

Inspection report for Revoe Children's Centre

Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	420877
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2013
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Date of previous inspection	29 September 2010
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Linked school if applicable	119248 – Revoe Community Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY234787 – Revoe Children's Centre

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.

Report Published: May 2013

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Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

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

An inspection of the registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006. An inspection of the co-located primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 8 (deemed Section 5) of the Education Act 2005. Reports of both of these inspections are available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, staff, representatives of the school governing body and advisory board and several members of the local authority. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Revoe Children's Centre is located within walking distance of the town centre in Blackpool. The centre was designated as a phase two children's centre in September 2007.

There are areas served by the centre and each is economically and socially disadvantaged. Six are ranked in the top 10% of the poorest areas in the country, one in the top 30% and one in the top 40%. The reach area has one of the highest levels of population mobility of children and young people in the country. Children enter early years provision with a much lower level of skills and knowledge than that expected for their age.

In the local area, 47% of children aged under five live in households where no one is working. A high proportion of those families who are working have seasonal employment and the majority of young children live in families accessing benefits. There are 90% of local families from a White British background with other families from a range of minority ethnic groups.

The centre is governed by Revoe Community Primary School's governing body on behalf of the local authority. The school's governing body is the registered provider for the registered early years provision at the centre.

At the time of the inspection, an acting headteacher had been in post for two weeks.

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 families

4

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

4

Main findings

Revoe is an inadequate children's centre. This is because leaders, the governing body and local authority have failed to ensure that the centre is having enough impact in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for families. Although services provided are adequate and are having a satisfactory impact upon the lives of local children and their families, those in charge have not demonstrated that they are able to make the necessary improvements to make it a good centre.

Rooms used for groups of children and families are safe and each individual child and adult is treated with respect by staff. As a result, the majority of local families use the children's centre. Children, parents and staff behave appropriately in and around the premises. The promotion of equality and diversity is adequate and individual differences between children or parents are respected.

Centre staff know the local area well and understand that families face many challenges linked to unemployment and low income. Consequently, the main strength of the centre is how parents are being helped to access training and employment opportunities, and the positive difference that this is making to the lives of adults and children.

Weaknesses in policies, which are shared with Revoe Community Primary School, and in the work of centre leaders, the governing body and the advisory board mean that safeguarding within the children's centre is inadequate. For example, the safeguarding policy has some inaccurate detail and is out of date. Centre staff do not know about all local young children

subject to child protection plans. The induction of new staff in relation to safeguarding is not good enough and managers do not regularly check the safeguarding knowledge of staff and volunteers. Staff team discussions about safeguarding policies and practice are too infrequent to ensure that staff are fully up to date. The centre manager has not been supervised by the school to support her in her work and to help her to support others. The headteacher, governing body and advisory board do not provide enough challenge to the centre about safeguarding nor do they conduct enough checks on the safeguarding work of staff.

Those responsible for the centre have not kept a close eye on the overall work of the manager and staff. Formal discussion about improvement has not been regular, detailed or challenging enough. In addition, the local authority has not made robust-enough checks on the work of the centre and the annual discussion about improvement is not sufficiently detailed or challenging. These weaknesses indicate that the arrangements for governance and accountability within the centre are inadequate. In addition, the centre makes limited use of support from partners when making plans and reviewing progress. This does not help the centre to learn and improve. Consequently, evaluation is inadequate because the centre has too generous a view of how well it is developing and improving and an inadequate understanding of the most important issues to address.

One of the recommendations made at the previous inspection was to increase the involvement of users in shaping the future development of the centre. However, this has not been tackled well. Too few families, including those from target groups, are involved in decision making in the governing body, advisory board and in task groups. Consequently, the extent to which parents are making a positive contribution to the centre is inadequate. Considering these weaknesses and the poor quality of significant aspects of leadership and management, the centre does not have the capacity to improve its work.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the contribution made by parents, including those from target groups, to the decision making and governance of the centre, including through the governing body, advisory board and task groups.
- Improve governance and accountability by:
 - ensuring that checks made on the work of the centre by the headteacher, governing body and advisory board are regular, detailed and challenging
 - improving the quality, range and detail of challenge given to the centre by the local authority about self-evaluation and improvement through formal checks, including the annual conversation.
- Improve centre planning and self-evaluation by:
 - ensuring that the centre, partners and local authority work together to form an accurate view of the centre and that this is reflected in records of self-evaluation and in development planning
 - ensuring that all plans and evaluations are clear and sufficiently detailed and that the centre and partners have a good understanding of the main priorities for improvement.
- Improve safeguarding by:
 - ensuring that centre staff have information about all local young children subject to child protection plans
 - ensuring that the safeguarding policy is accurate, up to date and wholly suited to the joint needs of the centre and primary school
 - improving the induction of staff and volunteers about safeguarding policies and procedures
 - introducing regular checks by centre leaders on staff and volunteers regarding their knowledge of safeguarding
 - increasing the frequency of team discussions about safeguarding policies and practice
 - ensuring that the governing body, advisory board and local authority visit the centre regularly and conduct checks about safeguarding policies, staff training and practice and challenge leaders about the improvement of safeguarding
 - providing supervision for the centre manager that supports her in her work and helps her to support others.

How good are outcomes for families?

The centre has an impact on the economic and social well-being of families and consequently some positive outcomes are being achieved. Improvement in the employment prospects of local families is a result of the centre's formation of links with the family learning team of the local authority. A significant proportion of local parents are engaged in a range of activities for adult learning such as literacy, numeracy and cooking on a budget. Individual starting points are recognised, improvement is acknowledged and good information about employment opportunities is available. Consequently, parents report significant gains in their personal confidence and fathers feel comfortable in attending activities or asking for help, such as borrowing a tie for an interview.

Parents at the centre feel safe attending groups and sitting in the communal areas. Centre staff ensure good behaviour by setting a clear example so that all adults and children behave well. Risk assessments by staff are appropriate and any accidents recorded. Due to a range of information, advice and groups, parents have improved their knowledge of keeping their children safe. When the centre knows that children are in care or are subject to a child protection plan, they are supported adequately and, as a result, their outcomes are improving. However, due to weaknesses in the sharing of information, the centre does not know about all local young children subject to a child protection plan. Children involved with the Common Assessment Framework process are supported appropriately by family support and outreach staff.

The centre is having a satisfactory impact on other outcomes for families. The centre's advice and regular support help the majority of users to understand how to keep healthy. Breastfeeding by mothers at six-to-eight weeks has improved and is in line with the Blackpool average but is below the national average. Levels of obesity for local Reception Year children are higher than the regional and national averages. Group activities effectively help parents to play and learn with their children. From low starting points in their development and learning, children are making satisfactory progress but this means that they are not fully ready for the next stage of their education in school.

Local parents are passionate about their children's centre but some do not feel valued, making comments such as 'We want to be listened to' and 'We would be happy if the centre said no to our suggestions if we could understand why the decisions were made.' Parents' involvement in decision making at the centre has not improved well since the previous inspection. The advisory board is new and the centre is struggling to involve more parents. Other opportunities to contribute, including through the governing body, are limited. Consequently, outcomes for making a positive contribution are inadequate.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	3
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships, and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	4
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment.	2

How good is the provision?

3

What the centre offers to support children's learning is satisfactory, including in the on-site early years setting. However, some activities for parents and children are good; for example, an inspector observed a yoga-inspired story session for mothers and babies which included wonderful opportunities for parent-child attachment to be strengthened. Opportunities for adult learning are good but no formal parenting courses are currently provided to support families.

In spite of weaknesses in helping some parents feel listened to and able to contribute, the centre has managed to improve the overall levels of registration and take-up of services, including by most target groups. The proportion of children who have used the centre at least once in the past 12 months represents 58% of those who live in the centre reach area. This is helped by increased links with health colleagues and the centre manager's good knowledge of the reach area but weakened by a limited focus upon homeless families.

When families reach a crisis point due to parenting, financial, health or relationship pressures, the centre provides adequate support. Assessment of needs has been improved recently by shifting the focus from the child to the whole family through the Team Around the Family assessment. However, not all case records are of a high standard and their quality is not supported well by centre leaders.

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	3

The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.

3

How effective are the leadership and management?

4

Leadership and management are inadequate because those responsible for the children's centre, including the governing body of Revoe Community Primary School, the advisory board and local authority have failed to provide adequate support for the centre manager. This has included a lack of appropriate supervision to ensure that she is supported well. Not enough support has been provided to help with planning and reviewing the progress of the centre's work. There has been an over-emphasis upon consistency with the school systems at the expense of considering the specific needs of the children's centre. As a consequence, evaluation is inadequate.

The physical environment of the centre is safe, the small staff team is deployed appropriately and services are having a satisfactory impact upon children and families. Consequently, the centre offers satisfactory value for money.

Staff listen to the views of those attending activities but formal opportunities for families to contribute to decision making are limited. Inclusion is promoted and specific work with fathers, for example, has made a difference to their lives. There are good links with the Together Centre to support local children who are disabled or who have special educational needs. However, weaknesses in planning and evaluation mean that equality and diversity are only satisfactory.

Partnership working has a satisfactory impact on improving the lives of children and families. The centre works well with social care and with the local authority domestic violence worker to support known family issues. However, weaknesses in sharing information with the centre manager mean that the centre does not know all local children who are subject to a child protection plan. Appropriate referrals are made when emotional health issues for children or adults are identified.

The governance and accountability within the centre are inadequate. Leaders do not have a realistic view of how well the centre is doing. This is because there have been too few checks on the work of the centre by the headteacher and members of the governing body. These weaknesses have been made worse by limited challenge and support to the centre by the local authority.

Safeguarding arrangements are inadequate. The safeguarding policy does not include enough information relevant to the centre and some parts of the policy are inaccurate and out of date. Although the centre conducts appropriate checks when staff begin in their posts and meets minimum requirements for training staff in child protection, the support to staff about safeguarding and checks on their work are not good enough. The local authority appointed an interim leadership team a few days before the inspection took place. Trust in this team from staff has developed quickly and is growing. The interim leadership team has

taken rapid action to stabilise the centre and ensure the safety of children, although much remains to be done.

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	4
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secures improvement in outcomes	4
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	4
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	3
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area 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 findings of the March 2013 inspection of Revoe Community Primary School and the inspection of the early years setting, Revoe Children's Centre, contributed to this inspection report and judgements because the school, children's centre and early years setting are all linked together under the same leadership and governance.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Revoe Children's Centre on 13–14 March 2013. We judged the centre as inadequate overall.

We judged that leaders, the governing body and local authority have failed to ensure that the way in which the centre is led and managed is of an acceptable quality.

Thank you for contributing to the inspection. We found it very helpful to talk with you about the centre. Although during the inspection we found that the services provided are adequate and having a satisfactory impact upon the lives of you and your families, those in charge have not demonstrated that they are able to make the necessary improvements in the centre.

We did find that rooms used by you and your children are kept safe. We judged that each individual child and adult is treated with respect by staff. We were pleased to find that a majority of local families use the children's centre and that children, parents and staff behave appropriately in and around the premises.

We found that the main strength of the centre is how you are being helped to access training and employment opportunities and the difference that this is making to your lives.

Weaknesses in policies shared with Revoe Community Primary School and in the work of centre leaders, the governing body and the advisory board mean that wider safeguarding within the children's centre is inadequate.

The way in which the headteacher, governing body, advisory board and local authority have kept an eye on the overall work of the children's centre has not been good enough. As a result, the arrangements for governance and accountability within the centre are inadequate.

Self-evaluation and planning within the centre are inadequate. The centre has too generous a view of how well it is developing and improving and an unclear understanding of the most important issues to address.

We were disappointed to find that too few families, including those from target groups, are involved in decision making in the governing body, advisory board and in task groups. This means that the extent to which you are being helped to contribute to the centre is inadequate. Considering these weaknesses and the poor quality of significant aspects of leadership and management, the extent to which the centre has the ability to improve its work is inadequate.

So that your children's centre can become good, we have recommended that centre leaders, the governing body and local authority do the following:

- Improve the contribution made by parents, including those from target groups, to the decision making and governance of the centre, including through the governing body, advisory board and task groups.
- Improve governance and accountability by:
 - ensuring that checks made on the work of the centre by the headteacher, governing body and advisory board are regular, detailed and challenging
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 - increasing the frequency of team discussions about safeguarding policies and practice
 - ensuring that the governing body, advisory board and local authority visit the centre regularly and conduct checks about safeguarding policies, staff training and practice and challenge leaders about the improvement of safeguarding
 - providing supervision for the centre manager that supports her in her work and helps her to support others.

We realise that our findings will cause you some concern. The local authority of Blackpool Council is now required to produce an action plan to improve your children's centre. Ofsted will conduct another inspection within 12 months.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.