

Shepherds Lane Children's Centre

Shepherds Lane, Chapeltown, Leeds, LS8 5AN

Inspection date 28–29 January 2014

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.

- Robust strategies are in place for the local authority, leaders and staff to locate all children and their families in their area and identify their needs correctly. Appropriate action plans ensure that families have access to the good range of services and activities and outstanding levels of advice, guidance and support.
- As one headteacher summarised, 'The very strong partnership working is key to the centre's successes'. Direct lines for information-sharing and joint provision of services and activities ensure that the families with the most vulnerable circumstances are swiftly supported. This fully promotes their safety and welfare.
- Parents' views are meaningfully sought and used to shape services so they are what families need and want the most. Consequently, the very large majority of children and families the centre has identified as in most need of their support and intervention are meaningfully engaged in centre services. Their lives are improving and inequalities are narrowing as a result.
- The centre staff and partners work exceptionally well together to identify children who are at risk of developmental delay or underachievement early on and tackle this with gusto. As a result, the large majority of children makes at least good progress from often very low starting points.

It is not outstanding because:

- Recent improvements to systems for evaluating, monitoring and demonstrating the centre's performance are not robustly embedded. Measurable targets are not always precise, highly challenging and clearly identified. Consequently, staff and leaders lack exact direction in how to achieve exceptional results.
- The centre does not demonstrate to users how valuable their views are and how these are used to make important decisions about the services offered. In addition, too few parents are enabled and empowered to become members of the advisory board or develop their own support groups.

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, staff, partners, the senior leadership team and representatives from the advisory board and local authority.

The inspectors visited both sites where services are delivered.

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

Inspection team

Rachael Flesher, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Pawson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Shepherds Lane Children's Centre is a stand-alone centre and serves a compact inner city area of Leeds which borders both Harehills and Chapeltown wards with a radius of approximately half a mile. It provides services from two sites a short walking distance apart; Choto Moni family services at Bankside Primary School and the Shepherds Lane Children's Centre early years provision site. The centre is part of the Chapeltown and Harehills Extended Support Services (C.H.E.S.S) cluster and works collaboratively with both Harehills Children's Centre and Chapeltown Children's Centre.

The centre meets its core purpose by offering a range of services which include health services, family play sessions, parenting courses, adult learning and family support. These services are delivered to families from the children's centre buildings and through outreach home visits.

In total, 779 children under five years of age live in the area, all within one of the 0-10% most deprived areas in the country. There are approximately 79 lone-parent families, 78 families claiming benefits and 60 children living in workless households in the reach area. Approximately 75% of families within the area served by the centre are from minority ethnic groups including, Bangladeshi, Somali, Eritrean, New Guinea, Czech Republic, Polish, Romanian and Pakistani communities. The target groups identified by the centre are families from minority ethnic groups, parents and children with disabilities, working families on low income, workless families, lone parents, asylum-seeking families and refugees and families experiencing domestic violence.

The centre is managed by Leeds City Council. A new centre leader was appointed in September 2013. The centre shares an advisory board with Chapeltown Children's Centre due to their close proximity and parents are consulted through a wide range of forums. Most children enter early years provision with skills, knowledge and abilities below those expected for their age.

What does the centre/group need to do to improve further?

- Embed systems to manage and demonstrate the performance of the centre robustly and ensure that targets for improvement are clear, precise and highly challenging to support staff and leaders fully on their journey to be outstanding.
- Enable more parents to contribute to the decision-making, governance and management of the centre by:
 - developing a system to show the community how their views are valued and used to make important decisions and shape services
 - becoming members of the advisory board
 - establishing and running their own groups.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The local authority has secured very good processes for partners to share key data and information about families in the area with the centre. In addition, staff and leaders have developed extremely effective partnership-working with a range of professionals and the community itself. As a result, all families and young children are registered with the centre and target groups and families clearly identified, based on an accurate assessment of their needs.
- Outreach workers are used very effectively to work with those families the centre has identified as in most need of their support and intervention and are not engaged. They successfully enable many

of these families to benefit from the services through home visits and attendance in groups.

- Leaders, staff and partners use the views of families and other information to plan and deliver services that will have the most impact on improving the lives of local families. As a result, groups are very well-attended by families from the diverse community it serves. This includes those the centre has identified as hard to reach, for example the Bangladeshi community.
- The attendance of families in groups and services is robustly monitored and evaluated. Where the participation of families fluctuates or they show signs of disengaging, the staff follow it up with successful outcomes.
- However, actions set by leaders do not sufficiently guide and challenge staff to target even more vulnerable families precisely and promote their engagement.
- Almost all families with children entitled to receive free early education for their two-, three- and four-year-olds are taking up their place in early years provision that is good or better. This is due to the concerted effort of staff and partners promoting the value of early education to parents and supporting them to secure a suitable place.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The children's centre is seen by all who use it as the hub of the community providing them with 'a second home'. Evidence in case files and testimonials from families demonstrate the exceptional levels of support, care and guidance they receive to improve their lives, particularly during times of crisis. As one parent summarises the views of many, 'I'm not sure what I would have done without their care and support'.
- The joined-up delivery of targeted early intervention and prevention work with a range of professionals has a positive impact on children's safety and welfare. This prevents situations escalating, resulting in low numbers of children in need and children on child protection plans.
- Good information and support is provided by the centre and health professionals to promote the health and safety of children and families. A range of parenting courses is offered, including classes to support the development of healthy eating. Very good antenatal provision is delivered, particularly for asylum seekers and refugees. Health-specific targets are met or improving as a result.
- The centre provides some good opportunities for adults to improve their education and skills, including programmes in family learning and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Volunteering opportunities ensure the development of skills for further education and future employment. However, processes to track adults on these journeys, and demonstrate any long-term impact, are in their infancy.
- Parents value the opportunities in groups to meet other adults, improve their parenting skills and for their children to play and learn together. As one parent summarised, 'the centre provides an excellent preparation for nursery. My son is now confident and unafraid to mix with other children.' The work with Northern Ballet to promote children's development through music and movement produces exceptional results, with some of the most vulnerable children achieving beyond their age-related expectations.
- Robust observational assessments show that the large majority of children makes good progress from often very low starting points and are more prepared for school. The gap between the lowest achieving and the rest is narrowing through purposeful and timely early intervention by the centre and early years professionals working exceptionally well together.
- Systems to support centre staff to evaluate and improve the quality of groups and sessions where required are not embedded.

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

- A good range of activities and services is provided by centre staff and partners that meet the needs of families well. Collaborative working arrangements ensure that information is shared, the wide range of expertise utilised and issues faced by families tackled collectively. This leads to improved lives for families and inequalities narrowing.
- The views of families are used very well to shape services, resulting in high numbers accessing them. However, there are no direct forums to demonstrate how the centre uses this feedback so families understand how valuable their involvement in the centre's work is. As a result, too few parents are contributing to the governance and management of the centre, for example, through their attendance on the advisory board, or being enabled and empowered to establish and run their own groups.
- Advisory board members reflect the community and have a good knowledge of the local area and needs of families. The board is provided with a range of performance data and information and this is used to support and challenge the centre in its drive to be even better. The advisory board is committed to involving more parents in their work.
- Performance management arrangements are in place to hold leaders and staff to account. Leaders use data and information well to demonstrate the difference they are making to families and how any gaps are closing. However, revised processes for setting and monitoring precise and challenging targets for improvement, to guide the centre fully on its journey to outstanding, has only recently been introduced and therefore not embedded.
- A culture of safeguarding is embedded and the safety and welfare of vulnerable children and adults are at the forefront of the centre's work. The social care duty desk provides a valuable resource for professionals to access expert advice and information directly. This enables them to secure the best support and intervention for vulnerable children as quickly as possible.
- Strong partnership-working and clear and effective policies and procedures ensure that the centre is working collaboratively to support looked-after children, children identified as in need and children subject to child protection plans and Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes. This ensures that children and families receive swift and timely support from the range of professionals required. Clear processes are in place to challenge and resolve any blockages in partnership-working to support families. This reduces the risk of harm to children.
- Training and professional development opportunities for staff are identified and secured to maximise the staff's skills and expertise and develop the centre's workforce. Staff have confidence in the recently appointed manager to lead them on their journey to excellence.

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 details

Unique reference number	22686
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	430155
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	779
Centre leader	Chris Radelaar
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0113 2484603
Email address	chris.radelaar@leeds.gov.uk

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