

Havant East Children's Centre Group

Sharps Copse Schools Campus, Prospect Lane, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 5PG

Inspection date 22–24 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.

- Most priority families, and particularly fathers, teenage and lone parents and children with disabilities or special educational needs, regularly use the centres.
- Staff focus strongly on inclusion, remove barriers to participation and reduce isolation for families.
- Parents and children develop positive relationships and behaviour through attending the group's good quality activities. They use what they learn at these to good effect at home.
- Family support workers give families very good individual help and use successful strategies to assist parents to build confidence and motivation to improve their lives and keep their children safe.
- A good number of eligible children take up their free entitlement to early education because family support workers and partners promote this well.
- Many adults attend parenting and adult learning courses where they improve their self-esteem, cope better with conflict, help their children learn and develop confident English and mathematics skills.
- Volunteers play a very active role in the centres, gaining valuable skills and experience.
- The group has excellent partnerships with a wide range of professional organisations, particularly health and midwifery services, to provide families with seamless activities and services.
- Highly effective leaders and managers listen to, and value, families' views and ensure that their needs are met particularly well.
- Good management results in a strong culture of improvement and high satisfaction rates among the centres' users.

It is not outstanding because:

- Not enough children have a good level of development when they start school. Staff do not plan and evaluate activities sufficiently to link with the key stages of children's development.
- The group is struggling to cope with the increasing number of referrals to support families with children subject to a child protection (CP) or child in need (CIN) plan as it does not have sufficient family support workers.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre group 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 Sharps Copse and Park Futures Children's Centre, Starfish and Orchard Children's Centre and Trospacc Children's Centre.

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

The inspectors held meetings with the cluster manager, coordinators, lead practitioner, family support workers, senior leaders from the local authority and Action for Children, health partners, social care team leaders, troubled families coordinator, early years partners, adult learning and employment partners, volunteers, parents and members of the partnership boards.

The inspectors visited a range of activities at three centres and several outreach venues.

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

Inspection team

Janet Rodgers	Her Majesty's Inspector, Lead Inspector
Denise Blackwell	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jameel Hassan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the group

Havant East group (the group) has three children's centres: Sharps Copse and Park Futures, Trospacc and Starfish and Orchard delivering services on five sites across the Leigh Park, West Leigh and Warren Park areas of Havant, Hayling Island and Emsworth. Activities are also run at a large number of community venues, including schools, community centres and church halls. The group is managed by Action for Children on behalf of Hampshire County Council. The group works closely with Havant West group and shares a cluster manager, lead practitioner and a practitioner forum. Havant East group has two coordinators who oversee the day-to-day management of the centres. The three main centres each have a partnership board which comprises community representatives, partners and parents.

All centres are open five days a week, and Sharps Copse and Park Futures additionally runs activities on Saturday. Parents can access a wide range of services including health and midwifery clinics, play activities, adult learning, parenting classes and advice and guidance sessions. Sharps Copse and Park Futures acts as the service centre for the group and is located on the same site as Sharps Copse Primary and Nursery Schools with an additional site in a community facility at Warren Park Primary School. Trospacc is within the grounds of Trosnant Infant and Junior School; Starfish and Orchard is within Mengham Junior School's grounds with an additional site in the community room at Emsworth Primary School.

There are 4,364 children under five years living in the group's reach area. The area includes: Havant, a densely populated town with one of the largest social housing estates in Europe; Hayling Island, a holiday destination with seasonal employment where many families feel isolated; and Emsworth, where pockets of deprivation sit alongside affluence. All the group's centres are in areas with high levels of deprivation and disadvantage. Unemployment and adults with no, or low levels of, qualifications are particularly high in Havant but lower in Emsworth and on Hayling Island. The local population is predominantly White British. The group's children's skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to school are below the levels expected for their age.

Schools and registered early years providers are subject to separate inspection arrangements. Reports can be found at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Plan all activities to incorporate the key stages of children's development for the Early Years Foundation Stage, but particularly communication, literacy and numeracy, to increase the proportion of children achieving a good level of development when they enter school. Ensure that staff evaluate how successfully their planned activities develop children's skills, attitudes and understanding and record their progress within the 'weekly planners' and 'learning journeys'.
- The local authority and Action for Children should review the group's staffing at all levels to ascertain its sufficiency to respond to the increasing number of CP and CIN referrals and maintain the good levels of help and support while running more group sessions to meet these families' needs. As a matter of urgency, recruit to the unfilled family support worker vacancies.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families Good

- Most priority families access regularly the group's activities and services. The group holds activities in very convenient locations, including well-thought-through outreach venues. All centres are busy and used well.
- Managers and partners know who their priority families are and offer highly relevant services and activities with a strong focus on inclusion and reducing isolation. A good number of families with

children with special educational needs (SEN), disabilities or who are looked after join activities, including very tailored sessions such as the 'Little Stars SEN group'. Fathers feel welcome and many attend health clinics or young parents' groups while others join 'Family Fun' sessions held on a Friday and Saturday.

- All the known teenage parents in the area access the specific groups for young parents at Trospacc and Park Futures. Staff plan these groups carefully to run alongside midwife clinics, parenting sessions, 'Bumps'n'bundles' and breastfeeding support for that particular age range.
- The delivery of child-health clinics within the group's centres helps parents to learn at an early stage how centre staff can support them and their children to improve their health and well-being. Health visitors check the progress of two-year-old children and share any concerns they have immediately with family support workers.
- The number of families where no-one is in paid employment using the centres dipped for six months in 2013 because the partner delivering on-site employment support withdrew this service. The local authority and cluster manager applied pressure successfully to have this reinstated. Early indications show these families are starting to return to the centres and take up services.
- Family support workers working with families in their own home very successfully encourage parents to access services held at centres. They accompany parents who lack confidence and gradually introduce them to group activities. Parents welcome how this helps remove their barriers to participation.
- Family support workers liaise productively with agencies and specialist organisations when helping the large, and increasing, number of families with children subject to a CIN or CP plan. This close dialogue ensures families receive prompt, relevant and early support.
- The large majority of children eligible for two-year-old funding take up their free entitlement to early education. Managers and staff have good knowledge of the few that don't take this up and work productively to tackle the underlying reasons. They recognise the area needs more good quality childminders and are taking a key role in recruiting more.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The group offers good quality activities and services where children enjoy activities, such as 'Messy Bugs', that offer experiential learning. Staff and volunteers promote a positive climate that leads to good relationships between children and parents. They are sound role models who exhibit good techniques for speaking to children and managing their behaviour.
- Some, but not all, staff plan and evaluate activities and services well. In the less effectively planned activities, staff make insufficient links to the key areas of children's development within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Not enough children achieve a good level of development when they start school, although those accessing the group's activities and services do better.
- Family support workers improve the lives of the families they work with significantly by developing parents' understanding of how to keep their children safe. They assess families' needs thoroughly and provide extensive support. Parents receiving individual help have clear expectations and a good awareness of how they can improve family life.
- Adults benefit from a good range of parenting courses, including those specific to their child's age. They deal more positively and effectively with stress, depression and conflict at home. A good link with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service provides families with useful safety advice and free smoke detectors.
- Parents develop a better understanding of the importance of a healthy diet through 'Cook and Eat' sessions, information leaflets and healthy snacks at the centres. Children's obesity levels have improved significantly and are now better than national averages.
- Recent initiatives, such as 'Mum knows Breast', are showing early indications of improving the low breastfeeding rates. Staff respond creatively to the exceptionally strong and historic bottle-feeding culture in the area through campaigns, such as using local mothers in posters.
- Parents improve their English and mathematics through attending courses that are taught in a fun and meaningful context. Although on-site delivery is at an early stage, some parents have already

progressed to a higher level or a work-related qualification.

- Parents have valuable on-site careers and employment advice and guidance. The well-devised and managed volunteer programme has proved beneficial in helping parents develop confidence and skills, gain qualifications and jobs. A parent gained tremendous confidence through giving a presentation at the Labour Women's Conference about her experience as a volunteer.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The local authority and cluster manager set comprehensive targets with a strong focus on continuous improvement. They scrutinise progress routinely through well-established, and highly effective, monitoring and analysis of data. The group achieves most of its targets, and where they fall short, the cluster manager and coordinators take appropriate remedial action.
- The cluster manager and coordinators hold regular supervision meetings with staff and volunteers, and manage their performance very effectively. Staff receive highly relevant training and development. This has helped family support workers become more confident in aspects such as questioning parents' attitudes towards their children.
- The highly effective partnership boards provide extensive support for the group. Board members draw on their impressive awareness of each children's centre to challenge constructively the centres' work. Their discussion of a few concerns, such as staffing levels, is constrained because directors do not join the partnership board meetings when higher-level strategic subjects are discussed. The group has excellent strategic partnerships enabling it to offer seamless activities and services to families. The well-attended practitioner forum brings together a wide range of organisations who share expertise productively and inform the area's needs assessment. Communication is particularly good and has helped refine the CP and CIN referrals process.
- The group consults with parents, listens to their views and takes these seriously when making strategic decisions, resulting in high levels of satisfaction. Parents' champions represent the local community's views well at the partnership board meetings. The cluster manager and coordinators make innovative use of electronic booking systems, social media and evaluation weeks when deciding on future activities and to gather a broader range of parents' views.
- The group has robust safeguarding arrangements and protocols. Staff receive highly effective induction and ongoing training, supplemented with regular updates. The lead practitioner reviews and monitors family support workers' case files regularly to ensure children are not put at risk.
- Resources are managed and shared well with the neighbouring group but the group has insufficient staff to cope with the increasing number of CP and CIN cases. Family support workers prioritise their workload on helping individual families, which often means they cannot run targeted group activities to meet these families' needs. The group has two vacant family support worker posts that have yet to be advertised.

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 well-being 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.

Group details

Unique reference number	80331
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	424765
Managed by	Action for Children on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	4,364
Centre leader	Susan Turle
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	02392 475101
Email address	sharpscope@actionforchildren.org.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 22676 Park Futures/Sharps Copse Children's Centre
- 22922 Starfish/Orchard Children's Centre
- 23358 Trospacc Children's Centre

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