

RAVENSDALE with Forest Town Children's Centre (Part Ravensdale, part Eakring & Forest Town wards)

Sanders Avenue, Ravensdale, Mansfield, NG18 2DN

Inspection date 11–12 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Inadequate	4
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a centre that is inadequate.

- The centre is not supporting enough children and families who live within the reach area, and is unable to clearly identify and give priority to those families who need the services most.
- Information and data available to the centre do not provide sufficient detail of the needs of the families they are working with. Staff do not use information well enough to precisely identify needs.
- There are not enough opportunities for those who might benefit the most to take part in activities to improve their personal skills, education and employability.
- Governance arrangements are weak and currently there is no functioning advisory board to provide direction, support and challenge to the centre regarding its work in the area.
- The centre fails to set clear priorities to form integrated services that meet the needs and requirements of the range of families within the local area, particularly for those in most need.

This centre has the following strengths:

- The centre and its partners work well together, with some local schools, to ensure children are better prepared for starting school.
- Targeted collaborative work with families in a local homeless centre is effective in identifying and meeting their individual needs.
- The centre is now improving. Where elements of poor performance are identified, the centre manager provides additional guidance.

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 leaders and managers from the local authority, centre staff, health, education, parents, early years practitioners and schools.

The inspectors visited Forest Town Children's Centre, Mansfield Primary Academy and the Tideswell Homeless Centre.

They observed the centre's work, carried out a joint observation with the centre manager, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Joan Cawdron

Additional inspector Lead Inspector

Deborah Sanders

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Ravensdale with Forest Town Children's Centre (Part Ravensdale, part Eakring & Forest Town wards) is a phase one centre in the Ravensdale area of Mansfield, and has been formed by the merging of two centres. Ravensdale centre is located on the site of a leisure centre, on a housing estate close to the centre of Mansfield. Forest Town site is linked to a library in a residential area. Ravensdale ward consists of three areas that fall within 10% of the most deprived in the country. Forest Town ward consist of three areas which fall within 20% of the most deprived. Services for children and families in Ravensdale and Forest Town are delivered at a number of sites across the area. Ravensdale and Forest Town have the highest number of workless households in Nottinghamshire and there are 350 children across the area living in workless households. Most families live in social housing. There is also a high incidence of domestic violence. Almost all of the population is White British with very small percentages of families of Bangladeshi and Eastern European heritage. Most children in the area enter early years provision with skills below those typical for their age.

Since 1 June 2013 Ravensdale and Forest Town Children's Centre (Part Ravensdale, part Eakring & Forest Town wards) has been managed by the Nottingham Children and Families Partnership. Day-to-day management of the centre is carried out by a centre manager who is supported by a district manager. Although there is a newly formed parents' forum, the centre does not have an advisory board.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Identify and engage with families who are most in need by working more closely with partner agencies and promoting services.
- Work with the local authority and professional partners to establish more effective ways of gathering information and data which are relevant to the centre's reach area and which enable the centre to more effectively identify its target groups.
- Develop opportunities to encourage workless adults back into employment by providing and/or facilitating:
 - further training to help adults improve their skills and/or gain further qualifications
 - work with Jobcentre Plus to help adults be better prepared for work opportunities in the area.
- Establish an advisory board, involving key organisations and individuals including parents, to improve governance arrangements and to engage in decision making and monitor and provide challenge to the centre.
- Identify and develop clear strategic priorities to deliver services that more precisely meet the needs of those families who will benefit most.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Inadequate

- Not enough families access services on a regular basis. Much of the provision is not focused enough on those who are most in need. The lack of information, in particular about those who are expecting children, those initiating breast feeding, and wider health issues such as smoking, substance misuse, obesity, and families with additional needs, makes it difficult to ensure that they are accessing services.
- Records and observations are satisfactory and provide information that tracks some of the progress being made. Better information sharing would support future planning where further work is needed.
- Staff work adequately with health visitors and the speech and language team to support those

families who access education for their two year old children. Centre staff satisfactorily support families on a one-to-one basis through the 'Home Talk' programme to help parents develop their children's language skills.

- Outreach work such as play activities with children and their families at local schools, the paired centre and the homeless centre are satisfactory. They offer opportunities for families in other parts of the reach area to access services such as health, housing advice and for preparing children for nursery and school.
- Opportunities for adults to access information about potential work opportunities and to gain the relevant skills and qualifications are few. Some parenting and literacy and numeracy courses have been provided but not all adults complete their courses. There are no clear links between what these activities might do to prepare individuals for future courses and how they might benefit the whole family. Those who do complete programmes comment on the benefits to them.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- 'Stay and play' and 'Wobbly Ones' sessions are well attended and children enjoy the range of resources provided. The outdoor play areas on both sites are well equipped. These sessions help children prepare for moving on to nursery and support the children's development of behaviours and listening skills. Some parents told inspectors how they now play and sing with their children at home helping their children develop their language and memory skills. An English class currently supports a small group of parents for whom English is their second language and enables them to improve their children's use of English.
- The work at the homeless centre draws together a range of professionals to ensure children are protected and families have opportunities to access health and parenting programmes. Support for breastfeeding mothers is limited, although training for peer supporters is planned for the autumn.
- The centre works effectively with local childminders who attend the centre and access courses and information to support their work with local families.
- Those who access services speak highly of the support they receive. One parent spoke emotionally about the significant improvement the centre has made to her life due to counselling she has received and the play and development activities her children have attended.
- Tracking systems and learning journeys are held for some children but the sharing of information is limited because professionals are unable to share the outcomes or impact of their work. Information regarding the progress of those children in school who have attended the centre is improving.
- Information on levels of achievement of children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage shows a rise with the particular schools that the children's centre is working with. The gap between the lowest achieving children and their peers is narrowing.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Inadequate

- The local authority annual check did not fully recognise the issues facing the centre. Tracking systems do not contain enough information to enable an accurate analysis of the families' needs or the frequency of their attendance. Targets set by the local authority are not sufficiently challenging.
- The centre has experienced high staff turnover. The centre manager was appointed 11 months ago. Attempts to establish an advisory board have been made, however this is not yet operating. The centre manager has tackled a range of issues during these early months. The newly commissioned partnership and centre manager are developing a vision and commitment to bring about the necessary improvements.
- Although a parents' forum has been set up this year, it is not yet effective. The forum is currently establishing a constitution. They are keen to support the centre and have planned fund-raising activities to help provide additional activities for children and their families. They contribute ideas for activities and engage with others in their community, although this has yet to fully impact the

provision.

- Safeguarding has remained a priority with staff in the centre continuing to have an adequate focus on reducing the risk of harm to children. The needs of children subject to child protection plans and children in need are appropriately met with staff using the Common Assessment Framework. Staff care about the families and are appropriately qualified. Training for safeguarding is up to date and statutory checks have been carried out. The new centre manager placed a high priority on improving the case files for children and families who need additional support from the family support workers. All staff have regular supervision meetings and aspects of their work requiring improvement are being addressed.
- The centre is used well and has some good resources, including a suitable room for health support, and a range of toys and books for children. It is welcoming and adequately promotes an inclusive environment. Steps have been taken to work with a local college to provide language classes for a small group of parents where English is not their first language, and bi-lingual signage has been provided to support better inclusion for these families. Different faith festivals have been celebrated during 'Stay and Play' sessions widening children's knowledge of different cultures.
- Evaluations overall adequately provide sufficient information on which to plan future provision, more detailed information from all partners would ensure provision is more precisely tailored to meet individual needs.

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	22469
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	421493
Managed by	The Nottingham Children and Families Partnership on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	894
Centre leader	Jill Godfrey
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01623 486982
Email address	jill.godfrey@nottsc.gov.uk

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