

# Scarborough (Eastfield)

## Children's Centre

c/o Link walk Centre, Link Walk, Eastfield, Scarborough, YO11 3LR

### Inspection date

14–15 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:		
Access to services by young children and families		<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of practice and services		<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>

### Summary of key findings for children and families

#### This is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Not enough children and parents, particularly fathers, teen and lone parents are actively engaged in centre services. Centre data relating to access by target groups lack clarity and interrogation, preventing the centre from developing and targeting its services and resources more effectively.
- The leadership, governance and management of the centre have not been robust. Data available to the centre are not consistently accurate, timely or localised, particularly health data. This prevents a secure understanding of the needs of the whole community and hinders the effectiveness of the centre's business plans, particularly in relation to improving breastfeeding.
- A strategic move towards a coast collaborative steering group governance model is in its infancy and parents' role in this group has reduced. Too few adults engage in volunteering opportunities or secure further qualifications, and limited information from some partners prevents the centre knowing the full impact of this work.
- The centre has yet to develop a consistent approach to tracking the educational progress of children from different backgrounds and their readiness for school having accessed services. Furthermore, 21% of children aged three and four do not take up their free nursery entitlement.

#### This centre has the following strengths:

- The centre provides good levels of care, guidance and support to those families engaging well with services. Intensive support packages provided by experienced and well-trained parent support advisers ensure that help is on hand when families need it most. Practical advice includes guidance on housing, finances, drug and alcohol misuse and healthy relationships.
- Opportunities for staff to undertake further training, qualifications and reflect and share professional expertise across the collaboration of children's centres are good. Continuous professional development is good at all levels and consistently embraced by this motivated staff team.
- Assessment of children aged two years successfully identifies children who are most in need of early intervention and who require additional support in their personal, social and emotional skills and communication and language. Centre data confirms 100% take up of nursery education funding for this group of children.

### 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the children's centre service manager, centre staff, including parent support advisers, and officers from the local authority. They also met with health, education and early years and adult learning partners, parents and representatives from the coast collaborative steering group. They looked at the centre's view of its own performance, the centre's development plans, a sample of the centre's policies and procedures, a selection of case studies and a range of other relevant documentation. The inspectors visited Eastfield Library and Derwent Valley Children's Centre to observe some activities. Visits to activities were undertaken jointly with a centre manager. The children's centre service manager attended team meetings along with a representative from the local authority.

### Inspection team

Gillian Bishop

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tara Street

Additional inspector

## **Full report**

### **Information about the centre**

Eastfield Children's Centre is located in Eastfield on the outskirts of Scarborough and serves 630 children aged from birth to five years. The centre received designation in 2009 and provides the full core offer. The reach area includes Cayton, Overdale and Osgodby, although families are beginning to access services offered across five other coastal children's centre reach areas, with the move towards a collaborative model of working being developed. Outreach provision includes one- to-one home support by parent support advisers, access to services across the wider network of children's centres, Eastfield's Library, Braeburn Community Infant and Nursery School and Cayton Jubilee Hall. Happy Jays Limited is co-located with the children's centre and provides part-time childcare places alongside delivery of some play sessions and crèche provision. Separate inspection arrangements exist for this provider and its inspection report can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Centre data confirm that most families residing in the area are predominately White British, although there is a very small number of children from Black and minority ethnic families. Scarborough is a coastal town and the main employment is seasonal and related to tourism, leading to some transience within the area. Three of the super output areas within the community fall into the lowest 20% most deprived in the country. Data indicate that 36% of children under five years live in households dependent on workless benefits. The large majority of children enter early years provision with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age.

The centre is managed by the local authority alongside a newly established coast collaborative steering group that supports governance arrangements. This group has leadership responsibilities for six children's centres. A children's centre service manager manages the day-to-day running of Eastfield and Filey Children's Centres. Strategic management of the coast collaborative is led by the integrated service manager who has line management responsibility for four children's centre service managers. The centre staff form part of the bigger integrated-services team who work together to deliver North Yorkshire's early intervention strategies: ready for parenting; life and school programmes; and local authority strengthening communities initiatives.

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

- Improve access to services by young children and families by:
  - using demographic data more effectively to monitor, understand and inform engagement levels across the reach area and support the identification of families and particular target groups who are less likely to engage with centre services
  - increasing outreach provision to more isolated and rural communities
  - improving uptake of nursery education funding for three- and four-year-olds to ensure children in their early years have access to some pre-school experience prior to starting school.
- Improve the quality and impact of practice and services by:
  - increasing the number of parents engaging in adult training and volunteer opportunities to improve pathways to work experience, qualifications and/or employment
  - further improving systems to track the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to demonstrate the impact of early childhood services on narrowing the achievement gap between different groups of children and children's readiness for school.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, governance and management by:
  - improving the collation, interrogation and analysis of data to assess community needs more effectively and ensure performance-management procedures are accurately informed
  - improving the centre's business plan so that all key priorities are precise, grounded in measurable success criteria and contain well-informed targets to improve the accuracy of self-evaluation and the pace of improvement
  - significantly improving access to localised health data to enable centre leaders to assess health trends more effectively and set specific health targets within their business plan, particularly in relation to breastfeeding.
  - working closely with the local authority to increase the role and level of challenge provided by the coast collaborative steering group to secure an increasing critical analysis of their work
  - securing and sustaining a pathway for parents in formal decision-making processes and enable Eastfield families to retain a voice within the new steering group arrangements.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

#### Requires improvement

- Following a lengthy closure due to refurbishment, the centre has made a concerted effort to increase registrations by providing a busy summer activity programme, activities in the local library and Braeburn Community Infant and Nursery school and continuing home support through its parent support advisers. As a result the large majority of families are now registered with the centre.
- However, only 50% of families are actively engaged in services. Outreach services in the wider and more rural community are under-developed. In addition, the centre does not have an accurate picture of the make-up of the community, delaying the access by families and particular target groups. For instance, precise information about the number of disabled children, teen parents, Black and minority ethnic families and fathers is currently unknown.
- Current business plans to support increased engagement of target groups such as fathers and teen parents are still in their infancy as focused consultations to determine views about need and services they require have yet to take place.
- Following recent access to birth notifications, the development of some onsite health provision and strong partnerships with health professionals, the centre is better placed to make contact with families at an earlier point and provide access to pertinent services. Consequently, the centre has seen an increase in the number of children aged from birth to two years being registered.
- The centre has established an appropriate range of flexible provision which encourages the majority of families to engage in both universal and invitation-only services. Children whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and disabled children receive access to childcare and one-to-one parenting support ensuring the best possible start in their care and learning.
- Regular crèche support for parenting and education courses removes potential barriers to access.
- Assessment at age two shows children make steady progress given their very low start points in their learning as a result of early intervention work provided by the centre and Happy Jays. The centre has been very proactive in securing childcare places for all eligible two-year-olds in the reach area. As a result parents are thoroughly aware of the benefits of this provision and welcome the opportunity to access early help and education for their children.
- Although the uptake of three- and four-year nursery education funding is 79%, the centre is not aware of the reasons why the remaining 21% are not accessing their entitlement. This is because the funding data are not routinely investigated to understand access trends.

### The quality of practice and services

#### Requires improvement

- The lack of health data at a centre level impedes an accurate analysis of health trends in the area and prevents health-specific targets being set against local baseline data. Consequently, breastfeeding targets are set at a local authority level, which is unhelpful to the centre when attempting to improve the prevalence of breastfeeding at six-to-eight weeks.
- Families engage in a wide range of physical activities and educational programmes promoting their understanding of how to lead healthier lives. Onsite health provision continues to improve with groups such as 'bumps to buggies' and antenatal appointments provided by midwives. However, provision to support breastfeeding remains too limited across the collaboration of children's centres.
- Allocations to early help and support are swift due to multi-agency partnerships and effective screening to assess and identify needs. The Common Assessment Framework, alongside 'Team around the Child' meetings are well embedded and build an holistic approach to meeting the needs of the whole family. This is particularly so for those at risk of domestic violence, looked after children and children being supported by child-protection plans.
- In addition, the newly established 'Developing Stronger Families' project, is helping staff, in collaboration with key partners, to target families most in need of intensive early help and support and tailor services much more specifically.
- Adults access a satisfactory range of courses, such as 'Money Matters', mathematics, English and a 'Helping in Schools' programme, all of which help parents to develop their knowledge and skills and

broaden their aspirations for future success. However, at 31%, too few adults gain relevant qualifications and information about new local apprenticeship opportunities has yet to reach families who may benefit. Despite a well-established volunteering programme and a very proactive parent volunteer who has run the 'Hey What's Cooking?' group admirably for many years, the number of volunteers is too low.

- Play and learning experiences for children accessing the childcare and centre activities are appropriately planned and enjoyable due to the positive interaction between children, parents and staff. Good partnerships with the majority of local schools and childminders provide opportunities to share early years expertise, support school readiness and establish a smooth transition to school.
- However, only 31% of children achieve a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage which is below the local and the national average. Systems to track children's progress and demonstrate the difference services make are not yet good enough. This prevents the centre demonstrating how the achievement gap between different groups of children is being tackled as the gap has not reduced for three years.
- Parents benefit from a range of parenting courses alongside activities that help them to understand and support their children's development such as, 'Terrific Toddlers', 'Stay and Play', 'Baby Play' and 'Little Monkeys' and the more intensive, 'Family Links' programme. As a result parents value early education and learning and state they are more confident in their own parenting skills.
- Parents speak highly of the services and staff and they refer to the centre as a place of 'safety and security' and where they learn positive strategies that help to keep themselves and their children safe. One parent returning to the area after a period away reported, 'I could not wait to get back, it was like coming home.'

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

#### **Requires improvement**

- Leadership, governance and management of the centre are sound. The centre manager is experienced, highly motivated and well qualified for her role. Staff are carefully supported and supervised at all levels.
- The coast collaborative steering group includes consistent membership from a range of partner agencies who are highly supportive of the work of the centre. However, the challenge provided by the group to drive forward improvements has not been robust due to the lack of rigour in the way centre performance has been interpreted.
- Available data are not interrogated with rigour leading to misconceptions about the centre's on-going performance. For example, data are not used effectively to monitor, track and analyse engagement by key target groups or assess the centres work towards reducing inequalities in health, achievement and life chances. Consequently, and despite a well-structured annual conversation process, the centre's self-evaluation is not accurate.
- The business plan also lacks rigour. Performance targets and success measures within the business plan are not used well enough to enable staff, the local authority and the steering group to effectively monitor impact across all services.
- The centre is improving because the local authority has secured partnership agreements with key partners such as health and adult-learning providers. These are helping to improve information-sharing protocols and increase the provision for children and families.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are generally secure and statutory requirements are met. Parent support advisers, in particular, receive good levels of training and professional support, ensuring they understand how best to assess and meet the needs of the families with whom they work. In addition, close supervision alongside regular case file management helps to identify weaknesses in recordings, ensures family files are kept up to date and progress for families routinely reviewed.
- Parents demonstrate a good understanding of the centre's safeguarding responsibilities and duty to protect all children because child-protection policies and procedures are transparent and clearly explained.
- The centre has established some good strategies to engage parents in the planning and delivery of

services and activities. For example, some parents influenced the development of a full summer activity programme, they challenged the joining up of services when these did not meet needs and they participated in a consultation about temporary closure and refurbishment of the centre.

- A few parents have held decision-making roles on the previous management steering group. However, only one has maintained this position on the newly formed steering group. Furthermore, a parents' forum has been disbanded due to lack of parental engagement with the process.
- Financial management and deployment of services, staffing and resources are sound. Small charges for universal services such as 'Hey What's Cooking?' and 'Baby Play' have been introduced sensitively and carefully, ensuring equal access to services and ensuring families, especially those in greatest need, are not excluded from services.

## 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>	22642
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427567
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	630
<b>Centre leader</b>	Louise Goodger
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01609 534053
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