

# South Bournemouth Children's Centres

108 Stourvale Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, BH6 5JB

<b>Inspection date</b>		24–25 October 2013	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
	Previous inspection:	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 children's centre group requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Senior leaders have overseen increased participation, but overall the group is not regularly engaging the large majority of families from the most deprived areas, especially within Southbourne.
- Senior leaders and the advisory board are not making best use of available information and data to ensure the effectiveness of their actions and to plan carefully targeted activities that support all target groups of users.
- The local authority is not ensuring that information from the Department of Work and Pensions, local police and health partners is presented in a timely and helpful format for the group to have a clear and specific identification of the needs of lone parents, families experiencing domestic violence or teenage parents.
- The group's improvement plan identifies key target groups, but does not record the actions that will sustain improvement or describe how progress will be measured.
- Some sessions for young children do not always provide high quality learning experiences.
- Senior leaders do not closely monitor the quality of provision and standards of health and safety of third party providers to ensure they meet best practice.

### This children's centre group has the following strengths:

- An active outreach team is effective in working with partners to provide individual support that is helping families to improve their well-being and sustain their involvement with the centre.
- Children with communication and language difficulties and special educational needs are being identified quickly by knowledgeable staff, closely monitored and supported well so that children increase their readiness for school.
- The group provides a range of good quality services for parents to complete adult learning courses, improve their literacy and numeracy skills and gain qualifications.
- Parents and carers attending both centres describe the welcoming and friendly staff and appreciate the care and support they receive.

## Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre group 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 Pokesdown and Southbourne.

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

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, representatives of the local authority, advisory board members, partner agencies, local education staff, parents and carers, outreach workers and childcare staff.

The inspectors visited Chatterbox, CoMotion movement and dance, Messy Play and Minky Moos sessions, Teddy's Pre-School, Southbourne Children's Centre, Pokesdown Children's Centre and Roseberry Park church.

They observed the centre's work, looked at a range of relevant documentation and took account of parental satisfaction surveys from both centres.

## Inspection team

Mark Lindfield	Her Majesty's Inspector, Lead Inspector
Joy Law	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linda Kaye	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the group

Southbourne Children's Centre is a phase 2 children's centre which was designated in March 2008. There are 1611 children aged under five years old in the reach area. Southbourne reach area is within one of the top 70% of the most deprived areas nationally which contains varying levels of deprivation. The centre has no direct links with a primary school.

Pokesdown Children's Centre is a phase 3 children's centre which was designated in March 2010. There are 739 children aged under five years old in the reach area. It is within one of the top 70% of most deprived areas. The governance also manages the on-site Early Years provision, Teddy's Pre-School. A very large majority of families in Pokesdown's reach area are White British with a small minority of mainly Eastern European families.

A rising proportion of children under five years old live in workless households and an increasing proportion of families are eligible to receive benefits. Although the overall proportion of workless families and those eligible for benefits across the reach area is lower than the local authority and national averages, nearly a quarter of families with children under five are living in poverty in the most deprived areas. Children's levels on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage vary across both reach areas but overall children arrive with broadly typical levels of development for their age.

The local authority reviewed the management of its centres. It amalgamated the two centres into a group managed by a single children's centre manager. The local authority commissioned the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) to manage the two centres on its behalf and renewed the commission in September 2013. The two separate advisory boards were joined into a single advisory board from September 2013 and it manages the centres on behalf of the local authority.

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

- Increase the access, participation and sustained engagement of target groups, especially from Southbourne's most deprived areas.
- With local authority support, improve the group's use of information from the Department of Work and Pensions, local police and health partners to ensure a clear identification of the needs of lone parents, teenage parents and families experiencing domestic violence in order to:
  - plan carefully targeted provision
  - include clear milestones and success criteria within improvement plans.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring senior leaders more rigorously and regularly monitor:
  - the effectiveness of actions to increase engagement and support target groups of users
  - the quality of third party provision to ensure it meets the group's standards of best practice
  - the group's activities for children to ensure it provides high quality learning experiences in all sessions.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The centres' engagement of families from the most deprived areas, particularly within the Southbourne reach area, requires improvement. The local authority has set targets to improve engagement and ensure a greater proportion of families use services regularly. The centres can provide evidence that a new staffing post is working actively to establish and maintain engagement in the most deprived areas.
- Not all data held by the local authority are presented in a timely and helpful format. Information on rates of breastfeeding, birth rates, incidents of domestic violence and on the precise needs of lone parents in the area is slow to be presented to the centre or is provided in a format that is confusing. This makes it more difficult to measure the effectiveness of the centres' work in engaging all those who are in need of services.
- The group uses information gathered to gain an adequate understanding of the needs of local families. A range of local voluntary and private providers, an active staff team, well-organised special educational needs support services and contacts with local voluntary and private providers help to provide information that the centres use to adapt services. For example, the centres have increased services and provision for families speaking English as an additional language, children with communication and language difficulties and gained additional funding to support the engagement of fathers within both reach areas.
- An enthusiastic and knowledgeable outreach team is effective in prioritising a number of families in need of individual support and in helping them to access and sustain their involvement with the centre. Communications and partnerships with other agencies, including health and education to deliver support to vulnerable families, are good and centre staff use these to effectively manage and deliver support.
- There has been an increased uptake of children receiving government funding for two year olds. The local authority has broadened the criteria to ensure an improved take-up rate in the local area.

### The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The group provides an appropriate balance of universal and targeted services. Services targeted at children with special educational needs, families speaking English as an additional language, families in need of additional support and to develop adults' training and qualifications are well organised. However, the group's services to support lone parents, fathers and teenage parents and engage the large majority of these families in the local area require improvement.
- The centres do not rigorously and regularly monitor all available information and data to ensure the effectiveness of their actions to support all target groups of users. The centres regularly submit quarterly information they have collected to the local authority. This information is not closely analysed, and available data are not included to ensure the engagement of some groups of vulnerable families, such as lone parents, are closely monitored.
- Joint working with healthcare staff in the centres has helped families to make satisfactory progress in developing their well-being. However, the centres' services are not closely linked to improving the achievement of local area strategic health targets. Centre staff provide support and advice to improve families' health and safety but this is not linked to information about an increasing rate of emergency admissions to hospital.
- Centres provide opportunities for parents to independently access a range of information, advice and guidance to improve their economic well-being and pathway into employment. Parental responses gathered by the centres show comparatively lower levels of satisfaction for the support, information and advice around employment, general benefit advice and tax credit information.

- The quality of activities and sessions for children are not always of good quality. Children attending Teddy's Pre-School at Pokesdown and special educational needs sessions receive good provision because they are carefully assessed and their progress recorded. Other sessions for children are not linked to the development of local priorities such as the attainment of boys or developing children's mark making.
- There are good working partnerships with the local college and families have good access to appropriate courses including literacy and numeracy. The centres provide a good range of opportunities for adults to improve their education and qualifications. As a result, an increased number of parents are achieving accreditation and gaining qualifications.
- The centres have developed close relationships with a number of local schools to ensure children with special educational needs and those supported by government funding are helped to make a smooth transition into primary education. Children with communication and language delay and special educational needs in the local area are being supported well by the centres.
- Staff at both centres provide a high level of care and support for families that attend services and activities. Staff show a welcoming approach for parents and families from the time they enter the two sites. Parents speak highly of both centres and report that there is often a buzz of excitement.
- There is a good use of volunteers. They feel well supported and have been able to develop knowledge and skills. This has helped them to build confidence and move on to higher-level study and employment.

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

Requires improvement

- The local authority's monitoring of the group's effectiveness requires improvement. It monitors the effectiveness of the centres through an annual conversation and quarterly reports and has set realistic targets to increase the engagement of vulnerable families. However, it has not monitored the accuracy of the group's recent development planning or self-evaluation.
- Governance arrangements are in a period of transition and the joint advisory board does not have a clear understanding of the overall quality of provision. Where governance is more effective, there is a close analysis and understanding of data held by the centres and local authority and this is used to shape service provision and manage staff performance. Over the last year the separate and joint advisory boards have not regularly conducted a close and searching analysis of the centres' data to ensure services reduce inequalities for target groups of children and families in the area.
- The analysis of data and information available to the centres for some target groups are not used effectively to reduce barriers to engagement for some groups and target resources. The centres' development plan does not provide a clear and precise record of the actions to be taken to improve outcomes or clear success criteria by which senior leaders and the advisory board can evaluate the effectiveness of actions.
- Senior leaders are not monitoring sessions run by third party providers closely enough. While these sessions are often enjoyed by children and families, senior leaders have not checked that providers adhere to the centres' best practice on health and safety requirements and display safeguarding information. Safeguarding checks on the suitability of staff working for a third party are complete and held at head office.
- Systems to monitor the performance of centre staff are helping to move the centres forward and ensure a close and supportive team approach. Supervision occurs monthly, is challenging and provides staff with good access to relevant training. Staff feel supported by senior leaders because they are helped to develop their practice and their individual achievements are recognised.
- Senior leaders have ensured a systematic approach to the assessment of children and families in need of individual support. Supervision of case files are monitored monthly and as a result the centres can point to a good proportion of cases where they have helped families to improve. The

group has led the development of a 'Family Star' tool that has now been adopted across the local authority.

- Parents are frequently invited to provide evaluations of services and activities. For example, families attending speech and language and family learning sessions complete detailed and helpful assessments. These are used to adapt services that meet their needs well.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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.

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<b>Local authority</b>	Bournemouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	423589
<b>Managed by</b>	Bournemouth YMCA
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	2350
<b>Group manager</b>	Alex Evans
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 434310
<b>Email address</b>	southbournecc@bournemouthymca.org.uk

**This group consists of the following children's centres:**

- Southbourne Children's Centre
- Pokesdown Children's Centre



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