

Central Children's Centre

Edward Street, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire, DN32 9HL

Inspection date

17–18 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:		
Access to services by young children and families		Good	2
The quality of practice and services		Good	2
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a good centre.

- The centre leader's inspirational and motivational leadership has created a strong and dedicated team of staff who share her passion for meeting the needs of families. As a result, the centre continues to improve.
- A large majority of the families, including those who have the highest levels of need, engage in the wide range of good-quality services which the centre provides.
- The centre is raising the aspiration of workless adults and provides outstanding opportunities for them to train, gain skills and qualifications which improve their opportunities of gaining employment this is helping to reduce inequalities.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. Excellent liaison with partners ensures that families receive joined-up services which meet their needs well and helps reduce the risk of harm to children.
- Governance arrangements, including the local authority and the Advisory Senior Management Team (ASMT), are strong and have a positive impact in helping the centre improve.
- The centre's high quality services have a significant impact on developing parenting skills, contributing to children's development and improving the lives of families who use the centre.
- Parents value the warm and friendly environment at the centre and really appreciate the excellent care and support which they receive from the leader and staff.
- As a result of the centre's good work to develop their knowledge and skills, children who attend the centre achieve better results across the Early Years Foundation Stage than those who do not. These children are also well prepared for the transition to school.

It is not outstanding because:

- Some families who might benefit from support from the centre are not using the services on offer. As a result, data show that some children are not ready to engage with learning when they start school and some health outcomes are not improving rapidly enough.
- Local authority improvement targets lack precision and this hinders sharp evaluation and short-term target setting.

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 three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, members of staff, volunteers, professional partners from health and education, members of the community area senior management team, as well as officers from the local authority.

The inspectors visited the satellite site at the Old Clee Academy and met a parent and staff member who were undertaking a meeting as part of the care pathway.

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

Inspection team

Jean-Marie Blakeley	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Tara Street	Additional Inspector
Ann Taylor	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Central Children's Centre is a stand-alone, phase one, centre which is managed directly by the local authority.

The centre is situated in Heneage Ward, close to the town centre of Grimsby, on a site shared with Edward Heneage Academy, and Surestart Central Children's Centre Day Nursery, which is run by a private provider. Both organisations are subject to separate inspections. Their reports can be found on the ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The centre is supported by an advisory board known as the community Advisory Senior Management Team (ASMT) which includes representatives from health, education, social care, the community and parents. It is also overseen by the local Senior Management Team which includes the headteacher of Edward Heneage Academy, the manager of the onsite nursery and the centre coordinator.

Services are also delivered at a satellite venue situated on the site of Old Clee Academy. This site is due to be closed and services relocated to the former Edward Heneage Primary School building, once refurbishment is completed. Services are also delivered in several community venues.

Seven of the 10 super-output areas within the reach area are within the 30% most deprived areas in the country. The local population is predominantly of White British heritage. There are 1158 children under five years of age living in the area. Within the reach area, 410 children aged under four years live in households dependent on workless benefits. Families are highly transient, moving around the cheap privately rented housing in the area. Children enter early years provision with skills which are generally below those expected for their age.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Together with partners, develop strategies to seek out and engage with the families who are not using the services the centre provides, in order to increase the impact on health and early years education outcomes.
- The local authority should help the centre to drive forward its developments, by sharpening its use of data to set and monitor precise improvement targets for all aspects of the centre's services.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Effective liaison with partners ensures the centre not only knows about all new births within the area, but also gains a thorough understanding of the needs of individual families. As a result, a very large majority of families are registered with the centre and a large majority of those living in the most deprived areas, including all teenage parents, access services at the centre.
- Community play workers deliver a wide range of high-quality activity sessions which increases access and engagement of targeted families, such as those subject to domestic violence, and helps identify individual needs.
- Disabled children and their parents are well supported through good access to a sensory room and clear signposting to support groups such as those for Downs syndrome or autism.
- The centre provides very good support for childminders, early years and daycare providers which helps identify and support parents, particularly those who are reluctant to engage with the centre. Centre staff visit partners' premises, increasing their contact with parents.
- Cheap local rents and attempts to avoid those in authority, means that some families frequently move around the town, making it difficult for the centre's dedicated parental engagement workers to identify and engage with them. Nevertheless, they have increased the numbers using the centre's services.
- Staff have been highly successful in encouraging parents to take advantage of available funding for nursery places for all eligible two-year-old children. In addition, almost all children take up the three- and-four-year-old entitlement to early years education.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The centre provides an outstanding range of training, accredited qualifications and volunteering opportunities which raises aspirations and helps workless adults get into work. Courses are well developed from parents' individual learning journals, long-term aspirations and local work opportunities such as those in the care industry. There is excellent monitoring of progress, measurement of impact and tracking of individual adults' progress by centre demonstrating that services are helping to reduce inequalities.
- Effective partnership work with schools and pre-schools helps the children who use the centre to make good educational progress. Data show that these children are better prepared for school and achieve higher scores across the Early Years Foundation Stage than other children who do not attend. Targeted sessions to boost children's development such as the 'Write Dance' and 'Little Buds' groups have a good impact on improving children's skills and, as a result, help narrow the achievement gap for these children who are most in need.
- The centre provides a good range of targeted parenting programmes, focused play sessions and drop-in opportunities for families. Families benefit from the social contact with other parents and children and the good-quality advice and activities provided by the centre staff. Parents develop a clear understanding of their responsibilities in keeping their children safe and learn how they can help their children's development through play.
- Antenatal clinics and other health-related sessions held in the children's centre help raise awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles, provide support for breastfeeding and help mothers to stop smoking during pregnancy. Although all health outcomes are improving some, such as breastfeeding, are not improving rapidly enough.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Parents, partners and staff are united in praising the dynamic and caring centre leader. One parent said, 'She's crazy, in a good way. She is so friendly; she is like our extended family. She showed me that I can be a good parent and also get an education myself.' Staff are united in saying their leader is an inspiration and role model for them.

- The needs of children subject to child protection plans and children in need are particularly well met and the Common Assessment Framework is used well to coordinate effective early support. Well-organised preventative work with partners, such as those from social care and the family resource service, enhances the centre's ability to help keep families safe. All the required policies and procedures are in place to ensure effective safeguarding practice across all aspects of the centre's work.
- The local authority, ASMT, parents and community members provide good support and helpful advice for the centre with background information and data about the local area which help shape services with a key focus on reducing inequalities. Ambition and priorities for the centre are clear. Governance knows that overall provision is good and that the performance of staff is managed well.
- The centre's services are continually evolving and responding to the needs of families within the area, and the centre's development plan contains a wide range of actions to bring further improvement. However, the annual conversation, quarterly monitoring reports and the centre's development priorities lack sufficient precision to set sharply focused and short-term targets.
- The centre leader ensures that activities and services for families have high-quality resources. Well-qualified and knowledgeable staff are used effectively to meet the needs of families. Although staff absences during the last year reduced the centre's capacity to engage with all families, it successfully increased the numbers using its services. The new building provides increased opportunities for the centre to provide services for more of the families in the greatest need.

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.

Select details

Unique reference number	20603A
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	421445
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1158
Centre leader	Jenny King
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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