

# Inspection report for Moss Side Sure Start Children's Centre

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Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	404485
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Centre leader	Mutasim Billah
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Moss Side Children's Centre EY104115

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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 centre staff, representatives of the local authority and a wide range of partner agencies, carers and parents. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Moss Side Sure Start Children's Centre was designated in March 2007. It is a phase two centre which is managed directly by Manchester City Council. Governance is provided by an advisory group which comprises representatives from a range of stakeholders, including parents.

The centre serves an inner-city area which is identified as having among the 4% highest levels of disadvantage in the country. The reach area straddles one of Manchester's main arterial routes to the south. Current figures indicate there are 785 children aged under five years within the reach area. This represents more than one-in-five members of the local population. Over 50% of such children live in households claiming workless benefits. The community regularly receives new residents, many of whom are new to the country. Over 60% of local families belong to a wide range of different minority ethnic groups, the majority being of Black African, Black African Caribbean or south Asian heritage. Between them, they speak many different languages. Most children's skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to early years provision are significantly less well-developed than expected for their age.

The centre provides the full core offer. It offers family support and, through its outreach work, encourages local families to access services at the centre and elsewhere in the locality. The centre runs general sessions for adults and toddlers, and also specific sessions for groups such as teenage parents, and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender families.

Health workers provide midwifery, breastfeeding, and speech and language sessions. Adult education partners run courses which families access at the centre and at other local sites.

At the time of the inspection the centre leader was on paternity leave and so the head of a different children's centre was in charge.

Local authority nursery and childcare provision operates from six rooms on site. It is open on weekdays for 51 weeks of the year between 7.45am and 5.15pm. This provision was inspected in November 2011 and the report can be found on the Ofsted website.

## 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

Moss Side Sure Start Children's Centre provides a satisfactory service for the families who live in its local area. While those who use it describe it as, 'a real hub for the community', others are less clear about the services it provides. Just over half of families with children aged under five had contact with centre staff over the past year. The attendance of lone parents and male carers is lower than other groups, and increasing the reach to these target groups remains a key priority for the centre.

The children and adults who use the centre's services steadily improve their knowledge and skills. They are aware of how to live healthy and safe lives. There has been an increase in the level of skills of local children at the end of their Reception Year in school although the gap in attainment between the 80% highest achieving children and the rest was the same in 2012 as in 2010. The sessions which run for specifically targeted small groups have a clear focus and there is evidence of these having a positive impact on improving outcomes for those involved. However, not all sessions are as well planned or provide parents with enough modelling and guidance on how they can support their children's learning.

The centre provides a warm welcome for all who pass through its doors. Comments such as, 'It feels like an extended family', and, 'We have always felt safe and calm because staff are there for you', typify users' appreciation of the good quality care, guidance and support that the staff offer to them as individuals. Suitable arrangements are in place to secure the

safeguarding of children. Although procedures are generally followed, occasionally they are not; such as using the camera facility of a mobile phone during a session. Centre staff show sensitivity in adapting services so that they reflect the diverse needs of the many different groups within the community and promote equality of opportunity.

The centre is very accommodating to other groups that need space to provide their services and, taking suitable account of the need for confidentiality, staff willingly share relevant information about families. The centre is less successful in obtaining information and data from other agencies, particularly health, in order to guide its planning. Staff evaluate the impact of the centre's work but do not do so with sufficient rigour to provide a clear picture of its stronger and weaker areas. The advisory group acts more as a forum for sharing information than as a means for holding the centre to account for its work. Satisfactory leadership and management are helping the centre to sustain the quality of its provision during a period of city-wide reorganisation and reductions in funding. Regular monitoring and guidance by the local authority provide clear direction for the centre. The outcomes for users and the centre's achievements to date show that it has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Improve the outcomes for children and families by ensuring that:
  - activities are planned so that they help parents to increase their knowledge of how to support their children's learning and development
  - the centre works in collaboration with other agencies to provide activities that are targeted at reducing the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest of children by the end of Reception Year.
- Improve the provision for children and families by:
  - increasing the numbers of potential users who regularly access the centre's services, in particular lone parents and male carers.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that the centre checks in more detail the value of its work and uses this information to add impetus to action planning
  - enhancing the work of the advisory group in holding the centre to account
  - working with other agencies, particularly health, to increase the availability and accuracy of data and the sharing of information related to local families
  - ensuring that procedures for safeguarding are put into practice consistently.

## How good are outcomes for families?

3
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Parents are well aware of the benefits that the centre provides for their families both in terms of the, 'good, big space for children to play and explore' and the new things that they learn. In one session for teenagers, young mothers were delighted by the clay-work that they had produced in earlier weeks, decorated and could use as Christmas presents. They obviously enjoyed attending the centre and having the opportunity to develop their creativity while their children made new friends and experimented with different toys from those at home. Adult and toddler sessions, which run three times a week, are less well focused and not always led by a trained volunteer or member of centre staff. The planning outlines different activities and resources but does not take into account what the centre's evaluations show about the different needs of users and the progress they make. This reduces the impact that the sessions have on developing children's skills and the opportunities for adults to receive guidance on how they can involve themselves more in their children's learning. As one parent commented, 'They are not exactly structured and if you were a newcomer you might need a bit more direction.'

Participation rates are good in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses to which centre staff signpost users. Some users progress to further training, for example, in English and mathematics or to become a teaching assistant or a midwife. Others develop the confidence to take more charge of their lives. Users do contribute their ideas to the parents' forum and the advisory group but do not yet provide routine and systematic input to the governance of the centre.

Breastfeeding figures for the reach area are above the national average. In a recent survey of 55 users, 52.7% of mothers were still breastfeeding their baby at six to eight weeks. Local levels of dental decay and childhood obesity are reducing, although the incidence of obesity in Reception-age children is three percentage points above the national average. Children enjoy healthy snacks at the centre and exercise sessions for adults are much appreciated.

Parenting courses and sessions to support those experiencing domestic violence have a positive impact on the safety of children and adults. Centre staff provide helpful information to other agencies that adds to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process, child protection discussions and subsequent action. Case studies provided by members of the Early Intervention Team, the Children's and Parents' Service, and childcare staff demonstrate the wide-ranging practical and emotional support on offer via the centre. This has led to local families accessing housing, baby and safety equipment, and behaviour and relationships counselling thus reducing family stress and increasing the safety of children. During activities at the centre, children and adults generally act in a safe manner, although adult users are not always alert to the potential hazards posed by using mobile phones in the presence of children.

In 2012, 59% of local children achieved the skills expected at the end of Reception. This is in line with the national average for 2011 and a good increase on the previous year. However, the achievement gap rose to 31.1%, the same as it was in 2010. The centre leader has recently attended a city-wide 'Getting Ready for School' forum aimed at increasing the focus of all services on improving the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. While children make satisfactory progress from their starting points, the centre has yet to introduce plans and actions to play its part in helping to reduce the gap in achievement between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest of children by the end of Reception Year.

Children enjoy their time at the centre, behave well and happily collaborate and share with each other. Parents say that their children 'benefit' from the sessions and 'learn to play with others.' They also comment that after input from members of the speech and language team, they 'will sing more nursery rhymes and use everyday objects as toys and tools for learning.' Such words exemplify the centre's satisfactory impact on improving outcomes for children and families.

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>3</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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships, and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment.</b>	<b>3</b>

## How good is the provision?

<b>3</b>
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Through outreach work and liaison with other agencies, staff are aware of and adapt the centre's services to meet the community's changing needs. Some targeted groups, teenage parents, for example, engage well with the centre's services but only 36% of lone parents and 21% of male carers were actively involved in the year ending June 2012. This is despite the inclusivity of activities, the provision of sessions for lone parents and a few male carers regularly attending adult and toddler sessions. Monthly sessions for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender families from across the city are well attended. They help to reduce discrimination and enable children to maintain a positive image of their family.

The recently developed assessment form highlights families' needs at an early stage and helps staff to target their work. The centre provides access to translators to help with

communication. Crèche facilities enable users to access, for example, counselling or adult training. Case studies show that targeted work, such as 'Confident parent, Confident child' courses or one-to-one support, make a clear difference to families' lives. For example, it empowers them to identify what is of real importance to them and the steps they need to take in order to reach their goals. The weekly baby café effectively supports breastfeeding mothers. According to one parent, 'It provides a nice focus for the week and was very important to my learning as a new mother.'

Other professionals and many centre users comment very favourably on the interest that staff take in families as unique individuals. This enables staff to tailor support very well according to families' different needs and to provide good quality care and support. Staff are proactive in seeking support from other agencies, particularly for those in crisis such as the loss of benefits and accommodation if a partner does not return from visiting their homeland abroad. Their helpfulness at signposting users to other services offers opportunities to raise ambitions and increase confidence. One parent commented about her Early Intervention Team family worker, 'She sure does take loads of weight off my shoulders.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

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

## How effective are the leadership and management?

<b>3</b>
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Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and have access to supervision. Through the annual conversation and quarterly monitoring process, local authority representatives provide clear targets for the centre to work to. There is also access to suitable training as required. The centre is beginning to base its self-evaluation of the impact of its work on concrete evidence. However, this is not yet being done with sufficient rigour. Although staff generally work in effective partnership with other agencies, some information and data, such as that related to live births or the numbers of disabled children, are not always readily available. These two weaknesses have an impact on the centre's ability to plan its provision and they contribute to it improving at a satisfactory pace.

Staff are responsive to suggestions and requests about services from users and other stakeholders, such as community groups, and actively encourage their involvement in parents' forum events and the advisory group. However, minutes of meetings and discussion with participants show that, while the group provides a useful forum for sharing information, it does not currently fulfil its governance role to best effect in holding the centre to account for the quality of its services. Staff ensure that the accommodation is put to good use for a range of different purposes. The outcomes for families show that the centre provides satisfactory value for money.



Satisfactory safeguarding policies, procedures, suitability checks and training ensure that staff and most users take appropriate actions to ensure children's safety at all times. However, occasional lack of vigilance means that not all policies are consistently followed. Work with other agencies and the centre's own actions provide support for those experiencing domestic violence or emotional difficulties.

The centre promotes diversity and equality of opportunity in a satisfactory manner. It is inclusive of the wide range of different groups represented locally, many of whom experience high levels of disadvantage, and it takes positive action to reduce discrimination. Staff have regular contact with, and support, the majority of families with disabled children that the centre is aware of. Centre staff successfully support families and signpost them to services that enable them to take the first steps towards improving their social, emotional and economic well-being.

These are the grades for leadership and management:

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>3</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>3</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

The findings of the report of the on-site childcare provision were taken into account during this inspection.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Moss Side Sure Start Children's Centre on 12 and 13 November 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you to those of you who spoke with us at the centre or on the telephone. You helped us to learn more about the centre's work. You told us many stories of how well staff listen to your individual concerns and help you to overcome difficulties. These, added to other evidence, mean that we judge the care, guidance and support that the centre offers you as individuals to be good.

The support and encouragement for breastfeeding help good numbers of you to continue doing this until your babies are at least six to eight weeks old.. Children enjoy the healthy snacks available during sessions at the centre. They also behave well and enjoy experimenting with new toys and making new friends. We also saw that you mostly take care to act in a safe manner. However, we noticed a parent using their telephone as a camera during the adult and toddler session. In order to ensure children's safety, we have asked the centre leaders to make sure that this, or something similar, cannot happen again.

Local children's skills at the end of Reception Year are rising, which is good news. We have asked the centre to play a more active part in helping to narrow the gap between the skills of those children who make the most progress and those who find learning more difficult. We have also asked leaders to make sure that sessions such as the adult and toddler group, offer you more guidance on how to help your children learn as they play. The activities with a bit more focus, such as Savera and one-to-one sessions with family workers have more of an impact. They clearly help you and your children to develop new skills, grow in confidence and, some of you, to move on to training and employment.

The centre encourages you to give feedback about sessions and what services you would like and it is good that you have opportunities to have your say at advisory group meetings. We have asked leaders to make sure that this group works more as it is meant to, by holding the centre to account for the service that it offers your community.

The centre is very inclusive of all the different groups who live in your area but, at the moment, it is not attracting enough users, especially lone parents and male carers. We have asked leaders to find ways of increasing the numbers of families who attend activities.

Finally, we have asked the leaders to do two more things: to work with other agencies, especially health workers, to get more accurate information about families' needs; and to take more care when gauging how well the centre's services cater for your needs. It is important that the centre is clear about what it does well and where it could improve so that it can make a real difference to the lives of more families in the area who have young children.

Thank you again for your help. We wish you well for the future.

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