

# The Chai Centre

SureStart Healthy Living Centre, Hurtley Street, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 1BY

<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 June 2015
<b>Previous inspection date</b>	23 June 2010

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
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.

- All local children aged under-five are registered with the centre and the large majority, including those identified as most in need of the centre's support, are engaged in its activities. This underpins the centre's success in improving families' well-being and reducing inequalities.
- Staff have detailed knowledge of individual families' circumstances and needs, and are highly attuned and sensitive to the different cultures within the community. They develop this knowledge through the pattern of focussed home visits which they conduct over each child's first three years.
- Strong partnerships and sharing of information, especially with health colleagues, lead to swift identification of any concerns about families or children. This leads to families receiving timely and effective action from appropriate professionals and also reduces the risk of harm to children.
- The centre's work with families experiencing domestic abuse is highly effective.
- Children's skills levels at the end of Reception are on a rising trend, particularly for those of Bangladeshi origin. The centre works closely and effectively with schools and childcare providers.
- Staff are highly focussed on improving the health of local families. The proportion of mothers who breastfeed their baby for at least six-to-eight weeks is above the national average and increasing.
- All members of the staff team work closely together and respect each others' skills and expertise. This strength, at the core of the centre, has helped it maintain the good quality of provision for families despite an extended period of changes to management. The words of one staff member echo those of others, 'we're quite passionate about our work and can rely on our co-workers.'

### It is not outstanding because:

- The many changes in leadership, governance and management that have occurred over the past year have reduced the ability of the advisory board to hold the centre to account about the impact that its work has on improving families' well-being. Development planning and the monitoring of the centre's quality lack sufficient rigour to drive the centre's improvement at a fast pace.
- Children's achievement at the end of Reception is below that of children in similar areas. Not enough eligible two-year-olds take up their entitlement to free early years education. The quality of the centre's group activities for children does not match the high quality of its work in families' homes.

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

- In order to help to raise children's levels of achievement at the end of Reception Year:
  - ensure that the planning for group activities focuses on children's learning, and that staff record children's progress over a number of sessions and strengthen the guidance for parents about becoming involved with their children's learning
  - further increase the numbers of eligible two-year-olds who take up their entitlement to free early education.
- Strengthen the centre's leadership, governance and management by ensuring that:
  - the advisory board quickly resumes its role in holding the centre to account
  - the systems for observing and monitoring the quality of the centre's activities and evaluating their impact on improving families' well-being, are firmly embedded
  - development planning has clearly defined targets against which to measure the success of any actions taken.

## 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 telephone conversations with: parents; centre staff and volunteers; one member of the advisory board; senior representatives of the local authority; the early help coordinator; children's social care and health professionals; staff from primary schools and nurseries; childminders; the community education liaison officer; members of faith communities; two independent providers of adult training, advice, guidance and support; the local authority adult learning manager.

The inspectors visited the centre, Reedley Hallows Children's Centre and also accompanied centre outreach workers as they carried out two visits to families' homes.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including that relating to self-evaluation, development planning, activities, policies and procedures, and safeguarding. The centre leader took part in one joint observation with an inspector.

## Inspection team

Sarah Drake, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Parm Sansoyer	Additional Inspector
Philip David Ellwand	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

The Chai Children's Centre is a stand-alone centre which shares its site with a Healthy Living Centre and Little Acorns Community Nursery. Only the children's centre formed part of this inspection, reports of other provision can be found at: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted). Since October 2014 the centre has been run by Lancashire County Council, prior to this it was run by Lancashire Care Foundation Trust. Since the previous inspection the centre has also experienced changes in leadership. The most recent manager, who was seconded from elsewhere in the local authority, left in February 2015. Since April 2015 the former children's centre teacher has taken on the role of centre leader. Centre governance is provided by the local authority and an advisory board.

There are approximately 1,000 children aged under five living locally. All live in areas identified as among the one to ten percent most deprived areas nationally. Most families belong to Black and minority ethnic groups. Around 49% of families are of Pakistani heritage and 19% are of Bangladeshi heritage. Around 16% are White British, many of whom stay in the area for only a short time. Local housing is generally of poor quality with a high proportion rented from private landlords. Most families are dependent on workless or low-income benefits. Children's skills on entry to early years provision are generally below those typical for their age; their communication skills, especially in English, are particularly weak.

The centre provides a range of services, including activities to support children's and adults' learning and families' health. It has identified the families most in need of its support as those: living in the Bangladeshi community, especially fathers; who are White British, especially those identified as out of work; who are reluctant to take up their entitlement to free early education at age two.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The centre's work with parents often starts very early on in the mother's pregnancy. This is due to the centre's co-location with health clinics, and the good sharing of information between health professionals and centre staff, including about those families who are new arrivals into the community. Staff contribute to ante-natal courses and provide much information for new parents.
- As a result of this good work, all local children are registered with the centre and the large majority have regular contact with staff. Good quality support for Bangladeshi fathers is having a demonstrable impact on their increasing involvement in their children's upbringing.
- In response to the reluctance of many members of the community to participate in activities outside the home, centre staff conduct a structured pattern of visits to every family. This ensures that families have good access to important information, relevant to their child's needs. Furthermore, these visits allow staff to monitor each child's progress against that which is typical for their age. Should either staff member or parent identify any concerns then, again through close partner work, there is the opportunity for swift referral to the relevant professional support.
- White British families often move into and out of the area within a short space of time, with some returning more than once. Staff use their comprehensive knowledge of families to keep track of the children and ensure their safety. One midwife confidently commented, 'If I didn't know about a family here, I could go to an outreach worker and they would know.'
- Adults have good opportunities to access relevant courses designed to enhance their skills and qualifications leading towards employment.
- Most three- and four-year old children access free early education. However, despite a recent increase, the proportion of two-year olds taking up their entitlement to do so is not high enough.

Centre staff are working closely with the local community, including religious groups, to improve such children's access to a good start to early education in order to strengthen their skills in readiness for school.

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

Good

- The centre provides an appropriate balance between services that are open to all and others that are designed for those with specific needs. Where possible, staff adapt the provision according to parents' preference. For example, they changed the time of day for some groups in order to make them easier for families to attend.
- The pattern of home visits is pivotal to the centre's success since it enables staff to provide support that is tailored to users' needs. Staff's detailed records and systematic tracking build up a clear picture, to which parents contribute, of each child's developing personal, communication and physical skills. However, children's progress when attending group activities is not tracked and the weekly planning for these, while based on a scheme of work, is rudimentary. Opportunities are sometimes missed to help parents become more involved in their children's learning. This reduces the impact of the sessions.
- In 2014, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception Year increased by significantly more than the national increase. However, despite the improvement, the proportion is below that of most children who live in disadvantaged areas, and the gap between the higher achieving children and others is showing no sign of narrowing.
- The centre's close links with schools, nurseries and childminders have helped them to improve their practice. It has spear-headed the comprehensive service for those children who have additional needs, which leads to early diagnosis of their specific needs. This also allows parents a much appreciated means of sharing information and support.
- Staff's work to promote families' health and safety is multi-faceted and effective. Breastfeeding rates are consistently above national figures, helped by high quality support in the local hospital, in the home and at the centre. The community education liaison officer works closely with the centre and families to, for example, encourage fathers to exercise with their children. Centre staff and health visitors report that, in response to work in this area, more families are using Moses baskets, or similar, for their babies. As a result, the risks of co-sleeping are reduced.
- Showing exceptional knowledge of and sensitivity to the culture of the local community, staff provide highly effective support for those experiencing domestic abuse. 'I'm looking forward, I'm making good friends and a life for myself, I'm not looking back', is typical of the comments made by those who have benefited from the service.
- Trusted partnerships are extending the range of adult learning opportunities, including those leading to qualifications. The good range of parenting programmes effectively helps users to establish routines and positive behaviour management with their children. The programme that helps parents to enhance their children's communication skills has a measurable impact. Those who volunteer at the centre are well mentored, develop useful skills and bolster the centre's provision for others.
- Over the past year staff have provided intensive support for around 10% of families, to very positive effect. This includes those identified as a child-in-need or on child protection plans. Health professionals and social care workers wholeheartedly praise the centre's success in reducing risks for children and building adults' ability to grow in self-confidence and independence. From support with housing to help with child development, centre staff make a positive difference to local families' personal and economic well-being, and help to reduce inequalities.

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

Good

- The arrangements for leadership, governance and management have changed significantly over the past year in what one professional described as, 'a perfect storm of reorganisation'. The staff team is to be commended that, throughout the upheaval, members have continued to provide families

with good quality support.

- The changes have had an impact on the effectiveness of the advisory board, which has not met regularly, has no chair and no parental representation. However, a firm date is set for its next meeting and there is good evidence that, until recently, members did hold the centre closely to account. Those spoken with demonstrated good knowledge about the quality of practice and services, the use of performance management and how effectively the centre is helping to reduce inequalities.
- Throughout the changes, the local authority has maintained its governance role, both supporting and challenging centre leaders. It produces a wealth of data that informs decision-making and, through the annual conversation and six-month review, helps to drive forward improvement. Its representatives have been pushing leaders to sharpen the targets in development planning and to improve their recording of the impact of the centre's work. Monitoring and evaluation systems are in place and are strong for some areas, but are not sufficiently embedded throughout the centre's practice.
- Leaders use the centre's resources effectively to meet young children's and families' needs. For example, sharp analysis of the impact of outreach workers' family support work clearly shows that over the past year staff have been working even more effectively to reduce levels of need.
- All staff have the safeguarding of young children as their priority. Comprehensive policies, procedures and practice underpin this work. The Common Assessment Framework process effectively ensures that all relevant partners collaborate closely in order to bring about improvement. Staff are very persistent in maintaining contact and they record all activity clearly in case files. Senior staff conduct regular, detailed supervision meetings with staff to both support them and ensure that they sustain good practice.
- Almost 1,000 people attended the centre's recent 'ten year' celebrations. From the start, local families have felt a sense of ownership – contributing to its design and choosing its unusual name. They describe it as 'a friendly place, run by helpful people' and value its support because, 'when you're down staff bring you straight back up.'

**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>	23167
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	464705
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,000
<b>Centre leader</b>	Thelma Cullen
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 628530
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