Experiences and Perceptions of
Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre

Report Presented to
Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre
May 2009

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1	**INTRODUCTION**

1.1   Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre was designated in September 2007, and 'officially opened' in February 2009. The Centre is housed in refurbished premises within a nursery/school complex in the heart of Northampton and offers diverse health, childcare, early education and support services delivered by a multi-professional team. These services and activities are available to children aged 0-5 years old, and their parents/carers, residing within a catchment area comprising eight 'Super Output Areas'[1] in the Castle and St. James ward of Northampton.

1.2   In April 2009, the Centre for Children and Youth (CCY) – a research centre based at The University of Northampton – was commissioned by Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre to collate and gather evaluative data regarding experiences and perceptions of the Children's Centre during its first year of activities.

1.3   This report presents key findings from this round of evaluative activities. The report is structured in the following way.

1.   Introduction to the evaluation

2.   Aims of the evaluation

3.   Research methods employed in the evaluation

4.   Findings from the evaluation

5.   Summary and recommendations

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[1] Each Sure Start Children's Centre has a catchment area comprising several 'Super Output Areas' (SOAs). SOAs are discrete areas with similar socio-economic characteristics, as defined by the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS). Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre has a catchment area comprising eight SOAs in the Castle and St. James wards of Northampton. A map showing the location of these eight SOAs can be viewed on the Northampton Borough Council website:
http://www.healthylivinghub.org.uk/_attachments/2012695/SOA%20E01027150.pdf

2	**AIMS OF EVALUATION**

2.1 The evaluation project had four key aims:

- to collate all existing evaluative data relating to Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, and its diverse services/activities;
- in so doing, to provide robust evidence in relation to the Sure Start National Performance Indicator (NPI) regarding user satisfaction;
- to conduct initial consultations with two groups with whom the Children's Centre had not formally consulted (children, and 'non-users' of the Centre);
- to make recommendations to support the future development of the Children's Centre's evaluation strategy.

3	RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 The project entailed two main lines of work, which are outlined in sections 3.2 and 3.3, respectively:

- collation and analysis of existing evaluative work conducted at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre during 2008-09;
- new consultations with children, and 'non-users' of the Centre.

3.2 Existing evaluative data

3.2.1 In Spring 2009, Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre Management Team developed a user-satisfaction survey, following a Local Authority template (see Appendix 1). The questionnaire was designed to gather core evidence relating to the Sure Start National Performance Indicator (NPI) regarding user satisfaction. Centre staff distributed questionnaires to Centre users during 2008-09. 34 useable questionnaires were gathered by March 31st 2009. This dataset provides the basis for the development of Performance Indicators in Section 4.2 of this report.

3.2.2 Prior to March 2009, miscellaneous evaluative projects were conducted by Centre staff with users of diverse Centre services and activities. These datasets have been used in two ways in this report.

- Where evaluative data were directly comparable with the March 2009 user satisfaction survey *and* where it could be established beyond doubt that there was no duplication of respondents, findings were added to the main Performance Indicators dataset. In this way, responses from an additional 24 users could be added to the main dataset (giving a total sample of 58 users). Findings from this dataset are presented in section 4.2 of this report.

- Individual evaluative projects have been written up in section 4.3 of this report, to provide a 'snapshot' of evidence about users' experiences of a range of Centre services and activities.

3.2.3 Tables 3.1-3.4 show the characteristics of users represented in the main 'Performance Indicators' dataset reported in section 4.2.

Table 3.1   'Location' of consultations compiled in main 'Performance Indicators' dataset, frequency and per cent

LOCATION	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
3D music	12	21
ESOL class	12	21
Baby Café	8	14
Drop-in session	8	14
Home safety equipment programme	6	10
Melody Bears	6	10
Toddle Tots	2	3
Baby massage	1	2
Rhyme Time	1	2
Not indicated	2	3

Table 3.2   Gender of users represented in main 'Performance Indicators' dataset, frequency and per cent

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
Male	3	5
Female	55	95

Table 3.3   Place of residence of users represented in main 'Performance Indicators' dataset, frequency and per cent

SUPER OUTPUT AREA[2]	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
E01027150 (Castle)	13	22
E01027151 (Castle)	7	12
E01027152 (Castle)	10	17
E01027153 (Castle)	7	12
E01027154 (Castle)	5	9
E01027155 (Castle)	2	3
E01027233 (St. James)	2	3
E01027238 (St. James)	4	7
Not indicated	8	14

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[2] See footnote 1 for a definition of 'Super Output Areas'. Parents/carers who completed the 'Performance Indicators' questionnaire were asked to indicate their postcode. CCY researchers assigned these postcodes to SOAs individually, using this map in conjunction with the *Multimap* website.

Table 3.4   Ages of children of users represented in main 'Performance Indicators' dataset, frequency and per cent

AGE	FREQUENCY	PER CENT[3]
0-1 years	19	38
1-2 years	8	14
2-3 years	5	9
3-4 years	6	10
4-5 years	4	7
Not indicated	24	41

3.2.4 Table 3.5 outlines the size and foci of the additional stand-alone evaluative projects collated in section 4.3 of this report. Note that it was not possible to incorporate a significant proportion of the earlier material in to the 'Performance Indicators' dataset. This is because: (i) several of the earlier surveys did not request postcodes; (ii) it was not possible to ascertain whether surveys were completed by different users, or a small duplicated group of respondents; (iii) earlier surveys did not use consistent measures of 'user satisfaction'. Consequently, it is likely that the findings in this report significantly underestimate usage of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre during 2008-09.

Table 3.5   Additional evaluative projects conducted by staff at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre during 2008-09.

PROJECT	METHOD	COMPLETED	NO. OF RESPONSES	NO. OF RESPONSES USEABLE IN MAIN 'PERFORMANCE INDICATORS' DATASET[4]
'Baby Days' evaluation	Questionnaire	Feb. 2009	6	0
Community room wall	Feedback invited on blank poster paper	Mar. 2009	c.10	0
ESOL training evaluation	Questionnaire	Mar. 2009	8	0
Generic feedback – version 1	Questionnaire	Mar. 2009	36	18
Assessment of home safety equipment scheme	Questionnaire	Mar. 2009	22	6

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[3] This table shows the number/percentage of respondents with children of each given age. Since several respondents had more than one child, the per cent column sums up to more than 100%.
[4] See section 3.2.2.

3.3   New consultations

3.3.1 In March-April 2009, CCY researchers conducted initial consultation exercises with two groups whom the Children's Centre had not previously formally consulted: (i) children aged 0-5; (ii) 'non-users' of the Centre (i.e. parents/carers who live within the catchment area of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, but do not use the Centre).

3.3.2 With the permission and support of staff from a local nursery/school, short consultations were conducted with groups of local children aged 0-5 who previously visited Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre for diverse events/activities. In this way, CCY researchers consulted with 47 children aged 0-5 as of May 2009. Age and gender of the children consulted are indicated in Tables 3.6-3.7. The children were asked a range of questions designed to elicit responses on the following topics:

- experiences/perceptions of the Centre;
- most enjoyable things about the Centre;
- least enjoyable things about the Centre;
- how the Centre could be improved.

    Findings from these consultations are reported in section 4.4 of this report.

Table 3.6   Age of children consulted, frequency and per cent

AGE	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
0-1 years	0	0
1-2 years	0	0
2-3 years	8	17
3-4 years	25	53
4-5 years	14	30

Table 3.7   Gender of children consulted, frequency and per cent

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
Male	27	57
Female	20	43

3.3.3 With the permission and support of staff from schools and parents/carers groups within the catchment of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, short consultations were conducted with local parents/carers who *do not* use the Centre. In this way, CCY researchers consulted with 27 such 'non-users' during April/May 2009. Characteristics of this sample of 'non-users' are indicated in Tables 3.8-3.10. 'Non-users' were asked a range of questions designed to elicit responses on the following topics:

- awareness of the Children's Centre, and its services/activities;
- experiences/perceptions of the Centre;
- reasons for 'non-usage'.

These consultations were designed to be directly comparable with the main 'Performance Indicators' questionnaire survey (see section 3.2.1). Findings from these consultations are reported in section 4.5 of this report.

Table 3.8   Gender of 'non-users' consulted, frequency and per cent

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
Male	1	4
Female	26	96

Table 3.9   Place of residence of 'non-users', frequency and per cent

SUPER OUTPUT AREA[5]	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
E01027150 (Castle)	1	4
E01027151 (Castle)	0	0
E01027152 (Castle)	3	11
E01027153 (Castle)	2	7
E01027154 (Castle)	3	11
E01027155 (Castle)	1	4
E01027233 (St. James)	7	26
E01027238 (St. James)	8	30
Not indicated	2	7

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[5] See footnotes 1 and 2.

Table 3.10   Representation of 'high priority' groups amongst 'non-users' consulted

GROUP	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
Teenage parents/pregnant teenagers	1	4
Lone parents with child/ren aged 0-5	7	26
Workless households with child/ren aged 0-5	2	7
BME households with child/ren aged 0-5	5	19
Households with child/ren aged 0-5, where child or parent/carer is 'disabled'	1	4

4	**FINDINGS**

4.1   Key findings from the evaluative work described in section 3 are presented in the following sections.

     4.2   User satisfaction: National Performance Indicator
     4.3   User satisfaction: other evaluative projects
     4.4   Consultation with children aged 0-5
     4.5   Consultation with 'non-users' of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre

4.2   User satisfaction: National Performance Indicator

4.2.1   Sure Start Children's Centres are required to report local data in relation to a National Performance Indicator (NPI) regarding user satisfaction with the Children's Centre and its services/activities. Section 4.2.3 presents evidence against this NPI. Related findings about user awareness, access and satisfaction are included in sections 4.3-4.4 of this report.

4.2.2   From an analysis of data from the *Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre Data Profile* (2008), it is estimated that there are 471[6] households with children aged 0-5 within the catchment area of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre. The following findings are based on this estimate.

4.2.3   Parents/carers were asked to evaluate the services/activities they had accessed at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre during 2008-09. Table 4.1 collates two indicators of user satisfaction with services/activities: (i) the proportion of Centre users who were satisfied with the services/activities they accessed during 2008-09; (ii) the NPI for user satisfaction, '% of parents with children aged 0-5 in the Children's Centre area satisfied with services'. It can be established that parents/carers from around 12 per cent of households with children aged 0-5 within the Centre's catchment were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with *all* of the services they accessed at the Centre during 2008-09. In practice, this means that 95 per cent of parents/carers who used the Centre during its first year of operation were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with all of the services they accessed. Table 4.1 juxtaposes these findings with baseline date from the *Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre Data Profile* (2008). In terms of satisfaction *amongst users*, data from Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre compares favourably with the Northampton Borough average, and feedback from Children's Centres of similar age.

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[6] In the absence of definitive statistics, this estimate was calculated by combining ONS statistics for number of children aged 0-5 (as of 2005), and proportion of households with different numbers of children (as of 2008) within the Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre catchment area.

Table 4.1   Performance indicator 1a: user satisfaction at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, 2008-09, with comparisons[7]

	FREQUENCY	(i) % OF CENTRE USERS 2008-09	(ii) % OF PARENTS/CARERS IN CATCHMENT WITH CHILDREN AGED 0-5
Spring Lane users 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with all services/activities they accessed at the centre	55	95 (55/58 users)	12 (55/c.471 households)
Satisfaction *amongst users*: all Northampton Borough Sure Start Children's Centres, 2008	n/a	90	n/a
Satisfaction *amongst users*: all 'Phase 2' Centres in Northants., 2008	n/a	96	n/a
Satisfaction *amongst users*: all 'Phase 3' Centres in Northants., 2008	n/a	83	n/a

Table 4.2 provides a more detailed breakdown of user satisfaction data from Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre. Note that, while the reported 'reach' of each element of the Centre's provision could be extended, there is near universal satisfaction *amongst users* of each service/activity.

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[7] Comparisons derived from *Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre Data Profile* (2008). 'Phase 2' refers to Sure Start Children's Centres designated in 2006-08. 'Phase 3' refers to Sure Start Children's Centres designated in 2008-10. Since Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre was designated in September 2007, but officially 'opened for business' in February 2009, comparison might reasonably be drawn with figures somewhere 'between' the statistics for 'Phase 2' and 'Phase 3'.

Table 4.2   Performance indicator 1b: user satisfaction with specific provision at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, 2008-09

	FREQUENCY	(i) % OF USERS OF THIS PROVISION, 2008-09	(ii) % OF PARENTS/CARERS IN CATCHMENT WITH CHILDREN AGED 0-5[8]
Spring Lane users 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with engagements with Children's Centre staff	55	100 (55/55)	12 (55/c.471 households)
Spring Lane users 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with engagements with other centre users	55	100 (55/55)	12 (55/c.471 households)
Spring Lane users 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with info. supporting parenting	26	93 (26/28)	6 (26/c.471 households)
Spring Lane users 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with ESOL classes	15	100 (15/15)	3 (15/c.471 households)
Spring Lane users 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with health visitor service	14	100 (14/14)	3 (14/c.471 households)
Spring Lane users 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with midwifery service **	6	86 (6/7 users)	2 (6/c.471 households)
Spring Lane users 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with info. about childcare	3	100 (3/3)	1 (3/c.471 households)
Spring Lane users 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with childcare provision	2	100 (2/2)	≤1 (2/c.471 households)

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[8] See footnote 6 for explanation of estimated number of households with children aged 0-5 within catchment area.

4.3   User access/satisfaction: other evaluative data

4.3.1   This section compiles additional evaluative data on the following topics:

- overall user awareness and satisfaction of provision accessed at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre;
- user experiences of specific Centre services/activities.

4.3.2   In the core 'Performance Indicators' survey, and the earlier generic user feedback survey, users of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre were asked a range of questions about their awareness, usage and experiences of provision offered by the Centre. Table 4.3 provides an overview of user awareness, usage and satisfaction of a range of services/activities. There appear to be three categories of provision:

- aspects of provision which are known and used by the majority of Centre users (e.g. discussions with Centre users and staff, information about parenting);
- aspects of provision which are known and used by a smaller, but significant, subsection of Centre users (e.g. health visitor services, ESOL classes, speech and language services);
- aspects of provision which appear to be relatively little known and used by Centre users (e.g. careers advice/services, information about Borough/County Council services).

Note that the vast majority of users of Centre services/activities were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the provision they accessed.

Table 4.3   User awareness, access and satisfaction in relation to provision at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, 2008-09[9]

PROVISION	PER CENT		
	Centre users aware of this service	Centre users who have accessed this service	Users of this service who were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'
Meeting/discussions with other Centre users	100	100	100
Info. supporting parenting	88	51	93
Discussions with Centre staff about child/ren	85	50	100
Discussions with Centre staff about self	77	50	100
Health visitor service	43	25	100
ESOL classes	41	27	100
Info. about childcare	38	5	100
Speech and language service	31	21	100
Childcare provision	24	4	100
Info. about Borough/County Council services	17	4	100
Support for local childminders	17	0	n/a
Careers advice/support	14	0	n/a
Midwifery service **	14	13	86
Day trips **	8	0	n/a
Dental treatment **	3	0	n/a
Online access **	0	0	n/a

4.3.3   In the March 2009 user feedback survey, diverse users of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with different aspects of the Centre. Responses are summarised in Table 4.4. With the exception of a few criticisms of catering at a particular event, all users were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with these aspects of the Centre.

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[9] Data from core 'Performance Indicators' survey, March 2009. Double asterisks denote services which are not yet provided at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre: findings for midwifery suggest some confusion about the status of the Centre in relation to local midwifery services

Table 4.4   User satisfaction with aspects of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, 2008-09[10]

ASPECT OF CENTRE	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
Appropriateness of room for activity	36	100
Friendliness and approachability of staff	36	100
Staff response to any views and concerns	36	100
Welcome on arrival	36	100
Appropriateness of refreshments	34	94

4.3.4   The core 'Performance Indicators' survey and earlier user feedback and community room wall surveys asked users to indicate those aspects of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre which they particularly liked, and any ways in which the Centre could be improved. Responses are summarised in Tables 4.5 and 4.6. Users identified a wide range of features which they like about the Centre: they especially value the Centre's 'friendly' atmosphere, meeting other users and Centre staff, and the availability of information about parenting. The most widely-cited suggestions for improving the Centre were measures to attract more users, and the addition of more   trips and activities such as baby massage, baby signing and baby yoga. Examples of users' viewpoints are presented in the accompanying text boxes.

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[10] Data from user feedback survey, March 2009.

Table 4.5   What users like about Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, 2008-09[11]

BEST FEATURE	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
Friendly atmosphere	18	23
'Meeting other mums'	17	21
Centre staff	15	19
Info. about parenting	13	16
'Baby Café'	10	13
'Everything'	9	11
Emotional support	8	10
Child has fun	6	8
Spending time with child	6	8
Drop-ins	4	5
'Toddle Tots'	4	5
Info. about community activities/services	3	4
'Rhyme Time'	3	4

What users like about Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre

"Supportive atmosphere and very friendly. Helpful advice from staff. Found out about more activities and groups"

"Supportive and friendly group. Staff very helpful. My baby also enjoys the group"

"The group is relaxing and you feel at home"

"Meeting other mums and sharing experiences"

"Meeting other parents, my son being able to play with other children"

"No-one is left out – everyone talks and gets along"

"Learning with others. Advice from staff. Sharing ideas with other people who go along"

"Providing me with very useful and relevant information childcare"

"The centre is a lovely place to visit, everyone is warm and friendly – highly recommended ☺!"

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[11] Data from core 'Performance Indicators' survey, first user feedback survey and community wall feedback survey (all March 2009). In total these surveys gathered 80 items of feedback (see Table 3.5). The table shows the number of items of feedback which mentioned each point (it may be the case that the same users contributed to more than one of these surveys). Since many users listed more than one thing they liked about the Centre, the per cent column sums up to more than 100%.

Table 4.6   What users would change about Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, 2008-09[12]

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
'Nothing'	18	23
More trips	12	15
Attract more users to Centre	11	14
Baby massage	10	13
Baby signing	8	10
Baby yoga	8	10
Longer sessions	8	10
Different time sessions	7	9
Careers support/advice	6	8
Language classes	6	8
Services/activities closer to home	5	6
Activities for older children in 0-5 range	5	6
More equipment	5	6
First aid courses	4	5
Messy play	4	5
More adult courses	4	5
Money management	3	4
More outdoor activities	3	4

What users would change about Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre

"Nothing I would change – the centre is great already!"

"Need to do more day trips, especially in spring and summer"

"More trips – as Spring Lane is the only one that doesn't do day trips!"

"Advertise it more so more people come!"

"Get more people involved"

"More sessions – e.g. baby massage, baby yoga, baby signing"

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[12] Data from core 'Performance Indicators' survey, first user feedback survey and community wall feedback survey (all March 2009). In total these surveys gathered 80 items of feedback (see Table 3.5). The table shows the number of items of feedback which mentioned each point (it may be the case that the same users contributed to more than one of these surveys). Since many users listed more than one thing they would change about the Centre, the per cent column sums up to more than 100%.

4.3.5 In 2008-09, staff at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre conducted stand-alone evaluations of three aspects of the Centre's provision: 'Baby Days', ESOL training and the home safety equipment scheme (See Table 3.5). Findings from these evaluations are summarised in Tables 4.7-4.9. In each case, there was near universal satisfaction in terms of all of the evaluation criteria.

Table 4.7   User satisfaction with 'Baby Days' activities at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, 2008-09[13]

STATEMENT	PER CENT	
	'Agree' or 'strongly agree'	'Disagree' or 'strongly disagree'
'All sessions were helpful'	100	0
'I feel more confident in my parenting having attended this event'	83	17
'My views and concerns were taken seriously'	100	0
'I would recommend this session to other parents'	100	0

Table 4.8   User satisfaction with ESOL classes at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, 2008-09[14]

STATEMENT	PER CENT	
	'Agree' or 'strongly agree'	'Disagree' or 'strongly disagree'
'I felt welcome in the classroom'	100	0
'The building was easy to get to and has enough space'	100	0
'The teacher explained what I could learn and do on the course'	100	0
'The teacher taught us well'	100	0
'The lessons have helped me to learn things I did not know before'	88	12
'I am learning what I expected to learn'	100	0
'I enjoyed the food/drink provided'	100	0
'The teacher helped me when I had questions or problems'	100	0
'I would recommend this session to friends/family'	100	0

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[13] Data from 'Baby Days' evaluation, February 2009.
[14] Data from ESOL training evaluation, March 2009.

Table 4.9   User satisfaction with Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre home safety equipment scheme, 2008-09[15]

ASPECT OF SCHEME	PER CENT	
	'Satisfied' or 'very satisfied'	'Not satisfied'
Arrangements for organising work/delivery	95	5
Service from staff	100	0
Behaviour of workers	91	9
Standard of completed work	95	5

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[15] Data from assessment of home safety equipment scheme, March 2009.

4.4   Consultation with children aged 0-5

4.4.1 A sample of children aged 0-5, who had visited Spring Lane Sure Start
       Children's Centre, were asked to indicate what they most liked about
       the Centre. Responses are summarised in Table 4.10. Examples of
       children's viewpoints are presented in the accompanying text box.
       Children listed a wide range of features of the Centre which they liked:
       indeed, around two-fifths (38%) of the children consulted said that
       they liked 'everything' about the Centre. The most commonly-cited
       positive features of the Centre, from children's perspectives, were:
       opportunities to play games, access to toys, have fun, meet friends
       and spend time with a parent/carer. Around one-in-five of the
       children consulted specifically mentioned Centre staff as being among
       their favourite things about the Centre.

Table 4.10   What children like about Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre,
              2008-09

BEST FEATURE	FREQUENCY	PER CENT[16]
Playing games	23	49
Toys	22	47
Having fun	20	43
Meeting friends	18	38
'Everything'	18	38
Spending time with parent/carer	12	26
Centre staff	9	19
Painting/drawing activities	6	13
Music/singing activities	6	13
Dancing	5	11
Snacks/drinks	5	11
ToddleTots	4	9
Baking activities	4	9
'Boogie Bears'	3	6
Stories	3	6
Playing with siblings	3	6

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[16] Children were able to list as many positive features as they wanted. Since many children listed more
than one thing they liked about the Centre, the per cent column sums up to more than 100%.

What children like about Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre

"I liked all of it – it is amazing. Everything I see, I like. It is special. I like everything, even the food!"

"It is fantastic – there is a beautiful dolly and a teddy bear"

"I love it – you can do playing and sliding and dancing and jumping. I like everything about it"

"I really like playing – we play at being Power Rangers. I play in the sand and make a big, big castle"

"It is lots of fun. I danced like a kangaroo – it was a bit funny!"

"I love playing and having friends"

"I like walking [to the Centre] with my mummy. I love playing the games and being with my mummy"

"I love [name of Centre staff member]. She is nice – I like it when I see her"

4.4.2 Children were asked to indicate what, if anything, they would change about Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre. Responses are summarised in Table 4.11. Examples of children's viewpoints are presented in the accompanying text box. Around one-in-four (26%) of the children consulted indicated that they would change 'nothing' about the Centre. The most commonly-mentioned suggestions for change, from children's perspectives, relate to the approach, entrance and exterior areas of the Centre. For around one-in-four (23%) of the children consulted, the route to the Centre was a source of anxiety (see accompanying text box). Around one-in-eight (15%) children called for improved opportunities for outdoor play at the Centre. Other concerns raised by children included: reported incidences of 'rough' play/behaviour by children at the Centre, 'mess' and 'noise' made by babies, and a shortage of computer-based activities/resources.

Table 4.11   What children would change about Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, 2008-09

SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE	FREQUENCY	PER CENT
'Nothing'	12	26
Improve entrance/street	11	23
More outdoor play	7	15
Less 'rough' play	5	11
Keep 'babies' separate from older children	5	11
More computers	4	9
More 'quiet' activities	3	6

What children would change about Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre

"The cars [in the car park and near entrance] make too much noise. You could get hurt"

"I don't like the walk [to the Centre]. The walls are horrible and big dogs go woof and scared me"

"A place to play out and go down and up on a scooter or skateboard"

"I would like to play outdoors. The grass is too long and wet. It is too bumpy to play on"

"Some children are rough when they play. They rush around – I got squashed"

"I don't like playing with the babies. The babies do horrible poo. It makes mess!"

4.5　Consultation with 'non-users' of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre

4.5.1 This section presents findings from consultation with a sample of parents/carers who live within the catchment area of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, but do not use the Centre. These 'non-users' were asked to indicate their level of awareness of Sure Start, and Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre. Responses are summarised in Table 4.12. Although the majority of non-users consulted had heard of Sure Start and their local Sure Start Children's Centre, there was somewhat limited awareness of the nature of this provision: around one-in-three (30%) 'non-users' had heard of their local Centre but were unsure about what it was, and around two-fifths (44%) of 'non-users' indicated that they had 'never heard' of the Centre.

Table 4.12　　Awareness of Sure Start and Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre amongst 'non-users', 2008-09

NAME OF PROVISION	PER CENT		
	Heard of it – know about it	Heard of it – not sure what it is	Never heard of it
Sure Start	33	44	23
Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre	26	30	44

4.5.2 'Non-users' were asked to indicate their awareness of specific aspects of provision available at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre. Responses are summarised in Table 4.13. More than one-quarter of the 'non-users' consulted (i.e. a substantial proportion of those 'non-users' who had heard of the Centre) were aware that the Centre offered opportunities to meet other local parents/carers, support for parenting, groups for families, and health visitor services. However, there was much more limited awareness of specific Centre services such as career advice/support, breakfast club, holiday playscheme, speech/language services and after-school club.

Table 4.13   Awareness of services at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre amongst 'non-users', 2008-09

ASPECT OF PROVISION	PER CENT	
	Aware of this provision	Have accessed this provision in past
Opportunities to meet other local parents/carers	37	2
Support for you as a parent/carer	37	0
Groups for families with children aged 0-5	33	0
Advice about parenting	26	2
Health visitor service	22	11
Information that helps you and your child/ren	22	2
Info. about childcare	14	0
After-school club	11	3
Speech and language service	7	0
Holiday playscheme	7	0
Breakfast club	7	3
Careers advice/support	0	0

4.5.3 'Non-users' were asked to outline any factors which prevented them from accessing services/activities at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre. Key barriers to access are summarised in Table 4.14. Examples of users' viewpoints are presented in the accompanying text box. The most commonly-cited barriers to access were: a reported shortage of information about the Centre, the Centre's location, uncertainty about how to 'get involved' with the Centre, lack of time, and personal anxieties. Around one-in-four of the 'non-users' consulted felt that they 'did not need' to access their local Sure Start Children's Centre.

Table 4.14   Reasons for 'non-usage' of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, 2008-09

BARRIERS TO ACCESS	FREQUENCY	PER CENT[17]
Lack of information	10	37
Location of Centre	8	30
Uncertainty about getting involved	8	30
'Don't need' to use Centre	7	26
Lack of time	6	22
Anxiety	5	19
Went once, but child didn't like it	5	19
'Not for me'	5	19

Reasons for non-usage of Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre

"People don't know what's going on there – we need more info"

"It is a bit of a trek from here [i.e. St. James]! And it is a bit of a dodgy walk. You don't feel safe"

"I don't know how to get involved – can we just turn up? I'm a bit nervous about it"

"Don't need it – we prefer to do our own thing and look after ourselves"

"It's a bit of a stigma - It feels a bit like you're asking for help"

"Just lack of time – it doesn't fit in with the routine when you're juggling everything"

"I haven't got the self-confidence to go"

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[17] 'Non-users' were able to list as many reasons as they wanted. Since many 'non-users' listed more than one reason, the per cent column sums up to more than 100%.

4.5.4 'Non-users' were asked to suggest ways in which Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre could be developed to facilitate or encourage them to access provision. In addition, they were asked to make recommendations regarding needs for services/activities for parents/carers with young children in their local communities. Responses are summarised in Tables 4.15 and 4.26. Examples of users' viewpoints are presented in the accompanying text boxes. 'Non-users' made several recommendations for encouraging usage of the Centre, including: provision of additional information/publicity about the Centre, 'starter sessions' or 'open days' (to enable local parents/carers to familiarise themselves with the Centre, and overcome anxieties about getting involved), and the development of activities or publicity focused on local communities slightly distant from the Centre itself. In general, the list of recommendations/needs for provision in their local area corresponds closely to the list of services/activities which are actually offered at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre. This suggests that the Centre is well-placed to address needs within the local community, although 'non-users' may be currently unaware that this is the case.

Table 4.15   What would encourage 'non-users' to access Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre, 2008-09

WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE USAGE	FREQUENCY	PER CENT[18]
More information/publicity	7	26
'Starter sessions'	5	19
'Open days'	5	19
More activities in own neighbourhood	4	15
Advice on getting involved	4	15
'Nothing'	3	11

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[18] 'Non-users' were able to make as many comments as they wanted. Since many 'non-users' made more than one comment, the per cent column sums up to more than 100%.

Table 4.16   'Non-users' recommendations/needs for provision in their local area, 2008-09

SUGGESTIONS FOR SERVICES/ACTIVITIES	FREQUENCY	PER CENT[19]
Information about local services/activities	6	22
Safe places for children to play	5	19
Opportunities to meet other mums and share problems	5	19
Activities in school holidays	4	15
Advice about parenting	3	11
After-school activities	3	11
Advice about finances	2	7
Baby massage	2	7
Help dealing with Council	2	7
Language classes	2	7
Early morning activities	2	7
Affordable childcare	2	7

Non-users' needs and recommendations for local services and activities

"More information about Sure Start and other things in the area – like a 'what's on'"

"Some of the information is a bit hard to digest. Maybe if you had an open day it would help people know what's available and feel comfy with it"

"More things for children to do and safe places for them to go – especially in the school holidays"

"More support and advice for new mums. When you are a new mum, you need a support network to help you cope"

"Run some 'starter' sessions so you've got people in the same boat, so we can get to know what's what"

"Stuff to do after school and in the holidays"

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[19] 'Non-users' were able to make as many recommendations as they wanted. Since many 'non-users' made more than one recommendation, the per cent column sums up to more than 100%.

5	SUMMARY

5.1 Key findings from this piece of work are summarised below. Where appropriate, evidence-based recommendations are made.

5.2 **National Performance Indicator: user satisfaction (section 4.2.3)**
On the basis of this project, it can be robustly established that parents/carers from 12 per cent of households with children aged 0-5 within the Centre's catchment area were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the Centre's provision. In practice, this means that 95 per cent of Centre users during 2008-09 were satisfied with the provision they accessed.

Recommendations
- Congratulate Centre staff on near unanimous satisfaction amongst users.
- Focus activities upon engaging more users, and developing user feedback methods to gather opinions from a greater number of users.

5.3 **Feedback from parents/carers who use the Centre (section 4.3)**
- Parents/carers who used the Centre during 2008-09 were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with virtually all aspects of the Centre and the services/activities they accessed.
- Parents/carers who used the Centre during 2008-09 especially valued the Centre's 'friendly' atmosphere, meeting other users and Centre staff, and the availability of information about parenting.
- The most widely-cited suggestions made by parents/carers for improving the Centre were measures to attract more users, and the addition of more trips and activities such as baby massage, baby signing and baby yoga.

Recommendations
- Congratulate Centre staff on near unanimous satisfaction amongst users.
- Consider addressing calls for more trips and activities, and measures to attract more users.
- Thank parents/carers for useful and constructive feedback, and provide feedback on how their comments have been acted upon.

5.4 **Feedback from children who have used the Centre (section 4.4)**
- Virtually all of the children aged 0-5 consulted were very positive about their experiences of the Centre.
- Children especially valued opportunities to play games, access toys, have fun, meet friends and spend time with a parent/carer at the Centre. Many of the children consulted also specifically mentioned Centre staff as being among their favourite things about the Centre.
- The most widely-cited suggestions made by children for improving the Centre related to the entrance and exterior areas of the Centre. For around one-in-four children the route to the Centre was a source of anxiety. Other concerns raised by children included: limited access to outdoor play, incidences of 'rough' play/behaviour by other children, 'mess' and 'noise' made by 'babies'.

Recommendations
- Congratulate Centre staff on child-friendliness of Centre and staff.
- Consider addressing concerns regarding exterior parts of Centre.
- Monitor concerns regarding 'rough' play, and interactions between children of different ages.
- Embed consultation with children into Centre's ongoing feedback/evaluation processes.

5.5   **Opinions of 'non-users' (section 4.5)**

- Key barriers to accessing the Centre were: a reported   shortage of information about the Centre, the Centre's location, uncertainty about how to 'get involved' with the Centre, lack of time, and personal anxieties. Around one-in-four of the 'non-users' consulted felt that they 'did not need' to access their local Sure Start Children's Centre.

- 'Non-users' made the following recommendations for encouraging Centre usage: provision of additional information/publicity about the Centre, 'starter sessions' or 'open days' (to enable local parents/carers to familiarise themselves with the Centre, and overcome anxieties about getting involved), and development of activities or publicity focused on local communities slightly distant from the Centre itself.

- 'Non-users' identified a range of needs for provision in their local area: their needs correspond closely to the list of services/activities which are actually offered at Spring Lane Sure Start Children's Centre. This suggests that the Centre is well-placed to address community needs, although 'non-users' may be currently unaware that this is the case.