

Orrell Lamberhead Green Children's Centre

Kershaw Street, Orrell, Wigan, WN5 0AW

Inspection date 23–24 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Good	2
The quality of practice and services		Good	2
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a good centre.

- The centre provides a trusted focal point for the community whose members are confident that they will find there, high quality care, guidance and support.
- Staff's determination and innovative approaches to marketing mean that the numbers of children and families that are registered with the centre and using its services are increasing year on year. A large majority of local families are now involved.
- In collaboration with its partners, the centre provides access to a range of good quality services. It is particularly successful at helping to increase children's communication and personal skills prior to school and at helping adults to improve their confidence and skills in preparation for work.
- Parents' views have a strong influence on the centre's provision. The many volunteers play a crucial role in recruiting new members, leading activities and enabling the smooth running of the centre.
- Good leadership, management and governance ensure that centre staff work as a strong, mutually supportive team, whose members share high aspirations for local families and have high expectations of themselves. Regular checking of the success of activities leads to improvements in provision.
- The centre promotes equality of opportunity very well by helping to break down barriers that hinder families from moving forward.

It is not outstanding because:

- The sharing of data and information between health service, local authority and centre staff is not sufficiently streamlined.
- There is no system in place through which to track the progress made by children and adults.
- Leaders do not make best use of the information from monitoring to guide plans and decisions.
- The collaborative leadership committee does not have full representation from all stakeholders.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with centre leaders and other staff, representatives from the parents' forum, the local authority, the health service, the on-site nursery provision and local schools. The inspectors also held discussions with a range of providers of both centrally and locally commissioned services, and spoke informally with parents and other users of the centre. It was not possible to speak with any representatives of the collaborative leadership committee, the centre's advisory board, since none was available during the inspection which took place during school holidays.

The inspectors visited the two sessions held during the inspection; a 'Stay-and-Play' session for adults and children, and a work-club session.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including: safeguarding information; data about registrations and attendance; case files; minutes of the collaborative leadership committee and other meetings; the centre's procedures for monitoring the quality of its performance and its development planning.

Inspection team

Sarah Drake	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Philip Ellwand	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Orrell Lamberhead Green is a stand-alone, phase three centre which has been operating its full core offer since March 2011. It is managed on behalf of the local authority by a leadership team. The centre leader is also headteacher of the adjacent primary school; other staffing comprises the centre coordinator, an administrator/receptionist and one link worker. Governance of the centre is provided by a collaborative leadership committee, which includes representatives from the four local primary schools. Working with partners and other agencies, the centre offers 'Stay-and-Play' sessions, parenting support, counselling, family and adult learning, crèche facilities, health-related activities and access to flexible childcare provision. It is planned that, from September 2013, the centre will work with two others in the locality to form one children's centre group.

There are 910 children aged under five years living within the reach, which has four areas identified as among the 30% most deprived in the country. Thirty-six per cent of children live within these areas, and approximately one third live in families that have no adult in employment or that are dependent on benefits. Most families are White British with fewer than 4%, some of whom are asylum seekers, belonging to minority ethnic groups. Children's skills on entry to early years provision are generally below expectations for their age.

The centre shares a site and is linked with Orrell Lamberhead Community Primary School and Lamberhead Green Headstart childcare provision. Their most recent reports can be found on the website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rigour with which leaders evaluate the impact of the centre's work and focus their drive for improvement by:
 - working with colleagues in the health service and local authority to improve the sharing of data
 - analysing the centre's own data more efficiently to help guide decision making
 - introducing systems to track the progress made by children and adults who use the services regularly
 - ensuring the full contribution of all stakeholders, particularly from the health service, to the collaborative leadership committee
 - identifying in development plans the desired impact of actions on improving the well-being of children and families.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Over the past year, the numbers of children and families engaging with the centre have increased significantly. Almost four fifths of those who live in the most disadvantaged areas and approximately two thirds of all families with children under five years are registered. Eighty-one per cent of children living in workless households regularly attend sessions.
- Centre staff work well with other agencies to prioritise those families in most need of support, including target groups, and are skilful at developing trusting relationships with potential users. They check on those who are not involved and are persistent in going out into the community to encourage further uptake of services. Parent volunteers also play a strong part in this, as do 'fun days' and the centre's summer activity schedule.
- Parents greatly appreciate the provision of a free crèche, run by staff from the on-site nursery, which removes barriers to their participation in adult learning. Staff are skilled at initially engaging users in sessions which really interest them, such as floristry or gift-making, both of which have been run by parent volunteers, and then encouraging them to progress to accredited courses. Staff willingly accompany those who initially lack confidence to attend sessions on their own, or provide one-to-one sessions in the home for those in the greatest need.
- The centre is increasingly successful at persuading eligible families to take up the entitlement to free nursery provision for their two-year-old children. Fifty per cent did so in autumn 2012 but this has now increased to 87%. The centre's good work to support childminders means that some of these are accredited to take children funded in this way, thereby ensuring the availability of good quality childcare for all those in need.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Staff work well with other agencies to assess individuals' needs, provide the right levels of support and, using their strong local knowledge, to signpost users to the most suitable services.
- The small amount of health data to which the centre has access shows that obesity levels in local Reception-age children have more than halved since 2010, and the incidence of mothers breastfeeding their baby at six-to-eight weeks has increased to 40%. Healthy living activities, ranging from healthy cooking courses to one-to-one support from a health trainer, have a positive impact on families' well-being.
- Opportunities for parents to socialise and to bond with their babies through, for example, baby massage, relieve feelings of isolation and support their mental health. As one parent commented, 'the centre keeps me sane and makes it easier for me to enjoy my children.'
- Well-focused work with private and voluntary childcare providers, parents and schools has led to a significant reduction in the numbers of children identified as at risk of delay in developing their communication skills. Reception classteachers have noticed much improvement in children's speech and their knowledge of letters and sounds when they first start school. At the end of the Reception year, local children's skills are in line with national averages and the gap in attainment between the lowest and highest achievers is slightly narrower than the national figure.
- Adults' good quality questioning at, for example, 'Stay-and-Play' sessions helps to develop children's thinking skills and independence. Similarly, other activities, such as the highly popular 'Drama Totz' and 'Kiddy Kapers', promote children's self-confidence and skills of listening and following instructions.
- The centre acts as a hub for adult education ranging from parenting classes to 'English for Speakers of Other Languages' to literacy, numeracy and work-related courses. It runs a successful work club and credit savings bank and users have ready access to good-quality guidance. Most participants complete the courses and many progress to further learning, volunteering or into employment, improving their life chances and those of their families.
- Centre staff provide high-quality support for those who are having doubts about their ability to cope and they delight in any successes. However, the centre has no system through which to track the

progress of those who use its services. At times of crisis, such as the sudden removal of an asylum seeker to another area, staff provide exceptional hands-on help.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Good quality leadership and management have built a strong staff team which is reflective about its practice and clear about its priorities. The centre's thoughtful child poverty pledge underpins all evaluation of its effectiveness and any decision making.
- The local authority's quarterly reviews and regular meetings of the collaborative leadership committee and its working groups ensure that the centre is held properly to account. Those in governance know about staff's performance, the quality and success of the centre's services, how it is helping to improve users' life chances and what it is doing to improve its own work. However, there has been no health-service representative since 2011.
- Evidence gained from monitoring and parents' views leads to swift action if services do not come up to scratch. However, leaders are not rigorous enough about analysing the information they have in order to: provide clear evidence of the centre's strengths; highlight any weaknesses; precisely pinpoint areas for future focus or provide measurable targets against which to gauge improvement. The sharing of information between different professionals is not sufficiently smooth and consistent. Development plans have few measurable success criteria related to improvement in children's and adults' skills and well-being.
- Staff receive regular supervision and performance management but evidence to show what was discussed and agreed is not always recorded. However, staff and volunteers have good access to varied and well-targeted training. Their developing skills are put to exceptionally good effect to augment the centre's resources. For example, volunteers carry out some reception duties so that staff can lead sessions such as work club and 'Peek-a-Boo Babies'.
- Good-quality safeguarding arrangements, with particularly strong training for staff and parents, are embedded throughout the centre. Good liaison between professionals about those causing concern leads to effective use of Common Assessment Framework processes to protect children and adults most in need. Other agencies praise the work of centre staff who, through their skilful development of relationships with local families, are often able to prevent situations from escalating.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for children and their families and as a result inequalities are reducing rapidly and gaps are closing.
Grade 2	Good	Practice enables most children and their families to access good quality services that improve children's wellbeing and achieve the stated outcomes for families.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	Performance is not as good as it might reasonably be expected to be in one or more key areas.
Grade 4	Inadequate	The needs of children and families in its area are not being met and/or the leaders and managers are not providing sufficient challenge to bring about improvement to the quality of services.

Select details

Unique reference number	22271
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	421483
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	910
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