

# Inspection report for Astley & Buckshaw Children's Centre

Local authority	Chorley
Inspection number	362433
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Chanan Tomlin

Centre governance	The centre is governed by a committee of Buckshaw Primary School's governing body with an associate member from the Sure Start Early Years and Childcare Service and Primary Care Trust (PCT).
Centre leader	Karen Stephens
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Chancery Rd
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Linked school if applicable	Buckshaw Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Buckshaw Nursey EY368304

The inspection of this Sure Start Children's Centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

## Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents and carers, prospective parents and carers and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents and carers, prospective parents and carers and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and one early years inspector.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation. They also held meetings with senior managers from the centre, parents, members of the advisory board and a number of partners including the nursery manager, health, education and children's social care professionals.

## Information about the centre

Astley & Buckshaw Children's Centre is attached to Buckshaw Primary School. It is located in the heart of an economically diverse community ranging from an affluent middle class to an output area which is high on the index of social deprivation. The area is predominantly White British, but there is a small percentage of families belonging to minority ethnic groups. There are two sheltered accommodation sites in the community which cater for people over the age of 55 where they are supported to live independently by the Social Landlord Places for People individual support team. There is a small Young Parent and Baby Unit close by which provides temporary accommodation for single parents and their children.

The centre's catchment is far reaching and covers Euxton, Astley Village and a new and growing development, Buckshaw Village. Although the centre occupies a central location it is not directly accessible via public transport from the outlying areas of the catchment. The centre is governed by a committee of Buckshaw Primary School's governing body with an associate member from the Sure Start Early Years and Childcare Service and Primary Care Trust (PCT). The day-to-day running of the centre is the role and responsibility of the extended services coordinator (ESC) and is overseen by the head of centre who is also the headteacher of the school. The centre was designated in June 2007 and the building was officially opened in January 2008.

Astley & Buckshaw is part of a network of eight children's centres which cater for the wider Chorley area and work together and at a number of levels. Heads of centres meet regularly, ESCs meet monthly and the outreach workers also meet regularly. In addition, there are cluster meetings where heads of centres and ESCs meet with Sure Start senior and strategic managers. This networking assists in sharing the workload and enables centre representation at meetings and forums.

A multi-agency team which includes health visitors, midwives, speech and language therapists and mental health workers provide services from the centre's site. Children's skills on entry into Buckshaw Primary are broadly as expected for their age. The centre provides a variety of groups which deliver services linked to the Every Child Matters outcomes and Early Years Foundation Stage principles. The outreach team work to assess the needs of the more vulnerable families and aim to engage with them through the universal and targeted services offered.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

### Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

2

### Capacity for sustained improvement

The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management

2

## Main findings

Astley & Buckshaw Children's Centre meets the needs of users well and provides good support for children and families. It is well led and managed and provides high quality activities for children and families. Its governing body is good at ensuring a high quality provision. However, there are no centre users on this body and users are not regular volunteers at the centre.

Overall, the outcomes for users are good. They are outstanding in the way that users adopt healthy lifestyles and enjoy and achieve with regard to their personal and social development. Multi-agency partnerships are outstanding and meet the needs of families and individuals very well. The centre provides an excellent range of services that improve the lives of users in genuine and sustainable ways.

The centre effectively supports breastfeeding mothers through the Breastfeeding Support Network; Bump, Birth and Beyond; Health Visitors' Red Book referral visits and the Tiny Toes new-born group. It establishes contact with new mothers through early notification forms supplied by local midwifery service. Fathers are encouraged to take an active role in their child's development through attendance at ante-natal classes and father/child activities. Parents and carers are encouraged to participate in adult learning through a range of courses offered by the centre, some of which lead to qualifications.

The centre runs a cookery scheme and promotes healthy eating and exercise. This has in no small part contributed to the fact that Chorley's rate of 7.8% obese children in the Reception Year for 2008-9 was below the county average of 9.0%. The centre is outstanding in its support for vulnerable families, children and those in crisis, through highly effective and sensitive outreach workers that coordinate multi-agency work and offer one-to-one support. Parents and carers value the provision that the centre offers and speak very highly of staff.

The centre is effective in the ways that it assesses the individual needs of children and their families and promotes diversity and equality of opportunity. However, it is less effective in evaluating the impact that its services have on users, in order to inform any adaptations to the centre's activities and attract more users from within the catchment area. The centre has identified that its main area for development is to accumulate and evaluate data so that it has indicators of its performance. It is also exploring ways of promoting usage amongst people within the community that are hard to reach.

The centre's partnership and collaboration with Jobcentre Plus directs users towards sustained employment and the centre provides information on benefits, although the impact of this is not yet evaluated. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures, are well trained and share their concerns effectively so that the safety of users is ensured. Strong multi-agency communication is effective in preventing family situations developing into crisis.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Ensure user involvement in the governance of the centre and encourage users to become volunteers.
- Promote usage of the centre's activities by reaching potential users in the catchment area.
- Collect and use data about the impact of activities in order to increase and further improve the provision.

## How good are outcomes for users?

2
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Uptake of the centre's activities is good and parents and carers see them as time to make new acquaintances and socialise. Users say that courses, such as Food Hygiene, Health and Safety in the Kitchen, and Nutritional Awareness, and activities, such as the Mini Mend programme and Mini Gym, have raised their awareness and appreciation of the importance of healthy eating, nutrition and exercise. This raised awareness has contributed to a decrease in child obesity in the area. Users recognise the benefits of learning about healthy lifestyles and many feel that these activities have had a long-term impact on their lives.

Children from Buckshaw Primary School and nursery and other outlying schools who are identified as having additional needs are supported through the centre by multi-agency work. Outcomes for the Early Years Foundation Stage at the Buckshaw Primary School are good and nursery staff agree that this can be attributed to the early interventions of the centre.

Users respond well to the centre's well focussed programmes to promote families'

and children's safety. Information about sexual health, counselling and one to one support, as well as behaviour and anger management for children, advice on domestic abuse, debt/sustainable borrowing and drug and alcohol misuse are all helping users to make enduring changes to their lives. The issuing of Home Safety Packs, free thermometers and safe parenting literature effectively raise users' awareness of how to keep their children and themselves safe. The centre has developed a course on e-safety and appropriate internet use and is exploring ways of attracting participants.

Vulnerable adults in the community are identified and their needs are met well. The centre effectively supports children with child protection plans and those who are subject to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process. Staff are fully aware of safeguarding procedures and follow the centre's policies to ensure that all children are safe and protected.

Although users are extremely positive about the centre's services, parents and carers do not form part of the centre's committee and evidence of the impact of parent and carer groups on influencing change and decision-making is limited. The centre intends to introduce a service user forum a member of which will be invited to join the governance committee. It also intends to introduce a comment section in the signing in book and is considering ways of recording all approaches by members of the public to the centre.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	1
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	2

How good is the provision?

1

Parents and carers in crisis who attend user groups have their needs identified effectively and are quickly signposted to services provided by the centre or its affiliates. The centre identifies and supports first time and isolated mothers and parents and carers with mental health problems by addressing their needs whilst taking the broader picture into account and assisting those on the periphery affected by these issues. The centre provides easy access to the Child and Adolescent Mental

Health Team (CAMHS), nursery and school nurses, speech and language and occupational therapists. Vulnerable family members are also encouraged to further their development and skills by attending training that leads to certification. This promotes self-worth and confidence. The centre is clear about its responsibilities to identify the needs of vulnerable children and staff act discreetly and professionally when offering support. These services are indispensable to many of the users.

The centre has established links with health visitors and midwives who carry out baby checks and weighing sessions through the Tiny Toes group. Early notification forms provide the centre with information on pregnancies and this helps with the early enrolment of expectant mothers. Midwives conduct booking in clinics for pregnant mothers and an ante-natal clinic from the centre. Breastfeeding is supported through 'Bump, Birth & Beyond'. Weaning programmes are conducted by a community nurse. The centre has arranged training for parents and carers of children on the autistic spectrum and paediatric first-aid courses. The centre focuses on whole-child development and parents and carers are supported through their child's milestones well.

Outreach workers help families understand child development and help parents and carers prepare their child for school. Parenting courses provide useful support and guidance. Childminders are supported and the centre has established links with day-care providers in the area. A crèche is available for parents and carers attending adult sessions. The centre provides activities at weekends and through school holidays and considers provision for working families by arranging events for working fathers at weekends.

The centre is uncluttered and welcoming. Notice boards display useful information and there is a Jobcentre Plus kiosk in the entrance hall. In addition to this, posters and information regarding contraception, sexual health and emotional, verbal, physical abuse are strategically placed. The centre celebrates its achievements through displays around the centre and through high-profile visits, such as the visit from the mayor to the centre's harvest festival. Users are comfortable in the centre and say that the staff are 'friendly and approachable'. The centre leader has a good understanding of the purpose of centre and is very accessible to users. Staff are very enthusiastic about what they do; they enjoy excellent working relationships and this is acknowledged and appreciated by users.

Some courses are evaluated by attendees through questionnaires at the end of sessions. However, the centre knows that assessment of the impact of provision and an evaluation of the needs of potential users are areas for development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	1

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	1
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	1

## How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The leadership structure of the centre is understood well by staff. Minutes and records of meetings are kept efficiently. Staff are effectively deployed and all have a wide range of skills. For example, one outreach worker runs play sessions and another, baby massage groups. Staff attend regular supervision and exchange important information informally every day. Governance and accountability procedures are of good quality. The centre development plan suitably identifies vulnerable groups, such as teenage mothers, and links to area-wide priorities in order to improve the provision and outcomes for its uses. It expresses real vision whilst adhering to realistic timescales and budgetary considerations.

Notwithstanding the fact that the centre's catchment area is predominantly White British, it celebrates other faiths and cultures. The inclusion of all children and their families is central to its vision. The centre is fully accessible to users with disabilities.

Procedures and policies for the safeguarding of children are robust. The centre has a nominated officer for safeguarding, although he is not referred to by name in the policy. Safety procedures are in place to ensure that children are kept safe and secure whilst on the site. Risk assessments are completed for all rooms and activities and mobile phones are not used by staff on the premises. Staff have undergone the relevant checks by the Criminal Records Bureau and all staff information is kept in a central record. Recruitment procedures fully comply with requirements.

The centre has excellent partnerships with area health visitors and midwives. Its partnership with Buckshaw School is very good and it provides wraparound care and space for the extended school group. Partnerships with local housing associations and schools are excellent and the centre is exploring ways of extending this to include special schools. In association with the local authority, the centre is in the process of developing partnerships with local doctors and surgeries.

The take-up rate of the activities offered by the centre is good. However, it does not have a users' forum to encourage users to contribute to the running of the centre. Leaders and managers are aware that they do not yet collect and use data about the impact of its services sufficiently well to inform future planning. The centre uses its resources well and provides good value for money.



These are the grades for leadership and management

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	2
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	3
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	1
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	3

## Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The Ofsted report for Buckshaw Nursery, dated March 2009, was taken into account in the provision and outcomes judgements.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Astley & Buckshaw Children's Centre on 15–16 September 2010. We visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's plans and documents and had discussions with some of you and professionals. We judged that the centre is good overall and that it provides some outstanding support to you and your families, particularly in the way it helps you to lead healthy lives and achieve both educationally and personally.

One of the things that the centre is doing really well is supporting mums that are breastfeeding. In no small measure, this accounts for the fact that the percentage of mothers initiating breast feeding in Chorley has increased in the period between 2005 and 2009. In 2008-9 34.32% of infants in the Chorley area were still being breast fed at 6-8 weeks. Some other accomplishments in Chorley that your centre has contributed to are; the reduction in the numbers of obese children in the Reception Year, fewer young children with tooth decay and fewer underweight babies born.

Your children's centre is also good at making sure that dads are involved with their children and families. Support for vulnerable individuals and families is also a real strength of your centre and we were gratified to see that people who were in crises have made real progress. Parents and carers who spoke to us all said that your children's centre is a warm and welcoming place and that staff can be trusted to help and support them. You also told us that staff listen to you and give good, sound advice. We found that the different services work well together as a team to provide help and support to families where a child has special educational needs and/or disabilities. In particular, activities around weaning, messy play, baby massage and the baby clinics are well attended. Parents and carers we spoke to said they thoroughly enjoyed the activities offered. People in charge of running the centre are doing a very good job. The children's centre manager has worked hard to make sure that everything the children's centre does for you will make a difference to the area in which you live.

The whole family is at the heart of what the centre provides and this is seen in the exceptional variety of activities on offer, as well as the number of you who attend them. Managers know there is still more to do if they are to meet fully the needs of your community. For example, the manager knows that it would be helpful to evaluate the impact of the centre more carefully in order to further improve its services. We have asked the centre to make sure actions are in place to improve this. In addition, we have asked the centre to establish a 'Users' Forum', include users on the governing body and encourage users to become volunteers.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come and speak to us, we are very grateful and we wish you every success for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).