

# Derbyshire - South Normanton Group

The Hub, Shiners Way, South Normanton, DE55 2AA

## Inspection date

14–15 May 2014

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:

- Although the number of local families accessing the centre has improved not enough families, particularly from priority groups, currently access services.
- The information provided by the local authority and health partners is not accurate enough to allow the setting of precise targets for improvement and to demonstrate the impact of the group's work.
- Information is not effectively used to clearly identify target groups and there are a lack of formal systems for information sharing and involving partners in identifying families needs.
- The advisory board does not currently provide sufficient challenge to leaders and managers to drive faster improvements.
- Evaluations of activities and services are not rigorous enough and parents do not have sufficient influence on shaping the centre's work.
- Not enough is done to check the progress of the children who attend sessions and to ensure that enough adults are accessing courses that will improve their skills and knowledge for employability.
- The numbers of children who take up their free entitlement to early education at age two are not high enough.

### This children's centre group has the following strengths:

- The new coordinators have quickly taken action to raise staff confidence and to create a 'can do' atmosphere within the centre. They have rapidly tackled issues that needed urgent attention and are now setting a much clearer sense of strategic direction within the centre. As a result the centre is improving.
- The group provides valuable support for the most vulnerable families and their children that is very much appreciated by those that receive it.
- The activities provided by the centre such as 'Stay and Play' and 'Pathways' are of good quality and help young children to improve their 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. The centres that form part of this children's centre group are South Normanton Children's Centre and Blackwell Children's Centre.

This inspection was carried out by three Additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the leaders of the centre. They also spoke to other members of staff who work in the centre and representatives from the local authority as well as members of the advisory board. Conversations took place with staff from partner agencies including a range of health professionals and staff from the adult and family learning services. Inspectors also spoke with headteachers and staff from children's social care. Discussions with parents took place at different times during the inspection.

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

## Inspection team

Susan Walsh Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jean Samuel	Additional inspector
Geoffrey Dorrity	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the group

The South Normanton group consists of two centres: South Normanton and Blackwell Children's Centre's which are situated approximately 2 miles apart. The South Normanton Centre serves South Normanton and Pinxton. It is situated at the hub which includes many local services. The reach area for the Blackwell Children's Centre mainly covers the Blackwell, Newton, Tibshelf, Westhouses, Hilcote and Hardstoft areas. The Blackwell Children's Centre is situated at Blackwell Primary School. There is also a Pre-School that is located on the South Normanton Children's centre site. This provision is inspected separately and the reports are available on our website: [www.Ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.Ofsted.gov.uk).

The group provides universal and targeted services for families to meet the core purpose of Surestart Children's Centres. The services are delivered by children's centre staff and in partnership with other service providers such as health and adult education. Services are delivered off site with group outreach provided at Pinxton Youth Centre (for South Normanton) and Tibshelf Village Hall (for Blackwell).

The centre has been through a turbulent period and there have been recent changes to staffing and leadership and management. The group is currently managed by two part time children's centre coordinators. The coordinators took over the full running of the service in April 2014. They continue to have responsibility for four other centres. The group is managed by Derbyshire County Council through multi agency team managers. Both centres within the group have a different team manager. The children's centre's staff are work across the group.

Most families in the area are of white British heritage. The proportion of children who live in workless households is above the national average. Most children enter early education with skills that are below those expected for their age.

The centre has identified its particular target groups as: children needing support with language development; families suffering from domestic violence; and fathers, or male role models within a family.

### What does group need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of priority families from the reach area that benefit from the group's services by:
  - using data and local information more effectively in order to accurately identify target groups and ensure that the large majority engage
  - developing more formal systems for sharing information between partners including health partners and social care so that services are finely matched to individual needs
  - working with partners to ensure that most two-year-old children who are eligible for free early education access good or better provision.
- Improve the impact of the services provided by the group by:
  - working with health partners and the local authority to ensure that the group is set specific health targets that are based on local needs and that can be used to plan services and activities that have a significant impact on the health of families
  - developing the way that children's progress is checked including making certain that their starting points are robustly identified, that assessments are used to plan the next steps of learning and that tracking measures the progress that children have made
  - working with partners in adult education to make certain that more adults access courses that will improve their employability
  - making sure that the information about the take up and completion of courses is effectively analysed and used to inform the way future services are planned.

- Improve the impact of leadership and management and governance of the group by:
  - working with the local authority and health partners to ensure the centre is provided with accurate and accessible data which can be used effectively to set precise and easily measurable targets for improvement
  - urgently implementing the planned improvements to the way the advisory board functions including making certain that parents have sufficient influence on the development of the centre.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

### Requires improvement

- The majority of families are registered with the group and access the services that are offered. Registration and engagement rates have risen over the last few years. However, there are inconsistencies in the attendance by different groups of users. For example almost all the teenage parents in the area are engaged in activities but there are a significant number of lone parents who are not attending the centre.
- Those families expecting children are well engaged with the centre as a result of staff attending well baby clinics across the reach area and their close working relationships with health visitors.
- Although the centre has good local knowledge not enough is done to combine this local knowledge with data to make certain that target groups are effectively identified and engaged. However, more recently there has also been a stronger focus on those who are less likely to participate in services. For example, the group is in the process of developing a Dad's group and is bringing positive male role models into the centre.
- Good relationships with health professionals and with local schools ensure that the centre is made aware of families that are in the most need of their services.
- The good informal communication between professionals who are co-located in the group means that the needs of vulnerable families are identified and addressed. However, there is lack of robust formal systems that would ensure that the exchange of information is maximised and that a wider range of partners are effectively involved in identifying families' needs.
- Outreach work with identified families is effective and is helping families to sustain their involvement with the centre. This includes families where there are issues with alcohol or drug abuse and those who are experiencing domestic violence.
- Not enough two-year-old children entitled to free early education take this up, particularly in the Blackwell area. Leaders and managers are still exploring the reasons why.

### The quality of practice and services

### Requires improvement

- An appropriate range of activities is delivered by the group. These activities make a positive difference to those that attend but, at present, not enough families benefit from the valuable support and guidance provided by the centre. This limits the centre's contribution to narrowing inequalities.
- The centre offers a range of enjoyable activities that focus on children's social and language development and get them ready for starting school. The progress of children's language development is carefully checked when children are supported through initiatives such as 'Every Child a Talker'. In some other sessions staff have not yet started to collate formal records of children's

progress and consequently they have not got a clear measure of children's starting points and are not specific enough regarding what they can do to boost each child's progress.

- The centre is good at providing emotional support for first time parents which reduces their sense of isolation and helps to address post natal depression. Some that attend the group report that it is 'the highlight of their week'.
- Families, who find themselves in complex and chaotic circumstances, receive valuable support from staff of which they are very appreciative of. Staff are particularly good at providing help and support at times of economic hardship and at supporting parents when they are experiencing emotional upheaval. Parents are offered individual support that often has substantial impact on their children's behaviour and has allowed them to establish better routines within their households.
- Case files and records are maintained to an appropriate standard. The new coordinators have worked with staff to review files and to make certain that work is completed in a more timely manner.
- The centre does not have specific health targets and has difficulties accessing accurate and up to date information about important indicators of good health. This makes it difficult for the centre managers to plan activities that might have a greater impact on breastfeeding and obesity rates. Nevertheless staff work hard to promote healthy lifestyles. Activities such as 'Love food Hate Waste' are appreciated by parents.
- The take up of courses for adults is relatively low although there has been a recent improvement. The data that is available regarding the completion of courses including Family Learning is insufficiently analysed and does not yet feed effectively into strategic planning that focuses on improving life changes and reducing inequalities.

### **The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management**

### **Requires improvement**

- The newly appointed coordinators work extremely well together. They are experienced and knowledgeable and have taken quick action to raise staff moral and make staff feel empowered. Staff say that coordinators are 'fantastic to talk to' and that they have made a 'massive difference' to the ethos in the centre.
- The coordinators have rapidly developed a very secure understanding of where the centre needs to move forward. They have tackled issues that needed immediate attention and are now setting a much clearer sense of strategic direction within the centre.
- New staff have very quickly adapted to their roles in the centre. They have brought with them a range of skills that compliment those of the existing staff. They have helped to reinvigorate provision, for example, at the Blackwell Centre, and together with the centre leaders have ensured that resources are used more effectively.
- The data provided by the local authority has recently improved. However, it is still not exact enough or presented in a format that is easily accessible. Inaccuracies in data makes it hard for the centre to determine the impact of its work and to work with the local authority to set precise and measureable targets against which the success of the centre can be judged.
- The local authority correctly recognises that the centre was not challenged sufficiently during its last annual conversation and that it was not set sufficiently precise or measurable targets. In response it has strengthened its quality control procedures.

- Staff take their duties relating to safeguarding seriously. Workers are not afraid to report their concerns if they feel that a child is at risk. Safeguarding policies and procedures are appropriate and staff are safely recruited. Common Assessment Framework processes are increasingly used well to assess need and provide early help to families.
- The centre is not provided with sufficient information about the children in the area who are looked after, who have been identified as being a child in need or who are subject to a child protection plan. Nevertheless when they do know about these children they offer good support and have a good impact on outcomes for families.
- Performance management and professional supervision has been reinvigorated under the leadership of the new coordinators. They have ensured that new staff have been able to quickly access appropriate training and have not been afraid to challenge poor practice when it occurred.
- The evaluation of the delivery of services and their impact is not rigorous enough. Although there is some limited evaluation of sessions and parent's views have sometimes influenced the planning of sessions the centre recognises that not enough has been done to consult parents and children about their needs.
- The centre leaders quickly recognised weaknesses in governance including the lack of challenge provided by the advisory board. They are reorganising the advisory board and the board members are working with an external role model so there is more emphasis on analysing the comparative performance of the centre and the impact of the centre's work on reducing inequalities.

**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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	80314
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	442819
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1063
<b>Centre leader</b>	Lisa Buxton and Diane Harrison
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	01629 533735
<b>Email address</b>	Lisa.buxton@derbyshire.gov.uk

**This group consists of the following children's centres:**

- URN 22772 South Normanton Children's centre
- URN 20330 Blackwell children's centre



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