

Titchfield and Oakham Children's Centre

73-75 Princes Street, Mansfield, NG18 5SL

Inspection date 9–10 October 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 works hard to encourage families in the neighbourhood, including those who may be hard to contact, to access its services and as a result the centre is usually successful in engaging families in the most need of support.
- The centre plays a pivotal role in the local community and is particularly good at bringing families from different backgrounds together.
- Staff are effective at reaching families out in the community and the support offered to them in times of crisis is very good indeed. There is a very strong emphasis on keeping children safe.
- The centre has a good impact on the health, general well-being and achievement of children and their families because it provides a wide array of very good quality services. It is particularly successful at narrowing the achievement gap for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, at helping parents to increase their levels of confidence and at helping families to manage their finances.
- Leaders and the advisory board are constantly reviewing the quality of services and driving forward improvement at a good rate. They work well with an extensive range of partners to secure high quality services that contribute well to improving the lives of local families.

It is not outstanding because:

- There is still a small minority of local families who are not registered with or involved with the centre and a very small minority of targeted families have not yet accessed services.
- The data provided by the local authority is not always accurate. It is not presented and analysed in a way that gives a clear picture of the impact of the centre on the lives of local families. The targets set by the local authority for the centre's improvement are not ambitious 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 integrated services manager and the child and family support lead as well as representatives from the local authority and Family Action. They also spoke to the majority of staff who work in the centre. Conversations took place with staff from partner agencies including health professionals, staff from social care, the adult education service and local charities and initiatives as well as with a local counsellor. There were also discussions with three members of the advisory board, parents and other volunteers who are involved in the Friends of Titchfield (FOTO) Group and parents who were attending activities.

The inspectors visited activities at the site as well as in the local community.

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

Inspection team

Susan Walsh	Lead inspector Additional inspector
Geoff Dorrity	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Titchfield and Oakham Children's Centre is situated in the heart of the Titchfield and Oakham area, Mansfield. Services are delivered from the centre by a well established team of staff and staff from health, education and the children's social care. Many services are also delivered in community venues. Almost half the families served by the centre live in an area where there is significant social and economic disadvantage, the other half live in a more advantaged area. Most families are from White British backgrounds although there are an increasing number of families from Eastern Europe. About 38% of children under five live in households where no one is working.

The leadership and management structure for the centre has changed over the last year, with a new integrated services manager being appointed and a child and family support lead for a cluster of centres being based at the centre. In June 2013 the Nottinghamshire Children and Families Partnership took over responsibilities for the centre. The day to day management and delivery of services is the responsibility of Family Action, who are members of the partnership. An advisory board is in place. The local authority continues to monitor the work of the centre.

Most children in area enter the Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills that are below those expected for their age.

The centre has identified as particular target groups as: children living in families that have low incomes; children from minority ethnic groups; children classified as in need or with a child protection plan; and children in families where there are issues relating to domestic abuse.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Work relentlessly to make certain that even more families, including those from target groups, access the high quality services offered by the centre by
 - increasing the proportion of parents who register with the centre soon after the birth of their children and who give the centre permission to visit them at home
 - making better use of modern technology to publicise the work of the centre
- Improve the way data is used by the centre leaders, the local authority and the advisory board to measure the impact of the centre's work and to drive further improvements by
 - ensuring that data is accurate and presented in a way that provides a clear picture of the impact of services
 - working with the local authority and the Nottinghamshire Children and Family Partnership to set more challenging targets
 - sharing data more effectively between partners including those that provide adult and community education

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- A large majority of families including those expecting children and from target groups are registered with the centre and access the support that is offered. Outreach work is highly effective and involves a wide range of partners.
- Early contact with parents through home visits ensures that the requirements of families are quickly identified and families are encouraged to access those services which would have the most impact

on the quality of their lives. However home visits are dependent on new parents giving permission for workers to call. Some parents decline the offer and a small minority of families do not register with the centre.

- Active involvement in the local community including partnership work with the private and voluntary sectors, schools and community groups ensures that the centre is made aware of families that are in the most need of their services. Staff work hard to involve families who fail to participate regularly. However there are a few targeted families who still do not access the support provided by the centre. The centre has not yet made full use of modern technology to publicise its work.
- Assessment at the age of two is used well to identify children who need additional support, particularly those who need help to improve their speech and language.
- Most eligible children from target groups take up the entitlement to free early education when it is offered. Although until recently only small number of funded places have been available. The centre has been very active in supporting the private and voluntary sector so that even more children will be able to take advantage of good quality free early education in the future.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The centre provides a good range of relevant services with an appropriate balance of universal and targeted services.
- The centre is at the heart of the local community and many users and partners praise the centre for the way it has brought together different sectors of the local community. Extensive work with the Eastern European community has been particularly successful in breaking down barriers. The fundraising efforts of the FOTO group have provided many exciting opportunities that would not have normally been available to local families
- A wide range of successful partnerships means that the large majority of families in target groups receive the help they need in timely manner. Case files and records are maintained to a high standard. Children are listened to and their voice plays a central role in planning the type of support given to a family. This means that early help has the maximum impact on the well being of young children.
- The centre has recognised that rates in the area for initiating and sustaining breast feeding are below average. The extension of the peer support programme together with the development of new support groups in the neighbourhood is having a positive effect and recently the rates of sustained breastfeeding six to eight weeks have substantially improved.
- Partnerships with local providers of early education are excellent. Work on enhancing children's speech carried out in association with the speech and language therapy service and well established school readiness projects have ensured that children's skills on entry to Nursery are continuously improving. The centre staff have also provided extensive support for local providers in the private and voluntary sector leading to improvements in the quality of provision.
- Adults have been able to access a good range of courses that improve their confidence and raise their aspirations. Very good partnerships with organisations such as 'Framework' have enabled families to more effectively manage their finances. Volunteering has been for many parents the first step on the journey to paid work. Although local providers of adult and community education hold information about the achievements of adults this information is not routinely shared with the centre. Therefore the centre is not able to properly track the progress of adults.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre leader has built upon existing good practice at the centre. Procedures and systems for checking the quality of the centres work have increased in rigour. Nevertheless the warmth of the staff and the welcoming atmosphere has been retained.
- The centre ensures that resources and services are available and are used well to meet the needs of young children and their families

- Staff have taken advantage of a good range of training opportunities particularly relating to issues such as domestic violence and alcohol and drug abuse. This has enhanced their effectiveness and given them an insight into the problems faced by some families in target groups.
- Parents and children are consulted about their needs and services are designed and developed in response to their requirements. The FOTO group provides parents with more formal opportunities to shape the future of the centre as they contribute to the work of the advisory board.
- Performance management and supervision are well established and thorough. Direct observation of sessions and interactions such as home visits by centre managers and frequent evaluations of the impact of activities by staff and parents are used well by leaders to ensure that the centre's work is of a high quality.
- Duties relating to safeguarding are taken very seriously. Policies and procedures are thorough and the common assessment process is used appropriately in order to reduce levels of risk. The centre provides very good support for looked after children, their carers and children who have been identified as being in need or who are subject to a child protection plan, including through their work with colleagues in social care.
- The data the centre receives from the local authority is not always accurate or organised in way that provides a clear picture of the centre's impact on local families including those in target groups. Additionally, targets set by the local authority are not sufficiently challenging and are not helping the centre to secure outstanding practice. Nevertheless the centre does its best with the data that is available and recognises where it needs to develop further.
- The advisory board contains a good mix of committed professional partners and representatives from the local community. The board receives a considerable amount of information about the work of the centre and the work of partner agencies and voluntary organisations. Members know about the way staff are managed and ensure that the centre is successfully tackling inequalities. However, their ability to challenge is reduced by the way that data is collected and presented and the provision of local authority targets which are not challenging enough for this centre.

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

Unique reference number	23324
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	427490
Managed by	Nottinghamshire Children and Family Partnership

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	647
Centre leader	Debbie Leatherland
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01623 421880
Email address	Debbie.L Leatherland@nottsc.gov.uk

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