

Daisychain Children's Centre

Melrose Avenue, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK3 6PS

Inspection date 17-18 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
Access to services by young children and families		Inadequate	4
The quality of practice and services		Inadequate	4
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a centre that is inadequate. It is not good because:

- The centre has not improved enough since its previous inspection. Leaders have not tackled most of the recommendations to help the centre improve. The local authority has not provided enough support to help the centre establish effective targets for its development. The centre coordinator does not observe staff delivering sessions in the centre so does not have a clear picture of the quality of their work.
- Too few families are using the centre's services and only a minority of families in most need are known to the centre. Staff do not receive sufficient information from the local authority or key partners, such as health professionals, to help them identify all of the families who would benefit the most from attending the centre.
- Arrangements for checking the progress made by children and adults who attend the centre are not sufficiently well developed. Staff are unable to clearly identify children who need further support because accurate measures of progress are not used.
- Partnerships with adult learning providers remain underdeveloped, with no formal arrangements for recording how well the parents are doing.
- The advisory group is not effective enough. It does not have a chairperson and does not provide the centre with sufficient challenge to help it improve. Key strategic partnerships remain underdeveloped and the information produced by the local authority is unreliable.

This children's centre has the following strengths:

- Staff provide good individual support for families known to the centre. They create a welcoming environment, which encourages families to return and make use of the good resources available. Many parents view the staff as positive role models and place a high degree of trust in their advice and guidance.
- Safeguarding arrangements are given high priority and the centre coordinator ensures professional supervision and support for staff are effective. Detailed recording on case files demonstrates good attention is given to helping parents understand how to manage risk and develop effective solutions in times of crisis.

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 the centre coordinator, family support workers and officers from the local authority. They also met health, education and early years partners, parents, volunteers and representatives of the advisory group. They looked at the centre's self-evaluation, action planning, a sample of case studies and safeguarding procedures.

The inspectors visited activities jointly with the children's centre teacher.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Daniel Grant	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Lesley Elizabeth Talbot-Strettle	Additional Inspector
Jamie Hassan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

The centre became operational in 2009 as a phase three standalone centre based at Abbeys Primary School in West Bletchley. The centre delivers a range of services to meet its core purpose, including family support and baby massage. It is open Monday to Thursday from 8.45am to 5.00pm and on Fridays from 8.45am to 4.30pm. It is managed by the local authority, with the advisory group, comprising key partners and parents assisting its governance. The centre coordinator shares her full-time role between this centre and another centre subject to a separate inspection. The local authority is about to embark on a review of children's centres across the area.

There are 1,264 children under five years of age living in the centre's area, which is mainly urban. The vast majority of families live in areas ranked within the 30%–70% most deprived in the country, with pockets of deprivation predominantly around Granby and West Bletchley. Data show that overall 29% of children live in workless households and 20% of families are eligible for working benefits. Most families living within the reach area are of White British heritage, with around one third from a wide range of different minority ethnic groups, particularly Eastern European and African Caribbean. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities when the children enter early years provision are typically at levels expected for their age.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- With the local authority, improve leadership, governance and management to ensure that all families, particularly those with the greatest needs, have access to a full range of high quality services which improve their life-chances and well-being by:
 - ensuring the local authority provides effective leadership, robust scrutiny and consistent support
 - establishing a robust development plan with clear and challenging targets which clearly identify and prioritise all of the areas in need of improvement
 - improving the effectiveness of strategic partnerships with health professionals and adult learning providers so that information is shared and delivery of services is better integrated
 - strengthening governance arrangements and ensuring the advisory group meets its terms of reference, elects a chairperson and rapidly develops its role in holding the centre to account
 - improving the quality of information received from the local authority and using it effectively to establish a clear profile of the needs of local families
 - implementing more thorough and systematic quality improvement arrangements, including observations of staff to ensure all aspects of service delivery improve.
- Increase the engagement of families in most need, particularly families who have children with additional needs, families with minority ethnic heritage and lone parents through better use of information and more effective partnership working.
- Ensure children and adults who get involved in services have their progress checked so that they can see the benefits of attending the centre.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Inadequate

- Since the previous inspection the number of families with children under five who have registered with the centre has increased significantly, but the proportion that uses the centre's services remains too low.
- The centre and its partners do not work together effectively enough to target families with the greatest needs, such as teenage parents, children with additional needs, those from minority ethnic groups, or those expecting a baby. Consequently, only a small minority of these families

use its services. Staff look at participation rates and are aware of the need to extend the centre's reach, but are not clear how best to go about doing this.

- Strategies for encouraging families to participate in relevant services are ineffective. A small number of families receive highly effective home visits from centre staff and receive good individual support. This helps to make improvements to their well-being and reduce inequalities, such as encouragement to seek specialist advice over debt and housing problems. However, staff are not focused closely enough on identifying those less likely to engage.
- The centre has been successful in helping local families who are eligible to take up their free entitlement to high quality early years education and a large majority now benefit from this. However, staff are not clear how many of these children are from families in most need because registration information is incomplete. The centre does not gather sufficiently detailed information to identify whether children are prepared well for starting school.
- A few parents in touch with the centre benefit from accessing further education courses, but numbers are low and there are no arrangements for staff to check their progress. Links with Jobcentre Plus are becoming increasingly effective, but staff are unaware of the outcomes for parents. The centre is not active enough in promoting volunteering.

The quality of practice and services

Inadequate

- The impact of practice and services in improving children's well-being and improving the lives of families is not fully understood because the centre does not check progress. Those who use the centre's services receive good support and acquire new skills and increased confidence, but this is not systematically recorded. Breastfeeding rates are low and childhood obesity levels are higher than the regional and national rates.
- Close links with the neighbouring school benefit many families, but good opportunities are missed to reduce the very large gap which exists between boys' and girls' achievement at the end of Key Stage 1. The very popular 'let's play and learn together' sessions do not provide boys with sufficiently challenging or interesting experiences as they play and explore the outdoor area.
- In 2013, 53% of children living in the reach area achieved a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The good work of the centre staff does not benefit the majority of the families with the greatest needs because they do not attend. Accordingly, further improvements are required to ensure the impact of services on improving life chances and reducing inequalities increases.
- The quality, range and relevance of services offered by the centre are typically good, but the take up by those most in need is too low. For example, through volunteering, a parent has been encouraged to build workplace skills when supporting reading, but arrangements for more volunteering opportunities are under developed, with very few parents able to benefit.
- Staff are seen as positive role models and families value the good quality care, guidance and support that help them overcome urgent problems. The centre's work to promote some equalities is successful, as reflected in the gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and the rest, which is closing more rapidly than seen nationally.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Inadequate

- Leadership, governance and management have not improved since the previous inspection. The local authority does not monitor the effectiveness of the centre thoroughly enough and arrangements for governance through the advisory group are not fully established. Day-to-day management of the centre has improved since the previous inspection but there is a lack of focus on targeting those with the greatest needs.
- There has been insufficient support from the local authority to help the centre establish effective targets for its development. The centre coordinator has received inadequate support to prioritise actions for improvement. Consequently, the centre does not have an effective development plan

with challenging targets which clearly identifies all of the areas in need of improvement.

- The advisory group recognises it does not yet provide effective governance for the centre. It is not fully established and does not currently have a chairperson or sufficient understanding of the quality of practice and services. Information provided by the local authority is unreliable so cannot be used to accurately measure the centre's performance. The advisory group does not know how effective the centre is at closing the gap for children and families and reducing inequalities.
- The centre has a wide range of good resources and services, but these are not used effectively or efficiently enough to establish local priorities and meet the needs of families with most needs living in the area. Arrangements for ensuring the quality of activities offered by the centre are not yet fully developed. The centre coordinator observes staff conducting home visits, but does not observe staff delivering sessions in the centre.
- Good relationships exist between practitioners such as health visitors and centre staff and an increasing amount of joint working takes place. However, sharing of information to target those in most need is limited, such as children with additional needs. Strategic partnerships with health and adult education providers remain underdeveloped. Services are not sufficiently integrated because protocols for sharing information are not fully established.
- The centre leadership team has very recently established a clear and realistic understanding of what is required to improve the centre. The team recognises that current arrangements remain inadequate, but is optimistic that plans to improve the centre will be effective. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these plans. The parents' survey responses and post-activity evaluations demonstrate a slight decrease in their level of satisfaction.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young children are given high priority. The centre works closely with other professionals to maintain a strong focus on reducing the risk of harm to children. This includes those subject to child protection plans, those identified as being in need, looked after children and those assessed using the Common Assessment Framework. Effective policies, procedures and practices are in place and staff have good levels of knowledge and awareness with which they promote well-being.

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.

Unique reference number	20907
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	440211
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,264
Centre leader	Tracy Seymour
Date of previous inspection	9–10 October 2012
Telephone number	01908 641454
Email address	Daisychain.ChildrensCentre@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

(Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

