

Callis Grange Children's Centre

Beacon Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 3DG

Inspection date 30–31 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

- This welcoming and friendly centre is reaching the large majority of families, especially those in most need and, in particular, those who are from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. As a result of a concerted effort by all centre staff, registrations have risen dramatically over the past year.
- Strong partnerships, particularly with schools, neighbouring centres and health professionals, ensure that families receive the help and support they need.
- The centre is well led and managed. Staff are committed to improving the opportunities for all families, particularly those in the target groups. They know the local community well and are always available to listen to parents' queries and concerns.
- Staff utilise every opportunity to identify each family's individual need and support them with carefully tailored help and advice, particularly at times of crisis. As one parent commented, 'Before I felt really lonely as I was still going through periods of depression, but now I have got the centre I don't feel so lonely. It feels like my second home.'
- The local authority, together with the advisory board, works well together to both challenge and support staff to drive improvements. Together, they set realistic targets for the centre in order to improve the lives of families it serves.

It is not outstanding because:

- Relatively few fathers take part in the regular activities of the centre, and the centre leaders recognise that this is an area for improvement.
- The checks on monitoring and tracking of progress, particularly those adults accessing further education or employment, are not fully developed.

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.

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, operational team, community involvement workers, district manager from the local authority and partners from health, education, community development, and the early years teacher. Visits to activities, such as Story Time, Baby Massage and midwife and child health clinics, were undertaken. Inspectors also met parents, volunteers, and representatives from the advisory board, and the parent forum. They looked at the centre’s self-evaluation, action planning, a sample of case studies, safeguarding procedures and a range of other relevant documentation. The centre manager, together with a representative from the local authority, attended all meetings of the inspection team.

Inspection team

David Scott, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Elizabeth Dickson	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

The centre was designated in January 2010 as a phase two stand-alone centre and delivers a range of services, including health, parent and toddler groups, crèche services, family support, antenatal and adult learning. It operates for 50 weeks throughout the year, and is open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm. Callis Grange shares its site with Callis Grange Nursery and Infant School (URN 118406), and is adjacent to St Peter's Junior School (URN 118750). The centre is managed by the children's centre network manager on behalf of the local authority. The advisory board, comprising of key partners and parent forum representatives, provides governance.

The centre's reach area includes 900 children under five years of age, some of whom are from minority ethnic families, predominantly of East European heritage. The area is very mixed socially and economically, with pockets of deprivation. For example, 12% of Children in the catchment area live in the Beacon Road ward which is in the top 30% most deprived areas in the country. Information shows that 18% of children live in workless households and/or are in receipt of Working Tax Credit. The centre has identified children who are in most need, families living in the most disadvantaged areas, those from workless households, lone parents and families from minority ethnic backgrounds as its key target groups. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to early years provision are below the levels expected for their age.

What does the centre needs to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of fathers who attend the centre by:
 - finding out why this group does not attend as regularly as others
 - publicising more widely the range and benefit of services on offer.
- Refining systems to check the progress of different groups still further so that the centre has a very clear view of the progress made, particularly those who go on to further education or employment and can use this to help shape future activities.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The centre provides a very welcoming and friendly environment for children and parents who benefit from the range of activities available. Links with health professionals are particularly strong. Every family with a newborn baby receives a visit within 28 days of the birth. This helps to promote the very positive engagement of families, so that over 84% of children living in the most deprived neighbourhoods and those from workless households regularly access services.
- There is particularly good engagement, at over 79%, made up of children in most need, lone parents, and families from minority ethnic groups, all of whom are high priority families for the centre. Registrations have increased dramatically from 50% in March 2012 to 68% as a result of all staff going out into the community promoting the centre.
- The centre is sensitive to the needs of families who are in most need and does all it can to help them stay safe. Parents' awareness about health and safety in their homes is raised through the centre's useful practical help and advice and, as a result, they have become more self-assured and confident in managing risks. The work of the centre makes a strong contribution to keeping families safe through its home visits and first-aid courses for both staff and parents.
- The centre's information shows that 99% of eligible two-year-old children take up their free entitlement to early years education and this helps to close the learning gaps between the lowest 20% and the rest in readiness for school. Parents benefit from attending activities such as Family Time and health visitor drop-ins that help them give their children the best start by improving their parenting skills.
- Dads increasingly enjoy attending activities at the centre, such as Toddler Time and Story Stack.

While steadily rising, at 44%, the proportion of fathers regularly attending services at the centre is in the minority, although some attend sessions at other centres.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Almost two thirds of children achieve a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is better than that seen locally or nationally, and is increasingly good in making sure that children are ready for school, and in reducing inequalities of access.
- The centre is focused on providing services for families with the greatest need and is highly successful in working with target groups, for example workless families, lone parents, families living in the most disadvantaged areas and those experiencing mental health issues, to help them overcome personal challenges in their lives.
- Domestic violence is a particular issue in the area and outstanding partnerships have been forged, including with a local women's refuge, to ensure that women experiencing domestic violence can safely access the activities and receive timely and effective support.
- Strong emphasis on adopting a healthy lifestyle has produced positive health outcomes for families in most need. The proportion of mothers who continue breastfeeding at six to eight weeks has risen markedly, from 16% in 2009 to 44% in 2012, which is above national averages. Between 2010 and 2012 there was a sharp decline in the percentage of children in the Reception Year that were recorded as obese, from 9.2% to 6.4%.
- The centre is committed to improving children's early language development. Through sessions such as Little Talkers, parents are encouraged to understand how their child learns to speak through play and exploration of activities. In addition, the centre runs a book sale scheme whereby parents can buy books designed to be read with their children at discounted prices.
- Adult learning courses and referral for employment advice help improve the financial stability for the majority of families. Case studies indicate good individual support where almost all have either gained employment or have undertaken training in readiness for work. Additionally, over a third of adults have been awarded a pass at GCSE. As one parent commented, 'If it wasn't for the courses I have done here at the centre I wouldn't have got the job I wanted.'

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre runs smoothly and day-to-day management is effective. Professional supervision is closely linked to staff training, and each member of staff has their own individual action plan with targets, which is directly linked to the centre's overall aims. The innovative use and sharing of resources and services with neighbouring centres enable highly efficient use of available funds in order to meet the needs of young children and their families.
- The advisory board is made up of a range of community members, centre users and partners who appropriately support and challenge the cluster of centres it serves. As a result, governance and accountability arrangements are clear.
- The parent forum makes a positive contribution to the successful running of the centre. For example, parents organised a Teddy Bears Picnic during the inspection to celebrate the centre's third birthday. Staff frequently seek their views informally and through post-activity evaluations and use them to help shape services.
- Key partners, parents and leaders meet regularly to review and agree action plans which include clear targets to ensure the continuing success of the centre. Effective links have been made with the local authority data team. However, the collection and analysis of data to check the full impact of the centre's actions on improving the lives of families across target groups are not yet fully developed.
- Staff use the Common Assessment Framework to prevent issues escalating in families and coordinate support with Team Around the Family and social care colleagues. Early intervention results in the number of children subject to a child protection plan being supported well. The centre's safeguarding arrangements are thorough. Successful multi-agency working between key

agencies ensures that child protection concerns are swiftly acted upon.

- The centre manager is held to account on the centre's performance and is supported well by the local authority. The centre's priorities for improvement are appropriate, challenging and realistic. Everyone is ambitious to make the centre outstanding, and centre staff have already had considerable success in improving outcomes for families.

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.

Unique reference number	20542
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	427454
Managed by	The children's centre network manager on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	900
Centre leader	Sheridan Grundy
Date of previous inspection	N/A
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