

# Inspection report for Osmaston/Allenton Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	367852
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 August 2012
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	N/A
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	N/A
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	First Steps Crèche EY 388646 First Steps Early Years Centre EY 440848

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 an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre coordinator, centre staff, parents, partner agencies and local authority senior managers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Osmaston/Allenton Children's Centre is a phase one children's centre. It fulfils its core purpose by providing early education integrated with childcare, family support and outreach to parents, child and family health services and access to adult education support. It operates from one site in the Osmaston/Allenton area which sits within the Alvaston, Boulton and Sinfin wards of Derby.

The strategic management and governance of the centre is the responsibility of Derby City Council. The service manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre and is part of a locality management team, which manages four other centres locally. The centre offers satellite services from Lord Street Community Nursery. The advisory board consists of representatives from partner organisations and key stakeholders that work with the children's centre, the local authority and parents.

The majority of the families who use the centre are of White British origin. A growing number of families in the community are of Eastern European and African origin. Data for the reach area place the user base in the bottom 5% nationally for deprivation. The children's centre has 1,104 children under five in its reach area. About 44% of children and adults who use the centre live in homes that are dependent on benefits and where no-one is in work. When they start early years provision, the majority of children have skills, knowledge and abilities that are below those expected for their age.

The range of activities offered by the centre includes a child health clinic, breast-feeding support and a range of early years activities and parenting support, including a counselling and outreach service. The centre has links with health visitors, community midwives and speech therapists. It signposts families to providers that offer adult education, volunteering opportunities, and activities designed to support parents back into employment and training.

## 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

This is an effective centre which demonstrates a good capacity to improve. The centre's self-evaluation is detailed and broadly accurate; it makes effective use of a wide range of local data to support key judgements. The advisory board carefully scrutinises the self-evaluation to ensure that it accurately reflects the centre's key strengths and weaknesses.

The centre manager, working together with centre staff and a wide range of partners, helps to provide a good service that meets the needs of many of the most vulnerable children and families in the area. Parents are actively involved in the centre through the well-organised and vocal neighbourhood forum.

The centre provides good support and services which are improving the lives of children and families, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This is because centre staff know the make-up of the area well, and this enables them to respond promptly and sensitively to families particularly when experiencing crises or long-term problems. They work with partner agencies to assess needs accurately and sensitively, provide support and signpost families to organisations providing specialist support, accompanying them to appointments when necessary.

Outreach work is particularly effective in engaging families who are reluctant or unable to attend activities at the centre. However, the proportion of teenage parents, teenage mothers-to-be and lone parents who use the centre, remains stubbornly low.

Procedures for vetting the suitability of staff are good. Parents say that the centre feels safe and welcoming. Families receive good information and support to keep themselves safe in their homes. For the relatively high proportion of women in the area reporting domestic violence, the centre provides a particularly well-regarded and effective support programme.

The centre runs a wide range of well-attended activities and learning sessions. The centre's programme to support parents in their role as their child's first educators has helped parents to manage their child's behaviour better and to develop an improved understanding of child health and development. The range of health programmes is particularly effective in promoting healthy lifestyles, especially those that encourage parents to prepare food with their children, such as 'Make and Bake' and 'Eat Better, Start Better.' Young mothers comment very positively on the regular baby health clinic service provided at the centre.

Adult users benefit from well-planned learning, including parenting programmes, and accredited courses in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The centre's onsite Jobcentre advisor provides a good, impartial service for users considering further education, training or employment.

The centre provides good care, guidance and support for its users. Centre evaluations show that a high proportion of parents find the staff friendly and supportive. The centre's inclusive approach means that families from different backgrounds feel welcome and are able to enjoy the wide range of provision on offer.

Members of the advisory board and the centre manager work closely to ensure that the centre continues to respond to local needs. Good performance management arrangements are in place and staff who have a high level of expertise are supported by good supervision from managers.

Well-formulated action plans and a range of strategies to evaluate the impact of services on families, including use of increasingly helpful data from the local authority, have ensured good provision and improved outcomes for children and families. However, the centre's data on the number of lone parents and of disabled children or those with a disabled parent living in the area are incomplete.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- In partnership with the local authority, develop systems to gather and analyse reliable data on lone parents and on disabled children or those living with a disabled parent in the reach area so that the centre's services can better meet their needs.

- Increase participation rates of the hard-to-reach target groups, including teenage parents and mothers-to-be, even further so that more families benefit from using the centre's services.

## How good are outcomes for families?

2

The centre secures good outcomes through a wide range of high-quality services. Take-up is high and well sustained. This includes antenatal and postnatal support, as well as breastfeeding support. However, the numbers initiating and sustaining breastfeeding remain stubbornly below those found in the city and nationally, but this represents good progress from a low baseline. The centre promotes physical activities such as 'Lets Get Physical' and keep-fit sessions for parents and children. The centre has run 'Make and Bake' and 'Eat Better, Start Better' courses which help parents to introduce into their diet healthy food for themselves and their children. Health visitors and community nursery nurses run a regular and well-attended health clinic at the centre, which provides a baby weight monitoring service as well as advice about weaning, breastfeeding and early learning. The centre has a high profile locally and parents and partners report that it is the hub of the community.

Parents and children feel safe at the centre. Parents have a good understanding of how to keep children safe in the home. Records show that participation in the centre's very successful programmes to support parents as their child educators results in significant improvements in children's behaviour and in adults' ability to manage the behaviour of their children and their family lives. The centre makes good use of the Common Assessment Framework process to assess the needs of vulnerable children, including those subject to a child protection plan, and takes appropriate actions to safeguard their welfare. The centre's well-regarded and successful programme to support women experiencing domestic violence enables them to make good progress in their personal development and confidence.

Data available across the reach area confirm that the achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores is improving for children at all ability levels but at a faster rate for those at the upper end. This has resulted in a widening of the gap between the lowest-achieving 20% and the rest. Centre staff recognise this disparity and have begun to take appropriate corrective actions. The centre works well with the council's adult learning service to offer courses in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and ESOL. Success rates are good. Many parents go on to work as volunteers at the centre or in the community. The centre's neighbourhood forum, which consists of parent users, is very active and reports regularly to the advisory board on the views of parents

Children have good opportunities to develop skills to help them in the future. For example, the centre's wide range of programmes has helped parents to become better aware of children's early learning. Parents are more confident in their relationship with their children and in supporting their children's literacy and numeracy development. The centre works effectively with the high proportion of

children and families living in households dependent on welfare benefits.

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>2</b>

## How good is the provision?

**2**

The centre has registered the very large majority of families living in the reach area. The extent to which the centre meets the needs of families, including vulnerable families, is good. The exchange and sharing of information on individual families between partner agencies, which enable the centre to assess families' needs comprehensively, is good. The centre offers a wide range of well-attended activities and courses for children and parents which have a beneficial impact on families. It has been particularly successful in working with specifically targeted groups such as families dependent on benefits and the Traveller community. The centre's effective range of outreach services ensures that many of the most vulnerable families receive support. However, despite the best efforts of the centre's team of family visitors, particularly through their outreach work, the centre struggles to engage with teenage parents and teenage mothers-to-be.

The centre runs an annual awards evening for centre users who complete centre-led courses and activities. Staff focus well on helping users to improve their employability and participation in further learning. Parents enjoy the purposeful learning sessions the centre provides. One parent said, 'I didn't even know how to change a nappy and now I have a happy two-year-old.' Another volunteered, 'I'm going to start a health and social care course in September and it's all down to my family visitor.'

Centre staff know their users very well. The multi-agency team has highly effective procedures for assessing the needs of individual families, including looked-after children, using all the available information from a wide range of agencies. Parents and users comment very positively on the good quality of guidance and support they receive from centre staff. The centre offers crèche facilities for parents attending

courses or activities. The centre works particularly effectively with families in crisis. Family visitors support parents well with information, advice and guidance about smoking cessation, sexual health and benefits. This work has resulted in self-referral to additional centre services, such as to counselling.

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>

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

**2**

The centre has clear and effective governance arrangements in place, and day-to-day operation of the centre is good. Members of the advisory board provide close scrutiny of the centre's work and of its priorities. The board receives regular detailed reports about the centre's performance and finances and provides appropriate challenge for the centre manager. It provides particularly good scrutiny of the centre's self-evaluation. Centre staff receive clear line management and appraisal support from their manager.

Targets and milestones in the centre's action plan are rigorous, clear and closely aligned with the local authority's corporate priorities and objectives. The local authority provides good-quality and accessible data on the area covered by the centre, as well as the city. Managers make good use of data to understand the composition of the area and to align provision to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. They have accurate data on the local area at city and ward level. However, detailed demographic data on the area covered by the centre, which crosses three council wards, is incomplete. For example, the centre does not have accurate information on the number of lone parents nor of disabled children or those with a disabled parent.

The centre promotes equality and diversity well. Families that use the centre reflect the local community. Users report high levels of satisfaction with the centre's services. Managers understand the community well and the centre's team of family visitors and the multi-agency team have a thorough understanding of the diverse range of parents who live in the area. The centre provides an effective level of service for the families with disabled children and those with special educational needs that are known to them and who require the centre's help. Activities and sessions are accessible and timetabled to encourage maximum attendance. Provision for those who speak English as an additional language is good. The centre has begun to monitor outcomes according to equalities categories, though it is too soon to judge the full impact of this development.



Safeguarding arrangements are good. The centre discharges its responsibilities effectively. Staff are well trained in safeguarding issues. All staff, including volunteers and temporary staff, undergo an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check, which is renewed every three years. The centre works very effectively with other agencies to share Common Assessment Framework decisions concerning safeguarding and deals with any arising concerns promptly. Early intervention and a multi-agency approach underpin all that the centre delivers. This contributes to its success in meeting the needs of those within its reach area. Risk assessments are comprehensive. The centre has an effective lone-working policy and highly effective health and safety policies and procedures to ensure staff and families are safe. The centre has good site security, including closed circuit television.

The centre has good partnerships with health, education and social services, as well as with a range of voluntary organisations. Parents contribute to centre management through participation in the community forum. Staff work very well in collaboration with partners to meet the needs of the most vulnerable families and children. Information sharing is prompt and effective. The centre's integrated working practices are particularly effective in meeting needs in a coordinated and coherent way. Consequently, the centre 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 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

Before the inspection, inspectors read the Ofsted inspection reports for local primary schools and nurseries to learn about partnership-working, attainment of local children and contextual information about the area in which the centre is situated.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Osmaston/Allenton Children's Centre on 22–23 August 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We were pleased to spend time at the centre looking at its work and talking with some of you, the staff and other professionals who work with you.

The centre provides a wide range of high-quality services which meet the needs of parents, carers and children living in Osmaston/Allenton. The centre is very good at promoting health and physical activities, and sessions such as 'Eat Better, Start Better' and 'Let's Get Physical' are both fun and well attended. Many of you also told us that you value the regular baby health clinic that the health visitors and community nursery nurses run at the centre where you can have your baby's weight checked and ask questions about how to best care for your baby.

The centre has good arrangements for providing a safe and welcoming environment. You told us that the centre feels safe and that you feel able to talk to centre staff about any safeguarding concerns you may have. The centre's family visitors help parents to promote safety in the home and to identify and minimise potential hazards and risks. The centre carries out thorough risk assessments to ensure the safety of parents and children visiting the centre.

The centre is good at asking you for your views on its services and ways in which it could support you better and uses these well to change and adapt the services to meet your needs more closely. Those of you who belong to the neighbourhood forum play a useful role in helping the centre to provide services that meet your needs.

The centre works particularly well with parents and children who live in households that depend on welfare benefits. Staff work very effectively together and with a wide range of other agencies to find out about those of you who might be in difficulties. They act quickly to assess with you what will help you cope and how to help make things better for you and your family. This helps to keep your children safe. The centre provides many opportunities for users to improve the health and well-being of parents and children. Those of you who attended the programme to support

you as your child's first educators are now better able to manage your child's behaviour. Those of you who have experienced domestic violence are encouraged to attend the available support programme which helps you to regain confidence, seek help and make important changes in your lives.

Inspectors were pleased to see that so many of you have been taking up adult education courses and achieving qualifications in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages. Many of you go on to work as volunteers or gain employment, particularly with the help and support from the Jobcentre advisor based at the centre.

The centre is successful at meeting the diverse needs of the community that it serves. It has worked especially hard to reach families who are dependent on benefits and those from the Traveller community. However, we have asked the centre to encourage more teenage mothers and mothers-to-be to register so that they too can benefit from the wide range of activities and courses on offer.

Centre staff are very knowledgeable about the wide range of parents and families who use the centre. Under the careful guidance of the centre manager, centre staff provide good care, guidance and support for all of you who use the centre. You told us that staff treat you with respect and that they do not judge you. This makes the centre popular with families and a large number of you use its services to help you improve your lives and those of your children.

The centre's senior managers have accurate information about the families living in the Osmaston/Allenton area. Consequently, they are able to provide services that meet the needs of these families well. However, the centre does not have enough information about the number of lone parents or of disabled children or those living with a disabled parent. We have asked the centre to work with the local authority to gather this information promptly so that it can meet the needs of all families and children in the area.

Thank you very much for your welcome and for taking the time to talk with us. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and sharing your experiences. 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).