

# Inspection report for Copperhouse Children's Centre

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Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	411020
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY344338 First Class Day Nursery (Lancashire) Limited 309675 Toppers Day Nursery

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 additional inspector and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, outreach workers, health and education professionals, and a representative of the local authority. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation. They spoke with users of the centre and observed activities in the centre and at venues in the local community.

## Information about the centre

Copperhouse Children's Centre is a phase two centre which was designated in November 2008. It is situated in a refurbished building at the western end of Rishton, which is a small town with little local industry that serves as a dormitory town to its larger neighbours. Across the reach area, 29.7% of children live in workless households and a similar proportion live as part of families who are dependent on benefits. The reach has a mix of affluent and less advantaged areas, some of which fall into the category of the 30% most deprived. The reach area is predominantly made up of White British families; however, there is a small number of families from other ethnic heritages. The majority of children's levels of skill on entry to early years provision are below those expected for their age.

The centre runs a varied range of activities and groups that provide both universal and targeted services for families within the reach area in line with the full core purpose of the centre. A number of services operate in other buildings located in the local community in order to ensure that all families from the reach area are able to access services on their doorstep. The centre is managed under the strategic direction of the local authority. Recently, the centre has become part of a federated centre which consists of Huncoat Children's Centre and Copperhouse Children's Centre. Both Copperhouse and Huncoat Children's Centre have a shared management, staff team and governance arrangements. The centre has two linked childcare providers, First Class Day Nursery (Lancashire) Limited and Toppers Nursery. The linked childcare provisions are subject to separate inspection

arrangements. First Class Day Nursery (Lancashire) Limited was inspected in July 2009 and Toppers Day Nursery was last inspected in February 2011. The reports of these inspections are available on our website: [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**

1
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### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

1
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## Main findings

This is an outstanding children's centre. Registration rates are extremely high and its excellent services are exceptionally well used by local families. Partnerships with a whole host of professional services and local providers are outstanding. These help to make sure that the centre is able to swiftly identify families who are in the most need of support and target their efforts extremely well. In addition to providing super activities in the centre building, staff take many activities into venues in the local community. These activities result in outstanding learning and excellent outcomes as local families enhance their understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles and keep themselves safe. The centre's work in safeguarding families is of an exceptional quality and there is a relentless drive to make certain that children are protected.

The hard work of the staff to continuously raise the profile of the centre together with excellent outreach work results in a centre that is at the heart of the local community. Relationships within the centre are outstanding and there is warm and friendly welcome for all its users and its professional partners. These excellent relationships mean that parents feel confident to ask for help and the quality of support for parents in times of crisis is exceptional. A typical comment from a parent was that the staff, 'have been a blessing'. The centre works remarkably well to raise awareness of abusive relationships and domestic violence and its impact on children's well-being. It helps families to tackle urgent issues. This work has had a considerable impact on the emotional well-being of mothers and their children.

The centre has a very significant impact on improving the personal, social and emotional skills of local children and their ability to communicate. It has worked hard to reduce inequalities in the neighbourhood. The centre provides outstanding support for families with disabled children and those with special educational needs when it is fully informed about

their requirements. Occasionally, the potential for support is not maximised because a small number of health partners are sometimes slow to provide the centre with detailed information about these families' needs.

The centre's outstanding capacity for further development and improvement is illustrated by the way that staff never rest on their laurels. They work tirelessly to introduce further innovative practice, such as programmes that inform teenagers how to manage potentially abusive relationships, and courses that help parents to understand how boys learn. This is in addition to working very closely with the local primary school and other local partners to develop outdoor education.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Work with health partners who assess and support disabled children and those with special educational needs to make sure that detailed information about families' requirements is always shared with the children's centre staff as quickly as possible.

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

<b>1</b>
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Outstanding partnerships with health professionals mean that parents of young children and babies are offered excellent support. As a result they are able to enhance their understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles. The vast majority of expectant mothers in the area attend antenatal appointments at the centre and this is the start of the seamless support that continues through to birth and throughout children's early childhood. Successful health education starts with 'Bumps, Birth and Beyond' antenatal classes, and continues to 'Baby Massage' and 'Baby Play'. Mothers say that they have, 'really bonded' with their babies, 'through touch and eye contact' and that, 'Staff take the time with everyone and explain really well.' Staff have received Baby Friendly training to ensure that breastfeeding messages are consistent throughout the centre. They also work very closely with the National Childbirth Trust to ensure that peer support is available to local mothers. Consequently, rates of initiating and sustaining breastfeeding are rising swiftly and the proportion of mothers who continue to breastfeed six-to-eight weeks after birth is above the national average at 47%. The centre has been particularly effective at encouraging young mothers to breastfeed and there are some wonderful success stories. The Healthy Heroes approach to early health education is efficiently delivered in all groups and has been introduced into preschool provision in the area. As a result obesity rates for children at the end of the Reception Year are decreasing and are lower than the national average at 8.8%. There are many varied, high quality and extremely well attended opportunities for children to make friends and enjoy themselves. These are very much appreciated by parents who say that their children have, 'more confidence and have learned important social skills'. Very strong partnerships with local schools and private and voluntary providers of early years education and childcare have also been pivotal in making sure that outcomes for children are outstanding. The centre has successfully delivered a range of schemes that get children

interested in reading, that help them to understand the links between sounds and letters and have also had a strong and successful focus on helping boys to learn. All this has contributed very well to the significant improvements to children's skills that have been achieved across the reach area in recent years. The proportion of children who go on to reach national expectations in their personal, social and emotional development and in their communication and language at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has significantly improved and is now at the national average. The gap between the lowest 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile and the rest has been successfully closed, and at 15.7% is almost half the national average. Parents also have many superb opportunities to improve their educational attainment, such as through attending literacy and numeracy courses. Volunteering is used particularly well to enhance parents' skills and there are many active volunteers in the centre. For example, one volunteer has contributed over 700 hours of her time to the centre in the last 12 months. Parents are given excellent advice in times of financial hardship that helps them to cope with their situation. For example, they are able to make appointments to meet experts from the Citizens Advice Bureau and outreach workers do all that they can to help parents to solve housing problems and to manage debt.

Robust policies and rigorous procedures ensure that children are kept safe. There is an excellent relationship with children's services which ensures effective communication and contributes extremely well to keeping all children safe including those who are subject to a child protection plan. The Common Assessment Framework is used extremely well to ensure that those families with circumstances that make them vulnerable receive timely and very effective support. Outreach workers from the centre are often involved in helping parents to organise their lives more effectively and in making certain that parents become more successful in managing their children's behaviour. The involvement of these outreach workers is central to the de-escalation of concerns and in ensuring that it is extremely rare for a child to be subject to a child protection plan a second time. The centre also provides an exceptionally safe environment for looked after children to have supervised contact with their parents.

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>1</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>1</b>

## How good is the provision?

Levels of registration and engagement are extremely high because staff go the extra mile to make sure that all local families have ample opportunities to get involved with the centre. This starts with excellent communication with midwives and other health professionals that results in detailed knowledge of the mothers in the neighbourhood who are expecting a baby. The centre builds upon these super opportunities for early registration and engagement through exceptional links with local schools, private providers of childcare, including nurseries, and housing associations. Therefore, it is able to contact parents who may move into the area at a later date. It uses door knocking and surveys extremely well to make sure it knows exactly why some families in the locality may choose not to attend the centre and is able to take decisive steps to ensure the centre is able to meet their needs. The centre is particularly effective in ensuring that services are targeted at the families in the most need of support. For example, one mother and toddler group provides a stepping stone for less confident parents who may be reluctant to join in a larger group. Outreach is outstanding and where needed services are taken into families' homes. These home visits have led to the successful engagement of families in all target groups and enabled them to access services that they would have otherwise missed.

There is a super range of high quality activities that promote children's and adults' learning and development exceptionally well. Staff carefully check children's development and plans for further activities are based on what children are interested in and what they need to learn next. Checks are also made on the progress of adults and they are able to build extremely well on their previous learning. For example, they are able to move from taster sessions, to level 1 and level 2 courses and then to more complex courses or employment. Families with circumstances that make them vulnerable are quickly identified and receive excellent individual support. Additionally, parents are offered outstanding support in times of crisis. The help provided by the centre workers is described by parents as, 'brilliant'. For example, one parent said, 'from feeling so low and shattered they have helped my confidence, my outlook and helped me to shine.' The centre ensures that very valuable information about many aspects of parenting, including advice about how to keep children healthy and safe, is available to parents who visit the centre. In addition a vast range of advice is available on many other subjects including sexual health and drug and alcohol abuse. Active partnerships with other agencies ensure clear, consistent and up-to-date messages are delivered. Counselling is easily available to parents, and local men as well as women have made use of this valuable avenue of support.

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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</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?**

**1**

The leadership at all levels is focused clearly on providing an excellent range of services that are matched exceptionally well to the particular needs of the families in the area. All the staff share the high levels of commitment and enthusiasm exhibited by senior managers and levels of motivation are exceptionally high. Comprehensive data is used very effectively to identify where further work is needed. Development planning is of an extremely high quality. It contains very detailed methods designed to bring about improvement and clear numerical targets. Strategies are swiftly implemented and therefore provision and outcomes for families are outstanding and continuously improving. The centre is also flexible and carefully uses expert local knowledge. This means that the centre can move swiftly to address emerging issues. For example, when there was a sharp and unexpected local rise in the rates of teenage pregnancies the centre quickly responded by putting on a group to address the needs of very young mothers in a nurturing environment. The local authority is rigorous in the way it monitors and challenges the centre. The advisory board represents an extremely wide range of professional viewpoints and a good number of parents regularly attend meetings. It ensures that a very close and critical eye is kept on the development of both of the centres it serves. The centre is extremely good at making certain that the quality of activities are carefully monitored and that parents' and children's views on the quality and impact of services are recorded and acted upon. The parents' forum has been invigorated and is working exceptionally well as a means of gaining a broad range of views. The constant improvement of an excellent service that reaches the vast majority of local families and has a significant impact on their emotional and physical well-being demonstrates the way the centre provides outstanding value for money.

Safeguarding and multi-agency cooperation are given an extremely high priority. All staff have their backgrounds carefully checked when they are recruited. Staff training is thorough and equips staff exceptionally well for their roles in the centre. There is a particularly strong focus on making sure that staff understand about emotional abuse and the impact that domestic violence has on young children. Therefore, staff are highly skilled at providing successful early intervention that stops concerns from escalating. The centre promotes equality, tackles discrimination and celebrates diversity exceptionally well. It is especially good at making sure that any gaps in attainment between groups of children and their parents is reduced securely and swiftly. It has provided excellent help for parents who speak English as an additional language and helped to make certain that their children settle quickly into school and became successful learners. It has a sensory room that is well used by many members of the local community including those who have older disabled children and those with special educational needs. However, the centre does not always get the most comprehensive and up-to-date information about families who might benefit from their help when their children are being assessed for delays in their development. Despite this, when the centre is made fully aware of the situation by other health professionals it is then able to provide outstanding support.



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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures 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>1</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>1</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>1</b>

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

The inspection of the children's centre was informed by the most recent findings and judgements of the inspections for First Class Day Nursery (Lancashire) Limited and Toppers Day Nursery.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Copperhouse Children's Centre on 20–21 March 2013. We judged the centre as outstanding.

We would like to thank all the people who spoke to us when we visited the centre. Many of you told us what you thought about the centre and its activities. Your views were very helpful. The vast majority of families in the town are registered with the centre and make full use of the outstanding services it provides. These services are very important to families in Rishton and help them to improve their health and to keep their children safe. For example, rates for breastfeeding in the locality have risen and fewer children are obese at the end of the Reception Year.

The centre has outstanding partnerships with many other providers of services for young children and these are central to the centres success in achieving outstanding outcomes for local families. For instance, outstanding partnerships with health partners including midwives make certain that the centre is able to make early contact with prospective mothers. These partnerships enhance the flawless care provided by the centre which starts with the first antenatal appointment, moves to 'Bumps Babes and Beyond', a group that delivers antenatal advice before providing well attended and much appreciated 'Baby Massage' and 'Baby Play' sessions. Together, these activities ensure that parents know how to keep their babies healthy and safe. This excellent work is built upon through a group for babies who are starting to walk and explore their world before children can go on to access a wealth of wonderful activities that are successfully improving their social skills and their ability to communicate. Many of these activities are held in local community venues, which make it easy for you to get to groups. The centre has worked exceptionally well with local schools and nurseries to make certain that your children get off to a flying start in their education, and develop their understanding of the links between letters and sounds. There has been a particularly successful focus on helping boys to learn. The centre has a strong focus on closing gaps in the achievement of children and this is now much lower than the national average. There is an exceptionally good focus on promoting equal opportunities. The centre provides outstanding support for disabled adults and children and those with special educational needs. However, this wonderful support is not always maximised because a small number of health partners do not always provide the centre with sufficiently detailed information quickly enough when children are being checked for delays in their development.

The centre is very successful at promoting safeguarding and keeping children safe. It works very closely with local providers of children's services to help parents in difficult situations to improve their parenting skills and the way they manage their children's behaviour. This makes certain that the number of concerns about children's safety and well-being do not rise. You told us how much you value the centre's work on domestic violence, and the wealth of knowledge provided by centre workers helps you to improve your personal circumstances. It was heartening to hear how you are helped in times of crisis and we were moved when we read the many comments you have provided that praise the work of the centre's staff. The centre has also provided numerous useful opportunities for adults to improve their qualifications and skills. Many of you have been able to gain qualifications in literacy and numeracy. Volunteers have made a very valuable contribution to the centre whilst improving their own skills.

The centre is very well managed by experienced leaders who are supported by a very competent and enthusiastic staff. Together, they ensure that the centre always provides a welcoming atmosphere where parents can be confident that their concerns will always be listened to and responded to positively. Senior managers in the centre work extremely well with the advisory board and managers from the local authority to keep a careful check on the centre's work. They use data, local information and parents' views extremely well to make certain that the centre focuses well on target groups and continuously improves the quality of its work and outcomes for local families. This relentless focus on providing the highest quality of provision, together with the implementation of inventive new ideas,

ensures that the centre provides outstanding value for money and that its capacity for further improvement is also outstanding.

Thank you for telling us about your experiences of the centre, and may we wish you and your families 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).