

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 the leader of the centre and the leader from another centre in the locality. They also spoke to staff who work in this and the other local centres, and representatives from the local authority as well as members of the advisory board. Conversations took place with staff from partner agencies, including a range of health professionals, the adult education service and local charities and initiatives. There were also discussions with parents at different times during the inspection.

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

Inspection team

Susan Walsh, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Ken Fisher	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Crumpsall Children's Centre is a phase two centre and is situated within the North West District of Manchester. It works on a partnership basis with Cheetham and Woodville Sure Start Children's Centres. The centre manager also manages Woodville Children's Centre and there is an advisory board that provides governance to both centres. The local authority is directly responsible for monitoring the work of the centre.

There is child care offered at Tiddleywinks, which is through a private provider. It is inspected separately and the reports are available on our website: www.Ofsted.gov.uk. Crumpsall contains some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country. Accommodation for local families primarily consists of a mix of local authority council property, rented terraced property and some privately owned property. Many families move in and out of the area. Of the families in the reach area, 23% live in households where no one is working. In many families the main wage earner is employed in a relatively low-paid job. Most of the families are from minority ethnic communities. These families include those from Pakistani, Black British and African heritages and a significant number are new arrivals to the area. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage provision in local schools with skills that are well below those expected for their age. The centre has identified as particular target groups families from minority ethnic heritages, families with vulnerable children including those in local authority care, those who are subject to a child protection plan, those classified as children in need and those living in troubled families. It offers family support, adult learning and health services.

What does the centre/group need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the centre's impact on school-readiness and the proportion of children who join local schools at age-related expectations by :
 - developing a closer working partnership with a wider range of local schools
 - exploring innovative ways of promoting school-readiness for those children who are not attending childcare provision or are new arrivals to the area.
- Encourage more fathers to develop their own skills and to become more actively involved in enhancing their children's development.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Early contact with those that are expecting children and those in target groups is enhanced by very active partnerships with a wide range of agencies. Information is shared effectively and on-site ante-natal services and facilities for registering new births contributes to good levels of registration that have consistently increased over time.
- Families who are newly registered are invited to join short courses that inform them of the wide range of activities and services that are available in the centre. This ensures that families, including those in target groups, are well informed and quickly develop a close work relationship with staff. As a result, the large majority become actively engaged and access the services offered by the centre.
- The centre works very well with the local authority and other partners to ensure that access and participation is carefully monitored. For example, the centre realised it did not have sufficiently detailed information about the ethnic heritages of families. This information is now collected more carefully, allowing the centre to ensure equality of access by making certain its services are carefully matched to the needs of different groups.
- The centre is working effectively with health partners to make sure that regular health checks for babies and children, including those at the age of two, identify children who need additional

support. A close partnership with speech and languages professionals enhances this work.

- The vast majority of children from target groups take up the entitlement to free early education when it is offered. Close partnerships with providers in the private sector help to make sure that parents are fully informed about free Early Years education in the neighbourhood.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The centre is at the heart of the local community and is used by families from a very wide range of backgrounds. It provides a good range of appropriate services with a suitable balance of universal and targeted services. However, there is still a small minority of families in the area who do not benefit from these good quality services; therefore the impact of the centre on improving the well-being of families is good, rather than outstanding.
- Parents have good opportunities to develop their skills in speaking, reading and writing in English. Many are starting to develop an understanding of the child care profession. The provision of crèches assists access to courses, especially for local women. However, relatively few fathers take advantage of the opportunities to develop their employability skills or gain an understanding of how their children learn through play.
- There are good opportunities for parents to develop their skills and raise their levels of confidence through volunteering. For some this is a successful route to employment.
- A strong partnership with health professionals and range of voluntary agencies ensures that clear messages on the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle is given to families. This is consistently re-enforced at all the activities provided by the centre and has contributed to a reduction in obesity levels for Reception-aged children.
- The centre provides high standards of care to local families who face challenges in their lives and does much to improve life chances and reduce inequalities. Low-level needs are met within the centre; when necessary staff refer more multifaceted cases to a range of partner agencies including the Early Intervention Team and other agencies that work with complex and troubled families in Manchester. Additionally, the centre works in close partnership with local initiatives, such as 'Big Manchester', to support local families.
- When children start school their skills are well below those that are expected for their age. The centre has very good relationships with some local schools, but with others the contact is more limited. Children who have attended local and voluntary providers of child care often have noticeably better skills than those who have not. Recently reinstated transition meetings are providing some schools with better information about new starters and sessions within the centre have helped some children to improve their speech and language. However, there is potential to do more to promote school-readiness for those who have not attended pre-school provision or who are new arrivals in the area.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Resources are used very well to make certain that families' needs are met. The three children's centres in the local area work closely together to provide a good range of services that are tailored to local requirements, are made accessible to families and are not replicated unnecessarily.
- Reorganisation of responsibilities within the local authority has resulted in the centre being provided with a higher level of challenge and more effective governance. For example, the annual conversation between local authority and the centre is now clearly focused on the need to demonstrate the impact of the centre's work on improving outcomes for local families. As a consequence, centre staff report that this has helped them to focus their efforts more efficiently. Additionally, the local authority has raised its targets for the centre in order to secure outstanding outcomes in the future.
- The centre manager uses the detailed data provided by the local authority exceptionally well to pinpoint exactly where improvements can be made. The centre sets its own ambitious targets to

improve outcomes for local families in addition to those provided by the local authority. These targets are carefully met through the centre's long-term plans, and clear strategies that are designed to bring about improvement are methodically put in place.

- The advisory board contains a wide range of professional partners as well as a good number of parents. Parents also have the opportunity to contribute to shaping the services provided by the centre through their involvement in the active parents' forum. The board focuses its discussions on the impact of the centre's provision on the lives of local families and is actively involved in steering developments.
- High priority is given to safeguarding. This includes carefully checking staff to make sure that they are suitable to work with children and families and that record keeping is thorough. The centre uses the 'Manchester Common Assessment' (MCAF) framework well. Informative displays help parents understand how MCAFs can help them to access the services they need. The centre carefully checks that children who are looked after, or subject to child protection plans or classified as a child in need have either regular contact with the centre or one of its close partner agencies.

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/Children's Centre Group details

Unique reference number	20883
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	427456
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	886
Centre leader	Paulina Walters
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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