

# Chancet Wood Children's Centre

Chancet Wood Drive, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S8 7TR

<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 June 2015
<b>Previous inspection date</b>	Not previously inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>Previous inspection:</b>	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	3
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- While an increasing number of families are participating regularly in centre activities, this is not yet the large majority.
- The centre does not effectively track and check the difference it is making for those adults who access groups, activities, education, training, learning and skills opportunities. In addition, the range of courses offered is too narrow.
- The centre does not work effectively with all schools and childcare providers in the area to look at ways in which they can help children transfer into school better and ready to learn.
- New initiatives are in place to help women stop smoking during pregnancy and reduce the number of obese children starting school. However, too many children continue to lead unhealthy lifestyles.
- The centre's activity programme is too focused on support for babies. As a result, there are limited opportunities for young children to develop and progress through different forms of play as they grow.
- The centre has not implemented effective observation, assessment and planning systems to track children's progress, nor to adapt services to meet individual needs.
- Protocols for sharing information between the centre and some partners are not consistently in place. As a result, the centre's priority plan is not as precise as it should be to effectively drive improvement.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- Leaders, managers and governors are committed to meeting the needs of children and families and improving services, especially for the most disadvantaged, to the very best of their abilities.
- Multi-agency working is effective in the early identification of risk. Joint decision making and coordinated action results in swift, effective support for children in times of crisis.
- Supervision of staff occurs regularly, it is based on a respectful relationship and the process is understood and embedded. As a result, staff say they feel valued and are well supported to develop their existing skills and improve their practice.

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

- Improve access by:
  - increasing the proportion of families that sustain their engagement with the centre, particularly those families who live in the areas of highest deprivation.
- Improve quality and practice by:
  - strengthening partnerships with local schools and childcare providers to ensure that more children are ready for school, and narrow the gaps between children who are likely to experience disadvantage in their learning
  - implementing more effective arrangements to track, monitor and evaluate the progress and success of parents attending adult education courses and activities designed to help them gain employment or improve their family's finances
  - increase the opportunities for workless families to explore the range of vocational training offered and support them to access a wider range of accredited qualifications and progression onto higher education, training, learning and skills
  - continuing to work with health partners to reduce the number of women smoking at delivery and the number of obese children starting school
  - widening the universal activity programme to include more activities to help children from 12 months of age to progress through varied forms of play and experiences
  - improving the planning and observation systems used in all of the centre's services to track children's progress more consistently.
- Improve leadership, governance and management by:
  - effectively working with health and other key partners to ensure that regular, up-to-date data, specific to the area is made available to the centre, then using this information to set more precise priorities for improvement
  - developing clear procedures to capture the views of parents and children so that they contribute consistently to the centre's governance and in determining and shaping future services.

## 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 senior leaders, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority and parents. The inspectors visited activities that took place at the centre and at two venues in the area.

They observed the centre's work, looked at a range of relevant documentation and carried out a joint observation with the Early Years Best Start Team Manager and visited the Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST).

## Inspection team

Janet Stacey, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Maureen Deary	Additional inspector
Barbara Wearing	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Chancet Wood Children's Centre is a stand alone centre situated in Greenhill in the South of Sheffield. In July 2013 the centre merged with part of the Woodseats Children's Centre area. The reach now offers a service to families and children living in the Lowedges, Batemoor, Jordanthorpe, Norton, Greenhill and Woodseats neighbourhoods. The local authority is responsible for governance of the centre, supported by a Local Stakeholder Group.

The centre offers a range of services which includes family activities, family support and parenting programmes. Health services are offered at the centre and at the local doctor's surgeries. Linked childcare provision is provided by private and voluntary early years organisations in the local area. These provisions are subject to separate inspection arrangements and are available on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Local schools report a mixed picture with some children entering early years provision with a range of experiences and skills that are typical for their age and others reporting that children have a range of skills that are not typical for their age.

There are approximately 1,869 children under five years of age living in the reach area. The predominant families living in the area are of White British heritage. Some parts of the area are fairly affluent, however, children living in Lowedges, Batemoor, Jordanthorpe are considered to be less affluent. Within these areas 25% of children live in workless households. The centre has identified: children living in the most disadvantaged areas, children living in workless households and young parents, as those that need the most support.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

### Requires improvement

- Centre leaders have a good understanding of the needs of families living in the locality. However, data show that not enough families are accessing services, including expectant mothers, children living in the most disadvantaged areas or in workless households and those who are reluctant to access services.
- Although a wide range of training and learning opportunities are available in the area for adults not in employment to access, the centre does not always know who is delivering these services, or support adults to take part in them. In addition, the centre has yet to put in place systems to track whether adults are improving their economic-well-being, or gaining employment.
- Young parents are well supported by the Family Nurse Partnership; the centre know most of these families and conduct joint home visits with health partners to encourage them to access services in the centre. However, their attendance at group activities is not routinely tracked. As a result, the centre does not know how much of a difference this support is having, particularly to help with their parenting skills.
- The centre manager has been proactive in going out to local community groups to advertise the services of the centre. She has just secured the use of a community building in the Lowedge area. However, the impact of this work on improving the numbers of families accessing services from the most disadvantaged communities has yet to be seen.
- Almost all of the three-and four-year-old children eligible for funded places take up the offer. A large majority of eligible two-year-old children also take up their funded place at an early years setting. Staff are starting to be more proactive in contacting these families to try and encourage more children to take-up the offer. The vast majority of funded nursery places are at settings that are of at least good quality.

**The quality of practice and services****Requires improvement**

- A very effective referral procedure has been established by MAST. Centre staff are fully involved in this procedure, as are a wide range of professional partners. This robust system ensures that, for the children at most risk, swift, timely support is put in place by the right staff with the best skills to meet their needs.
- Families with babies benefit from good quality services which are open to all and those specifically for the families identified as most in need of help. In addition, outreach visits are used effectively to engage both adults and children at home and to explain what the centre has to offer. However, the activity programme is too limited to health and baby services. Consequently, parents are not being supported to understand how they can help develop their child's physical and communication and language skills as their child grows.
- Although staff plan for the play activities they deliver, their planning lacks detail about what children should learn, and the level of challenge for children of different abilities and the next steps to aid children's progress. As a result, staff are not in a position to track individual children's progress or development.
- The centre manager is working hard to establish productive partnerships with local early years providers and schools. While she has had some success, as one school is now working with the centre, these partners have not established a 'transition into school' programme in the areas where data show children are falling behind their peers at the end of the early years. As a result, the gap is not closing quickly enough to ensure these children are ready to start school and engage fully in their learning environments.
- The centre has established good working relationships with health teams in the area. Together they are starting to share pertinent information about the families with whom they are working. While activities are taking place to help parents understand how to provide a healthy diet and the dangers of smoking, too many children start school obese and too many women smoke, particularly during pregnancy. Consequently, children, particularly those living in the most disadvantaged areas are not being given the healthy start in life they need.

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

- The local authority have appointed a new, dynamic centre leader who has quickly assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the service and is starting to use the resources available more astutely. New partnerships have been established and new venues in the most disadvantaged areas have been agreed. While this indicates a level of capacity for future improvement it is too soon to see the long-term impact this commitment will have on reducing inequalities and improving life chances.
- The centre manager and her line manager use regular supervision, training and appraisal effectively to set goals, give constructive feedback and monitor the staff's performance. Staff are passionate about their work and have access to a good range of training opportunities to support their continuous professional development.
- Governance arrangements are clear and the Local Stakeholder Group is well represented and generally well attended. Members are enthusiastic and are keen to provide a good level of challenge to assist the centre in moving forward. The local authority regularly monitors the performance of the centre. In addition, it provides appropriate data to the centre. However, not all partners share relevant data, such as early years outcomes and breastfeeding data, with the centre manager. This impacts on the centre's ability to use data to set clear baselines in its development plan on which to measure its progress.
- Safeguarding children is firmly at the forefront of the centre's work. Effective referral processes between partners and the centre ensure that the right support is provided swiftly to families, including those whose problems have been assessed using the Common Assessment Framework process, those subject to a child protection plan, looked after children and those identified as in need. Case files are completed to a high standard and demonstrate that in times of crisis families

receive well-tailored, effective support.

- All parents spoken to stated how much they value the centre staff and how welcome they feel at the centre. While parents are represented on the Local Stakeholder Group there are no clear systems in place to feedback on the views shared by parents. As a result, parents have yet to have a true voice in helping to shape services at the centre.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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>	20621
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	455073
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,869
<b>Centre leader</b>	Jennifer Richardson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 274 9512
<b>Email address</b>	jennifer.richardson@sheffield.gov.uk

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