

# The Orchard Children's Centre

Beech Road, Eynsham, Oxfordshire. OX29 4LJ

<b>Inspection date</b>		8–9 January 2015	
<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		Requires improvement	3
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 large majority of children under the age of five living in the area are registered with the centre. The regular contact and engagement of the large majority of parents with new-born babies demonstrate the centre's ongoing effective work to increase its reach to local families.
- Children's readiness for school is supported well. Most eligible children take up their free early education place. A higher proportion of children than seen nationally achieve a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The centre's proactive work to promote healthy lifestyles is reflected positively in the high breastfeeding rates and low level of childhood obesity.
- Safeguarding is at the core of the centre's work. Families are given good support, care and guidance. As a result, those with very complex needs are helped to overcome their personal challenges with confidence.
- Parents say they are helped considerably by attending parenting programmes, and many reach their personal goals when they access further learning or work-based skills training. Volunteering opportunities are promoted very successfully and provide a useful pathway into paid employment.
- Good leadership, management and governance are driving positive change. Parents are well represented on the advisory board and play a key role in decision making. Partnerships have been very well developed by the centre manager and give extra value to the quality of services and practice. There is good capacity to sustain further improvement.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Effective action is being taken to improve access, but not enough children or parents from priority target groups currently sustain ongoing contact with the centre's services.
- The centre does not measure how well children who have used centre services achieve when they start school. This is because tracking of children's and adults' progress over time is underdeveloped; this inhibits the planning of future services.
- Some targets in the development plan lack challenge, and the monitoring of priorities is not always precise enough to assist a more rapid pace of improvement.

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

- Press ahead with the actions being taken to ensure that at least the large majority of all target groups sustain contact with appropriate services until their needs are met.
- Establish robust systems for tracking children's and adults' progress over time. In addition, strengthen the work with early years partners to find out how well target children who have accessed children's centre services achieve by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- With the local authority, sharpen the systems for checking the impact of centre actions on the main priorities in the development plan, and use the information to set challenging targets that assist a more rapid pace of improvement.

**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 the centre manager, staff, local authority officers, partners, volunteers, parents and members of the advisory board.

The inspectors visited activities including 'Baby and Me' and observed a 'Ring-o-Roses' session jointly with the centre manager.

Inspectors took into account parents' views as expressed directly to them during the inspection, as well as through their recorded evaluations about the centre's work.

Inspectors also looked at a wide range of documentation.

**Inspection team**

Christine Field, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Heather Hartmann

Additional Inspector

Aileen King

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

The Orchard Children's Centre opened in 2010 and is managed directly by the local authority. An advisory board, comprising partners and parents, is established to assist governance. The staff team includes the centre manager appointed just over a year ago, four children's centre workers and a part-time administrator. Services provided include activities to promote early learning, family support, child and family health, careers, adult learning and volunteering.

The centre is located in the grounds of Eynsham Primary School and Eynsham Pre-school. It shares its accommodation with Earlyworld, a private provider of breakfast and after-school clubs and play schemes for primary-age children. These settings are inspected under separate arrangements and reports can be found at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted). Oxfordshire is currently undertaking a review of its children's centres.

There are 1,318 children under five years of age living in the mainly rural area served by the centre. The area is predominantly affluent. There are pockets of disadvantage, mainly in the Standlake, Aston and Stanton Harcourt, Eynsham and Cassington communities. Around 7% of children live in homes where no one is in paid work; a similar proportion of families are eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Most families are White British, with a small number from Traveller backgrounds. Children start in early education with skills and knowledge typically at the level expected for their age. Priority target groups are identified as teenage parents, lone parents, workless families, families living in the most disadvantaged communities, and Traveller families at Standlake with children under five years of age.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Just under three quarters of young children are registered with the centre. Most access children's centre services within the locality. Effective systems are in place for monitoring participation and driving improvements, but the proportion of lone parents, workless families and those living in the most disadvantaged communities who sustain regular contact is not yet the large majority, and this requires improvement.
- The centre is aware that it needs to improve the engagement of priority groups further so that access is good and has put well-conceived strategies in place to achieve this over the next few months.
- The centre's partnership with health professionals is mutually supportive and is assisting an increasing number of expectant and new parents to register and use centre services on a regular basis. In the last six months, 71% of families with new-born babies have accessed services three or more times. Additionally, all teenage parents sustain their engagement with centre services until their needs are met.
- Services are being taken into the community to help overcome rural isolation and meet the assessed needs of groups such as Traveller families at Standlake. The Playbus, sponsored by the library service, was a very useful resource to support this work, but is no longer operational. The centre is currently exploring different options to ensure its good support for the Traveller community continues.
- Since her appointment, the centre manager has spearheaded the development of learning and skills provision. This has not been without its challenges, given the profile of the area which does not show high levels of need but has pockets of disadvantage. Due to the effective actions taken and successful partnership work developed, some 263 parents have been enabled to access courses or training that support their positive parenting, further education and economic well-being.
- Of eligible two-year-olds, 92% take up their free education entitlement, as do 98% of three- and four-year-olds. The centre has a purposeful and developing partnership with the co-located pre-

school. Staff are working together to explore ways to track the impact of children's learning and development, including those from priority groups, to ensure that all children make good progress.

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

Good

- The range, quality and relevance of services are good. Strong partnerships support the centre in planning and delivering services that respond to local needs and specific priorities increasingly well.
- Children are given well-planned social experiences to develop healthy eating habits and an adventurous attitude to trying new food. Such experiences are improving children's health and well-being, as shown by the rate of childhood obesity which, at 6%, is much lower than the national level. Health partners praise highly the centre's proactive work in helping new mothers to breastfeed. At 75%, the proportion of mothers continuing to breastfeed their babies at six to eight weeks is very high.
- Centre-led sessions, such as 'Ring-o-Roses', provide children with good quality learning experiences in a friendly and inclusive environment. Work to help children prepare confidently for school is developing well. For example, some children are experiencing communication delays and so speech and language drop-ins with specialist support are organised and funded jointly by local early years partners to meet these needs. Effective work takes place to enhance parents' support for their children's learning and development, including promoting positive behaviour.
- All centre activities for young children focus well on the prime areas of learning, and the system for tracking progress started in the crèche is ready to be used more widely. At 69%, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is above the level seen nationally. The next step for the centre is to find out how well children from priority groups achieve when they move on to nursery or pre-school.
- Very effective links with the local college and organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau ensure that there is a comprehensive range of adult learning courses available. Individual 'next steps' are planned in detail, and the centre has begun to follow up on how things are going at three, six and nine months. However, these details have not yet been collated to show the overall picture of progress over time or to inform future service planning.
- 'Money Matters' sessions, drawing on partner expertise, are extremely well attended and support improvements to families' financial well-being. Sixteen volunteers have been recruited and supported with work experience over the last twelve months; some have subsequently gained employment.
- Care, guidance and support are good. One-to-one support for children and families in their homes is effective and highly valued. Case files are well maintained and demonstrate the good impact that staff interventions have, particularly in helping families with very complex problems to get back on track. The involvement of a locality social worker in supervising family support work is a positive feature, and helps to ensure that families receive the right support at the right time.

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

Good

- The centre is well led by the manager who has the full support of partners and the staff in further developing the centre's effectiveness. Centre-specific priority areas are well understood and there are clear strategies in place for driving improvement. However, the development plan, which is closely aligned with the local authority key performance areas, does not consistently inject sufficient challenge into agreed targets or timelines to ensure a rapid pace to improvement.
- Governance is well established. Advisory board meetings are well attended by a core group of partners and parents, some of whom are also volunteers at the centre. A parent will be taking the chairperson's role at the next meeting. Members know the community well and have been instrumental in supporting the marketing and publicity campaign, as well as re-designing the programme as part of the actions being taken to extend the centre's reach.

- The local authority keeps a close eye on the centre's performance through regular monitoring visits and the regular one-to-one appraisal meetings with the centre manager. All staff usefully share the same performance targets related to increasing the sustained engagement of priority families. The annual conversation meeting offers the opportunity for core aspects of the centre's effectiveness to be evaluated. The next conversation meeting is due in March; this will provide a useful opportunity to check the impact of the centre's actions on increasing its contact with priority target groups.
- Safeguarding policy, practice and procedures meet current requirements. Partnerships with health professionals, social care and the newly established Multi Agency Services Hub (MASH) assist the centre's effective work to reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable children, including those subject to child protection plans, in need or looked after. Staff vetting procedures are robust, and training in child protection matters is up to date. The sharing of information with parents about e-safety has yet to take place.
- Centre users have high levels of satisfaction in the quality of services they receive. Comments about parenting programmes and the associated crèche, such as, 'I am a calmer mother and coping better with tantrums' and, 'my child's confidence has come on in leaps and bounds', are typical. Parents' views are gathered by the Parents' Forum representatives and taken to the advisory board or staff meetings to inform decision making. Resource use is efficient and effective, with additional benefit gained from facilitating five student placements which support a range of centre activities.

**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>	23722
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	454048
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,318
<b>Centre leader</b>	Sarah Ashfield
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 880686
<b>Email address</b>	sarah.ashfield@oxfordshire.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).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (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 2015

