

# Otley Children's Centre

Cross Green Community Centre, Cross Green, Otley, Leeds, LS21 1HD

**Inspection date** 5–6 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of practice and services		<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is a good centre.

- The centre leaders have a clear focus on improvement. They work very effectively to do whatever it takes to continually provide opportunities to improve the health and well-being of all children and families, particularly those in most need. Staff share their enthusiasm and morale is high.
- Staff know the local community well. They listen to families, understand their needs and ensure that effective support is provided quickly and sensitively.
- Strong partnerships, particularly with health and schools, ensure that a high proportion of the families and children in most need who are targeted by the centre, receive the right support at the right time.
- The centre provides highly effective outreach work which ensures that families engage with the centre and then remain involved in a broad range of stimulating activities. Families are keen to use the centre because it is a warm, welcoming place where all families feel at ease.
- The local authority and the joint collaborative committee have good systems in place to ensure that the centre meets the needs of local families. Parents' involvement in how the centre is managed is very strong.
- The high priority given to ensuring that families are safeguarded leads to a rapid and effective response to all children and families in need.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Monitoring of the progress made by children and adults who use the centre's services is not yet fully developed.
- There are not enough opportunities for adults to train or develop skills that will improve their opportunities of gaining 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 three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and managers in the local authority, health and social care partners, parents, grandparents, outreach workers, volunteers and members of the joint collaborative committee. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Inspection team

Dan Grant, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Sue Pepper	Additional inspector
Susan Walsh	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

The centre became operational in 2008 as a phase two, stand-alone centre and delivers a range of services to meet its core purpose, such as postnatal care and support for those targeted by the centre such as fathers and lone parents. It also offers a range of other support, such as help with benefits, childcare, breastfeeding, health and parenting. In 2012, it merged with Otley health visiting team and staff became part of the Otley early start team. It has recently relocated to more spacious accommodation and is situated within a large community centre in Otley town centre. It is open Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm. The centre is managed by Otley joint collaborative committee on behalf of the local authority and the line management is delivered by the headteacher of Ashfield Primary School. Governance of the centre is through a sub-committee of the joint collaborative committee, comprising key partners, parents and grandparents. The staff team includes three family outreach workers and a clerical worker.

There are approximately 1,008 children under five years of age living in the centre's area, which covers the busy market town and several surrounding villages. A small minority of families live in areas of disadvantage. Data show that, overall, 9% of children live in workless households. Some 20% of families are eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Approximately 5% of families living within the reach area are of Black or minority ethnic heritage. Most children start early years provision with skills that are typical for their age.

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

- Extend the opportunities for more adults, particularly those seeking paid work, to improve their economic well-being by:
  - building stronger links with training providers
  - actively promoting volunteering so that more parents sign up
  - providing more opportunities for onsite literacy, numeracy and work-related skills' development.
- Strengthen arrangements for monitoring the progress made by children and adults so that achievement is clearly recognised and used to help plan for their next steps and future success.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

**Good**

- All local families with children under five are registered with the centre and a very large majority are engaged in its activities. The centre has established a very positive reputation for providing high quality services, advice and support. This has encouraged families to use the centre to help their children make good progress with their health and development.
- Strong partnerships, including fully integrated health-visiting services, ensure that all families with new babies meet a member of the centre staff and receive a thorough introduction to the range of services available. Families in most need, including those with disabled children or children looked after by the local authority, are identified quickly and good attention is given to thoroughly assessing their needs.
- Very effective sharing of information between key partners ensures that outreach activities are a key feature of the centre's work. This enables centre staff and their partners, such as health and social care, to provide one-to-one support when it is most needed. This outreach support also encourages families to take advantage of some of the other services offered by the centre when they might otherwise be reluctant to do so.
- The centre is easily accessible, welcoming and very inviting. Good levels of resourcing and highly efficient local partnership strategies enable the centre to accurately target and prioritise those families most in need. An increasing number of families from the area of greatest disadvantage, and those with disabled children, are engaging with the centre's activities. However, the centre has rightly identified that more work is required to ensure this number increases further.
- The centre's checks on families' attendance show clearly that, once they see and enjoy what is on offer, their visits are more frequent and they attend more activities. Many of the activities provide families with good opportunities to socialise and to benefit from the advice of qualified and experienced staff, especially about their children's learning and development. Staff have become positive role models and are seen by many parents as providing essential support.

### The quality of practice and services

**Good**

- Services are planned jointly with families and key partners to ensure that the centre provides a full range of activities, including very flexible outreach support, at times and places that are convenient for those concerned. The centre listens carefully to families' needs and plans its services to reduce inequalities and increase their chances of success in life.
- One-to-one, home-based support for those in most need is particularly beneficial and often gives families the confidence to visit the centre and engage in structured activities. This helps them to look at ways of planning to improve their futures, including how to ensure that their children remain safe. Parents place their trust in the staff who help them to find solutions for their difficulties.
- Families' health and well-being are improving. Breastfeeding and immunisation rates are high and increasing, and childhood obesity levels are low and falling.
- The centre has good links with Jobcentre plus and provides good-quality help and advice on benefits and housing. A few parents have become volunteers and gained useful, transferable employability skills, which have led some to paid work. However, there are too few opportunities for this, and links with adult-learning providers have not developed quickly enough. Staff do encourage adults to attend education and training courses locally but they do not monitor their progress.
- Courses such as the 'Pram to Primary' parenting course are of great benefit, particularly to families in need, and the popular 'Mini-Movers' and other nationally recognised programmes, encourage a healthy, active lifestyle. Almost all children take up the entitlement to free nursery education. Close links with local schools help the centre to ensure that all children are prepared well for starting school. The gap between the lowest performing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and other children is much smaller than the national figure.

- Thoroughly planned activities ensure that every opportunity for learning is identified and used effectively, such as helping children become familiar with rhymes to remember and enjoy at home and once they start school. Learning to dress themselves and use the toilet independently removes any fears they might have about not being able to manage. However, formal recording and monitoring of children's progress towards reaching learning objectives remain at an early stage.
- Staff use their good experience and training very effectively to ensure that families remain safe. Close working with, for example, children's social care and health staff, ensures that important information is shared quickly and effectively. Case records contain good levels of detail and show the positive impact of support and advice.

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

**Good**

- Centre leaders work very effectively with the local authority and other agencies to ensure that local and regional priorities inform the full range of services on offer. The commitment and enthusiasm of the centre coordinator inspire all staff to 'pull out all the stops' in providing the best services they can for all of their families. Accordingly, the centre is viewed very positively by the whole community.
- The leadership team has an accurate view of where the centre's strengths lie and the areas it needs to develop. This is because the team makes good use of the information it gathers to show the successful impact of its work. Information shows that now most lone parents in the area are registered at the centre. The centre recognises that more needs to be done to address the needs of the workless and already has good plans in place to start adult literacy and numeracy classes in the spring term.
- Governance of the centre is dynamic and democratic. The joint collaborative committee understands the needs of the local area extremely well and focuses its strategic priorities on ensuring that the quality of life for all families in the Otley area improves.
- Methodical and relentless pursuit of excellence ensures that the centre continues to improve and has reached all of the performance targets set by the local authority. Demanding systems to check the work of the centre ensure that the local authority is well informed. Leaders know how successfully the centre is reducing inequalities between families.
- Parents' views are highly valued and gathered systematically to help shape services. The centre has an active parents' forum and, at every level of governance, it ensures that parents, including those with the greatest needs, are very well represented and contribute formally to the centre's decision-making about its development.
- Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and well organised. Staff are well trained and have good awareness of how to keep families safe. Children subject to child protection plans are well supported. The Common Assessment Framework is used effectively and a large majority of families identified as being most in need of intervention and support improve their parenting skills. As a result, families are more content and children remain safe.

**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 details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	22277
<b>Local authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	427470
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,008
<b>Centre leader</b>	Mrs Liz Oddy
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01133 782861
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