

Teign Valley Children's Centre

33 Fore Street, Chudleigh, Newton Abbott, Devon, TQ13 0HX

Inspection date 17–18 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:		
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 is a centre that requires improvement.. It is not good because:

- A minority of families with children under five are not yet benefitting from the support and services of the centre, especially in the areas where families need most help.
- Information about all the teenage parents in the area is not yet routinely shared by the health authorities, so that centre staff do not know how many there are and cannot offer them support.
- The centre does not yet have systems in place to track the impact of its work over time in preparing children for school, supporting adult learning and improving the lives of families.
- Not enough parents are involved in shaping the work of the centre through contributions to the work of Friends of Sure Start and the advisory board, or the centre's detailed analysis of their views.

This children's centre has the following strengths:

- Through generally good partnerships with health and social services, in particular, the centre knows most of the families with young children in the valley and increasing numbers benefit from its activities, guidance and support.
- The centre's well-trained and supportive staff and key partners provide a range of good quality early years activities and parenting courses throughout the valley, which are popular and appreciated by parents.
- Leaders and the advisory board have high aspirations for the families in the area. They have worked creatively to provide good quality services to meet their needs across the valley. The centre is improving and leaders are very clear about what needs to be done to bring about further progress.
- The centre staff provide high levels of care, guidance and support to its families. They work very effectively with key partners to ensure that the risk of harm is reduced for children most in need.

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 leader, the children's services manager for Action for Children, representatives of the local authority, members of staff, two local headteachers and a number of key partners, for example in health and JobCentre Plus. They also spoke to parents at various activities and in a number of meetings.

The inspectors visited activities that were being offered in various locations throughout the valley. Some of these were seen jointly with the centre leader.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including data held by the centre, policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of children and adults and the centre's plans for the future. They also took into account the views of parents expressed in their responses to surveys.

Inspection team

Graham Lee	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Penny Mathers	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Teign Valley Children's Centre was designated as a phase three standalone centre in April 2011. It is managed by Action for Children on behalf of the local authority. The centre manager also leads two other children's centres in the locality, Moors Edge and ABC Children's Centre. These centres work closely together and some parents attend services at the other centres. Teign Valley serves the two small towns of Chudleigh and Kingsteignton and rural locations throughout the valley. It offers early childhood services, parenting courses and health services in conjunction with its key partners. It provides help and support to families in need through working with them in their own homes. The centre also helps to put parents in touch with the right people for advice about issues such as benefits, domestic violence and adult education. The centre is based in an office in Chudleigh and services are delivered in various locations in Chudleigh and Kingsteignton and throughout the valley.

The centre serves one of the more affluent areas of Devon and levels of worklessness and families on benefits are low. However, there are pockets of relative deprivation centred mainly around Kingsteignton. The vast majority of families are of White British heritage, with very few who speak English as an additional language. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills and understanding which are broadly typical for their age. In collaboration with Devon, the centre has identified children in the greatest need, disadvantaged two-year-olds, teenage parents and families in its two relatively deprived pockets as the groups it is targeting for particular help.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that most families with young children are benefiting from the services of Teign Valley, or other nearby centres, especially in the places where it has identified there is most need of support.
- Work with partners in health to obtain up-to-date information about teenage parents in the area, so that the centre can support them.
- Develop systems to track the impact of the centre's work over a period of time, particularly in preparing children for school, supporting adult learning and improving the lives of families.
- Involve parents more in shaping the services of the centre through detailed analysis of their views and through contributing to the Friends of Sure Start and the advisory board.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Access to services requires improvement because there is still a minority of families with young children who are not involved in the centre's work, especially in the areas where it has identified most need.
- As a result of generally good sharing of information with partners, most of the families with young children in the area are known to the centre and registered with them. A majority of families, including mothers expecting children, are now benefiting from the activities, support and guidance provided by the centre and its key partners. Many of these keep in regular contact with the centre.
- Nearly half the families with young children are located in the two areas of Kingsteignton which are more densely populated and where the centre has identified the most need. As a result of successful promotion, the majority of families in these areas are now accessing services both in Teign Valley and the neighbouring ABC Centre. However, a minority is not yet involved in the centre's work.
- The centre has ensured that almost all of the teenage parents it knows about are involved in its services, or in the nearby Moors Edge Centre where there is a group established especially for them. However, the protocols for sharing information data are not yet fully established and, as a result, the centre does not know how many teenage parents there are in the valley.
- Families' needs are assessed well in the few cases where children are identified as being in greatest need, through productive working relationships with children's social care. The centre supports

these families effectively in their own homes to make improvements and to ensure that children are safe from harm.

- Currently, all almost all families where two-year-old children are entitled to free education take up the offer. Through the '2gether programme', the centre has established productive relationships with early years settings to help children to make the most of this entitlement.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The quality and practice of services require improvement because the activities and support provided by the centre are not yet reaching most of the families in the areas where the centre has identified most need.
- The centre provides a range of good quality services to support pregnant mothers and families through the various stages of child development. These services are delivered in partnership with health services and through the knowledgeable staff team. They are provided mainly in Kingsteignton and Chudleigh, the main hubs of population, but also throughout the valley.
- These courses and activities are very popular and are provided for all parents, who point to the positive improvements it has made to their children's development. Representation of those identified as most in need is sometimes low on these courses, but some attend courses at the neighbouring Moors Edge Centre in Newton Abbott.
- Although the centre does not provide childcare directly, it works in close partnership with early years providers and schools to support children's learning and development. Outcomes for children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are above average in the valley and the gaps for the children most in need have closed considerably. However, the centre is not yet tracking the impact of its work over time to measure its contribution to these good levels of achievement.
- A strong feature of the centre's work is the developing of parenting skills through the Solihull programme in particular. These courses have a significant impact in improving the lives of families. As one parent commented, 'The information about development stages has helped me to understand my children and has had a positive impact on my family.'
- The centre encourages parents to volunteer and a number have developed their confidence, skills and employability as a result to improve the economic well-being of their families. A particular feature is that a number of parents have set up and are leading their own groups in different locations in the valley.
- Adult education and advice about gaining employment have not been a high priority for the centre because unemployment is low and many parents choose to stay at home with their children. However, the centre does signpost parents to adult education and JobCentre Plus. Currently, these partnerships are limited and the centre is not tracking the impact of these links on the families concerned.
- An important aspect of the centre is the high levels of care, guidance and support provided by all staff to the families in the area. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. All members of staff foster good relationships really well and many parents told inspectors how friendly and supportive they are and one, for example, commented, 'When you come here once you come back again.'

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The arrangements for the management and governance are clear. There are strong lines of accountability between the local authority, Action for Children and the centre leader. All are focused on the centre's key purpose of improving the lives of the families most in need and have high aspirations which are shared between by all members of staff. In all its work, the centre is committed to reducing inequalities for its families. The centre's performance is checked rigorously and effectively at all levels.
- The centre leader works closely with the children's services manager for Action for Children to identify the centre's key priorities and to focus on those families most in need of its help. They have a realistic view of the centre's performance and have clear and ambitious plans to build on the work

of the previous centre leader. Consequently, the centre is improving, although it is not yet reaching a large majority of the families it has identified as most in need of its services.

- The advisory board oversees the work of the three centres in the cluster. It is representative of a wide range of partners and expertise and keeps a close check on how well the centres are doing. It knows about the quality of provision and about how the centre is reaching those families it has identified as most in need.
- Currently, there are no parents from Teign Valley on the advisory board or on The Friends of Sure Start, which is a group of parents across the three centres who are consulted about the centres' work. Additionally, whilst the centre surveys parents about its services, there is, as yet, no detailed analysis of this information that is used to shape services in the future.
- The centre is using the available information with increasing effect to identify the needs of families in the area. Whilst feedback is sought from users of services, the centre is not yet tracking the impact of its work over time on school readiness, adult education and improvements made through parenting courses.
- The safeguarding of children and adults is a high priority for all in the centre and this is reflected in rigorous policies and procedures. There is a senior and experienced member of staff dedicated to working with children in need and those subject to a child protection plan. As a result, the centre is effective in helping these families to make improvements. The Common Assessment Framework is used effectively in partnership with other agencies to measure the needs of families and provide the appropriate support.
- Arrangements for the supervision and professional development of staff are fully embedded and the staff value the opportunities they have to discuss their work. Consequently, relationships are good, morale is high and staff work well together to achieve their goals.
- The centre uses its limited resources creatively to provide services throughout its main hubs of population and the more outlying areas. However, resources, in terms of personnel and premises, are sometimes stretched in view of the geographical layout of the valley. The encouragement of parent-led groups has been a creative response to this situation.

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.

Select details

Unique reference number	23117
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	430044
Managed by	Action for Children on behalf of the local authority.

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1058
Centre leader	Kate Freeman
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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