

# West Penwith Children's Centre

The Lescudjack Centre, Penmere Close, Penzance, TR18 3PE

<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 November 2013
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
		Not applicable	
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 is highly regarded in the community and the large majority of young children and families access the services it provides. Increasingly, the services are targeted at those who most need them. The centre is especially successful in providing outreach services, such as family support and a toy library, to the outlying rural and coastal communities in the area it serves.
- The centre provides a variety of good quality services that improve the health and safety of young children and their families, and ensures that the children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, and communication and language skills, to help them achieve well at school.
- Improvements in the leadership, governance and management of the centre are leading to more effective and efficient ways of working and to improving outcomes for those most in need. Improvements are demonstrated well in detailed monitoring records of individual children and their families.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Target groups are largely identified well and their progress is monitored carefully. However, the centre is not evaluating its own data and information fully to make sure that it is reaching all of those most in need of support in its reach area.
- It is not checking whether the work it does to help adults into training is effective in helping them to gain qualifications and employment.

## **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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with representatives from the local authority, the senior locality manager, the locality manager in the absence of the children's centre manager, members of the advisory board, staff, partners, volunteers and parents.

The inspectors visited children in the care of child minders, parenting programmes for young parents, the toy library, an outreach programme, a domestic violence project, sessions on financial advice, health professionals, family support workers and parents.

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

## **Inspection team**

Sue Frater, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jon Bowman

Her Majesty's Inspector

Penny Mathers

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

West Penwith Children's Centre is part of a federation with the recently merged Hayle and St Ives Children's Centre. The centres have been recently reorganised and are under the strategic direction of the local authority. The local authority has divided the county into six localities. West Penwith and Hayle and St Ives Children's Centres are in 'Locality One'. The centre manager is line managed by the locality manager, who is, in turn, managed by the senior locality manager for the county. The centre is governed by its own advisory board. Some services, such as family support, are shared with the Hayle and St Ives Children's Centre. Services such as support for victims of domestic violence are commissioned by the local authority across Cornwall.

West Penwith Children's Centre covers an area of 78 square miles in the far south west of the country, which includes rural and coastal areas. Services are delivered through a hub and spoke model, the centre in Penzance being the hub and outlying premises in Newlyn, St Just and Marazion being the spokes. The centre is situated in one of the top 30% most deprived communities on the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The population is mainly White British. There are 2,084 children aged nought to five years within the area the centre serves. Over a quarter of these children are from families who claim out of work benefits. The centre provides support for children's health, safety and early years education, as well as support for their families. As a result, their attainment on entry to early years provision is at age-related expectations. The centre includes a separately managed nursery and a National Health Service dentist.

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

- Monitor and evaluate data and information fully so that the centre is certain it is engaging all those most in need of support.
- Devise a system for checking whether the work it does to help adults into training is effective in helping them to gain qualifications and employment.

### Inspection judgements

#### Access to services by young children and families Good

- A large majority of families are registered with the centre and have access to information, advice and guidance about early childhood services through the centre, its partners and its outreach work. However, the centre is not evaluating its own information fully, to make sure it is targeting and reaching all those most in need of support in its reach area.
- The centre identifies the needs of individual children and their families and matches suitable services to them, including specialist services. It uses observations and assessments of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage very effectively. Partnership working enables the centre to be more flexible in responding to the needs of the families through, for example, events with Jobcentre Plus that raise awareness of welfare reforms.
- Information and data are shared effectively between a wide range of partners including the health team, although this does not yet include midwives. The local authority provides a good range of comparative data which helps the centre to identify the most vulnerable groups to support.

- Effective systems are used for monitoring access to services, attendance and participation. These systems alert staff to any targeted families that fail to participate regularly.
- Early childhood services are promoted well through health clinics, a 'What's On' guide, family support workers and groups for young parents who would otherwise be unlikely to participate.
- Outreach work, particularly by the Family Support Work team, and the toy library are especially effective in helping vulnerable families in rural areas to access services and remain engaged until their needs are met effectively. Family Support Workers are now assigned to primary schools and attend parents' evenings and other events to encourage families with younger children to participate in children's centre activities.
- Assessment at age two is used to identify which of these children are most in need of early intervention. The centre works with families and other agencies to enable most of the children identified through this process to access the help they need. Almost all eligible families with two-year-old children take up their free entitlement to early education. The centre helps them to find good or outstanding providers.

### **The quality of practice and services**

Good

- The tracking of the progress that children make is thorough. Assessments of need, case files and records are detailed and ensure universal and targeted services are accessed in a timely manner. Learning journey records show that a large majority of vulnerable children have made good progress from their starting points in their personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language skills.
- Most children are working within age-related expectations when they start school, which gets them off to a good start. The children's centre teacher supports the centre's play team and all early years providers within the reach area and encourages them to use learning journeys. All local early years funded settings were judged good or outstanding by the end of May 2013.
- Early Years Foundation Stage data have improved over three years and are now broadly in line with expectations. The gap between the lowest achieving children and others has narrowed to less than the national average over the same period.
- Most of the families who are identified as needing to develop and extend their parenting skills complete appropriate courses, such as the WILD Young Parents Project and programmes provided by centre staff. The children are safe and healthy and achieving well in school or in early years settings. Many of the centre's health targets are met, including a reduction in child obesity through increased awareness of healthy eating.
- Almost all adults supported by the centre develop a good understanding of their responsibilities for their children's well-being and how to ensure the safety of their families. Parents, particularly lone young parents, praised the outstanding support they received on an individual basis from their family support workers, with some stating that they would not have been able to cope without it.
- There are currently no children looked after by the local authority in the nought to five age range. The number of children on child protection plans increased significantly last year. Rates of domestic violence are static, but those where children are present have decreased.

- Many parents actively contribute to the development of activities or volunteer to help, for example in supporting families where there are children with additional needs or in running play groups.
- The centre helps identified adults to access training, qualifications and the advice necessary to improve their economic prospects and chances of employment. However, it is in the early stages of checking whether they are gaining qualifications and employment.

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

Good

- The local authority provides good strategic leadership and guidance for the centre through the Early Help Strategy. The strategy involves service level agreements with a range of agencies to ensure they work together and share the new early help assessment tool to draw on the range of available expertise. The local authority carries out regular monitoring visits which provide effective challenge to support centre improvement.
- The locality manager is improving the consistency of provision through holding the centre manager to account for the impact of the services provided. This is achieved through monitoring the children's centre's self-evaluation and progress towards targets in its action plan.
- The advisory board includes members from a range of support services including education, health and the voluntary sector, and also parents. It monitors progress on the centre's action plan four times a year. The board is beginning to hold the centre to account appropriately for its performance in reaching the most vulnerable children and families.
- The new centre manager is making sure that procedures for monitoring and evaluating the outcomes for children and families, action planning, staff performance management and regular supervision are providing clearer direction for staff. In particular, the more rigorous procedures are helping the manager to develop and target resources more flexibly to meet the changing needs of families in the community.
- Parents and children are consulted about their needs and any changes to services. Parents' views are gained through events and surveys. In the most recent survey, almost all service users indicated that they were satisfied with the service.
- Robust policies and procedures for safeguarding ensure that the safeguarding and welfare of children remain at the forefront of the centre's purpose. Case studies demonstrate that the centre works effectively with parents to reduce the risk of harm to children. All the required safer recruitment checks on staff and volunteers are carried out and recorded well. The Safeguarding Policy/Guidance for Cornwall Children's Centres and staff training are up to date.
- Financial resources are managed across the locality and targeted according to greatest need. Resources available to the centre are well deployed through effective partnership working, integrated service delivery and innovative practice, such as outreach work. Resources are used effectively and efficiently to allow the centre to meet its targets and, increasingly, to improve outcomes for those in most need.

## 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.

## Centre details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	22363
<b>Local authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	427532
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	2,084
<b>Centre manager</b>	Caroline Perkins
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01736 334850
<b>Email address</b>	cperkins@cornwall.go.uk

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