

West Marsh Children's Centre

Macauley Street, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire, DN31 2ES

Inspection date		12–13 November 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.

- This centre knows its families very well and is the hub of the local community. Parents particularly value the non-judgemental care and support they receive from the dedicated and experienced centre staff team.
- The very large majority of the families, including those who have the highest levels of need, engage in the wide range of good-quality services.
- The care pathway and the focused work of the parental engagement workers make a significant contribution to the high engagement of families.
- The centre provides outstanding opportunities for adults to volunteer, and gain skills and qualifications.
- The centre gives the safeguarding of children and families its highest priority. Excellent liaison with partners ensures that families receive joined-up services which meet their needs well and help to reduce the risk of harm to children.
- The centre's high quality services have a positive impact on developing the parenting skills of targeted parents. They also make a significant contribution to children's development and to narrowing the achievement gap.
- Leadership, including governance, is good and the centre is well-managed. Careful monitoring and ambitious target-setting mean that the performance of the centre is continually improving.

It is not outstanding because:

- Attendance at some of the good-quality sessions is too variable. Some families who might benefit from the centre's support do not sustain their attendance over time. As a result, data show that some health outcomes, such as breastfeeding and smoking cessation, are not improving rapidly enough and very few parents gain employment.
- Although the very large majority of teenage parents and pregnant teenagers engage with some of the centre's services, too many are not accessing education, employment or training.

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 additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre coordinator, centre staff, officers from the local authority and a range of partners. These included representatives from health and education. They also met with parents, volunteers and representatives of the advisory senior management team (ASMT).

Inspectors listened to the views of parents and observed sessions including 'Toasty Tuesday' at Littlecoates Primary School, 'Let's Get Cooking' at Macauley Academy, 'Funky Monkeys' at West Marsh Community Centre, 'Adult English' in South Parade Primary School and 'Adult Maths', 'Little Diggers' and 'Family Links Nurturing Programme' in the main centre.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of documentation including the self-evaluation form, action plan, minutes of meetings, safeguarding policies and procedures, and a variety of assessment and planning files. Inspectors looked in detail at a number of case files of children subject to child protection plans, those deemed to be children in need and others in receipt of outreach support, including those subject to Common Assessment Framework (CAF) processes.

Inspection team

Jean-Marie Blakeley, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Emily Wheeldon

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

West Marsh Children's Centre became operational in 2005 as a phase one stand-alone centre. It delivers a range of services, including targeted parenting programmes, focused play sessions, on-site health clinics, one-to-one family support and adult education classes to meet the core purpose. The centre lies close to the docks and the town centre of Grimsby. The local authority directly manages the centre. An advisory senior management team, comprising key partners, assist in the governance of the centre. The centre is situated on the Macaulay Academy School site (URN: 138890) and shares a building with Judy Clark Childcare (URN: 205560) which are subject to separate inspections. These reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

There are 822 children aged under five years living in the centre's reach area which covers seven super output areas. Four of these are in the top 10% most deprived areas in the country and two fall into the top 20% most deprived areas, with one area outside the top 30%. Data provided by the centre show that 46.2% of children aged under five years live in workless households. Most families living within the reach area are of White British heritage. Housing is mostly privately rented houses. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below those generally expected for their age. Target groups include those families living in the areas of most deprivation, lone parents, disabled children and parents, teenage parents, workless families and minority ethnic families.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Together with partners, develop further strategies to increase the number of:
 - mothers who give up smoking during pregnancy
 - mothers who breastfeed their babies
 - workless adults that gain employment
 - pregnant mothers and teenage parents engaging in education, training or employment.
- Find ways to improve families' sustained attendance at the good-quality activities the centre provides.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families Good

- This is a vibrant centre with good information available for families to signpost them to the wide range of services in the centre and in outreach venues. The very large majority of families is registered with the centre and accesses its services. This includes the large majority of those living in the most deprived areas and most teenage parents, lone parents, ethnic minority families, disabled children and disabled parents.
- The highly effective use of the care pathway, which starts when a baby is born and is used regularly to review progress until they are five years old, has a significant impact on the high engagement with families. Ante-natal and post-natal clinics held in the centre, together with close liaison with health partners, ensure that the centre not only knows about all new births within the area, but also gains a thorough understanding of the needs of individual families.
- Universal and targeted activity sessions, delivered by skilled community play development workers and parental engagement workers, increase the engagement of targeted families, such as those identified as needing parenting support, and help to identify other families' individual needs. However, attendance at some sessions and activities is irregular and in some sessions numbers are low. Families are highly transient around the Grimsby areas and some families, who might benefit from support from the centre, do not sustain their attendance over time.
- The centre has strong partnerships with schools, childminders and Early Years providers which enable staff to share information and help identify and support parents, particularly those who are

reluctant to engage with the centre or other agencies. Parental engagement workers are a visible presence in partners' premises. This includes regularly standing in school playgrounds offering leaflets and other information, in order to increase the contact with parents, gain their trust over time and promote the centre's services.

- Staff are highly successful in encouraging parents to take advantage of available funding for nursery places for the significant number of eligible two-year-old children. In addition, almost all children access their three- and four-year-old entitlement to Early Years education.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Families benefit from the good-quality advice and activities provided by the consistent centre staff team. As a result, parents develop a good understanding of their responsibilities in keeping their children safe and learn how they can help their children's development in the home through play.
- The outstanding range of training, accredited qualifications and volunteering opportunities helps to raise the ambition and the employability skills of adults. Courses are developed well from parents' interests, their developing aspirations and local work opportunities, such as those in the care industry. There is effective monitoring of progress which demonstrates good achievement of qualifications and the development of confidence and skills. Nevertheless, the number of adults who gain jobs in this area of high unemployment remains low.
- Effective partnership work with schools and pre-schools helps the children who use the centre to make good educational progress. The centre is quick to respond to its partners and provides support and activities to boost the progress of children who may be underachieving, such as in speaking and listening. Observations, assessments and tracking systems for children's learning, are firmly embedded so children's progress can be tracked over time. This demonstrates that targeted children are making good progress and that the centre is helping to narrow the achievement gap between them and other children.
- Health-related on-site clinics and targeted sessions help to increase parents' understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Although all health outcomes are improving, including a good reduction in childhood obesity rates, some, such as breastfeeding rates and giving up smoking during pregnancy, are not improving rapidly enough.
- Parents are unanimous in their praise for the centre and in the support provided by its strong and consistent staff team. They told inspectors that they come to the centre for support if they have any problems or concerns, whether these are with their health, children's behaviour or development, relationships, housing, finance or anything else, because they know the staff will help and not judge them. One parent said, 'They are just amazing in a crisis. I was suddenly taken ill and they took care of everything, including getting me to hospital and looking after the children. I would not be where I am today without them.'
- A high number of teenage parents and pregnant teenagers engages with a broad range of services at the centre. However, too few of them are accessing education, training or employment.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The local authority and ASMT effectively monitor and challenge the centre. Extensive data and background information provided by the local authority are used well to shape services and set targets. The annual conversation, quarterly monitoring reports and supervision are used effectively to monitor the impact of the centre's work and identify priorities. As a result, the centre is continuing to improve, and increasing its success in reducing inequalities for local families.
- Families are given good opportunities to evaluate the work of the centre and to challenge and influence its services. Staff take every opportunity to seek their views and this vocal community, although usually suspicious of those in authority, does not hesitate in expressing what it wants and needs from the centre.
- Safeguarding is given the highest priority. The needs of children subject to child-protection plans and children in need are met well and the CAF is used well to co-ordinate effective early support. Close liaison and preventative work with partners, such as those from social care and the family

resource service, enhance the centre's ability to help keep families safe.

- Assessments of need, case files and records are maintained to a high standard and demonstrate effective co-operation and information-sharing between professionals. Case studies show that targeted intervention, prevention and early help provided by children's centre workers have a significant and positive impact on individual children.
- The resources available to the centre are used efficiently and effectively which enables the centre to engage with the very large majority of families who may benefit from its services. The recently appointed centre manager provides good supervision of and support for the centre staff. Her close scrutiny and constant review of the centre's services means that services are continually evolving and responding to the needs of families within the area. As a result, services are effectively targeted at those most in need of support and engagement with families and outcomes are good and improving.

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	23512
Local authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	427492
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	822
Centre leader	Michelle Townsend
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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