that 97.62% respondents are happy with the services of the children centre, which is above the Trafford average of 92.80%. During the inspection, parents were complimentary about the centre and all aspects of its work. A number of adults have become volunteers at the centre and completed appropriate training.

Good links have been established with Jobcentre Plus and employment opportunities are displayed within the centre. In addition, individual support is offered by the employment and training officer to help adults to access further education or employment. A training programme for adult learners is in place to support them in acquiring basic skills to help them access employment or further training. However, opportunities within the programme are currently confined to basic skills rather than a wider range of courses and activities to broaden their knowledge and skills further. Links have been made with local employers. Employment has been secured for a number of adults from the centre and this has increased their economic stability.

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>2</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>3</b>

## How good is the provision?

**2**

Effective strategies are in place to engage with the large majority of families in targeted groups. Levels of engagement with those registered at the centre are high. The centre is particularly successful in engaging with fathers and disabled children. The centre knows the families well and, together with its partners, and outreach services, meets the needs of vulnerable families well. The individual needs of families are effectively assessed and well-coordinated support is provided. Regular reviews take place which effectively monitor and track progress. Information from a variety of sources, such as data provided by the local authority, home visits and local intelligence, provides the centre with a good knowledge of the needs of target groups. Such valuable information allows services and activities to be shaped accordingly.

Rooms within the children centre are used flexibly to accommodate services, although many are delivered off-site. The good quality activities give parents valuable opportunities to develop their confidence and parenting skills. A well-resourced and attractive crèche ensures that children are well cared for while their parents attend courses. Good relationships are in place with local schools. Programmes, such as 'Ready Steady School', ensure that children transfer to school smoothly. The achievements of families and children are celebrated in a wide variety of ways such as through fun days and displays.

Centre workers are trained to offer advice on topics such as emotional abuse, neglect, and drugs and alcohol abuse. Home visits and ongoing one-to-one support are provided to those families identified by the centre as most in need of intervention and support. Those facing crisis situations receive strong support and reassurance from able, caring and dedicated staff. This is emphasised in the following comment from a parent, 'I would have been lost without Sure Start'.

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>2</b>
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## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

**2**

Staff, partners and the local authority value the strong leadership of the senior management team within the centre. Partnership working is embedded well in the centre in the oversight, planning and delivery of services. The centre leader is committed to the professional development of the team. The centre runs smoothly and day-to-day management is effective.

Governance and accountability arrangements are clear. Staff have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the centre and are well supervised and deployed. The advisory board has clear terms of reference and works well with the senior leadership team, in conjunction with the local authority, to provide the centre with appropriate support and challenge. The centre has a number of effective strategies in place to reach out to those who do not access the centre. Key partners are well represented on the advisory board, but the centre has yet to find ways to fully engage parents as members of the board. As a result, parents' views are not fully represented at a strategic level. Self-evaluation is accurate and future priorities are well targeted to meet the needs of vulnerable families in the reach area.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Effective systems are in place for the recruitment, selection and induction of new staff. All staff have enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks which are routinely renewed every three years. The health and safety of users is a key priority of the centre and risks are assessed thoroughly and minimised accordingly. Staff work well with others, such as mental health and domestic violence agencies, to protect children's welfare and there are good protocols for the sharing of information. Equality and diversity are well promoted and the centre places great emphasis on the uniqueness of the individual. Although situated in an area which is predominantly White British, the centre ensures that cultural festivals are celebrated and different languages are displayed. Disabled children and those with special educational needs are warmly welcomed into the centre. There is a strong culture of respect within the centre and inclusion is well promoted.

Outcomes for families are strong. The centre provides good quality resources for parents and children. The centre uses its resources well and fulfils all its statutory duties. It provides good 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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures 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>3</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 Sale West Children's Centre on 1 and 2 October 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you to those who gave your time to share your views of the centre with us. Many of you told us that you feel safe and welcome at the centre. We were particularly impressed by the commitment from the centre's staff and by its arrangements to keep children and families safe and promote their good health. We were also encouraged to see that the centre actively encourages new mothers to breastfeed their babies.

Activities are well planned and personalised to meet your needs. We particularly saw much enjoyment in the 'Baby Massage.' session we visited. Those of you who attended this session told us how massaging your babies, 'help them sleep well'. You are provided with valuable advice, sometimes through home visits and one-to-one support, as well as through different groups. A lot of information is displayed within the centre to help with difficulties you may be experiencing.

Overall, the centre is working well with adults to provide basic courses which will help them back into further education, training or employment. We have asked the centre to look at extending the range of courses and activities available to you so as to support you further in achieving your goals. Parents also enjoy attending courses such as 'Little Counters' which gives them opportunities to play and learn with their children.

You are given lots of opportunities to informally tell the centre what you think about the services and activities it provides for you. We have asked the centre to look at ways of involving you at a more formal level, for example, as members of the advisory board.

The leadership and management of the centre are good. Staff have a clear vision for the future and are strongly committed to providing services and activities that are suited to each of your needs. Partnerships with a wide range of professionals, such as health visitors, midwives and local childcare providers are good and these effectively enhance the ways in which the centre supports you and your children.

It is clear that you value the opportunities and care that the centre provides. We would like to wish you every success for the future.

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