

Rockingham Children's Centre

Rockingham Junior and Infant School, Roughwood Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S61 4HY

Inspection date 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:		
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	3
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Despite good increases in registrations, a large majority of families in the area, particularly those from target groups, are not yet regularly engaged in or benefitting from the centre's services. There is a limited range of activities available for families to participate in.
- The centre is not able to demonstrate that it is having a good enough impact upon local levels of breastfeeding, rates of obesity or mothers smoking during pregnancy.
- Not enough parents, especially those from workless homes, enhance their education, engage in training and volunteering or extend their workplace skills. Monitoring of those that do so, to see how well they get on in achieving their personal goals, is unsystematic.
- Development planning is too complex, lacks time scales and is not rigorous enough to fully support the centre in monitoring its performance, particularly relating to health and adult learning priorities. As a result, managers and the advisory board do not always follow up the weaknesses quickly enough to ensure the rapid improvement required.

This children's centre has the following strengths:

- Partnerships with the co-located school and social care professionals are strong. Safeguarding is given high priority and staff work well to build trusting relationships with families, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, to ensure they get the support that they need.
- Members of the small staff team are committed and enthusiastic and, as a result, they make everyone feel valued and welcome. Parents commented that they have, 'always found staff easy to talk to' and that they provide 'invaluable support'. Parents' role in decision-making is valued and encouraged.
- Parents benefit from attending groups such as 'Stay and Play' and parent workshops that help to build their confidence and parenting skills, and to manage their children's behaviour positively. Children who take up the free entitlement to early years education are well prepared to start school.

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 senior managers, officers from the local authority, centre staff, parents, members of the advisory board and a number of partners including health, education and children's social care professionals. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the centre's development plans, parent evaluations, key policies and the centre's equality and safeguarding procedures. Visits to activities were undertaken jointly with the childcare manager, and the head of centre attended all team meetings along with representatives from the local authority.

Inspection team

Tara Street	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Jean Webb	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Rockingham Children's Centre is a single, phase one centre situated within the grounds of Rockingham Junior and Infant school on the Wingfield Estate in North Rotherham. It offers a range of services to promote the full core purpose which include: child health services, family play sessions, parenting programmes, adult education and family outreach services. There have been significant staffing issues recently. The school and on-site childcare provisions are subject to separate inspection arrangements. The reports of these inspections are available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

There are 379 children aged nought to five years in the area. This has significant levels of social and economic disadvantage with 76% of families living in the 30% or below most deprived areas in the country. Mental health, domestic violence, unemployment, youth crime and substance misuse are all significant issues. Accommodation is predominately council housing and flats. Most families are White British with just 15% belonging to black and minority ethnic groups. Levels of unemployment are high, with 39% of children living in households dependent upon workless benefits. Most children enter early years provision with knowledge and skills, particularly in communication, language, and personal, social and emotional development, that are below expectations for their age.

The local authority commissions the governing body of Rockingham Junior and Infant School, in conjunction with an advisory board, to deliver the centre services. The centre leadership team is made up of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, lead teacher, day care manager and children's centre Chair of the Governing Body.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Improve families' engagement with the centre by:
 - increasing further the number of children and adults who use the centre's services regularly, including those from target groups and those groups that are reluctant to participate
 - extending the range of activities available to users.
- Work more closely with health partners to:
 - increase the number of mothers sustaining breastfeeding at six to eight weeks
 - reduce the levels of obesity in Reception Year children and the number of mothers who smoke during pregnancy.
- Extend the opportunities for more adults, particularly those from workless homes, to enhance their economic stability by:
 - increasing the promotion of, and participation rates in, adult learning programmes, volunteering, progression into further education and employment
 - further developing procedures to track and measure how well adults make progress when they access courses or programmes, and using the data gathered to help plan future services.
- Work with the local authority, advisory board and key partners to improve the centre development plan and the faster pace of improvement by:
 - setting challenging targets and success measures, particularly for health priorities and adult learning, in order to track performance more rigorously
 - using the information to tackle any identified weakness swiftly.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Positive partnership working has helped the centre to increase the registration of most of the children aged nought to five years in the area. However, strategies to increase children's and families' active engagement are not as effective in ensuring that a large majority continue to participate. The engagement by fathers, black and ethnic minority groups and those from the most deprived areas is particularly low.
- The centre successfully maintains contact with families who already access services and activities, through social media and regular community fun days. Parents find the text messaging service particularly useful to remind them about special events, such as 'Baby Bonanza' and road safety demonstrations.
- A key strength is the assessment to identify those children aged two years who are in most need of early intervention. As a result, these children regularly access good provision which meets their needs, and transitional arrangements for their move to school are well organised.
- Leaders and centre staff know well the individual children and adults who use the centre. Staff make effective arrangements to ensure that these families are able to access the care, guidance and support they need. For example, those parents working with outreach and family support staff receive prioritised access to relevant activities.
- Centre staff work proactively with other agencies to promote a 'joined up' approach to family support work across the area. The newly appointed family support and outreach workers have accurately identified local areas of concern, such as domestic violence, mental health and sleep time routines for children. This has informed the planning of new groups, which are due to start soon, with the purpose of improving the participation of these families, thereby helping to reduce any inequalities.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- Most of the centre's activities and groups provide a good service for those attending. However, they are limited in number and range, and the low number of families from some target groups engaging with the centre reduces its overall impact on improving children's health and well-being.
- Health provision is improving with a regular 'Baby Clinic and Bumps to Babies' session, on-site health assessments, and monthly 'Buggy Walks' in the community. However, obesity levels among Reception Year children and the number of mothers smoking during pregnancy remain higher than local and national averages. In addition, although improving, the percentage of mothers who sustain breastfeeding at six to eight weeks is low.
- Adults have access to a satisfactory range of courses, such as specific programmes for promoting parenting skills, which help develop their basic knowledge and skills. However, few adults gain relevant qualifications. There is limited evidence of the active promotion of, or increased participation rates in, a wide range of adult learning programmes, or progression into further education and employment, particularly for those in workless households. Procedures to track and measure the centre's effectiveness in this area are in the early stages of development.
- Play and learning experiences for children accessing the childcare and centre activities are well planned and enjoyable due to the positive interaction between children, parents and staff. Good partnerships with the majority of local schools, pre-schools and childminders provide opportunities to share early years expertise, support school readiness and establish a smooth transition to school. This work is helping to reduce the achievement gap between local children and others nationally.
- Extended childcare provision for two-year-olds, alongside the 'Imagination library', 'Little learners' group, home learning visits and parent workshops, is beginning to improve children's early social, communication and language skills. Additionally, these strategies are helping parents to recognise how to support their children's language more effectively.
- Together, the centre and its key partners provide appropriate care, guidance and support to families. Where a need for specific support is identified, the family support worker ensures that

families receive the correct help to make positive changes to their lives. As a result, the service for those identified as most in need of intervention or support is good.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The centre manager is knowledgeable about the community's needs and is well respected. She is supported by a small, skilled team that shares a common sense of purpose. The local authority and advisory board, provide an appropriate range of support and guidance. Day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood.
- Improvement plans are accurately focused on improving access and outcomes for the most vulnerable families. Previous targets, such as increasing registration and participation rates, have been met successfully.
- However, targets are not always challenging enough. Development plans are too complex and lack rigour because clear performance targets and timescales are not routinely set, particularly in relation to health and adult learning priorities. This prevents leaders and managers, including those who provide governance, from robustly monitoring the centre's success in reducing inequalities for local families. It also slows the pace of improvement.
- Most parents are actively involved in the evaluation and planning of services. Two very committed parents sit on the advisory board. Parents' ideas and views are gathered through regular consultations, evaluations and a newly established 'You Said, We Did' board. These are used appropriately to inform the centre's self-evaluation.
- Safeguarding is well established across the centre and arrangements meet statutory requirements. Staff work closely together with partners to maintain a strong focus on reducing the risk of harm to children.
- Well-organised preventative work by family support, outreach workers and the social care team helps to improve the safety of children. This ensures good levels of support for children subject to a child protection plan and looked after children. The Common Assessment Framework helps the centre to provide effective support for the whole family.
- Resources are used appropriately to prevent duplication and save money. Recent reductions in staffing have made this a challenge, limiting the range of activities the centre is able to offer and delaying the growth of some services.
- Staff feel supported in their work, through regular supervision, and they embrace opportunities for professional development. Senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of centre activities delivered by their own staff, and this is linked to on-going training opportunities, ensuring staff remain well-qualified and knowledgeable.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for children and their families and as a result inequalities are reducing rapidly and gaps are closing.
Grade 2	Good	Practice enables most children and their families to access good quality services that improve children's wellbeing and achieve the stated outcomes for families.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	Performance is not as good as it might reasonably be expected to be in one or more key areas.
Grade 4	Inadequate	The needs of children and families in its area are not being met and/or the leaders and managers are not providing sufficient challenge to bring about improvement to the quality of services.

Children's centre details

Unique reference number	22542
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	421494
Managed by	Rockingham Junior and Infant School Governing Body on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	379
Centre leader	Heather Green
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01709 336688
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