

# Christopher Robin Children's Centre

Christopher Robin House, Parsonage Road, Cranleigh, Surrey, GU6 7AN

<b>Inspection date</b>	14–15 January 2014		
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	<b>3</b>
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	<b>3</b>
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Requires improvement	<b>3</b>

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This children's centre requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Not enough families are regularly attending children's centre services. Although access to families most in need is improving, leaders recognise that the centre does not fully meet the needs of all families living in the reach area.
- Too few activities are aimed at improving adults' education and employment opportunities. Although referrals to adult education providers and Jobcentre Plus take place, little is done to record and track the impact of practice and services for individual users.
- Leaders have not fully established a rigorous system to check the impact of services on improving outcomes for families most in need. Centre leaders do not always have a clear enough picture about the effectiveness of the support provided by the wide range of partner professionals who work with families.
- Local authority targets for involving more families are not being achieved quickly enough. The centre's improvement plan is incorporated into an area plan which makes it difficult for leaders to track families' progress and measure the success of the actions they have taken.

### This children's centre has the following strengths:

- Close working links with childminder groups and other centre activities, such as Play and Learn, help prepare children well for school. Most children enter Early Years Foundation Stage above the level expected of them.
- Termly run parenting courses are well attended and highly effective in enabling parents to continue their child's education in the home environment.
- There have been many recent improvements as a result of strong leadership by the centre coordinator, supported by line managers. Centre staff are positive role models who provide good quality care, guidance and support, especially for families during times of crisis.
- Strong partnerships with other professional agencies help the centre to provide effective services to support the families in most need, including highly supportive work with families in their homes. All families and groups feel welcome and safe during activities.

### 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 and managers in the local authority, partners in health, education and social care, parents, representatives of partner organisations from the voluntary and community sector, outreach workers, early years practitioners and representatives of the advisory board.

The inspectors observed activities in the centre and visited other satellite sites such as Cranleigh Baptist Church.

They observed the centre's work, including a joint observation of the Play and Learn session, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including centre policies and procedures, case study files and parent satisfaction surveys.

### Inspection team

Alan Comerford-Dunbar, Lead Inspector	Additional inspector
Robert Miller	Additional inspector
Gail Robertson	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Christopher Robin Children's Centre was designated in 2008 and operates from a purpose built building. It is a stand-alone centre run by Christopher Robin Day Nurseries in partnership with Surrey County Council. The centre is co-located with Christopher Robin Day Nursery (URN 119992), which is subject to a separate inspection.

Governance is through the Christopher Robin Day Nurseries on behalf of the local authority. The centre's advisory board works in partnership with the nursery to manage the centre's service delivery. The advisory board is made up of members of the community, professional agencies and parents.

The centre works with partners from the local community and much of the centre's work takes place in family homes and at nearby community venues. The centre also makes use of the local authority purpose built children's centre bus to support its delivery of services to outlying rural areas. The reach area is mainly rural, with few densely populated areas of housing; there are also two Traveller sites. The centre has three significant groups of families most in need of support which are families from deprived housing estates, families referred to the centre by other agencies and Traveller families.

Currently 963 children under the age of five years live in the reach area, of which 53% are registered with the centre. The large majority of families are of White British heritage (93%). Some 9% of families live in workless homes and 16.9% of families are claiming the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Most children enter early years provision with a range of skills and knowledge that is above the expected standard for their age.

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

- Increase the number of families who attend centre activities, including families from identified families most in need of support, such as Travellers and from deprived areas, and use the range of data available to ensure these and other priority groups are followed up to find out why they are not fully using services.
- Improve links with Jobcentre Plus and adult education providers to establish an effective support process for adults wishing to improve their personal skills, education and employment; ensuring that all referrals are appropriately recorded and tracked to evaluate the impact of services.
- Establish a good system that helps leaders and governors to evaluate and challenge the support for families provided by the centre and its partners, both in the short and long term, and use the data gathered to plan effective future provision to better improve outcomes for families.
- Establish clear and measurable targets linked to the centre self-evaluation process by which leaders can check the progress being made by the centre towards achieving its targets and the impact of actions.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

### Requires improvement

- Too few families are registered at the centre, and still less access services on a regular basis. Although, due recent effective work by centre staff, the majority of families from families most in need of support are now attending centre activities.
- Services to meet the needs of the wider community are appropriately advertised, for example in local libraries and other public places, and families from all parts of the area covered by the centre attend activities. A mobile bus is effectively used to engage with families living in rural areas and, in particular, Traveller families. Traveller families have benefited from good advice and guidance, for example on housing and benefits.
- Access to early childhood services are good with antenatal classes being well attended and popular with parents. Centre staff work well with health colleagues to ensure that babies have the best start in life. Breastfeeding is actively encouraged by staff and, as a result, sustained breastfeeding rates have increased significantly recently and are high and well above local and national averages at 76%.
- The centre works closely with an effective childminding network and local nursery groups, which results in good quality childcare being offered, particularly for the funded two-year-old nursery places; all two-year-old funded places are taken up. Traveller children are successfully engaging with early years providers and some attend a local school; families referred to the centre by other agencies are well supported by centre staff and make good progress.

### The quality of practice and services

### Requires improvement

- The quality of services offered by the centre is very effective, with all services and activities run by the centre being well attended and valued by users. However, there are too few activities run to meet the needs of all families living in the area served by the centre. As a result, too few families benefit from the services offered by the centre and only a minority of families access services on a regular basis.
- The support adults receive about employment or education opportunities is insufficient to meet their needs. Adults are merely signposted to adult education providers and/or Jobcentre Plus for specialist advice about personal skills, education and employment; however, little is done to track the impact of work done with adults following these referrals.
- Parents and users of the centre are supportive of its work and happy with the quality of provision. The most popular services talked about by parents are the drop-in sessions, Play and Learn and The Parenting Puzzle. Parents spoke positively about how attendance on these courses helps them to increase their confidence and improve their ability to communicate with their children and others.
- Children living in the centre's reach area attain higher than national levels at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are well prepared for school as a result of their attendance at the centre and involvement in good quality activities. The gap between the lowest attaining children and their peers is narrowing year on year, and is well below the national average at 24%.
- Staff are confident when dealing with the complex needs of families and work well with a variety of partners, but especially social care workers, to support families in most need. Centre staff are highly effective when working with families within their own home. All users feel safe when attending the centre and other locations used for centre outreach activities.
- Partnership working with local midwives and health workers is strong and strategies are in place to support local health initiatives, such as improving breastfeeding rates and providing both antenatal and postnatal support for mothers. There is high uptake of immunisations and breastfeeding rates are above national and local averages. Obesity rates for children entering Reception classes are below the national and local rates.

**The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management****Requires improvement**

- Leaders have identified the right priorities for improvement; however, the centre's development plan is consumed within a larger 'area plan', thereby making it difficult for leaders to measure the impact of actions taken. The centre's systems for tracking and measuring the impact of its work on improving the lives of families and reducing inequalities, tackling discrimination and fostering good relationships are not robust enough to provide a clear picture of the benefits arising from families' involvement with the centre.
- Leaders' analysis of information about families and evaluation of the availability of resources and services to meet the needs of families occasionally lacks rigour. As a result, too few families are regularly accessing children's centre services. However, work with families most in need of support is increasing rapidly, with the majority of families now involved in some centre activities.
- The local authority effectively governs, challenges and holds leaders to account during annual conversations. The children's centre is well supported by the local authority and, in particular, by the advisory board who clearly understands what is happening in the centre. Senior managers from Christopher Robin Day Nurseries have, until recently, been too closely involved in the day-to-day running of the centre due to staff shortages. This issue has now been resolved and, following a period of stability for staff at the centre, all staff and managers are clear on their roles and responsibilities.
- Centre staff frequently ask parents and users to evaluate services and returns show that they have a very high regard for the centre and how it helps their families. Parents are well represented on the advisory board; however, currently, there is no parent forum nor are there any parent volunteers, although this is a temporary situation as parents have been fully involved in centre activities in the recent past.
- Safeguarding arrangements are appropriately robust. Case studies demonstrate that the centre's involvement has helped to reduce the level of support needed for children in need and some highly vulnerable families. Staff are vigilant and parents understand the importance of adopting safe practices. Staff's good knowledge and detailed record keeping play an important role in meetings with other professionals about children who are subject to the Common Assessment Framework arrangements or child protection plans.
- The recently appointed centre coordinator provides strong, focused leadership for centre staff who work diligently to support local families. Staff receive regular supervision and have appropriate access to training which enables them to respond professionally to the challenges that their work presents.
- Partnership working is strong, especially with the voluntary and community sector, social care and health professionals, which enables centre staff to provide good support for families especially when working with families within their own home.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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 details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	20723
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	430218
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	963
<b>Centre Manager</b>	Emma Hill
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Nor previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01483 276634
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