

Coventry – North East 2

Moat House Children's Centre, Deedmore Road, Coventry, CV2 1EQ

Inspection date 4-5 December 2013

| Overall effectiveness | This inspection: Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
|--|---|-----------------------------|----------|
| 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:

- The centres are reaching and engaging the majority of local families, including those in most need of support. However, the number of families accessing services is not yet high enough.
- The centres do not place sufficient emphasis on providing services for families with one-to-two year old children.
- Partnership working with adult and health services remains in place but has declined over-time. The impact of this is insufficiently established.
- The centres are working well with those families most in need of support but, data are not presented well or used effectively by senior leaders to look closely at how progress is measured and sustained.
- Strategic agreements with health partners do not currently enable good information sharing to help the centres target and develop services.
- Governance arrangements do not make best use of information to drive improvement.

This children's centre group has the following strengths:

- Staff provide good quality care, support and advice. Parents develop trusting relationships with them and appreciate the support given.
- Services directly provided by the group are well planned and of a good quality.
- Local schools report that children who have attended children's centre services are better prepared for school.
- Young parents, disabled children and those with special educational needs are closely monitored and supported well through specialist services.

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. The centres that form part of this children's centre group are Bell Green Children's Centre, Moat House Children's Centre and Richard Lee Children's Centre.

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

The inspectors held meetings with representatives from the local authority and advisory board, the senior leadership team, early year's practitioners, outreach workers, representatives from professional partnerships, volunteers and parents.

The inspectors visited a range of activities across the centres. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation

Inspection team

Kathryn Gethin, Lead Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Maxine Mayer

Her Majesty's Inspector

Geoff Dorrity

Additional Inspector

Full report

Coventry North East 2 is a group of children's centres in Coventry made up of three centres: Moat House and Bell Green, both phase one children's centres and Richard Lee, a phase 2 children's centre. All three centres open each week day from 8.00am to 5.00pm five days a week and are in close proximity to each other. Moat House Children's Centre and Richard Lee Children's Centre are situated on primary school sites. There are two local authority early years providers within the Moat House and Bell Green centres. These provide sessional care for children aged two to four years. Schools and early year's providers are subject to separate inspection arrangements. The reports can be found on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The children's centre service within Coventry has been part of a fundamental service review and now forms part of the Children and Family First service. Governance for the group is provided by the local authority with a single partnership board serving the group. The group offers a wide range of services to meet its core purpose. These include: post-natal appointments; play and learning; family support and adult and family learning opportunities. Services are also delivered in the community.

There are 3,805 children aged under five years living in the area. The large majority of families in the locality live in communities ranked within the top 30% for deprivation nationally. Richard Lee area has a mixed economy of population with large pockets of deprivation. The centre's key target groups are: disabled children and those with special educational needs; young parents; multiple birth families; lone parents and children living in workless and low income households. Unemployment rates, families on benefits and the proportion of adults without any qualifications are high. Most of the population is White British with smaller percentages of families from minority ethnic groups. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities are below those typically expected for their age when they enter early year's provision.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Improve access to services by:
 - increasing the registration levels and sustained engagement of families in most need, so that more families benefit from the services offered by the centres
 - developing play sessions at the centres for families with children in the one-to –two age group.

- Improve the quality and impact of practice and services by:
 - ensuring all services are of a high quality through evaluation of participation, attendance and quality improvement records in order to measure impact
 - developing procedures for tracking and recording the learning and development of children and adults
 - furthering the development of partnership working with health services and adult education to improve families health and well-being.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, governance and management by:
 - working with the local authority to ensure data are comprehensive, analysed and readily available in a meaningful format and use this data more effectively to look closely at how progress is measured and sustained
 - strengthening how the local authority and partnership board make better use of data to drive improvement
 - developing strategic agreements with the health authority to enable effective sharing of live birth information.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- A majority of families in the area with children aged from birth to four years are registered with the children's centres and target groups are clearly identified. However, outreach workers do not currently have capacity to support and encourage those families who are unlikely to access services. As a result, the number of children attending from families in most need is not yet high enough.
- There are some examples of strong, robust partnership working by the group. For example, services for teenage parents are delivered effectively through a strong partnership with the Youth Advice service. This means that all teenage parents are known and accessing services which impact positively on their lives and parenting skills.
- The effective work and support of the childcare sector by centre staff means that most eligible two-year-old children and an increasing number of three and four-year-old children, take-up their free entitlement to early education. There are suitable and sufficient places to meet demand.
- Information and data are not always shared effectively between partners or used well. Health visitors do not currently supply live birth data or information with regard to those children accessing universal services. However, the local authority is working with partners to improve this.
- The programme of activities has a strong focus on involving all parents and families. The majority of referrals for disabled children and those with special educational needs are received before the child's first birthday. Therefore, support for families through the Portage service or specialist groups in the centres such as, 'together like me' is in place from an early stage.
- The current programme for the centres does not offer a sufficient range of play sessions for the youngest children. As a result, a minority of families from the area choose to access services in neighbouring centres where sessions are more readily available.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- Services directly provided by the children's centre group are of a good quality and highly valued by parents. However, services provided by partners are not routinely scrutinised for their quality of delivery using the partners' internal quality improvement systems.
- Local schools report that children who have attended children's centre services are better prepared for school. In 2013 the proportion of children across the locality who achieved a good level of development was above local and national figures, with most children accessing the centre based childcare demonstrating good progress.
- Partnership working with early years' providers, youth service, schools and employment service providers is good and leading to improved outcomes for families. However, partnership working with adult training services to provide on-site programmes is in decline and partnership working with health services requires improvement to target families who would most benefit.
- Families are very well supported and guided by experienced practitioners who are strong role models and representative of the local community. Staff pay strong attention to the diverse and cultural needs of the families who access their services. A recent success has been the number of families becoming involved in a language and performing arts project run jointly with Moat House School nursery.
- Early identification and support for families in most need through the Children and Families First team and social care is good. Managers and staff review this work thoroughly and frequently monitor all referrals to its services to ensure families progress as well as possible relevant to their circumstances.
- Children attending services other than childcare and adults are not tracked effectively to demonstrate their development. Therefore, the centres have been unable to sufficiently analyse the impact of services.
- The children's centre group uses the local authority formal procedures for working with volunteers and numbers though low have recently improved. Suitability, of all volunteers is checked through the disclosure and barring service. Induction and training needs are adequately assessed and addressed.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management**Requires improvement**

- Local authority leaders and managers have taken the centres through a period of significant change. During this time performance management has not been as strong. However, staff morale and motivation remain high and staff have embraced opportunities to develop their skills.
- Data provided by the local authority lacks clarity and as a consequence is not used effectively enough by leaders and managers to look closely at how progress is measured and sustained.
- Governance arrangements are not fully effective. The partnership board meets on a regular basis and have a good understanding of local needs. However, information is not used well enough to shape service provision and drive improvement.
- Current arrangements for obtaining information, such as new births on families in the area are not systematic enough. The local authority is continuing to work with health partners at a strategic level to agree how this can be improved.
- Staff are well-trained and have relevant expertise. Resources are sufficient but currently stretched due to one employee being on maternity leave and another on long-term sick leave. Where needed the group has prioritised services, and made good use of partners by sign-posting families to relevant services.
- Safeguarding procedures are supported by robust policies and procedures. Staff use the Common Assessment Framework well. All children on child protection plans, children-in-need and looked-after children are known and supported well through close partnership working.
- Parents say how much they value the work of the centres and encourage others to join in the sessions. Activities such as 'little stars' are run by parent volunteers with support from the centre. Parents say how staff have made them 'feel relaxed and welcome' and they are confident to approach staff to discuss any issues.

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 Group details

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique reference number | 80277 |
| Local authority | Coventry |
| Inspection number | 424742 |
| Managed by | The local authority |

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Approximate number of children under five in the reach area | 3,805 |
| Group manager | Karen Ritchie |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 02476 785621 |
| Email address | karen.ritchie@coventry.gov.uk |

This group consists of the following children’s centres:

- 20258 Bell Green children’s Centre
- 22030 Moat House Children’s Centre
- 22500 Richard Lee Children’s Centre

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