

Stamshaw Children's Centre

Tipner Road, Stamshaw, Portsmouth, PO2 8QH

Inspection date 23–24 July 2013

| Overall effectiveness | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected | |
| 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 is reaching most local families, including those in its identified priority groups. Well qualified and experienced leaders consistently look at ways to improve opportunities for improving the safety, health and well-being of all children and families and particularly those in greatest need.
- Strong local knowledge and systems for assessing families' needs ensure that activities meet families' requirements well.
- Very effective partnerships with health services, early years providers and parents play a major role in the success of this centre.
- Parents speak highly of the centre. They are actively involved in decision making and the parents' forum makes an excellent contribution to the development of the centre.
- Children make good progress in their learning and development when they attend a wide variety of activities led by highly skilled staff.
- Staff employed at the centre are dedicated to improving the lives of children and their families. The strong emphasis on the training of all staff results in highly effective, competent and timely support.
- The local authority is very supportive and, together with the partnership board and governors, sets challenging targets and has good systems to ensure the centre works consistently towards them.

It is not outstanding because:

- The opportunities for parents to extend their work skills are not wide enough and the partnership board does not include enough partners from business, industry and enterprise.
- Immunisation rates for the youngest children are not improving quickly enough.

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 the centre manager and other staff, the local authority officers, health service representatives and the manager from an early years setting in the area. They also met parents, representatives from the governing body, partnership board and the parents' forum. Inspectors visited several activities, for example Mini Explorers and Let's Get Moving. One activity was jointly observed with the centre coordinator who, with local authority advisers, attended team meetings. Inspectors also visited a breastfeeding session for Stamshaw parents held at a nearby children's centre venue.

The inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including analysis of information, the centre's self-evaluation document and development plan, individual case studies, comments and feedback from families and partners and safeguarding information

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Eileen Chadwick | Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector |
| Linda Kaye | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about the centre/group

Stamshaw Children's Centre is a stand alone, phase two centre which opened in 2009. It is led and managed by the local authority. The day-to-day management of the centre is the responsibility of the child and family support coordinator, who also manages one other centre. She reports directly to the Area Lead (North) Children's Centres. The provision is currently in a period of transition as Portsmouth children's centres are being re-organised. In September 2013, Stamshaw will merge with the Northern Parade Centre, although some health checks and parents' courses will still operate from the Stamshaw site. Both centres, along with other North Area centres, are overseen by the same partnership board (advisory board), although each has its own parents' forum.

The centre has 1,085 children under five in its reach area. It is situated on the same site as Stamshaw Junior School. It is open throughout the year from 8.30am until 4.30pm on Monday to Thursday, and from 8.30am until 4.00pm on Friday, with some activities in the evenings and on Saturdays. The centre offers health and family support services, early years provision, advice and guidance, adult training and volunteering opportunities. The centre's services are provided at a number of venues which include nearby children's centres and centres across the city. The community team works across a number of outreach locations. Approximately 36% of children live in workless households, which is above local and national averages. About 29% are receiving working tax credits. About 15% of children living within the centre's catchment area are from minority ethnic backgrounds, being mainly of East European heritage.

Children's skills and abilities on entry to early years education are below the levels expected for their age. The centre has a particular focus on increasing the number of fathers, lone parents, teenage parents and parents from minority ethnic households who benefit from its services. An ongoing focus is to ensure the maximum participation of families in the most disadvantaged areas, including workless households.

What does the centre/group need to do to improve further?

- Develop further opportunities with partners to enhance parents' readiness for a wide range of work opportunities, based on the precise needs of the area.
- Broaden the partnership board's expertise by appointing members from a wider range of backgrounds, including business, industry and enterprise.
- Work with parents and health professionals to improve immunisation rates for the youngest children.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The centre enjoys strong partnerships with professionals for health, social care and pre-schools. These links, as well as new birth information and personal invitations and recommendations, have led to the success of the centre. The large majority of children and families are accessing services and activities on a regular basis and membership of the centre continues to increase. For example, the regular involvement of teenage parents has increased by 86% over the last year.
- The centre has good systems for assessing the needs of families when they first attend. Staff make very thorough use of these checks to ensure that the families in most need receive the right amount of help. The centre targets its services and support well to families in most need, and engagement with them is good.
- The very large majority (96%) of three- and four-year-old children access good quality early years provision in the area. An increasing number of two-year-old children is taking up free entitlement to good quality early education based on the centre's accurate and careful assessment of need. Children receive good support to help them prepare for entering pre-school and school.
- Outreach workers provide much personalised support during home visits and ensure families are

able to access other services. Staff listen to families, develop trusting and constructive relationships with them and plan services to improve their chances of success in life.

- The centre makes effective use of attendance information to shape services which match families' needs and encourage the families to come along. Staff ensure that local families always have full access to the centre's services. For example, when a large number of families from outside the centre's immediate area started to attend Mini Explorers, centre staff ensured priority was given to local families.
- Services are planned jointly with neighbouring centres to ensure a full range of activities is available, at times and places convenient for the families concerned. These include Saturday and evening courses for fathers and male carers, such as paediatric first aid courses. The centre listens carefully to families and plans its services to improve their chances in life. One-to-one support in their own homes often leads to families visiting the centre and then making return visits.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Courses such as Mini Explorers, Jiggy Wrigglers and Let's Get Moving help children to make good progress, because of high quality support from staff who ensure parents are actively involved. Staff successfully demonstrate how parents can promote children's enjoyment in learning and help them to develop a wide range of skills.
- Learning Journey checks completed by parents enable them to see how well their children are progressing towards their goals. Parents also benefit from the bank of follow-up ideas to promote home learning. The centre's Treasure Boxes demonstrate very well how simple resources can be used to enrich children's experiences and language development.
- For those children who attended Stamshaw Children's Centre, at 72%, the proportion achieving a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is above average. The centre makes good use of information on children's attainment at the end of the Reception Year to reduce inequalities, for example by ensuring boys and girls achieve equally well and to ensure the gap is narrowing between the least and most able.
- The strong emphasis on promoting good health, from pre-birth to beyond, results from very close collaboration between the centre and health professionals. The centre has devised many enjoyable activities to help families learn how to cook healthily, to provide a balanced diet and to encourage regular exercise. As a result, high obesity levels in the area have reduced significantly since the centre first opened and are now close to national averages.
- Breastfeeding support groups and peer supporters help mothers considerably. Breastfeeding rates are rising and are now above the rates for Portsmouth and in line with national averages. Immunisation rates are improving, but are still too low as they are not rising quickly enough for younger children. The centre is working with health professionals to raise parents' understanding of the importance of early immunisation.
- Assessment of families in most need is accurate, rigorous and based on reliable information. These families receive timely good quality care and help from the centre and its partners, such as social care or health professionals. Case tracking and reviews show that this makes a significant difference to families in difficulty. For instance, families in most need are often supported in their own home by centre staff to overcome challenges such as domestic violence, isolation, mental illness and child neglect.
- Centre staff successfully help parents to become confident so they can develop their skills. Parents are well supported to access a wide range of accredited further education and employability opportunities, such as English as an additional language, budgeting, literacy and numeracy, curriculum vitae preparation, first aid training, food preparation and hygiene, and safeguarding. Courses are well attended and the good links with partners such as Jobcentre Plus support families trying to find employment.
- Volunteers also work successfully alongside professionals to deliver some courses, which hone their expertise. There is evidence of families from target groups, such as lone parents, gaining employment such as childcare, shop work and hairdressing. However, there are not enough opportunities to develop parents' awareness of wider employment opportunities in the local area or

to receive training to equip them for such jobs. The centre has yet to work with partners to establish the full employment needs of the area.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Leaders are committed to reducing inequalities and improving life chances for children and adults. Team spirit is high and staff are well qualified, trained and motivated.
- The leadership provided by the centre leader, senior leaders and governors is strong. The local authority provides leaders with a broad range of information which the centre uses well to evaluate how well services are improving outcomes for families, including priority groups.
- The centre monitors its performance well and uses information and evaluations of services to identify where it could do better. Services are adapted to meet the needs of families and ensure the best use of resources.
- Parents play a very important part in the life of the centre. An excellent parents' forum contributes to decision making, as do parent representatives on the partnership board. They are very proactive in identifying strengths and where improvements are needed. The centre takes their suggestions seriously and makes every attempt to address them. For example, the centre has provided courses for parents and children around messy play in response to parents' requests.
- The partner and practitioner boards provide good levels of support and challenge. They have a thorough knowledge of the quality of services, know how well the performance of staff is managed and what the centre is aiming to improve. Members play a key role in evaluating the work of the centre and have a good knowledge of the data to inform this.
- The members of the partnership board have a good range of expertise between them for health and education, but there are fewer representatives from the business, industry and enterprise employment sectors. This inhibits their support for enabling parents and carers to secure training to match the range of work opportunities in the area.
- Safeguarding families permeates the whole work of the centre and is backed up by well-trained staff and comprehensive policies and procedures. The centre works closely with other professionals to support children in need, including those who are subject to child protection plans and Common Assessment Framework procedures. As a result, children are well protected.

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. |

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| Unique reference number | 22907 |
| Local authority | Portsmouth |
| Inspection number | 427485 |
| Managed by | Portsmouth City Council |
| Approximate number of children under five in the reach area | 1085 |
| Centre leader | Kathy Wallis |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable |
| Telephone number | 02392 639728 |
| Email address | Kathy.Wallis@portsmouthcc.gov.uk |

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