

# Sharrow Children's Centre

Sharrow Sure Start, 110 Sharrow Lane, Sheffield, S11 8AL

**Inspection date** 11–12 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
	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:

- The number of families who participate regularly in centre activities does not represent a majority from the local area. Staff and key partners are not using the full range of available information to identify and establish contact with the majority of families most in need of support.
- Staff do not track and monitor the progress made by those using the centre's services thoroughly enough to make sure that the support they receive is meeting their needs effectively. Staff do not always plan activities well enough to ensure that families make good progress in their learning and development.
- The centre does not provide enough support for local early years providers to help them improve. Partnerships with schools in the area are not yet good enough to ensure children are prepared well for starting school.
- Leaders and managers have been slow to help the centre improve and the local authority is not acting quickly enough to ensure that changes to the management arrangements are completed. There is too much disruption to services. Information about what is happening at the centre is not clear enough for centre users and front line staff to know what is available and when.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- Breastfeeding support is very effective. The centre has established a positive reputation. Staff have good experience and are welcoming. The number of mothers who successfully continue to breastfeed is high and all pre- and post-natal clinics and groups are popular and well attended.
- The centre provides outstanding support for fathers through the highly effective weekly 'Dads' Drop-in'. Activities are carefully planned to help families play and learn. They get involved in creative, stimulating experiences and receive advice on a range of topics.
- The centre has established a strong reputation as a local hub for the Sharrow community. Parents benefit from the centre's good links with the community forum. Families who attend activities such as English for speakers of other languages, cooking, and parenting courses increase their confidence and skills to manage their children's behaviour positively.

### 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 senior leaders and managers in the local authority, health, education and social care partners, parents, centre coordinators, outreach workers, early years practitioners, volunteers, representatives of the advisory board and community groups.

The inspectors visited Sharrow Primary School, the Broomspring Centre, Sharrow Community Forum and Ship Shape at Sharrow Old School. At the time of the inspection the centre had closed its purpose-built nursery and sensory room and suspended use of the outdoor play area.

The inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, such as development planning and leaders' evaluation of the impact of the centre's work.

### Inspection team

Daniel Grant	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Tara Street	Additional Inspector
Jane Hughes	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

The centre is situated on a main road central to the areas of most need. It is open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm. On Saturdays the centre runs a group for fathers and on alternate Sundays midwives provide an antenatal group. It is managed by the local authority, with the advisory board assisting its governance. A team of midwives and health visitors is based at the centre and holds regular clinics. The local authority is currently reviewing children's centres across the city and making significant changes. Sharrow Children's Centre recently merged with Broomhall Children's Centre. The local authority has very recently taken over responsibility for operational management of the centre from a local health trust, and the delivery of services is in a transition phase. The centre closed its nursery provision in July 2013.

There are 2,327 children under five years of age living in the centre's area, which is close to the city centre. The majority of families live in areas of disadvantage, particularly around Sharrow. Data show that overall 24% of children live in workless households. Some 15% of families are eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Approximately 62% of families living within the reach area are of Black and minority ethnic heritage. Most children in the area start early years provision with skills below what is typical for their age.

### What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the disruption to services by completing all arrangements for the change in operational management swiftly. Provide families and staff with clear information about the activities currently available at the centre. Enhance quality improvement arrangements so that the centre improves more quickly.
- Increase the number of families using the centre, especially those most in need, by more effective marketing of what is on offer, establishing effective protocols for sharing key data and information, and through more effective outreach work.
- Make sure all children and adults are supported appropriately by:
  - establishing more rigorous and systematic processes for tracking and monitoring progress
  - ensuring that all activities are planned thoroughly and are closely linked to improving outcomes for families.
- Strengthen partnerships with local schools and early years providers to ensure more children are well prepared for school.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- An increasing majority of families from the most disadvantaged areas are registered with the centre. However, staff recognise the need to extend the centre's reach so that more people, especially those most in need, can benefit from its services. Outreach work has acted in response to requests from other agencies to support families, and not been used effectively enough to accurately identify all target groups. An increasing number of fathers receive excellent support from the centre but other groups, such as lone parents and families with Black and minority ethnic heritage, are not yet identified well enough.
- Once users are engaged with the centre, assessments and consultations are used well to identify needs and match families to services, including specialist services. The centre encourages information and data sharing between partners and some is well established, particularly with the local primary school. However, the centre is not promoting high-quality early years practice with a large enough proportion of the early years providers in the area. This includes private voluntary and independent providers and childminders.
- A growing number of parents have benefited from accessing adult education courses in child and family health, and English. Good support for those seeking employment or vocational training is available at the local community forum. However, the centre does not promote this well enough or keep a record of the number of people who attend.
- The centre is a highly valued hub within the community. Staff have good levels of experience and skills which they use well to provide effective one-to-one support. They pay good attention to safeguarding. The centre provides adequate support to help those local families who are eligible to take up their free entitlement to high-quality early years places.

### The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The quality of the services provided is generally good but the involvement of some target groups is not yet high enough. There is very effective and popular support for breastfeeding which ensures the area has a particularly high breastfeeding rate. Support for fathers who attend the centre is excellent, with all activities closely linked to improving outcomes for families. However, other groups, including teenage parents, are not clearly identified.
- The centre recognises that not enough is yet done to track and monitor the progress made by families using its services and that some activities are not linked to learning goals. Limited local tracking data show that parents who attend family learning events make adequate progress in their understanding about how children develop and learn. Adults who attend the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses do well and a few progress to higher level qualifications. This demonstrates the centre's effective work in helping families to improve their life chances.
- In 2012, the proportion of children living in the area who achieved a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage was around national levels. The centre's work to promote equalities is successful, as reflected in the gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and the rest which is reducing year-on-year.
- Good partnerships with health professionals ensure services for families are sufficiently integrated. For example, the popular and very well-attended clinics held at the centre by midwives and health visitors are supported well by the centre staff. Childhood obesity levels are low and reducing. However, rates of tooth decay, infant mortality and accidents are high. Parent volunteers work as 'health champions' to promote healthy lifestyles and good advice about health is available through 'Ship Shape'.
- Partnership work with the vast majority of schools within the area is not yet good because the centre does not promote its services well enough.
- Many families who attend the centre see the staff as positive role models. The quality of care, guidance and support available to parents is generally good and this helps some to overcome complex problems.

**The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management**

Requires improvement

- The advisory board members understand their roles and responsibilities in providing challenge and holding the centre's leaders to account. However, in recent months they have been frustrated in their efforts because of the slow pace and nature of the current merger and change in operational management. All involved with the advisory board and leadership team are clearly determined to place a greater focus on driving performance and improving quality. Their purpose is to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for local people.
- Managers do not make good enough use of available data to identify accurately all of the families most in need of support. The local authority and health partners have negotiated a new protocol for working together and sharing key information, such as new births. As yet, it is too early to see the effectiveness of this.
- The local authority provides good data about the population and monitors and supports the centre's ongoing development through regular visits. It has an accurate picture of the centre's work but has been slow to challenge and improve performance. The centre coordinator is not yet familiar with the centre's systems and processes but has accurately identified many areas for improvement.
- Safeguarding is given high priority and staff work effectively with key partners to manage risk and reduce the likelihood of harm to children using the centre's services. This includes those looked after by the local authority, subject to a child protection plan, or identified as in need. Staff make effective use of the Common Assessment Framework.
- The centre delivers services from a number of outreach sites within the area and generally makes appropriate use of resources to meet the needs of those families who attend activities. However, senior leaders are unsure how the space which is currently closed to families is to be used in the future.
- Parents who have experienced periods of crisis have received effective support. Families who use the centre rate it very highly. Parents' evaluations and feedback to inspectors demonstrate a high level of satisfaction with both the staff and the services. However, a growing number of parents, staff and key partners are disappointed over the closure and suspension of so many activities and services and are unsure exactly what services the centre currently has to offer.

**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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	22677
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	427481
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	2,327
<b>Centre leader</b>	Carole Adams
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 250 7373
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