

Tiverton Children's Centre Services

Wilcombe Primary School, Lazenby Road, Tiverton, EX16 4AL
Two Moors Primary School, Comley Moor Road, Tiverton, EX16 6HH

Inspection dates	4–5 June 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Access to services by young children and families	Good	Not applicable	2
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 group of centres requires improvement. It is not good because:

- The respective roles, responsibilities and links between the local operational group and the advisory board are not sufficiently clear and these bodies are not in a strong position to provide the managers with effective challenge.
- The local authority, senior leaders and advisory board do not set targets for individual centres that are precise and challenging and include clear criteria to help leaders measure whether or not they have been successful.
- Leaders do not track the progress of children and families most in need sufficiently and therefore the difference that these services are making to their lives is not clear.
- Relationships with health services are not yet developed well enough to ensure services are combined well and that there are joint working plans towards improving the health of families and children in the area.

It has the following strengths:

- Information is shared effectively between partners so that the large majority of families in the area are known and the large majority of families in priority groups access the centre and engage with the services.
- Parents have an increasingly strong voice in the running of the centres and in shaping services and a good number of parents volunteer their time, especially to support breastfeeding. Families and children are at the heart of the services provided and feel a strong sense of ownership of the services.

What does the centre/group need to do to improve further?

- Clarify the roles, responsibilities and links between the local operational group and the advisory board and improve the effectiveness of challenge from these bodies so that they clearly drive the centres' continuous development.
- Together with the local authority, senior leaders and advisory board, improve the collection, use and analysis of data, especially for those in the target groups, so that:
 - individual centres have targets that are precise and challenging and include clear criteria to help leaders measure whether or not they have been successful
 - leaders can check whether improvements for children and families are long-lasting
 - relevant data is used well to evaluate the quality of the services.
- Improve the tracking and monitoring of children, especially those from target groups and including those accessing early education funding, to ensure they make good progress from their individual starting points and are well prepared for school.
- Build upon existing relationships with health to ensure that there are joint working plans towards improving the health of families in the area.

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.

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, managers from the local authority, and centre staff. They also met health, education and social care partners, parents, early years practitioners, volunteers and representatives from the advisory board and local operational group.

The inspectors visited Wilcombe Primary School, Tidcombe Primary School, Heathcoat Primary School, Tiverton Library and Sunningmead Community Centre.

The inspection covered Wilcombe Children's Centre and Two Moors Children's Centre.

The inspectors looked at the centres' self-evaluation, action planning, a survey of parents' views, a sample of case files and safeguarding procedures. They observed the centres' work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Penny Mathers, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Anthony Mundy

Additional inspector

Graham Saltmarsh

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

Wilcombe Children's Centre and Two Moors Children's Centre make up the Tiverton Children's Centre Services group. The group is part of the Mid Devon Cluster that includes Culm Valley and Cridton which are all managed by Action for Children on behalf of the local authority. An advisory board oversees the running of the all the centres in the cluster and a local operational group determines the local priorities for the Tiverton group. Some management functions are shared across the cluster.

Wilcombe Children's Centre shares the site with Wilcombe Primary School and Two Moors Children Centre shares the site with Two Moors Primary School. Both centres are based in the middle of the communities they serve. Two Moors School has a school nursery and Wilcombe School has a private nursery on site, both are subject to separate inspections. These nurseries were judged to be 'Good' at their last Ofsted inspection. The reports of all these settings can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk

A range of outreach services are provided in rural areas and use is made of community venues to deliver sessions. The centres offer a range of services, including baby massage, story time for dads, 'Stay and Play', 'Teenie Bops', 'U-Play', parenting courses, adult learning and family support. Antenatal courses, weaning support, baby clinics, fitness courses, trips in the school holidays and fun events are also part of the services available. The centres deliver services to those families who fit the criteria for the Devon Targeted Family Support programme and have family support staff employed specifically to undertake this work.

The centres cover urban areas as well as large rural areas where public transport is limited. Three geographical areas have high levels of deprivation, namely Lowman, Wilcombe and Castle. There are also significantly high levels of children in care or subject to child protection plans in the reach area. Priority groups are identified as teenage parents, children living with domestic abuse, children and families living in poverty, children with additional needs and children and parents identified as most in need. Almost all of the families are of White British heritage, although there are increasing number of Polish families in the area. Most children start early years provision with skill levels above what is typical for their age.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families Good

- Information sharing, especially with the Devon Targeted Families Programme and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, is good and the centres prioritise appropriately so that they work well with priority groups, including teenage parents, children living with domestic abuse, children and families in poverty and children with additional needs. Registration rates have increased rapidly over the last year so that most of the families in the area are registered, and the large majority of priority groups now access services.
- Staff are very committed and determined to ensure those families most in need are supported. All prospective parents receive invitations to ante-natal sessions, and work with midwives ensures families expecting children and most in need access services.
- Through close work with partners, families are encouraged to take up the entitlement to free early education and, as a result, the large majority of the families most in need access the funding.

- Work with families in their own homes effectively supports them, particularly where transport is infrequent. Work that is sensitive to the needs of different communities makes sure those most in need stay engaged until their needs are met. For example, some families prefer to come to the local community centre and so, as it has a good record of engagement and fosters good relations in the community, sessions are run from there.
- Staff have good knowledge of the local area and know their families well. The centres work well together to issue a regular newsletter and use social media to promote sessions.
- The monitoring of attendance by families at the centres effectively identifies those who do not attend regularly and follow-up systems are in place and effective in ensuring families are not forgotten and know who to contact and where to get help.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- While the quality of much of the provision is good, it is not clear what impact it is having on improving lives; this aspect of the centres' work requires improvement.
- Families are asked to give feedback on the services provided and they report that the centres have changed their lives and supported their children's development. However, staff are not regularly checking how well services make a difference to the lives of families and children.
- The quality of partnership working is variable. The centre works well with health services and the National Childbirth Trust to provide ante-natal sessions, but there is no clear plan to improve low breastfeeding rates or reduce obesity. Partnerships with schools are good but information on what each child needs to achieve to be well prepared for school is not always readily available, and systems have not been developed to show the impact involvement with the centres has in helping children reach a good level of development.
- The quality and range of services provide a good balance between those open to all and those supporting specific priority groups. Sessions such as 'Stay and Play' are very popular and give staff the opportunity to spot those who may need extra support. Staff and volunteers are good role models and provide strong support and care that ensures parents do not feel isolated and come to make friends, improve their parenting skills and feel better about themselves and their future.
- Families and childminders are made to feel welcome at the centre and parents have access to timely support that helps them improve their parenting, access funding for early education and support language development. Parents make positive changes to their lives and appreciate the way the staff involve them and provide relevant activities. Good support is available to those families experiencing domestic abuse and advice on benefits and housing is offered and taken up at the centre.
- Volunteering is well promoted at the centres and there are clear procedures for recruitment and training. A volunteer coordinator has recruited eight volunteers to support play sessions and there are over 20 breastfeeding supporters, some of whom visit the hospital to offer support and introduce new mums to the services of the children's centres. Staff have high aspirations for parents and volunteering is part of a clear pathway towards employment for adults.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- Specific information on the numbers of families and children in the target groups who are accessing services is not always sufficiently clear because the local authority does not

provide all the information that the centre needs.

- The local authority rightly focuses on improving access in the most deprived areas. However, the information on the numbers participating from other target groups is not yet fully analysed or used to set challenging targets to further increase the number of families who are supported.
- Roles, responsibilities and links between the local operational group and the cluster advisory board are not clear. The advisory board does not set appropriate and precise targets to effectively challenge and improve the lives of families. It is not able to clearly demonstrate that it makes a difference and drives improvements.
- Arrangements for evaluation of services are underdeveloped. While there are some systems in place, it is not easy for leaders to see the impact services are having in the long term on the lives of families. Information is available but not collected and analysed in a systematic way to shape future service development and not all practitioners or members of the advisory board are involved in the groups' self-evaluation processes.
- Safeguarding is well promoted and central to the work of the group. Recruitment and selection procedures ensure all the appropriate pre-employment checks are undertaken. Good integrated working with social care, including involvement in the Devon Assessment Framework, helps to reduce the risk of harm to children by making sure they get access to the services they need to make positive changes. Centres and activities are risk assessed and well run to ensure the safety of all who attend.
- Parents are well involved in the running of the centre, including in recruitment of staff and service design, and they encourage other parents to use the services. The 'Parents' Voice' meets frequently and undertakes fundraising. Parents also attend the advisory board meetings where their contributions are valued.
- The staff have a wide range of professional backgrounds and expertise and they know the reach area well. Supervision is regular and of a good quality and staff report they feel well supported and value their development opportunities.
- Resources are used effectively and good day-to-day management ensures the centres are well organised. The new cluster manager is experienced and has quickly gained the confidence of the staff team, who are committed and keen to improve.

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.

Group details

Unique reference number	80385
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	442827
Managed by	Action for Children on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1661
Centre leader	Sally Kendrick
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01884 250449
Email address	sally.kendrick@actionforchildren.org.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- Wilcombe Centre
- Two Moors Centre

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