

Victoria Hall Children's Centre

Station Road, Queensbury, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD13 1AB

Inspection date 16–17 January 2014

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.

- The centre has registered all families in the area. A large majority of them, particularly those from target groups, participate well in activities. They are very vocal about the positive difference the centre makes to their lives.
- The centre is well known as the hub of the local community and deservedly enjoys a good reputation. The small team of staff know the community well and quickly identify individuals and groups most in need of support.
- Children do well during their time at the centre. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children reach a good level of development and they are well prepared for school.
- Partnership work is a key strength. Staff have established highly effective relationships with a wide range of partners, including those in health, schools, adult education and social care. Consequently, staff provide a wide range of good quality services that help families to improve their health and well-being, along with their chances for enjoying a successful life.
- Families benefit from first-class care, guidance and support. As a result, families are helped to deal with difficult situations through successful outreach work, referrals and specific services, in order to overcome barriers and to reduce potential risks within the home.
- There is good quality advice, education and training, as well as opportunities to volunteer, all of which help adults who are unemployed to return to work.
- Leadership, management and governance are good. They continually seek ways to improve further all aspects of the effectiveness of the centre and, most importantly, outcomes for local families. The advisory board is proactive, well led and keeps a close check of how well the centre is working.

It is not outstanding because:

- The centre has not succeeded in reducing the rate of mothers smoking at delivery, in sustaining rates of breastfeeding at six-to-eight weeks after delivery or in improving children's oral health.
- Assessment procedures are relatively new. As yet, staff do not check and record regularly the progress that children and adults make in sessions. This makes it more difficult to show the impact of activities on users' skills.

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 centre staff, parents, members of the advisory board, volunteers, representatives from professional partnerships including health, early years, adult education, and also officers from the local authority. Inspectors observed one activity jointly with centre staff.

The inspectors took into account parents' views as expressed directly to them during the inspection, as well as through parents' recorded evaluations of the centre's work.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, such as the centre's performance management systems, development plans and data, information related to safeguarding and a selection of case files.

Inspection team

Jane Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Joan Cawdron

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Victoria Hall is a stand-alone children's centre, managed by the local authority and located in the grounds of Victoria Hall, in the village of Queensbury. It shares a site with the local library and swimming pool. Queensbury Tykes Pre-school shares the building and is subject to separate inspection arrangements. Inspection reports on this provision can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. The centre is the smallest of seven centres in Bradford South. The centre runs a range of integrated services including health, support for teenage and lone parents and family support. The advisory board reformed this year after separating from a combined board with Reevy Hill Children's Centre. The centre targets teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers, two-year-old children and lone parent families living in the most disadvantaged area of the reach as well as children with additional needs.

Within the reach, there are 581 children under five years of age. Of these, 100% are registered with the centre. The reach area falls between the 30% and the 70% least deprived areas in the country, with pockets of deprivation across it. Of families within the reach, 12.2% are unemployed and 25% of families in the reach are in receipt of the childcare element of working tax credit. There are 14.1% of children living in households dependent on workless benefits. Almost all families are of White British heritage. Children access early years education from a range of local childcare providers. Most children enter early years provision with skills typical for their age.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of mothers who are still breastfeeding at six-to-eight weeks after delivery, improve children's oral health and reduce the proportion of mothers who smoke during pregnancy.
- Build on the emerging assessment procedures so that staff check and record regularly and in enough detail, how well children and families are developing their skills and so that leaders can demonstrate more clearly the impact of this work by the centre.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- All local families, including those expecting children, are registered with the centre and have access to good quality services. Very close cooperation between the centre and health partners has driven up registration figures which have risen to 100% over the last four years. The centre signposts users to other relevant services, such as external sources of information, support and guidance.
- Staff regularly check who engages with centre services. They know that a large majority of families participate meaningfully in activities provided by the centre, particularly those from target groups. Staff are quick to contact families, particularly those likely to be in most need of help and support, who do not regularly engage in centre activities.
- All staff at the centre build strong relationships with families. For example, outreach workers are well known in the area and are often stopped by families who require support or to advise staff of others who would benefit from contact with centre services. One parent commented, 'My daughter has had a lovely childhood thanks to support for me and centre activities for her. A fantastic benefit.'
- Adults access services regularly to develop their economic well being. Volunteering opportunities are popular and lead to opportunities for work, both paid and unpaid, within and beyond the centre.
- The very large majority of families most in need access free nursery places for their children aged two, three and four years.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Staff are versatile and knowledgeable. The outreach team delivers a successful range of relevant universal and targeted services across the community. Children with additional needs, teenage and lone parents are well supported by outreach workers and families talk about the trusting relationships and good quality advice and support for them. One parent observed, 'Before I knew about the centre, life was very hard.'
- Very strong partnerships with early years providers promote health and well-being and develop children's skills and their readiness for school. Even though the centre promotes the value of healthy lifestyles, as seen in the much lower rates of obesity for children at the end of Reception Year and the rise in the initiation of breastfeeding, more work to reach a few health targets remains. For example, breastfeeding is not sufficiently sustained at six-to-eight weeks after delivery, too many mothers continue to smoke at delivery and children's oral health is not good enough.
- An above-average percentage of children across the reach achieve a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop key skills for future success. The rate of children's progress is improving year on year and the gap in attainment between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest continues to narrow. This confirms that the centre is improving children's life chances, reducing inequalities and preparing them well for school.
- Systems to track the progress children and adults make when they attend centre activities are relatively new. Currently, staff do not check or record regularly the progress that children and adults make in sessions in order to collate a clear picture of the impact of the centre for users.
- Adults from target groups, such as lone parents and teenage parents, participate in a range of activities to enhance their education, employability and general work skills. The centre is very much the hub of the community and satisfaction rates from families are high.
- The centre manager monitors the impact of services to ensure that these are relevant to the community. The centre adapts programmes in a timely manner to ensure that services are appreciated by the widest possible audience and so improves the lives of families.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Governance is highly effective. The leadership and the Chair of the advisory board encourage contributions from influential partners, such as a consultant midwife. The diverse and knowledgeable membership ensures that governance provides well-informed challenge to all aspects of the centre's work through the regular review of data, the management of staff performance and input into accurate self-evaluation. They have an accurate view of how well the centre is doing and make good use of all available information to plan further improvements.
- Leaders and managers are highly ambitious for the centre and have rapidly moved forward the successful work of the centre, particularly with target groups. They are held in the highest regard by partners and parents.
- The local authority is closely involved, alongside the centre's leadership, in helping to ensure that the centre is reducing local inequalities and improving outcomes for users. Local authority officers set challenging and measurable targets and ensure that data are readily available.
- Partnership work is exemplary. Through the careful use of good quality resources, the centre is able to provide a varied range of activities and services to meet the needs of families and the community. Close working links with the co-located pre-school leads to good sharing of information and resources and results in well-managed transition to the next stage of learning for children. One partner commented, 'The centre is like the trunk of the tree with everything else branching off from it.'
- Leaders ensure that good use is made of the diverse skills among staff. Staff are supervised closely by the centre leader. An effective programme of professional development results in well-qualified and knowledgeable staff.
- Parents and children provide regular opinions about their interests and needs and discuss how well the centre runs. They are involved in key decision making at different levels, for instance through

their representation on the advisory board and the parents' forum. The Chair is knowledgeable and ensures that the voice of parents is valued as an important resource.

- Safeguarding arrangements are of the highest quality. Clear policies and procedures to promote the welfare of young children and to reduce the risk of harm to families are comprehensive and are implemented consistently. Centre staff and partner agencies provide effective support to families at risk of harm and to families with children subject to child protection plans, looked after children and children in need. Staff use the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process and other tools to assess the needs of families in order to provide the appropriate levels of support. Staff meticulously maintain these files and leaders check them regularly to ensure consistency of practice.
- Effective leadership, strong partnership work and effective budgeting have enabled the centre to increase its impact significantly, particularly over the last year. The gap in life chances has narrowed between families, including children, and services reflect the priorities of families and the community. Leaders recognise there is more to do to check, record and show exactly how well users develop skills at the centre.

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

Unique reference number	23415
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	430180
Managed by	City of Bradford local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	581
Centre leader	Zoe Duffy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01274 432690
Email address	gemma.smith@bradford.gov.uk

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