

Derbyshire - Newhall Group

Elmsliegh Drive, Midway, Swadlincote, DE11 0ER

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.

- There is highly effective partnership working between the staff, managers and key professionals involved with young children and their families. This provides timely and valuable support and development opportunities for families. Families who are being supported or who are using the group activities on offer are very positive about the quality of their experience and the benefits to them.
- A very high number of adults take part in good quality training programmes, including adult literacy and numeracy courses and vocational and non-vocational courses. Success on these courses has inspired some adults to move into volunteering roles and into employment.
- The centre is very well supported and challenged by a well-informed advisory board and strong, clear accountability within the local management structure. As a result of this good leadership and governance the impact the centre having for families is improving.
- Communication and information sharing between professionals is excellent. Centre staff are very clear about their responsibility to protect the safety and welfare of children and swiftly make contact with partners if they are concerned about a child. Records are well-kept and up-to-date.
- Resources are thoughtfully used to maximise the number of families who will benefit from them. Centre staff provide a pre-school in a local school and a number of services are delivered in a central location that is easy to get to using public transport. This has helped the centre to support the large majority of families in its target groups to participate meaningfully in groups and activities.

It is not outstanding because:

- Target setting is not refined enough to make sure that strategic targets do not contradict the specific targets set for the centre by the managers and advisory board, and managers do not keep a clear record of the centre's progress.
- Checking children's progress is completed by the centre's staff. Never-the-less the checks do not use the same format and are not coherent in their content. In addition, there is insufficient oversight of the transfer of progress records to schools and early years providers so they are not used effectively to inform the next step in children's learning.

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 centres that form part of this children's centre group are Newhall Children's Centre and Castle Gresley Children's Centre.

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

The inspectors held meetings with local authority managers, neighbouring children's centre group managers, representatives from health and social care partners, the advisory board, local headteachers, adult learning providers and parents.

The inspectors visited the two children's centres and the multi agency team base and adult education provision in the town centre.

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

Inspection team

Joanne Smith Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Charalambos Loizou

Her Majesty's Inspector

Steve Nelson

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

Newhall Children's Centre group comprises two children's centres located in the Newhall and Castle Gresley communities in south Derbyshire. The group was formed as part of a Derbyshire wide review of children's centres and works closely with the neighbouring Woodville Children's Centre group. The Newhall centre group serves a population of approximately 1878 children from birth to five years old. The centre group is managed by the local authority and is supported by an advisory board, which is shared with the Woodville group of children's centres.

Newhall Children's Centre is accommodated in a pair of converted semi-detached houses in the centre of a large housing estate and operates full time. Castle Gresley is located in a converted school close to the centre of Castle Gresley village and operates part-time hours all year round. The Newhall group of children's centres is part of a birth to 19 years multi-agency team that has a base in the centre of Swadlincote, the nearest town. Centre services are offered in the town centre and other venues that are accessible using public transport.

The Newhall group of centres serves an area which historically had an important role in the mining and pottery industries and the area has suffered as a result of the demise of these industries. The number of children living in workless households and dependent on benefits in the area is high. Children have access to a wide range of early years education providers. The majority of children enter school early years provision with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. Almost all families living in the area served by the Newhall group are of White British heritage. The area borders east Staffordshire and is close to Leicestershire and some families access health services in these areas.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Refine the target setting process so that strategic targets do not contradict local targets and include progress measures to enable managers to record and check the centre's success more effectively.
- Review the systems used to monitor and track children's progress so that they are consistent and develop a process to ensure that they are all routinely passed to the setting providing for the next stage in a child's learning.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The centre provides a wide range of family services and activities that promote positive outcomes for families. Workshops for young parents, parenting courses and breastfeeding support and advice provide highly effective services for families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- Highly effective arrangements with health partners have helped the centre to register the large majority of families living in the areas served by the centre. Most two-year-olds who are eligible to receive funded early education do so. Centre staff are very active in identifying these children and supporting their parents to apply for funding. As a result more children are attending childcare settings than meet the local authority criteria for places.
- Resourceful thinking has led the centre to use a number of different local venues to deliver services. Staff and managers use the information they have about the local area very well to provide groups and activities that meet the needs of the families identified as most in need of support. All of the young parents known to the centre regularly and actively attend the 'Chill 'n' Chat' group. A recently established 'Gingerbread group' for lone parents is another good example of the centre's response to local need.

- Adults have good opportunities to gain practical skills and qualifications that lead to work related qualifications. The number of adults taking up these opportunities is increasing at a very good rate because the centre is working closely with partners to identify the families who need this type of support.
- Children's centre workers provide highly relevant support to families in their own home. They are very effective at challenging parents to change their behaviour, for example, to stop smoking when children are present. They also identify and work well with families who may find it difficult to attend a group and deliver activities such as parenting courses in the home ensuring the family has access to the support it needs.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The centre is part of an effective multi-agency team that coordinates support for families whose circumstances may make them in more need than others. The centre staff team successfully promotes and offers emotional stability and well-being for families, especially those whose children are subject to a child protection plan or who need help to safeguard the welfare of their children. Parents make comments such as: 'It is uplifting me' and 'It has turned me around ... my child is much happier now'.
- Staff make good use of partnerships with childcare settings, nurseries and primary schools in the area. A popular toy library runs from the local Adult Education Centre and offers a good range of stimulating toys and materials to promote children's reading, writing and speaking skills. This enterprise is successfully engaging parents in play with their children to develop children's skills.
- Centre staff keep very well maintained and thorough checks on children's development and progress when they attend regular groups, such as the crèche to support positive parenting courses. These records are shared with the schools children are moving on to. The format of the records varies from group to group and there is no consistent approach to how they are passed on, which means their usefulness to schools in early checks on children's skills and abilities is limited.
- Services and activities are very well-matched to the needs of the area served by the centre. A good example of this is the very effective 'Cook and play' sessions which are a direct response to rising levels of obesity in children. Recent information provided to the centre shows that there has been a positive impact on these figures in the area served by the centre and the number of children who are obese at the end of Reception Year in school has dropped.
- Adult and family learning programmes delivered by partners are very good quality. Centre workers are also highly skilled in their delivery of courses and sessions. They have a good level of ability to adapt activities and sessions on courses to make sure they are effective and meeting the needs of individuals and the group. A wide range of techniques and activities are used very well to involve people of all ages in their learning.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Most of the data produced by the local authority are clear and can and are used effectively to identify where the families who use the centre live. It has been noted that the number of families who are registered with and use centre services in some of the areas that are more disadvantaged is lower than the centre would like. As a result they have set specific measureable targets for improvement in this area.

- Staff and managers have regular and relevant meetings with their line managers providing them with good professional support and development. Discussions about work with families and any action points are recorded in staff files and in family files providing a thorough record of work with families. There is a clear link between staff and managers' supervision records, the work of the centre and the priorities for the centre.
- The local authority and the advisory board provide the centre with good levels of monitoring and target setting. Targets set for the centre are mostly challenging and realistic. However, in some cases, such as increasing registration and participation rates, the local authority's strategic target is unrealistic and contradicts the centre's own more realistic targets. Managers at all levels discuss and know the centre's progress towards meeting its targets. This, however, is not well recorded and does not provide an effective, easily accessible overview for all concerned in the development of the centre.
- Procedures to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and vulnerable adults are robust. Staff are very knowledgeable. They act promptly to contact children's social care partners if they have concerns about a family they have contact with or if they believe that a family is in need of more specialist support because they are not responding to the work being done with them.
- Case records are kept up-to-date because staff are aware of the need for all partners involved in work with a family, such as those who are subject to a child protection plan, to have the most recent, relevant information available to them. The records are clear about what action has been taken, what the response was from the family and what needs to happen next. There is clear involvement of families in the assessment of their needs, for example the common assessment framework, and in planning the type of support.

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 Group details

Unique reference number	80063
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	424910
Managed by	Derbyshire County Council

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1878
Centre leader	Helen Meadows
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01283 211157
Email address	helen.meadows@derbyshire.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 22120 Newhall Children's Centre
- 20583 Castle Gresley Children's Centre

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