

Derbyshire - Belper Group

Alder Road, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 1LP

Inspection dates	26–27 June 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

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 group.

- Leaders at all levels share the vision for on-going success of the group. Each of the centres in the group is led well. The consistent and effective approaches used by all those leading the centres is demonstrated in the group's history of continuous improvement and drive for excellence.
- As a result of the sheer determination and commitment of staff and leaders, the levels of engagement with families whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable, including families experiencing domestic violence and those suffering mental ill-health, are good and improving quickly.
- The success of the group is due in part to the highly effective partnerships with key agencies. Timely and effective early help and support for children and families is significantly enhanced as a result of the very positive multi-agency timetable of activities, groups and services.
- Access to good quality specialist services, for instance, perinatal mental health professionals, and services to support children with disabilities and special educational needs, is a strong aspect of the group. Consequently, children and adults considered to be potentially vulnerable have their needs assessed swiftly and access a good range of targeted provision.
- All three-year-old children, and almost all four-year-old children who are entitled to early education funding are making effective use of their entitlement in good quality early childhood settings. Most early childhood provision in the reach area is good. As a result, most children make good progress in their learning during their time at these settings.

It is not outstanding because:

- Members of the advisory board are not fully involved in the range of activities to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the group.
- There is not enough focus on tracking the successes of learners (adult and children) over time. Therefore, there is some lack of evidence to show the impact of the centres on improving the life-chances of children and families.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the role of the advisory board so that members take a more active role in the process of evaluating the centre's performance. For instance, when writing the self-evaluation, and during the annual conversation and quarterly monitoring meetings.
- Improve the analysis of data to demonstrate the impact of the group's work on the achievement of learners, both children and adults, during their involvement at the children's centres and beyond.

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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the children's centre coordinator; senior leaders from the local authority; education and health; early intervention and family support practitioners; early childhood providers, volunteers; health and social care professionals; adult education and commissioned services; parents and centre users; representatives of the advisory board.

The inspectors visited a range of services offered, including 'Little Learners', and 'Allsorts group', and accompanied a family support practitioner on a home visit. The inspectors visited each of the three children's centres and spent time meeting children and families.

They observed the centre's work, and conducted two joint observations with group leaders. They looked at a range of relevant documentation, including case files.

Inspection team

Deborah Udakis	Her Majesty's Inspector, Lead inspector
Pamela Blackman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Talbot-Strettle	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

There are 54 children's centres in Derbyshire, organised into 24 groups and one stand-alone centre. The Belper Children's Centre group was established in April 2013. The group is led, on behalf of the local authority, by a children's centre coordinator. Together with the centre leaders, the centre coordinator holds responsibility for the daily management of each centre. Some 2,182 children under five years of age live in the group's reach area.

Each of the group's three centres delivers a range of services, including family support, early childhood services, adult learning, parenting support, health services, speech and language therapy and family welfare. Governance arrangements for the locality are provided by the local authority and the advisory board. Registered early years provision is located in each children's centre area. The most recent inspection reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The centres serve a number of areas of significant disadvantage, particularly in Kilburn and Heage. Around 11% of children under five years are living in homes dependent on workless benefits. The vast majority of families living in the area are White British, with approximately 4% of families from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few families attending the centres speak English as an additional language.

Services within the group are targeted specifically at lone parents, families of minority ethnic backgrounds, and mothers affected by maternal mental health issues including post natal depression.

Children's skills and understanding on entry to early years provision are, on average, below those typical levels for their age.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- All staff working within the Belper Group have a very thorough understanding of the needs of local families. This is well informed by extended local outreach and delivering services in more isolated communities. Services are provided based on a very accurate analysis of the available data provided by the local authority and effective partnerships with most other local agencies. As a result the vast majority of families in the locality, including those expecting children, are known to the centres.
- The group is successfully engaging the large majority of all families living in the area. Importantly, they have regular and sustained contact with the vast majority of families from targeted groups, including lone parents, and families from minority ethnic backgrounds. Involvement with families is carefully monitored and this helps the centres to measure the impact of their work.
- Tracking shows that the very large majority of targeted families who are referred to centre services remain engaged until their needs are met. After they have accessed more targeted support they return to universal services, where monitoring carries on with a follow up phone call three months later. This ensures that provision continues to meet the individual needs of the children and families.
- Outreach workers are very proactive in the local community developing and supporting families to engage with the centre and other local services. This has facilitated the engagement of an increasing number of families experiencing domestic violence, parenting issues, mental health concerns, housing and financial issues. As a result they receive support for families is helping them improve their own and their children's health, wellbeing and economic circumstances.
- Almost all two, three- and four-year-old children take-up their free entitlement to early education and attend provision which is judged to be good or better.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Good partnership working with adult education partners ensures they are developing and delivering good quality programmes to meet identified, or expressed needs in local centres. Highly effective information, advice and guidance provided by the National Careers Service helps to signpost and support adults to further education and employment opportunities.
- The adult education activities provide good progression routes to move families forward developing their social, personal and employability skills. However, there is insufficient tracking of individual learners to show the progress they make.
- Volunteers employed by the group access good, robust and rigorous training and support. Two former volunteers are now in employment, as a result of the high quality learning they have accessed via the group.
- The wide range of good quality universal and targeted activities help to improve parents' confidence and parenting ability. Centres are highly inclusive and reduce inequalities and barriers to access by taking activities into rural communities so that the vast majority of children and families can participate.
- Well qualified outreach workers undertake in-depth assessments of the most vulnerable families. Their work is very focused, with good tracking and monitoring of cases and confident analysis of risk. There is clear evidence of how the centres are improving the well-being and life-chances of families, all of whom speak highly of the support they receive. One parent said, 'I don't know what I would

have done without the children's centre and their support'.

- The centre along with its partners pay particularly good attention to supporting the health of parents and children. Clinics and groups are very well attended and are popular. Families consistently say that the range of provision is improving their understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy. As a result, children and families in the local area enjoy good health outcomes, including high rates of breastfeeding and low levels of obesity.
- Children who are identified as being at risk of language delay access timely support from professional speech and language services. Parents say they are helped to develop their understanding of their children's speech and language development. Consequently, children who access speech and language support make significant gains in their speaking and listening skills.
- A thorough and systematic tracking of children's progress once they reach school is not yet in place. This means that leaders and staff do not always know the difference they have made to children's achievement over the different key stages of their education.
- Almost all children living in the reach attend schools where a higher proportion of children reach a good level of development compared to children in England overall.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The re-structured leadership has had a positive impact on strengthening partnerships and the delivery of services in local and accessible venues. Essential partnerships are nurtured and developed to ensure children and families access good quality services and activities. One key partner said that they were, 'impressed with the leadership, drive and enthusiasm', of the centre group coordinator.
- Leaders make very effective use of available data to analyse how well the group is meeting the needs of families. They are enthusiastic and use their skills, expertise and experiences to drive improvement.
- The strong and effective leadership team is well-supported, challenged and held to account by the local authority. The group's self-evaluation is predominantly accurate and identifies the group's key strengths and areas for development.
- The advisory board, consisting of parents and key stakeholders, enhances the governance of the group. During the regular meetings they scrutinise and challenge the performance of the group against agreed objectives. However, the board members have too little involvement in evaluating the performance of the group during formal processes, such as writing the self-evaluation and in the annual conversation.
- The safety and well-being of the children is of prime concern to all who work at the centres. Safeguarding protocols and procedures are consistently applied by knowledgeable staff. They take swift and appropriate steps to protect children who are at risk of harm. Children who are looked after, subject to child protection plans or children in need are well-supported as the staff work seamlessly with social care, education and health partners to support and monitor the child. The early help process ensures that children and families access timely support in times of difficulty and often pre-empt, and prevents, the need for statutory intervention.
- Staff are well qualified. Opportunities for continuous professional development are encouraged and staff feel well supported and highly valued because professional supervision is regular and effective.

Staff training and professional development plans effectively support the group's key priorities.

- Well-thought out performance management systems and quality assurance monitoring activities are helping to drive up the quality of services and provision. Leaders are successful in tackling individual issues of underperformance with staff and identify where further improvements can be made.
- Case studies and case files, and individuals spoken to throughout the inspection, recounted powerful stories of the positive difference the centre has made to their lives. Frequent consultation with parents helps them to share their views about the services and activities offered.
- Resources are used effectively, increasing participation and improving the lives of families, particular those facing specific challenges and those parents who are supporting children with additional needs. For instance, parents speak particularly favourably about using the sensory room and the difference this makes in helping them support their children with disabilities and special educational needs.

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	80032
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	442703
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2182
Centre leader	Lawrence Jackson
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01773 826651
Email address	belpercc@derbyshire.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- (URN 20268) Belper Children's Centre
- (URN 20866) Crich Children's Centre
- (URN 20987) Duffield Children's Centre

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