

# Speke Children's Centre

Sure Start Speke Family Centre, Conleach Road, Speke, Liverpool, L24 0TW

**Inspection date** 5–6 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	3
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Leaders do not always use the data or the information that they receive to identify the key target groups who most need their support. As a result, they are not clear just how well these groups are accessing services.
- Monitoring and tracking of the progress of children and adults attending services at the centre is not yet fully developed.
- The planning and evaluation of activities at the centre are not robust. As a consequence, there is often a lack of clarity about the purpose of the activity, what the session hopes to achieve and how it is helping those attending to improve their well-being and lives.
- The governing body and the local authority do not provide sufficient challenge to enable leaders and managers to swiftly improve the centre's performance.
- Self-evaluation and performance monitoring systems are not used effectively to set challenging targets to promote continual improvement of the centre.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- Outreach work is effective in supporting those families who are referred to the centre as in most need of help and support.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs are provided with good quality individual support which ensures they make good progress and enjoy the same opportunities as other children.
- Adults have many opportunities to work as volunteers in the centre. They are instrumental in seeking funds to help shape services at the centre.
- The centre has established effective relationships with local schools to share good practice and expertise so that all children living in the area are better prepared for school.

## 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 three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority and parents. The inspectors visited activities that took place at the centre and at a venue in the area.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Inspection team

Janet Stacey, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Sarah Drake

Additional inspector

Alan Comerford-Dunbar

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Speke Children's Centre is situated in Liverpool and is a stand-alone, phase one centre. The local authority has delegated responsibility for governance of the centre to Five Children and Families Trust (charity and limited company). Most of the families in the area are White British; there is a small but growing Eastern European community and an increasing number of Black African families living in the area.

The centre provides a range of services, including health services, social care, 'stay and play' sessions, parenting programmes, adult education and outreach services. Most of these services take place at the centre.

Linked childcare provision is provided by the governing body Five Children and Families Trust. The linked provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements and was last inspected in March 2013. The most recent report of this inspection can be found at: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). Data show that a majority of children in the reach area enter early years provision with a range of experiences and skills below those expected for their age.

There are approximately 1172 children under five years of age living in the reach area. The communities covered are ranked amongst the 5% most deprived areas in the country. The centre's key target groups are children living in low-income households, those receiving workless benefits, lone parents, children living with domestic abuse and substance misuse, disabled children and those with special educational needs.

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

- Identify more precisely those families in most need of support to ensure that these families access services at the centre.
- Demonstrate that outcomes are improving for the majority of families by:
  - tracking the impact of learning and development to ensure that children are better prepared for school and adults improve their long-term economic well-being
  - developing further the centre's evaluation systems to capture consistently the impact of the centre's work to improve outcomes, particularly for target families.
- Improve the quality of leadership, governance and management by:
  - strengthening the way in which the local authority and the governing body challenge the centre leaders and hold them to account for its work
  - improving the effectiveness of self-evaluation through regular and rigorous analysis of data to inform impact and outcomes
  - ensuring that targets in the centre's action plan are specific, measurable and focused on improving outcomes.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The majority of children in the reach area are now registered with the centre. Recent initiatives, such as quarterly door knocking, are having some impact on increasing engagement with the centre. However, centre leaders and staff have a variable understanding of those considered to be the most vulnerable. As a consequence, the centre is unsure if they are registering and engaging with these families as well as they could be.
- Health partners are based in the centre. As a result, health services are visible, accessible and helping to register more expectant parents. Antenatal and postnatal sessions are popular and busy. Centre staff and health partners can demonstrate that they are slowly starting to break down some long-held cultural attitudes towards smoking during pregnancy and bottle-feeding babies.
- A large majority of disabled children, lone and workless parents, and families living with domestic abuse and substance misuse are accessing a range of services at the centre. However, staff do not always analyse each group's specific needs to tailor support accordingly, or track the progress that these families are making. As a result, the centre is not yet in a secure position to be able to demonstrate fully the impact of their services to improve outcomes for these families.
- While the centre offers some good activities, participation rates across services are too variable. Targeted activities, such as the employability group 'Get Ready For Work' and parenting courses specifically for men, fail to attract sufficient participants and sustain their engagement.
- Most children from priority groups are accessing early education locally. The centre has been successful in supporting eligible families to take up free entitlement of early education, especially for two-year-olds. However, the centre has yet to track the progress that these children are making to ensure they are developing their social, physical and emotional skills and are being suitably prepared for school.

### The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The centre generally provides a good balance of universal and targeted services to reduce inequalities and to improve families' life chances; these include a good range of activities to improve parenting skills for adults, especially managing children's difficult behaviour. However, the majority of services are run with unclear outcomes and insufficient evaluation to measure the impact on families who participate. As a consequence, the centre cannot always demonstrate that its services are helping families to lead healthy, happy lifestyles.
- The centre is committed to improving children's and families' health. For example, activities to promote healthy eating have resulted in relatively few overweight children entering school. In addition, the centre facilitates a 'Forest School' programme. This allows children to become comfortable with an outdoor approach to education and play as well as enabling them to develop their physical skills and enjoy outdoor exercise.
- The centre facilitates some good opportunities for parents to volunteer at the centre. They assist staff in many of the activities and services, and help to design the summer holiday programme. In addition, access to guidance and support from a Jobcentre representative is regularly available at the centre. However, the impact of such opportunities is not systematically analysed so the full extent to which families benefit from these services and opportunities is unknown.
- The centre has developed good partnerships with local schools. Together they run a successful 'Ready Steady School' transition programme; these sessions include detailed planning and evaluation. As a consequence, children are eager to begin school and to learn what will be expected of them once they start formal schooling. Data for the local area show that children's attainment across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is higher than that of children living in similar communities and that the gap between those who do well and those who do not is narrowing quickly.
- The centre offers a good range of courses and activities to promote adult learning. However, attendance at these sessions is not effectively tracked or evaluated so the centre is unable to show

the impact that services have on reducing high levels of unemployment in the area.

### **The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management**

Requires improvement

- The governing body and local authority are supportive of the centre staff and leaders. However, they are not sufficiently aware of the target groups that need most support and are not challenging the centre effectively enough or evaluating the impact of its work on the priority target groups.
- The current targets, set out in the centre's development plan, do not have specific measures of success and timeframes in relation to the centre's identified priority target groups. In addition, the centre is not reflecting suitably on its practices and services. As a result, the centre cannot fully measure its success against set targets, or what it needs to do to progress and ensure that all of its resources are being used appropriately to fully meet the needs of the families that are living in the area.
- The planning of activities is varied; some plans include learning objectives while others are simply a timetable of events. As a result, evaluation feedback tends to report on enjoyment rather than informing the centre whether the activity is having the desired results, or whether changes are required to the training programme.
- Centre staff are fully committed to safeguarding. Those seeking help with domestic violence problems are very well supported. In addition, information sharing and referral processes between partners and the centre ensure that the right support is provided swiftly to families, including those whose problems have been assessed using the Common Assessment Framework process, or who are subject to a child protection plan.
- The centre places great emphasis on inclusion. Centre staff have acted quickly to engage the Eastern European families moving into the area. Members of the community are working as volunteers in the centre and form part of the parents' forum to ensure that this group's voice is heard. Support for disabled children and those with special additional needs is particularly strong. A dedicated link worker has good knowledge of individuals and is effective in initiating and supporting multi-agency working.
- Parents demonstrate levels of satisfaction with the centre, especially the welcoming, helpful staff. They make their views known through the parents' forum where most key groups are represented. They feel listened to and have a role in shaping services. Methods to obtain children's views are less well established.

**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.

**Children's Centre/Children's Centre Group details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	22808
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	427483
<b>Managed by</b>	Five Children and Families Trust
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1172
<b>Centre leader</b>	Susan Roberts
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 486 9719
<b>Email address</b>	susan.roberts@fiveforfamilies.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

(Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

