

# Inspection report for Butterstile Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	406938
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 October 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bob Busby HMI

<b>Centre leader</b>	Helen Ernst
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	105297 Butterstile Primary School
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	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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**Report published:** November 2012



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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 headteacher, deputy centre coordinator, senior managers, staff and volunteers. They met governors, parents, grandparents and children, and representatives from a wide range of partner agencies including health, education and social care. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Butterstile Children's Centre is a phase two centre which opened on 22 November 2008. It is based on the site of Butterstile Primary School and shares the same building. It is one of three children's centres in Prestwich and one of fourteen children's centres within Bury local authority. It is led and managed by the centre coordinator under the overarching governance of the primary school. The centre has its own established children's centre committee, which is made up of representatives from the local community, professional agencies and parents. The centre is situated in the St Mary's ward of Prestwich. St Mary's ward has eight Super Output Areas (SOAs), of which two fall within the 30% most deprived nationally, one of which is within the 10% most deprived nationally. The majority of families accessing the centre live in the reach area.

The centre coordinator is supported by a development worker who deputises in her absence. The headteacher of the school provides a strategic overview. The centre provides services to meet all elements of the core purpose of children's centres.

There are 768 children aged nought to four years in the reach area, 561 of whom are registered at the centre. The majority of children are from White British heritage backgrounds and 10.9% are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is in line with the local population. The rate of unemployment is below the national average. In the

centre's reach area, children demonstrate skills below those normally expected for their age on entry to early years provision. The primary school is subject to separate early years inspection arrangements. The inspection report can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## 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

Effective leadership and management have inspired this good quality centre to make a significant impact on the lives of families within the reach area. Centre managers, governors and staff are fully committed to continuous improvement. Thorough research data is analysed and used well by the centre coordinator to benefit centre users. However, data is not presented sufficiently clearly to governors nor shared with centre users. Managers prioritise, plan and deliver services well to meet the needs of the most vulnerable families.

Staff have excellent, trusting relationships with all families who use the service. They have a close understanding of their needs and the challenges they face. Extremely close partnership working is having a significant effect on meeting families' needs and improving outcomes. Centre staff work closely with midwives and health professionals to promote health and well-being in the area and to gain early knowledge and understanding of local need. The centre coordinator networks extremely well with other centre managers to improve services to vulnerable groups across Bury. One young parent echoed the views of many others when commenting 'The centre was definitely a lifesaver for me.' Close working has helped to significantly increase the number of mothers initiating breastfeeding by almost 34 percentage points since 2007 and to increase the numbers sustaining breastfeeding rates from a low base to 55% in February 2012. This is above Bury, North West and national rates.

The centre has extremely strong partnership working arrangements with a wide range of professionals and voluntary organisations. This ensures local services are

integrated and extremely well planned to meet the needs of the families in the reach area, successfully improving outcomes for target groups. However, obesity levels in Reception Year have increased in the reach area and across Bury and are above national averages. This is now a priority area for the centre and has led to an increased focus on providing opportunities for children to be physically active. For example, developing a Mini Olympics focus for stay and play sessions. The centre works closely with linked schools to include advice on healthy lunch boxes during the transition project, 'Jump Start'. In addition, weight management programmes have very recently been introduced for adults and are proving extremely popular.

The centre engages well with families in the area, especially with those in target groups. The large majority of children and their families are registered with the centre. An innovative 'Butterstile Buddies' scheme has been introduced to encourage more parents to become involved in contributing to the work of the centre. The centre promotes further education and family learning. It is working more closely with job centres and partner agencies to improve parents' employability skills and progression towards employment.

Children make very good progress from their starting points. Between 2008 and 2011 the number of children achieving at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scales almost doubled to 66%, which is above regional and national rates. Through the 'Jump Start' transition project, the centre ensures that children are extremely well prepared for school.

Lone parents and working families have access to weekend provision and a free crèche facility. Participation rates for most groups are good. The centre has introduced recent initiatives to improve engagement of fathers and male carers.

The full board of governors and managers very closely monitor the impact of the services and mount suitable challenge to performance. Parents are very well engaged in the work of the centre through the highly effective parent forum and through parent governors on the full governing body. However, parent governors are not sufficiently involved in the work of the children's centre committee, which is a sub-committee of the full board. Attendance at these meetings is low. Centre leaders have a highly accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the centre. The centre has a good capacity to improve.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Improve the presentation of data for all key target groups, especially the numbers of lone parents and children with disabilities, to ensure that the performance and priorities for the centre are understood by all governors, staff, partners and service users.
- Improve child obesity rates in Reception Year to meet local authority targets.
- Improve representation and attendance at the children's centre sub-committee to ensure that the sub-committee has the breadth of experience and ability to effectively support the children's centre in its work and challenge the performance of the centre.

## How good are outcomes for families?

2

Outcomes for families are good. The centre focuses extremely well on health and well-being to provide families with a good understanding of what actions they can take to improve their health.

Midwives and health trainers hold regular, well-attended drop-in clinics within the centre, including over the Christmas period when doctors' surgeries are closed. The number of parents and grandparents accessing classes has significantly increased and the centre regularly reviews its offer and introduces new programmes. A large majority of parents report that through centre groups they have learned how to provide healthy meals and keep their child safe and healthy. Partner schools report increased awareness of healthy options from parents attending the centre.

Families feel extremely safe at the centre. Access to the centre is very strictly controlled and thorough risk assessments are in place. Parents confirmed that attending groups at the centre has improved safety within the home and they have adopted safer practices. For example, parents' increased awareness of potential dangers helps them understand how to keep children safe at home.

Children make exceptional progress from their starting points and this can be seen in the significant progress consistently seen in Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores each year. Parents report that attendance at classes 'has helped prepare children for mixing in groups - they learn to share' and that 'the pre-nursery class provided excellent preparation for nursery.'

The centre has established excellent partnerships to foster good multi-agency working to protect those subject to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and child protection plans. Information is rapidly exchanged with key agencies to protect the most vulnerable children.

The centre has a well-established parent forum which is effective in feeding back parents' views and supporting the work of the centre. The centre's well-planned volunteer programme has successfully developed the self-esteem and confidence of its participants. Volunteers access a good range of training to help them succeed in their voluntary roles. One parent currently participates in the centre's volunteer scheme and helps in running groups at the centre as well as running a local playgroup. Three other parents await their Criminal Records Bureau clearance before taking up volunteer roles within the centre. Parent governors are represented on the full board of governors but the sub-committee for the children's centre is currently seeking a parent representative to become fully involved in the governance of the centre. An increasing number of parents have been helped into further training and employment and the centre continues to focus on this as an area for priority.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>1</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?**

<b>2</b>
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The centre's attention to assessment of need is good. The centre coordinator uses data well to record centre performance against key indicators and to set clear targets for attainment. Staff have challenging targets to improve outcomes for families. Most parents significantly gain in confidence as a result of completing courses. One parent commented, 'The parenting course was brilliant. It really built confidence in sharing problems with other parents in a confidential, non-judgemental environment.' The range of services is regularly reviewed and adapted to meet the needs of those accessing the centre.

The centre offers good provision to help children learn and develop. Activities are exceptionally well planned and rooms are adapted effectively within the centre and in other venues to provide a stimulating learning environment. Parents greatly value the opportunity to access groups which help them stimulate their child's play and support family welfare.

The centre works closely with partner schools to help children's transition to school. Resources are successfully shared and deployed to benefit families. For example sharing microscopes for use during 'bug-hunt' exercises and sharing and adapting rooms in outreach centres to offer classes. The centre very effectively meets the needs of all who access its services. It systematically reviews its provision through collection and analysis of feedback from families and parents at key milestones to inform future provision. The centre's excellent links with other agencies and partnership working, particularly with midwives and health professionals, provides a highly effective, integrated approach to improve the quality of services locally.

The centre offers a good range of provision which meets the needs of parents and children using the centre well. One grandparent commented, 'Bringing the children to

the centre has helped me make friends locally.’ Staff ratios are increased for sessions where children are from vulnerable groups, particularly for crèches running alongside parenting courses. The good range of learning opportunities is complemented by excellent care, guidance and support. At times of crisis, all families are supported exceptionally well and benefit from a seamless range of services and support. The centre has a high level of contact with targeted groups in the area. Many families with circumstances that make them most vulnerable access services. The large majority of children in the area are registered with the centre. However, the centre does not have limited data on lone parents with children aged under five, or the number of children with disabilities or children whose parents have disabilities who live within the reach area.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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

<b>2</b>
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Leadership and management are good. Centre leaders and governors have high aspirations for the centre and a clear vision on how goals will be achieved. The self-evaluation process provides an accurate picture of the centre’s performance. The full board of governors provides good challenge to the centre’s performance but attendance at the children’s centre sub-committee is too low to provide sufficient breadth of support or challenge. Parent governors are not sufficiently involved in the children’s centre sub-committee but parents do help shape services through a highly effective parents’ forum. For example, suggestions from parents resulted in the centre installing a taller perimeter fence to the outside play area and fitting a gate to the outside sandpit. Parents view the centre managers as being ‘excellent leaders and role models.’ The centre provides good value for money through the effective use of staff expertise, space utilisation across the centre and outreach centres and through excellent partnership working.

The centre engages extremely well with all target groups including those from Black and minority ethnic groups. Inclusion of children and their families is central to the centre’s work. The centre coordinator uses community data well and tracks families with particular needs or vulnerable children. However, information on centre performance and trends in data for all key target groups are not sufficiently shared with governors and service users in a suitable format to aid understanding and enable them to effectively challenge performance.



The centre has made significant progress in improving Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores and narrowing the achievement gap for the lowest achieving and the rest. It has also significantly increased breastfeeding rates. Equality and diversity are promoted well. The centre is effective in removing any barriers to achievement, for example by providing a free crèche where needed. The centre's 'All about us' group helps raise awareness of cultural differences to those attending. For example, by introducing families to different cuisines and recipes from around the world.

Safeguarding arrangements are given the utmost priority at the centre. All legislative requirements are met or exceeded. The relevant policies and procedures are ratified by governors annually. Clear safer recruitment processes and vetting procedures are strictly adhered to, ensuring that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults. Staff and volunteers have access to high levels of support and training. Thorough risk assessments are in place to protect all centre users. The centre has established outstanding working relationships with other agencies to protect children. Arrangements for early intervention and for dealing with domestic violence are excellent. Services are fully integrated between all partner agencies and lead to significantly improving outcomes for vulnerable families.

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>1</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>1</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>1</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**

Information made available from the 2008 inspection of Butterstile Primary School was taken into consideration.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Butterstile Children's Centre on 17 and 18 October 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank those of you who helped us with our work through your enthusiastic involvement in the inspection. We very much enjoyed our visit to your centre and meeting so many of you. It was really good to hear how important the centre is to you and the impact it has had in helping you and your families. You made us feel very welcome and we very much appreciated the amount of time you spent with us.

You told us that the centre is very friendly and welcoming and values your views on its services. We too felt welcomed by the friendly and knowledgeable reception staff. We know that the centre has taken into account your feedback through the parent forum, the parent governors and through parent consultation and has acted upon this information to make changes to the services. For example, in the provision of a higher perimeter fence around the outside play area and a gate on the outside sandpit. Parent governors reported being very involved in decision making but we found that too few parents are involved in the work of the children's centre committee, a sub-committee of the full board of governors.

The centre provides you with a wide range of activities which you told us you enjoy. We heard how much you enjoy attending activities such as 'Messy Play' and 'Shake, Rattle and Roll' and how the groups help you develop ideas around play at home. You also told us how important the centre is to the community, particularly as it provides so many activities for you and your children, whatever their age. For example, many of you attended and enjoyed the Jubilee celebration, the Christmas party and the educational trips organised by the centre.

We found that the centre staff are very good at assessing any difficult situations and provide you with excellent, practical support in times of crisis. The assessments they

carry out are extremely well informed and lead to highly effective individual support from specialists. We were very pleased to see how the centre encourages you to become volunteers and prepares you well for your volunteer roles. We know this has helped some of you to go on to further training and employment and others have become volunteers within the centre or become parent governors to help in the running of the centre. We were impressed with the 'Butterstile Buddies' initiative which allowed many of you to be closer involved.

We know you fully appreciate how the centre has planned its provision well and how flexible it is in coming to visit you in your homes to provide help and to encourage your participation in centre activities, especially at times of greatest need. You told us that you have particularly benefited from the 'Time for me' group and the 'Freedom' programme and how these groups have boosted your confidence and helped you and your families' progress.

We know that some of you have found the courses provided by the centre to be very helpful in developing your parenting skills as well as your confidence. We know that many of you went on to successfully complete other courses to improve your English and mathematics. We were extremely pleased to see and hear how the specialist support your children received helped prepare them for nursery school.

My colleague and I really enjoyed visiting many of the activities on offer. I was particularly impressed with those of you who enthusiastically participate in the parents' forum and the way you support each other. Everyone we spoke to said that staff always listen to your views on what you like and your suggestions on how they could improve those activities that you feel are not so good. Throughout the inspection we were constantly told by children and parents of the difference that the centre makes to them.

Throughout our visit we noticed how careful all the staff were to ensure that you are safe both at the centre and at home, and how it encourages you to be more aware of healthy lifestyles. We agree that the centre is a very safe place to be. The centre managers make sure that all the staff working at the centre have been suitably checked and cleared to work with children.

The centre works exceptionally well with partners and organisations to provide as many opportunities for you as possible. It works exceptionally well with midwives and health professionals to provide excellent information for prospective parents and new parents about healthy eating during pregnancy and how to promote children's healthy eating habits. It is also very good at making sure you know about weight management. We have asked the centre to improve further child obesity levels in Reception Year which is an increasing problem across Bury. The centre had already started working on this before we visited through the newly introduced weight management classes.

The centre managers and governors are committed to providing you with the very best services possible. They know exactly what they want to do to make sure the

centre continues to improve. They measure the impact carefully and plan how to further improve their services to benefit even more people in the community. The centre has a very good understanding of how much difference the provision makes in helping families to move forward in their lives. We have asked the centre to share more information with you so that you too understand what it is doing well.

We were very pleased with the enormous effect that the centre has had on the lives of you and your family and how it has helped you to turn your lives around. It is very obvious that the centre is hugely important to all of you who use the centre and to the wider communities of St Mary's ward. Thank you all once again for your time and enthusiasm in talking to us.

We would like to wish you all the very best in the future.

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