

# D1 Orchard Children's Centre

Dundale Primary and Nursery School, Silk Mill Way, Tring, HP23 5DJ

<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2014
Previous inspection date	Not Previously Inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
		Not applicable	
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 families from the area are registered with the centre and have good access to the services it provides. Most families identified as belonging to priority groups are also registered and use the centre regularly.
- The centre's partnership arrangements are exemplary. Centre staff are highly skilled at building productive relationships with partner organisations. As a result, the centre is able to offer families an extensive package of services and support that are well matched to their needs.
- By ensuring children from priority groups have a good start to school life, the centre helps to reduce inequalities. Initiatives such as the 'transition project' have been particularly successful at preparing children for school.
- Centre staff use a wide range of highly effective marketing and promotional events to attract new users who might be less likely to access its services.
- Leaders and managers within the centre, the local authority and the advisory board continually and rigorously monitor the centre's performance and take decisive action to make improvements when required. As a result, the centre performs well and continually improves the quality of its work and its impact on the lives of families.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Tracking of children's progress from their starting points at the centre is in its early stages of implementation. This limits the centre's ability to identify how specifically it can help individual children improve their learning and development.
- Auditing of case files is not rigorous enough. As a result, opportunities are missed to ensure key details and dates are always recorded

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

Fully implement the tracking system to ensure staff are able to plan activities that take account of the individual learning and development needs of children.

Formalise the procedure for auditing case files to ensure they are systematically checked for quality and content and that areas for improvement are clearly identified and shared with staff.

## 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 parents, centre staff, Headteachers of local schools, leaders and managers from the local authority, members of the advisory board and representatives from health, early years education and careers support services.

The inspectors visited activities taking place in the centre. Sessions observed include 'Baby Rhyme Time' and 'Messy Play'. They also jointly observed a session with the centre manager. Parents' views were taken into account from interviews, evaluations and satisfaction surveys.

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

## Inspection team

Priscilla McGuire, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Daniel Grant

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

The centre is located in Dacorum, Tring which is a semi-rural area in Hertfordshire. It is a mostly affluent area with pockets of deprivation. The centre is co-located with Dundale Primary School (URN 117286). The school's governing body has management responsibility for the centre and is supported by an advisory board. The school is subject to a separate inspection and was graded good at its last inspection. The report can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). Services offered by the centre include health clinics, adult learning, family support, careers guidance, parenting training and early years activities. Most services and activities are provided at the centre but some are offered at community venues such as village halls.

There are approximately 772 children under five living in the area and around 7% of these are defined as living in poverty. This figure is significantly lower than both the Dacorum and Hertfordshire average of 14%. Around 9% of children live in households dependent on workless benefits and 11% of families benefit from the childcare element of working tax credit. Most families are of White British heritage. The proportion of adults with qualifications at degree level and above, is higher than the rest of the county and the rest of the country. On entry to early years education, children's levels are broadly in line with what is expected for their age.

The centre has identified the following as its key priority groups: families living in the least advantaged area of Tring, families who are eligible to access free early years places for their two year old children and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable and are identified as in the greatest need.

### Inspection judgements

#### Access to services by young children and families **Good**

- By participating in meetings such as 'Family Matters' with health professionals and 'Early Years Network' meetings with representatives from nurseries and pre-schools, centre staff routinely share information with their key partners. As a result, they know most of the families with young children in their community.
- Most families from the centre's priority groups such as those identified as 'Families in Greatest Need' and those with two year old children who are eligible for free early years education, are registered with the centre. Expectant mothers also make good use of services. They make good and regular use of the services, activities and support it provides.
- The centre's marketing and promotion activities are highly effective and include an informative centre newsletter, community events such as 'fun days', use of social media, text messaging and newspaper feature articles that celebrate the centre's achievements or provide information about upcoming events.
- Most families whose children are eligible for free early years education places do so. Most

two year olds, also access places and benefit well from attending good or outstanding provision.

- The centre's work out in the community such as home visits and activities provided at community venues such as village halls is highly effective. It ensures that families, particularly those from priority groups who may be reluctant or unable to travel to the centre, benefit well from services that are most appropriate to their needs.

### **The quality of practice and services**

**Good**

- The centre's highly effective 'transition project' helps children in the area, particularly those from priority groups to be well prepared for school and helps to reduce inequalities. As part of the project, families are able to visit schools before term starts and meet teachers. They also receive an attractive 'transition' booklet which reflects input from parents and supports them in helping their children understand what to expect when they start school.
- Through close and highly productive partnership work with schools to collaborate on how the centre can support children's learning and development, the centre contributes significantly to the high proportion of children in the area who achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of the reception year.
- The centre is in the early stages of implementing a tracking system to monitor the progress of children from their starting points at the centre. Although staff are well informed about the progress of individual children, they do not systematically record this information. As a result, plans for activities do not always reflect the individual needs of children.
- Through the services provided by a midwife and from its own trained staff, the centre offers good support to breastfeeding mothers. This, combined with activities such as a breastfeeding workshop and a pregnancy club, contributes well to the high proportion of mothers who continue breastfeeding at six to eight weeks.
- Families, particularly priority groups such as those identified as in greatest need and those living in deprived areas of the community, receive good support and guidance from staff. When required, parents are guided to specialist services such as counselling support to help them overcome specific issues that staff cannot resolve. As a result, parents develop resilience and improve their ability to cope with problems.
- The content of case files reflects the effective way the centre works productively with a wide range of partner organisations to reduce risks of harm and to promote life chances for families. However, case files are not systematically audited and monitored. As a result, opportunities are missed to ensure dates and other key details are consistently recorded in files.

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

**Good**

- The quality of leadership, governance and management is good. The local authority's Children's Centre Improvement Partner (CCIP) process is key to the way it monitors the centre's performance.
- Through regular visits, joint observations of sessions, scrutiny of data and annual reviews, local authority leaders and managers keep a close eye on the quality of the centre's work and the performance of staff. They have an excellent understanding of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. They set targets for improvement and also use performance data about outcomes in relation to the centre's priorities, to monitor the centre's progress.
- Leaders and managers are highly competent, highly committed to doing their very best for families and very passionate about their work. They lead by example and as a result, the small but highly effective centre staff team are equally committed, competent and passionate about reducing inequalities and increasing the life chances of families.
- Working relationships between the Headteacher of the co-located school and the centre manager are exemplary. They are both very ambitious for the centre and work well together to for example, use tools such as a 'Red, Green and Amber (RAG) dashboard' to identify and carefully monitor the centre's progress in relation to agreed areas of improvement.
- Safeguarding and safer recruitment arrangements are implemented well. Staff are well trained in different aspects of safeguarding and make good use of the Common Assessment Framework and other procedures to identify when intervention and support is required. They also work well with social care teams to provide good support to families with children subject to child protection plans, with children who are looked after and those identified as children in need.
- Centre staff are highly skilled at building exceptionally strong relationships with partners such as health professionals, headteachers, Early Years professionals, community representatives and others. As a result, the centre offers an impressive range of services, activities and support for families and is an integral part of the community it serves.
- The centre listens to parents and captures their views through surveys and consultations. In addition, through their roles on the parents forum and the advisory board, parents are actively involved in making decisions about the centre's work.
- Accommodation and resources are managed well to ensure a good balance between services that are available to all families and those that are targeted at families with specific needs.

## 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.

## Centre details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	20893
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	452271
<b>Managed by</b>	The governing body of Dundale Primary School on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	772
<b>Centre leader</b>	Andrea Kelly
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 426922
<b>Email address</b>	admin.orchard@hertschildrenscentres.org.uk

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