

# Cherry Tree Children's Centre

8 Sharoe Green Lane, Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 8ED

**Inspection date** 11–12 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	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 is effective in identifying the changing needs of the majority of the community and responding to these needs. Consequently, at 84%, a very large majority are registered and, at 77%, a large majority of families identified as most in need remain engaged in services.
- The careful mapping of need results in good targeted provision, which has resulted in strong links with the army barracks, early intervention in supporting children's communication and language and the creation of the 'Blossoms' group, for disabled children and those with special educational needs.
- A high percentage of children in the area achieve good levels of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and children attending the centre's sessions make good progress from their starting points and move into school better prepared to learn.
- An astute leadership team lead well qualified and experienced staff who are clearly motivated by the work undertaken with families in the area. They have clear specialisms, roles and responsibilities, and this contributes to the success and continuous improvement of the centre's work.
- Very strong partnership working with a wide range of partners results in good outcomes for families in their health and well-being. Excellent, care, guidance and support is offered to those who need it most, such as those experiencing domestic abuse and adults requiring counselling services.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Not enough families from minority ethnic communities within the area are making use of centre services, to help further reduce inequalities and increase engagement even further.
- The range and promotion of adult learning courses is too narrow and systems to track learners' progress are under developed.
- All staff do not consistently support parents to understand the value of play and increase children's language skills during universal sessions.

## 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 parents, staff, members of the advisory board, volunteers and representatives from professional partners including health, early years and education, as well as the officer from the local authority.

The inspectors visited the army barracks as part of the inspection.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation. Inspectors took into account parents' views as expressed during the inspection, as well as through recorded evaluations of the centre's work.

## Inspection team

Parm Sansoyer, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Ken Fisher

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Cherry Tree Children's Centre is a phase two centre which opened in 2008. It is a stand-alone centre with a number of satellite venues in the local community. The leadership team and staff also work across Willows Park Children's Centre and Preston East Children's Centre. Governance of the centre is provided by Lancashire Local Authority in conjunction with a federated advisory board across the three centres. The centre provides a range of services including health services, social care, family play sessions, parenting programmes, adult education and outreach services.

There are three main wards covered by the centre. Within these wards two areas are in the 30 to 40% most deprived areas in the country and the others range from the 40% to 80% most deprived areas in the country. There are 925 families with children aged under five-years-of-age living in the area. The latest data show that only 7% of children are living in households dependent upon workless benefits. The majority of housing is privately owned or private rental, with some small pockets of social housing. The very large majority of the population is of White British heritage, with an increasing number of Indian, Pakistani and Polish communities. Most children living in the area enter early years provision with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age.

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

- Identify more effectively the specific nature of the needs of families to increase sustained engagement from target groups, such as those families of Pakistani and Polish heritage, to help further reduce inequalities and increase engagement even further.
- Increase the range of adult learning course available, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages and Information and Communication Technology, promote them more successfully and track learners' progress, to improve their economic well-being and so they are in a stronger position to support their children.
- Enhance further the monitoring of universal sessions to ensure that staff more consistently support parents to understand the value of play and increase children's language skills, to ensure more sessions are consistently good and better.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Staff have a good knowledge of the local and surrounding areas and the main issues within the community. Consequently, the large majority of target groups including lone parents, disabled children, fathers and families in greatest need are well supported by the centre and their partners. However, the centre acknowledges more work is still required to further engage those families of Pakistani and Polish heritage, who remain more reluctant to engage.
- High priority is given to working effectively with partners in helping to make contact early with expectant mothers and sustaining contact. This results in very high engagement, in particular, for children under one year-of-age and ensures mothers and their families benefit from the full range of early childhood services available.
- The centre offers a broad range of early childhood services, which are responsive to need; consequently, sessions are popular and well attended. For example, parents speak highly of the universal services, such as 'Baby massage', 'Baby club' and 'Toddler in' and the targeted sessions, such as the 'Blossoms' group for disabled children.

### The quality of practice and services

Good

- Collaborative working with private and voluntary early childhood settings and maintained schools is successful and helps ensure that children access good quality provision. For instance, the centre has been instrumental in securing funding to deliver training to staff in settings to increase their knowledge of how boys learn best. This has resulted in successfully narrowing the gap in boys' learning across the locality. In addition, during targeted sessions at the centre, robust observation, assessment and tracking of individual children's development is used well to maximise children's learning.
- There is very strong partnership working with midwives, health visitors and the neonatal unit. This coupled with clear key messages about health during all targeted and universal sessions at the centre, results in reduced obesity for children at Reception Year and a significant rise in sustained breastfeeding. Health outcomes for families in the area are good and continue to improve.
- The centre offers excellent care, guidance and support. For instance, seamless partnership working with Preston Domestic Violence Services and the onsite counselling service results in speedy support for those families to resolve crisis and improve their life chances and well-being.
- Effective targeted work with families who are living in the army barracks means many of these transient families with children under five-years-of age quickly feel part of the community and engage in centre services. Resulting in early identification of need and, in particular, improved outcomes in children's communication and language development and minimising the feeling of isolation for mothers.
- A good range of popular parenting programmes and targeted sessions significantly benefit adults to increase their parenting skills and improve their children's well-being and safety. In addition, targeted intervention and support with partner agencies, such as social care, results in good information sharing and record keeping to ensure families' safety and reduce inequalities, is a key priority.
- There is a successful volunteer training scheme and many of these adults have improved their skills and confidence and some have gone onto further training and gained employment. However, the centre does not yet promote and offer a broad enough range of adult training courses, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to engage more adults to improve opportunities for employability. In addition, systems to track learners' progress are under developed. Therefore, not enough of the targeted families improve their economic well-being and increase their skills, so that they are in a stronger position to support their children.

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

Good

- The local authority and centre's leadership team's management of the centre is good. Self-evaluation is accurate and routinely reviewed as part of the performance management cycle, which effectively drives improvement. Therefore, a good focus is placed on reducing inequalities between the different target groups identified and the changing needs of the community.
- The Chair, Vice Chair, key partners and parent members of the advisory board and parents' forum play a key role in supporting, directing and challenging the work of the centre. Key members of the advisory board are knowledgeable and extremely passionate in driving the centre's work forward to ensure it has a positive impact on families in the community. They make good use of effective systems to hold the centre to account.
- There are effective policies, procedures and practices in place to keep staff and families safe and promote the welfare of children. Early help, intervention and prevention work is well developed, ensuring those families in crisis receive intensive and targeted support. The number of children on child-protection plans and those subject to the Common Assessment Framework and looked-after children in the area is low. Consequently, outreach staff are in a good position to respond to families in crisis and those with low-level need in a timely manner.
- The leadership team are intuitive to staff needs and provide ongoing, personalised supervision, coaching and training. There are effective systems in place to monitor targeted sessions, audit files and provide support and direction for family case management. However, systems to monitor universal sessions are not as fully effective. Consequently, all staff do not consistently support parents to understand the value of play and increase children's language skills by promoting key vocabulary during activities.
- Staff place the children and families at the heart of the centre and are clearly passionate about reducing inequalities in the area. A number of positive strategies have been used to meet the needs of the minority ethnic community groups, disabled children, transient families and to increase boys' achievement. However, further work is required to help narrow the achievement gap for children and adults of Pakistani and Polish heritage, to help further reduce inequalities.
- The leadership team and staff work across three separate centres and this offers good value for money and use of resources. This results in a large team of skilled staff who have their individual specialist roles, such as the breastfeeding, domestic abuse and boys' achievement champions. Consequently, staff are passionate about their key responsibilities and ensure they drive their strategies and ideas forward and share good practice across centres.

**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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	20667
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	443642
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	925
<b>Centre leader</b>	Jane Baxter
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 717325
<b>Email address</b>	jane.baxter@lancashire.gov.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

