

Peters Hill Children's Centre

Peters Hill Nursery & Children's Centre, Peters Hill Road, Brierley Hill, DY5 2QH

Inspection dates	24–25 June 2014
Previous inspection date	Not Previously Inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Good	2
		Not applicable	
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 offers good access to a broad range of services for children and families, especially from target groups. Parents receive valuable support such as how to support babies' good health. Older children learn to listen carefully and how to mix with others successfully at 'Stay and Play' sessions.
- The quality and practice of services are good and so families, including those most in need of support, receive effective care from centre staff and health specialists. They check carefully on what stages of development children are at. Children who regularly attend the centre start the local nursery with higher levels of skills than those who do not.
- Children who regularly attend the centre do well at school and their skills are above those expected by the time they finish their reception year. In Year 1 these children do better than others in learning to use letters and the sounds that they make (phonics).
- Leadership, governance and management are good and so the impact of the centre continues to improve. For instance, local families receive effective support from the Citizens Advice Bureau about money matters at fortnightly sessions. Many parents gain extra qualifications because local colleges work well with the centre.

It is not outstanding because:

- Not all staff explain how parents can assist their child to develop their mark making and writing skills at home.
- A below average proportion of mother's breast feed their baby for six to eight weeks.
- It is not easy to see how much families from minority ethnic groups increase their use and the range of centre services they access, particularly in recent months, because leaders do not always record this clearly.
- Staff performance management records are not always fully completed.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality and impact of services so that they are even better by making sure that:
 - all staff provide parents with information about how to promote children's mark making and writing skills at home
 - the proportion of mother's who continue to breast feed for 6-8 weeks increases especially using breast feeding support from ante-natal groups.
- Improve access still further and the effectiveness of centre leadership by ensuring that:
 - all records make it easy to see how much minority ethnic groups are increasing their attendance at the centre and whether they are accessing a wider range of services
 - all staff assist leaders to collect evidence which show they have met their personal targets as part of performance management arrangements.

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 or spoke to the centre cluster manager, three members of the advisory board, many parents and carers, centre staff, health specialists, children and two representatives from the local authority.

Evidence from a recent satisfaction survey completed by 51 families was taken into consideration by inspectors.

One inspector visited the Peter's Hill Nursery.

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

Inspection team

Jackie Cousins, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Nick Gadfield

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Peter's Hill Children's Centre is situated in a mixed neighbourhood in which 725 children under five years live. The majority of the families who live in the surrounding area are from White British backgrounds but a few are from minority ethnic groups. A number of families are from Asian and African or from Western and Eastern European groups. A few families are learning to speak English. A couple of areas around the centre have considerable levels of unemployment, families in receipt of benefits and workless households. A few families have children with a disability or special educational needs or are 'troubled families' as identified by the local authority.

The centre opened in December 2010 and operates from a purpose built building with one medium sized room and one small room for one-to-one consultations. In partnership with other providers, the centre provides the full core offer of early education and health services, family support and adult learning courses. Most children enter early education with skills that are slightly lower than those expected for their age. Peter's Hill Nursery School which shares a site with the centre is a 45 place nursery which is subject to separate inspection arrangements. There are four children's centres in the area.

The centre is managed by the advisory board on behalf of Dudley Borough Council. The advisory board includes health specialists, a headteacher, local business man, parents and staff from the centre and other partners. The centre is not part of the payment by results trial and is not receiving extra funding from the government.

Significant target groups served by the centre include parents on low incomes who are bringing up children on their own, families receiving benefits or those not in paid employment.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families Good

- Local families have good access to services and 86% of those most in need of assistance regularly use the centre. Mothers expecting a baby and new mothers and babies, enjoy coming to the centre for sessions where they make new friends. They learn about how to use baby massage techniques to ease digestive problems and how to handle the many challenges of parenthood. One mother summed up others' comments when she said, 'If you feel bad it is great to have the centre and their staff to turn to for support and advice.'
- Toddlers are encouraged to take part in sessions where children learn to sing songs and perform actions which show that they listen and watch others carefully. Staff keep a close eye on how each child is developing. Parents effectively discuss any concerns they have about their child's development. This means that they receive valuable support about ways to fill gaps in a child's knowledge.
- Children who have a disability or special educational needs are included successfully in sessions because staff treat everyone fairly. The centre shows a strong commitment to

reducing inequalities and ensures they make good progress.

- This year, all three and four-year-old children and 84% of eligible two-year-old children took up their free education places at nurseries or pre-schools. This is because centre staff ensure that parents receive guidance about how to choose the best place to educate their child and the centre works productively to introduce children to the routines they will experience such as sitting sensibly on the carpet and sharing toys fairly. This means that children settle fruitfully into their early education.
- Parents' access to skills-based learning is extended successfully by the effective partnership arrangements with local colleges. Considerable numbers of parents do voluntary work and many gain paid employment through centre support. Local families receive help to fill in application forms and write a 'C.V.' because of a good joint venture with the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Families from different backgrounds mix successfully at the centre. The large majority of families who are not in paid employment or are in receipt of benefits work with the centre staff productively. Mothers, fathers, carers and children attend a wide range of sessions including 'Fun with Food' and join activities in the sensory room.
- Good encouragement is given to families, including those who may be less likely to access services to do so. However, it is not easy to see how much families from minority ethnic groups increase their use of the range of centre services, particularly recent months, because leaders do not always record this clearly.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- A wide range of good quality practice and services mean families are offered relevant support. Staff at the centre are skilled at showing parents the best ways to help children develop and grow. For instance, children who attend the centre productively improve their language and speaking skills. This is because staff talk to children effectively throughout sessions. Last year 80% of children in reception who speak English as an additional language and who worked with the centre staff reached a good level of development, which is well above the national average.
- The centre has tracked the progress of children who regularly used the centre services, including those most in need of the centre's assistance. This revealed that these children do considerably better than those who do not attend the centre. In 2013 results for children reaching a good level of development in reception for those who used the centre were 19% higher than those who did not. Inequalities are being reduced because the gap between reception children who are eligible for free school meals and the rest is narrower this year than it was last year.
- Many families develop their parenting skills successfully by attending 10 week parenting courses. They develop their knowledge and understanding of how to manage children's behaviour. This allows parents, including those from 'troubled families' to handle children's challenging actions in calm and thoughtful ways. Centre staff are readily available to discuss any concerns parents have about their children. One parent said, 'Staff here go the extra mile and really care for my family.'
- The centre works well with health specialists and so the obesity rate amongst five-year-

old children is below average and virtually all children are fully immunised against harmful infections at one, two and five-years-old. Families learn to lead health lives. For example, they go out for walks in the fresh air because the centre promotes well the use of local parks.

- Staff do not always offer parents guidance on how to develop their child's mark making skills at home. This means that a few parents do not understand in detail how to help their child improve their basic writing skills.
- The proportion of mums who breast feed their baby for six to eight weeks is below that seen nationally. Some mothers told inspectors they would like more guidance about how to continue breast feeding in their ante-natal sessions.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre manager, advisory board members and staff work effectively together to improve outcomes for local families. A centre development plan with specific and measurable targets is assisting them to enhance the impact of services. Recent successes include the fact that the very large majority of children who attend the centre, start at the local nursery with levels of skill that are at the stage of development expected for their age or better. These children's skills are significantly higher than those who do not use the centre.
- The centre knows the needs of local families well, including those from groups in most need. This is because data is analysed productively and resources are used effectively to meet families' needs. For example, the centre identified that some local families would welcome help to manage their finances. Centre leaders introduced a fortnightly service through a partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau. As a result over thirty families have received help with tackling issues such as employment or debt. In the last financial year, over 46 financial issues were carefully dealt with for local parents.
- The centre leadership places a high priority on keeping children and families safe. All staff follow procedures and practices thoughtfully. Staff are highly committed to helping children subject to a child protection order, assessed under the Common Assessment Framework, looked after children or those children identified as in need of support. Staff work astutely to share information with partners, including health specialists. Many files show that centre help has made a real difference to families' lives and that they no longer need extra support.
- Governance is good and the local authority and advisory board members watch over the centre's work effectively. Families get on well at the centre because staff welcome everyone and treat them all equally fairly. In recent years, there have been no racial, bullying, gender or homophobic incidents. The recent centre survey shows a high level of satisfaction from families and reveals that leaders refine services in the light of their comments and feedback. Finances are managed successfully and audited regularly by the local authority.
- Staff have valuable opportunities to train and refine their skills. All staff have a level three qualification or a degree in early years. Under-performance is checked carefully by the advisory board members and is tackled efficiently. They support staff thoughtfully,

allocating pay rises, promotion and extra responsibilities. Leaders supervise staff carefully and as part of their performance management agree targets to improve outcomes for local families as well as staff skills. However leaders do not encourage all staff to collect evidence that they have met their personal targets and so it is not easy to see from what is recorded, whether staff have developed their knowledge and enhanced outcomes, for local families.

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.

Centre

Unique reference number	22369
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	450406
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	725
Centre leader	Teresa McNally
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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