

# Thurcroft Children's Centre

Thurcroft Infant School, Locksley Drive, Thurcroft, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S66 9NT

<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 June 2014
<b>Previous inspection date</b>	Not previously inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
		Not previously inspected	
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:

- Data sharing between the local authority, health and social care partners, and the centre is not always accurate or timely enough. This prevents families being seen quickly and hinders leaders from setting and monitoring robust performance management targets.
- Despite high registration and initial engagement levels, not enough families, and fathers in particular, from the most deprived areas, are regularly engaging in activities and services.
- Planning for observation and assessment of children and families are not sufficiently robust. As a result there is a limited range of carefully planned and targeted activities available for families to participate in.
- Not enough parents, especially those from workless homes, enhance their education, engage in training or volunteering, or extend their workplace skills. The views of parents do not feature strongly enough in centre development as regular attendance by parents on the advisory board is also low.
- Quality assurance systems, including the supervision and monitoring of staff performance and case file audits, are underdeveloped and not applied rigorously enough by leaders and managers. The small staff resource is spread thinly across a number of local centres with varying reporting structures, which limits rapid improvement.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- The centre leader and staff team are well qualified and know the local community well. As a result, most families are registered and have engaged, at least once, with the centre. Families regularly engaging with the centre are overwhelmingly positive about the difference it makes.
- The large majority of children reach a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The centre's work has helped to reduce the gap in achievement between the most deprived children and the rest which is far smaller than that seen nationally.
- The take-up of funded early education places for children aged two, three and four years old is very high. Strong partnerships with childcare providers ensure that children attend regularly and make good progress in their learning.

### What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Improve data sharing between the local authority, health and social care partners, and the centre to ensure that the centre has accurate and timely data and information on families so that it can quickly contact them and also set and monitor precise performance targets.
- Improve the sustained engagement of families most in need of support from the centre by:
  - more thoroughly and regularly assessing their needs
  - maintaining contact with families and quickly following up those not participating
  - increasing the participation of fathers.
- Develop robust assessment and monitoring processes so that the centre can fully demonstrate that planned, focused activities are targeted to meet the needs of children and families and have the intended impact and outcomes.
- Improve the quality of provision by reviewing the current arrangements for the deployment, monitoring and supervision of staff, and through greater scrutiny of case files and regular observation and evaluation of activities.
- Help to reduce the high number of workless households in the area by increasing the range and availability of courses and encouraging more parents to participate in them and in volunteering opportunities.
- Build on current systems for listening to the views of parents and find ways, including providing a crèche, to encourage them to take part regularly in the advisory board.

### 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 the children's centre leader, the local authority, and other staff from the centre. Inspectors also met with a range of partners including those from health services, educational and voluntary sector organisations, and representatives from the advisory board. They listened to the views of parents.

The inspectors observed the centre's work including a 'Teeny Boppers' dance session, and a 'Parent and Toddler' session. They looked at a range of relevant documentation. They looked in detail at a number of case files of children, such as those subject to a child protection plan, those deemed to be children in need and others in receipt of outreach support.

### Inspection team

Jean-Marie Blakeley, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Tara Street	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Thurcroft Children's Centre is on the same site as Thurcroft Infant School (URN 106898) and a private provider, Tiny Explorers Pre-School (EY455594), both of which are subject to separate inspections. Their reports can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The centre is led by the headteacher of Thurcroft Infant School and is managed by the school governors on behalf of the local authority. Staff are shared with other local centres. The centre delivers a range of services, including targeted parenting programmes, focused play sessions, on-site child health clinics and one-to-one family support. An advisory board, comprising key partners and parents, assists in the governance of the centre.

Thurcroft is a former mining community on the outskirts of Rotherham. There are 380 children aged under five years living in the centre's reach area. Around one third live in one of the 9% most deprived areas in the country, another third in one of the 13% most deprived areas and the remainder in one of the 35% most deprived areas nationally. Data provided by the centre show that 47% of children aged under-five-years live in workless households. Most families living within the reach area are of White British heritage. Housing is mostly on the local authority council estate surrounding the centre or in privately rented houses.

Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below those typically expected for their age. Target groups specifically identified by the centre include workless households, families experiencing domestic violence, and those with low confidence in parenting.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Data and information are not always shared effectively between the local authority, health and social care partners and the centre. This means that the centre does not have all available data so that it can carefully monitor its work on increasing sustained access for those most in need. The centre has far exceeded its registration of local families compared to the data it was provided with from the local authority, which highlights the lack of precision in information.
- Information about the impact on health-related targets is inconsistent and not always specific to the centre's reach area. This makes it difficult for the centre to evaluate fully the impact it is having on the lives of families.
- The local authority does not provide the centre with precise information about the number of local disabled children. In addition the centre is not routinely informed by social care partners of those children subject to a child protection plan or identified as in need. As a result, staff are unable to reach out to these families and promote their engagement in the services and activities to support their needs.
- Leaders and centre staff have a good knowledge of the individual children and adults who use the centre but do not rapidly follow up those who choose not to engage with its services. Staff make effective arrangements to ensure that those families who use the centre are able to access the care, guidance and support they need. However, the range of activities and overall number of families from the most deprived areas, including fathers, regularly accessing services are too low.
- Parents and families who come through the door and those who receive outreach and family support are positive about the work of the centre. These parents are kept up-to-date with the different activities that are on offer through a variety of methods including word-of-mouth, text messages, leaflets and display boards in various locations in the community. They express good levels of satisfaction with the activities offered, particularly the various trips and outings.

- The centre's strong links with early years providers has ensured families are sign posted to good provision; children make good progress from their starting points. All children aged three-and four-years in the area take up their nursery places. Most children access the good provision at the onsite school. The large majority of eligible two-year-olds access their entitlement to early education at the good provision at the onsite private provider or at the nearby recently opened provision.

### **The quality of practice and services**

Requires improvement

- Most of the centre's activities and groups provide a good service for those attending. However, they are limited in number and range, and do not include enough targeted sessions which focus on things such as communication and language. This reduces the centre's overall impact on improving children's and families' life chances, health and well-being.
- Staff plan resources and activities for group sessions based on the needs of families and children who attend regularly and they comment they enjoy and value these. However, assessment and monitoring processes are not sufficiently robust. As a result, it cannot fully demonstrate that the provision is having the intended impact and outcomes for those children and families attending.
- Partnerships with the co-located school and two local early years providers are good. Staff work closely to monitor the progress that children make and to identify gaps in their attainment. They work well together to improve the quality of early years provision and narrow any gaps in achievement. As a result, a high proportion of children, including those living in the most deprived areas and those in receipt of free school meals, achieve a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Family support work is mostly of good quality and shows timely and appropriate interventions for those accessing this service, providing appropriate care, guidance and support to families. Any specific support needs that staff identify are appropriately referred to other agencies when necessary, ensuring that families receive the correct help to make positive changes to their lives.
- Case file records do not all show clear success criteria in action plans or set specific time scales in which to achieve and review them. Some important details, such as the time or length of the contact or whether the child was present, are not recorded. Therefore, the centre cannot fully demonstrate the value, relevance and impact of some of its work with families.
- The centre does not receive timely, accurate, local health data to enable leaders to assess health trends effectively, set specific targets, and plan and accurately monitor their progress. As a result, the percentage of mothers continuing to breastfeed at six to eight weeks, although improving, is low and maternal smoking during pregnancy is high. Some health targets are well met, such as high attendance at the onsite weekly child health clinic, high immunisation rates and low childhood obesity rates.
- Tracking of workless families is better. Many are long-term unemployed. Not enough parents enhance their education, engage in training and volunteering or extend their workplace skills. The small numbers that have volunteered have successfully gained qualifications and skills. The centre has promoted these successes positively in the community through providing employment to some parents but this has yet to inspire the majority to follow their success.

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

Requires improvement

- There are adequate arrangements for evaluation and improvement of services and activities including those delivered by partners. However, leaders do not carry out robust and systematic observations of staff work, leading to effective actions to improve performance and the quality of provision for families.
- The headteacher as centre leader is highly committed to the centre's work in providing a good early start for vulnerable children. Staff work hard but are spread thinly across centres in the surrounding area with differing reporting and management systems. As a result, the quality and rigour of staff supervision and the management oversight of all staff's work are insufficient. This results in inconsistencies in case file recording not being identified or addressed, and lack of

detailed scrutiny in the monitoring of families' engagement.

- The centre meets its requirements for the safeguarding of children and families with effective policies, procedures and practices. Staff attend relevant inter-agency meetings to support the few identified children in need or those who are subject to a child protection plan. However, there is insufficient use of the Common Assessment Framework to ensure thorough, regular and detailed assessment of need. The local authority does not inform the centre about every young child who has involvement with social care. As a result, the centre is unable to work with all families who may benefit from its support
- The centre is welcoming and provides a safe place for parents and children to come. Clear links with 'Choices and Options' and 'Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service' (IDVA) ensures appropriate support is provided for women experiencing domestic violence.
- The local authority monitors the performance of the centre adequately to ensure that it meets the locally agreed priorities. However, it does not sufficiently help the centre by ensuring that it has timely and precise data from all key partners and that the data it provides is accurate.
- The governing body and the advisory board watch over the work of the centre. While, assessment and monitoring processes are not sufficiently robust, leaders report on the impact of services on supporting the families most in need where they can. Such as closing the achievement gap and reducing inequalities. However, although the centre informally consults parents about their views it has not found ways to encourage parents to attend advisory board meetings regularly.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	23311
<b>Local authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	442877
<b>Managed by</b>	The governing body of Thurcroft Infant School on behalf of the local authority.
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	380
<b>Centre leader</b>	Tracy Harper
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 542538
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