

Picton Children's Centre

139 Earle Road, Picton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L7 6HD

Inspection date 10–11 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.

- Centre staff work well to reach out to families in the local area and encourage those who might be reluctant to use the centre's services. As a result the large majority of families in the centre's reach area are registered and engaged in services.
- The broad range of relevant services effectively meet the needs of local families, including those most in need of support.
- The centre works closely in partnership with the on-site nursery school to ensure that children are well prepared for school.
- Adults are encouraged to take courses which help them into employment or further training and improve their life chances.
- Strong partnerships with other professionals such as health workers and local schools ensure that the needs of families are effectively identified.
- Governance is well established and is supportive of the leadership and management. The local authority sets targets which effectively challenge the centre to improve. Registration, participation and attendance rates have shown a good level of improvement in the last year.

It is not outstanding because:

- Systems for sharing data and information with other local centres are not well enough developed to ensure centre leaders have the most accurate picture of the extent to which target groups are engaged in services.
- The extent to which partners' views are taken into account in the work of the advisory board is limited as few partners are active members.
- Systems to gather parents' views and involve them in decision-making are still developing.

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 the head of centre, centre manager, members of the centre's advisory board, parents, centre staff, a local authority representative, and partners from health, education, adult learning and early years.

The inspectors visited sessions held at the centre, and at a local community venue. This included joint observations with the head of centre and the centre coordinator.

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

Inspection team

Elaine Murray, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Philip Ellwand	Additional inspector
Priscilla McGuire	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Picton Children's Centre is located in Picton Neighbourhood Medical and Children's Centre. The centre is part of a federation with Chatham Nursery School, which is located on site, and St Hugh's Catholic Primary School, which is situated close to the centre. Chatham Nursery School provides the childcare provision. The primary and nursery schools are subject to separate inspections and their reports can be found on the Ofsted website at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The centre opened in 2006 and operates as a single centre. It is managed by the local authority and a formal arrangement is in place between the governing body of the federation and the children's centre.

There are 1,117 children under five years living in the Picton area, most of whom live in areas that are in the 10% most deprived in the country. The majority of the families with young children in the area served by the centre are not White British. Data show that 565 children live in households in receipt of workless benefits. Children enter early years provision with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age.

The centre seeks to focus activities on families eligible for funded places for two-year-old children, and families who speak English as an additional language.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Develop further the sharing of data and information with local children's centres to ensure that centre leaders have a more accurate picture of how far target groups are engaged in services.
- Strengthen the role of the advisory board by:
 - increasing the participation of a broader range of partners including health and early intervention services
 - developing more effective ways for parents' views to be gathered and taken into account.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The centre welcomes and includes all families. It is well known in the community and regarded as a place where families can go for advice and support.
- The centre works well to encourage families to engage with its services. Translated materials and interpreters are provided to ensure that families who speak English as an additional language are supported to access services. The centre provides a good level of support and advice to Romanian and Czech families in the area.
- The number of families registered with the centre has increased in recent months and, at present, 84.3% of families are registered. Of these, 72.8% of families are engaged in the centre's services, and this includes a large majority of some target groups such as teen parents and families eligible for two-year-old funding.
- Joint home visits between health partners and centre staff are used effectively to engage families whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Assessment of children at the age of two is used very well to identify those who are in danger of falling behind and support for them is put in place. The centre works well with local providers to ensure that as many three-and-four-year-old children from target groups attend pre-schools and nurseries. As a result, almost all children take up these places.
- The centre has been effective in encouraging an increase in participation and attendance rates.

This means that a greater number of families are benefitting from the centre's services.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Good quality services are provided for the families living in the area, which meet their needs well. Sessions such as 'Rhyme Time' provide effective opportunities for learning and enjoyment. Parents who speak English as an additional language praise the help this session gives to their own and their children's language development.
- Sessions such as 'Explore a Story', delivered in partnership with a local school, have a positive impact on children's readiness for nursery and school. The provision of these sessions has resulted in the early identification of children's and families' additional needs, so that support is in place before the children begin nursery and school and is helping to reduce inequalities.
- The centre's work to promote children's readiness for school has a positive impact on the rate of children's progress once they begin school. The progress of children who have been involved in the children's centre services and nursery is tracked in one local school. These results demonstrate that children make more rapid progress in personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development than in other areas of learning. The data show that, from low starting points, most children reach expected levels of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The large majority of parents are engaged in family learning and achieve well. The centre provides good access to training for parents and good support to help them develop skills to progress to further education and employment. Parents have good access to accredited learning such as 'Baby Connect' and basic mathematics courses.
- Parents develop a good understanding of how to keep children safe. 'Whoops safety' sessions help parents to identify hazards at home and learn how to keep their children safe.
- Centre staff work well with other partners to meet the needs of families who are most in need of support. For example, the enhanced midwife works jointly with the centre to support expectant mothers whose circumstances make them vulnerable or who have additional needs.
- Effective partnership working results in the promotion of healthy lifestyles and improved health outcomes for families. The percentage of mothers breastfeeding at six-to-eight weeks after the birth of their babies has increased from 42.7% in 2011/12 to 44.9% in 2012/13 which is just below the national average.
- Case files for individual families are maintained well and reflect the positive links and good communication with other professionals to meet families' needs.
- Parents praise the high level of support and guidance they receive from centre staff. One parent commented, 'I was really depressed, had postnatal depression and was a single parent. I couldn't have coped without the centre.'

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Centre leaders and managers support the staff team well and have a shared commitment to improving the life chances for children and adults. This contributes to the effective work of the centre.
- Centre leaders have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the centre, and the priorities for development. Leaders make good use of data to help their understanding of the local area and find out how well the centre is doing. Systems to share information and data with other local centres are developing. This means that, currently, leaders do not always have a clear picture of the extent to which target groups are accessing services at other centres.
- Governance arrangements are clearly understood. The local authority sets challenging targets which help to drive improvement. There have been good improvements to the levels of registration and engagement in recent months.
- The advisory board is well informed and has a good knowledge of the work and success of the

centre. Members provide support and challenge to centre leaders. Membership of the board includes some partners, but this is limited and some key partners such as health and early intervention services have little involvement.

- Parents' views are sought and valued, and action taken to adapt services as a result. Some parents are members of the advisory board but systems are still developing to ensure that parents' views are gathered and taken into account in decision-making about key priorities.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority. Effective policies and procedures are in place and staff are well trained in different areas of safeguarding knowledge. Staff use the Common Assessment Framework effectively and share information at all levels.
- Good governance also ensures that performance management of staff and professional supervision are well established. Staff have clear targets which link to the centre's priorities for development. Training and development opportunities are identified and staff undertake relevant courses. This has a positive effect on staff knowledge and how well they meet the needs of families.
- The centre works well with other local centres to provide joint services and make good use of resources. For example, the 'Rhyme Time' session is provided jointly with staff from a neighbouring centre and serves families from both areas.
- Good communication and effective partnerships with health partners, schools, training providers and other professionals help to ensure that the needs of families and young children are identified at an early stage. A good level of support and appropriate services are provided to effectively remove any barriers to their engagement in services and enhance families' life chances.

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	22376
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	427472
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,117
Centre manager	Colin Wilson
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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