

New Bewerley Children's Centre

Bewerley Community Centre, Bismark Drive, LS11 2NR

Inspection date 18-19 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
		Not previously inspected	
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:

- There has been too little focus on monitoring participation rates, including any analysis of families who choose not to attend any services, or who fail to attend regularly. This impacts on the centre's ability to evidence that the needs of all families and target groups have been effectively met.
- New local authority systems to monitor and evaluate the centre's performance are not yet fully embedded. Priorities set out in the centre's action plan are accurate but not all have measurable success criteria. It is therefore difficult for staff to demonstrate when they have been successful in meeting their targets across the whole range of work they undertake.
- Not enough families, particularly from workless households, access courses to improve their English, literacy and numeracy skills. The children's centre is not always working effectively with some partners to track the achievement of adults and there is limited support to help them build upon their skills and progress onto further training, volunteering or employment opportunities.
- The advisory board receives regular reports but provides insufficient challenge to the centre in order to really drive improvement. In addition, not all members fully understand their roles and responsibilities.

This centre has the following strengths:

- Staff have been successful in continually improving service provision, increasing the percentage of families and young children registered and engaged with the centre. As a result, a large majority of young parents, families from Black and ethnic minority groups and an increasing number of families from workless households now benefit from the work of the centre.
- The 'Early Start' team ensures that the needs of an increasing number of families in the reach area are accurately assessed and promotes an integrated approach to working with families in need. As a result, parents and young children receive the correct support from the most appropriate agencies in a timely manner.
- The dedicated team of family outreach workers provide much needed support to some of the most vulnerable families in their homes. This, combined with a strong partnership with health, has secured the engagement of a number of families who might otherwise have chosen not to access services.
- Safeguarding is well established ensuring the safety of children is at the heart of the centres' work.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre collaboration was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. The centres that form the Joint Extended Schools and Services (JESS) Early Start cluster are New Bewerley Children's Centre, City and Holbeck Children's Centre, Hunslet Children's Centre and Windmill Children's Centre. The inspection of City and Holbeck Children's Centre took place at the same time as this inspection.

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the children's centre managers and the senior leadership team, representatives from 4Children, family outreach workers, officers from the local authority, representatives from children's social work service and Jobcentre Plus. They also met health, education and early years partners, parents, volunteers and representatives of the advisory board. They looked at centre self-evaluation and delivery plans, a sample of case studies, safeguarding procedures and a range of other relevant documentation. Visits to activities were undertaken jointly with family outreach workers and centre managers who also attended all team meetings.

The inspectors visited services at City and Holbeck Children's Centre, St Matthew's Community Centre, Parkside Health Centre and Mumspace based in the city centre.

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

Inspection team

Jayne Utting	Her Majesty's Inspector, Lead Inspector
Gillian Bishop	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jean-Marie Blakeley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

New Bowerley Children's Centre is based on a shared site with New Bowerley Community School and is situated approximately two miles south of Leeds city centre. The reach area consists of six super output areas, five of which fall into the top 5% most deprived in the country. There are 967 children aged from birth to four years living in the reach area. The locality has a high level of worklessness compared to Leeds overall, with around 40% of families claiming benefits. The large majority of families are from a range of Black and minority ethnic groups. Mobility rates within the reach area are high. As part of the 'Early Start Team' in Leeds, the Health Visiting and Children's Services teams work collaboratively to provide one service for the children and families within the city. The centre itself is part of the JESS cluster, with three other children's centres and one Health Visiting Team. The other three centres in the cluster are City and Holbeck, Windmill and Hunslet.

The centre is managed directly by the local authority. It works most closely with City and Holbeck Children's Centre and shares an advisory board with them. The range of services provided includes family support, health services, parenting, volunteering and adult education. The area has the highest proportion of looked after children, children in need and children on child protection plans in Leeds. A reduction in the number of looked after children is a key priority for this area.

Children generally enter early years provision with skills, knowledge and abilities that are below those expected for their age, especially in communication and language and personal, social and emotional development. The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs, is above the national average, as is the number of children for whom English is an additional language. The primary school, with which the centre shares a site, is an enhanced provision supporting children with complex medical and physical needs. The on-site nursery provision was not part of this inspection as it is inspected separately. The report is available on the Ofsted website at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the centre more rigorously tackles the social disadvantage associated with long-term worklessness in the reach area by:
 - increasing the engagement of workless parents in activities and services focused on improving their economic stability and independence
 - identifying this as a clear target within its action plan
 - working more effectively with relevant partners in order to improve pathways into education, volunteering and training so that more parents gain work-based skills and future employment
 - improving the sharing of relevant information with partners in order to better evidence and monitor the progress of individuals.
- Ensure that monitoring and review activities focus on participation in order to increase the number of families who choose to attend courses and activities offered by the centre, and identify those who choose not to access.
- Ensure that the advisory board provides more effective challenge to the centre about its performance by:
 - ensuring all members, but particularly parents, clearly understand their role
 - developing the centre's delivery plan so that key priorities are clear, and there are specific measurable targets for each that enable the centre to better evidence the impact of the whole range of work they undertake.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Centre leaders have a good understanding of the needs of families living in the locality. This is informed by the centre's own activities, and the quality of data provided by the local authority in close partnership with health. As a result, the large majority of families are registered with the centre and engage in at least one activity.
- Despite this overall figure, participation rates across groups and activities are variable. The centre has not focused sufficiently on monitoring this in order to identify those families who do not attend services or who fail to participate regularly. This impacts on their ability to securely demonstrate meaningful, sustained engagement in some centre activities.
- Family outreach workers have been proactive in going out to local community groups and developing good links with schools, particularly those in areas where children have been identified as having poorer communication and language skills. This, combined with their sensitive approach and breadth of knowledge, has been key to ensuring the participation of some families who might otherwise have chosen not to.
- Through effective consultation, outreach work and some strong local partnerships, centre staff are working with the large majority of young parents, families of disabled children and families from Black and minority ethnic groups. However, other partnerships designed to increase the engagement of workless parents in activities and services focused on improving their economic stability and independence are less well developed.
- The uptake of free entitlement to early education for three- and four-year-olds is improving. However, headteachers report that a small minority of children are still starting school without any formal pre-school experience.
- The centre has been proactive in identifying those families who are eligible for two-year-old funding. Early years staff have worked closely with local private, voluntary and independent settings in order to improve the quality of their provision, enabling them to extend and offer more places, specifically for the most vulnerable two-year-old children.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The 'Early Start' team brings together health, children's centre and social work colleagues and provides a model of best practice for the accurate assessment and early identification of need. Case-file reviews show that parents benefit from good quality early help to support them at times of difficulty and, as a result, outcomes for these families are improving. Recent strategies to support families experiencing domestic violence have been particularly effective in reducing the risk of harm to children.
- Where children attend early years provision, the majority make good progress in their learning and staff can demonstrate that the development gap between the lowest performing children and their peers is narrowing well, including for children on child protection plans. Early years consultants have accurately identified key areas of weakness, currently in writing, and have worked closely with colleagues to plan focused activities designed to improve the development of early mark-making skills. However, the number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception remains stubbornly below both the Leeds and local authority average at 31%.
- A growing range of generally good quality activities are delivered by the children's centre team and commissioned partners. Parents who attend groups clearly benefit from the experience, particularly in terms of improving their confidence as parents. Those who attended the '0-6' behaviour group and 'Play2Learn' told inspectors how the centre had made them 'better parents' and enabled them to 'enjoy learning with their children'.
- The centre does not focus sufficiently on improving the employability of parents. Adults are signposted to job vacancies and some courses, such as first aid, numeracy and literacy and there are examples of some adults gaining qualifications that lead to employment. However, the centre does not yet receive sufficient information from adult learning providers in order to measure the

success of courses run or to modify services to be more appealing to a greater range of adults from target groups.

- The provision of courses for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) requires improvement. This provision, commissioned from a local college, has been attended by only a small number of parents, yet staff identify high levels of need for this service in the area.
- Levels of obesity of children in Reception Year have begun to improve over the past year. The centre runs a range of activities to help families make changes to their lives, including the Health Exercise and Nutrition for the Really Young (HENRY) programme and provides opportunities for families to purchase affordable fresh produce. Breastfeeding rates at six-to-eight weeks have increased. This is as a result of improved support to mothers who chose to breastfeed, such as the breastfeeding café and accessible peer support volunteers.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The local authority has worked hard to develop a clear strategy for performance management which focuses on the centre's contribution both to city wide 'obsessions' as well as specific local priorities. The centre's service delivery plan clearly sets out what these priorities are and how they will be addressed. However, the target-setting within these plans is not always specific enough in order to secure improvement, particularly in relation to the provision of activities to tackle the social disadvantage associated with long-term worklessness in the reach area.
- The advisory board is highly supportive of the work of the centre. However, recent minutes and discussions show that the challenge provided by the board to drive forward the improvements needed is limited. This is due in part to a lack of clear, measureable success criteria for some priorities, which makes it more difficult for members to evaluate the centre's on-going performance. In addition, some parents are not clear as to their role as an advisory board member, and not enough use is made of the specific expertise of some advisory board members.
- Operational management is good. Staff are well supported, trained and supervised in their work and contribute well to the on-going evaluation of services. The very diverse needs of the local community, coupled with high mobility rates, means that centre staff work flexibly, including the sharing of skills and expertise, in order to support families effectively.
- The complementary work of partners is used well to support the key challenges of the area such as reducing domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse and the number of children at risk of harm. This ensures the efficient use of resources, prevents duplication and is testament to the quality of the senior leadership team and their commitment to continually improving services.
- However, some partnerships, such as those with Jobcentre plus and adult learning, are less well developed. They require improvement if they are to have a greater and more lasting impact on supporting a further key challenge, which is, to reduce unemployment and the number of children locally who live in poverty.
- All staff have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of procedures to keep children and families safe and this is supported by regular training. The centre works well with health and children's social work colleagues, in order to reduce the harm to children, including those subject to child protection plans, looked after children and those who are most in need. Good use is made of the Common Assessment Framework in order to reduce harm and ensure that families have appropriate access to a range of services.
- Parents using the centre feel they are listened to and well supported by sensitive staff who are described as 'life-changing'. Parents feel that the centre is open to anyone in the area and new parents particularly appreciate the support they have received through groups such as 'Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond'. Parents of children with severe complex needs have also benefitted from the specialist support available through the childcare provision, as well as access to the well-resourced sensory room.

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	22094
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	427559
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	967
Centre leader	Lisa Smith
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0113 336 8255
Email address	lisa.j.smith@leeds.gov.uk

This collaboration consists of the following children's centres:

- 20736, City and Holbeck Children's Centre
- 23615, Hunslet Children's Centre
- 21587, Windmill Children's Centre

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