

Deeplish Children's Centre

59 Hare Street, Deeplish, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL11 1JT

Inspection date 6–7 March 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.

- Most local families are registered with the centre and the large majority regularly accesses its services. This is because centre staff provide a warm welcome to all comers, treat them with respect and demonstrate high levels of sensitivity towards families' different cultures and circumstances.
- The centre works very closely with a wide range of different professionals, such as from health and education, to provide a coherent package of support that is tailored to meet families' individual needs.
- Staff are skilled at listening to what parents want and adapting provision accordingly. Despite recent reductions in hours, the centre provides a good variety of activities and services. Imaginative programming, such as running play and learn sessions alongside the baby clinic, entices families to become involved in, and benefit from, all that the centre has to offer.
- Health outcomes, such as levels of sustained breastfeeding and oral health, are good. Families enjoy the sessions aimed at helping them to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- Adults have good opportunities to extend their learning and employability skills. Through volunteering they gain in confidence, support other families and augment the centre's provision.
- The centre manager's expert leadership is pivotal to the centre's success. She has developed a highly motivated team who, in the words of fellow professionals, 'put their heart and soul into their work' and 'provide a strong resource'. The local authority and advisory board offer the centre good levels of support and challenge.
- The centre keeps on improving, for example, children's access to early education or the levels of trust which members of the community place in staff to help them in times of need. Its work helps to effectively transform some families' lives. As one recent newcomer to the country eloquently said, 'When I came here I was zero.....not any more.'

It is not outstanding because:

- Too few lone parents and fathers are regularly engaged in the centre's activities.
- Not enough parents play an active role in helping their children to prepare for learning in 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 or conducted telephone conversations with: parents, centre staff, representatives from the local authority, health, children's social care, children's and adult education, the employment and skills team, Citizens Advice Bureau, Barnados and Women's Housing Action Group.

They visited and attended activities at both centres. One inspector also visited the local supported housing for young mothers.

The inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation such as data showing users' participation in activities, the centre's action planning and monitoring of its work, and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sarah Drake, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Cathryn Parry	Additional inspector
Qaisra Shahraz	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Deelish Children's Centre is a stand-alone centre which has Castlemere Centre, less than half a mile away, as its satellite. The centre is managed by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council. It is held to account by an advisory board comprised of interested partners. The centre provides a range of activities, including health care and information, adult education and sessions to help parents support their children's learning and development.

There are approximately 1,411 children aged between nought and four years living in the area served by the centre. The area is densely populated and close to the town centre. Approximately 46% of local families are White British and 44% are of Pakistani heritage. Other families, some of whom are asylum-seekers or refugees, belong to a range of different minority ethnic groups. Many families speak English as an additional language. Most live in rented accommodation. Levels of unemployment and social deprivation are high and many of those in work are on low incomes. Most children's skills on entry to early years provision are well below those typical for their age, particularly their communication skills.

The centre targets its support on: families belonging to Black and minority ethnic, White British and other White minority groups; fathers; disabled children; those experiencing domestic abuse and two-year-old children eligible for free early education. It is linked with Deelish Community Primary School and Sunshine Pre-School, neither of which formed part of this inspection. Reports of their quality can be found on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportions of fathers and lone parents that regularly engage in the centre's activities.
- Work even more closely with parents to improve children's skill levels on entry to early education.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Both centres provide a warm, welcoming atmosphere which puts families at ease and encourages them to participate in activities. Families have good access to a wide range of important information. This is helped by displays in different languages, or with visual clues above English words such as 'wash hands', as well as bilingual staff. Staff work at both centres, which offers continuity for families.
- Close partnerships with health professionals, including weekly ante-natal and healthy child clinics, mean that a very large majority of families register with the centre. This is further improved by family fun days and staff's regular presence in school playgrounds. The 'Tell us once' registrar service helps staff to avoid omission of children or their duplication on the register.
- The large majority of families, including those expecting children, engage in centre activities. The centre's systems to monitor the attendance of different groups clearly identify those who are not attending and this leads to staff targeting these with particular effort. They are very successful with, for example, disabled children, leading to their early access to specialist identification of needs and support. Between 85% and 92% such children have been engaged over the past year. However, the centre has yet to have a break-through in engaging the large majority of fathers or lone parents.
- Staff's hard work has led to an impressive increase in the numbers of entitled children accessing free early education at age two so that, currently, 81% do so. This uptake has been hard won, since local parents do not all recognise the benefits of early education outside the home for two-year-olds. All local three- and four-year-olds access free education, many of them in school nurseries.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The centre's services, ranging from baby clinics to adult learning, are varied and of good quality. They have a positive impact on families' health and overall well-being. Staff members' careful listening to, largely, mothers and analysis of their needs leads to sensitive, skilful encouragement and guidance that helps them take charge of improving their lives.
- Staff willingly conduct home visits or initially accompany the more reluctant to attend activities at the centre, but are keen to avoid them becoming dependent on one-to-one help. Good access to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses means that, for example, new arrivals begin to use the post office or read to their children at home. Staff's patient help with English supports this. Many progress from ESOL courses to further training and volunteering and, for some, this has led to employment. However, few fathers engage in these or other activities.
- Weekly Citizens' Advice sessions are well organised by centre staff and well used. Most recent figures show that this helped local families to improve their economic well-being by recovering over £31,000 in unclaimed benefits and deferring over £25,000 in debt.
- The 'Family Journey' offers focussed sessions for parents at different stages of their young children's lives which are relevant to families' immediate needs. 'Women's Safety Events' cover an extensive range of issues. Those of universal interest include safety outside the home and how to fit car seats. Those more specific to Black and Minority Ethnic families' lives include raising awareness of the hazards posed by wearing loose clothing when cooking. Support for those experiencing domestic abuse is both highly sensitive and effective.
- Work with young parents, particularly the, mostly, White British young mothers housed in local accommodation, is very effective. Some show initial reluctance to participate in events at the centre but most become eager users, attending play and learn sessions with their children and healthy cooking and first aid courses. Lone parents in the wider community are less well engaged.
- Sustained breastfeeding, levels of obesity, uptake of immunisations and reductions in children's tooth decay are all positive. There are no data about smoking in pregnancy but centre staff work hard with oral health professionals to raise local awareness of the hazards of chewing tobacco or smoking shisha.
- Centre staff and education professionals are working very closely with local childcare providers and schools to improve children's readiness for school. All are convinced that children's skill levels are rising, but data indicate that there is still a long way to go before they approach those typical for children's ages. Some parents make good use of the centre's efforts to help them extend children's learning at home, for example, by using the ideas sheets or borrowing books, but many still consider that children under three years are too young for this.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Skilled leadership, including supportive encouragement of the well-trained staff to take on responsibility for different aspects of the centre's work, has created a real hub for the community. A typical comment from users is, 'This is the place we can go to confidently.'
- Monitoring and tracking systems are highly effective in identifying the impact of the centre's work, particularly on those in its target groups. They have proved vital in helping the centre to continue to improve during recent delays in the local authority's provision of data due to changes in its systems.
- The advisory board and the local authority balance well the support and challenge they provide to the centre. They know its strengths and areas for development, and how the leader uses performance management to keep improving the quality of provision. They also appreciate how hard it is proving to reduce the gaps in children's achievement levels. They are proud of its highly successful work to reduce inequalities and promote community cohesion.
- Resources at both centres are of good quality and used well to enhance the lives of local families. New actions, such as the training of volunteers to lead 'Early Words Together' sessions which support families' literacy skills, enhance the efficient use of staff time. Having a range of professionals, such as family support workers and midwife clinics, accommodated at the centre,

leads to excellent partnerships and information sharing.

- Policies, procedures and practices relating to the safeguarding of young children are well embedded in the centre's daily practice. Close working with social care staff, health and education professionals ensures that looked after children and those subject to a child protection plan receive good quality support. Increasingly good use of Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes effectively help to identify families' needs, allocate responsibility for actions and reduce the risk of harm for children.

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	20936
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	430206
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,411
Centre manager	Sharon Kelly
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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