

Caister Children's Centre

Caister Infant, Nursery School and Children's Centre, Kingston Avenue, Great Yarmouth, NR30 5ET

Inspection dates	15–16 July 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	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.

- A very large majority of families from the area are registered with the centre. They have good access to high-quality information and services, in some cases designed and produced by the centre.
- Parents are very happy with the services provided by the centre. Activities are popular and well attended.
- Children enjoy a range of stimulating activities which help equip them for entering early years provision and for achieving well in school.
- The tracking of children's achievement over time shows that they make good progress from their starting points.
- Children and families who may be experiencing difficulties in their lives are very well supported by the centre staff's highly effective work.
- Children and families are kept safe from harm by effective support underpinned by clear safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Leadership, governance and management of the centre are effective. The centre knows its strengths and weaknesses and is improving strongly.
- The highly capable centre manager leads a dedicated team of staff who are committed to improving outcomes for local families.

It is not outstanding because:

- A third of families from ethnic minority backgrounds are not yet engaging with the centre.
- Parents completing family learning courses do not have enough opportunities to enhance their education and skills such as literacy and numeracy.
- The centre cannot measure its effectiveness in contributing to health outcomes because of a lack of information from health partners.
- Partnerships with some organisations are under-developed which limits the centres' opportunities to work with children and families in a timely and fully co-ordinated way.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of families from ethnic minority groups so that at least the large majority are actively engaging with the centre.
- Ensure parents have the opportunity to further enhance their education and skills.
- Improve outcomes for families through strengthening partnerships by:
 - further developing work with social care to ensure families in need of support receive help in a timely and co-ordinated way
 - Further developing work to support the improvement of the quality of early years providers in the area
 - working with the health authority to provide detailed information that the centre can use to measure the impact of its work on improving health outcomes for children and families.

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 parents, centre staff, members of the advisory board and governors, the headteacher, representatives from professional partnerships including health, social care and libraries, and officers from the local authority.

Inspectors observed the centre's work including four activities, two of which were joint observations with centre staff. The inspectors also visited an activity at Caister library.

Inspectors took into account parents' views as expressed directly to them during the inspection, as well as through their recorded evaluations about the centre's work.

Inspectors looked at a range of relevant documentation such as the centre's checks on its performance, development plans and data, information relating to safeguarding and a selection of case files.

Inspection team

Mary Dudley, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Peter Towner

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Caister Children's Centre is a stand-alone centre situated in Caister-on-Sea, north of Great Yarmouth in Norfolk. It shares a site with Caister Infant and Nursery School (URN120796) which manages the centre on behalf of the local authority, and its own day-care (URN EY389042) both of which are subject to separate inspection arrangements. Reports are available at www.ofsted.gov.uk. The school is also responsible for the governance of the centre supported by an advisory board. In addition the centre manager and the school are responsible for the management of Acle (Marshes) Children's Centre (URN21942), also subject to a separate inspection.

The centre delivers or supports access to a range of services including family support, adult and family learning, early education and health services, which are run from the centre and two community venues in the area. The centre's reach area is socially and economically diverse. It originally covered the coastal village of Caister-on-Sea but was extended in July 2012 to include the ward of Yarmouth North, an area with significant levels of deprivation and traditionally low levels of engagement with children's centre services. Around a quarter of children under five years of age are living in households where families are in receipt of out of work benefits.

There are 661 children under five years of age living in the centre's reach area, of which the very large majority are White British with a very small percentage from other ethnic groups, the largest being Eastern European. Children enter early years provision with skills below those typical for their age.

Families face a varied range of challenges; the centre has identified its main priority groups as children and families living in workless households, families from minority ethnic backgrounds, two year old children who are eligible to take up the entitlement to free education, and children who are less likely to achieve a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, such as summer born children and children with disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- A very large majority of families are registered with the centre and have access to good quality services, information and guidance. The centre is increasingly engaging expectant parents in services and over 85% of children are registered with the centre within two months of their birth. Effective outreach work, delivering services in the community and improved promotion of activities, has led to an increase in registration in the Yarmouth North Ward of the reach area by 57 percentage points since July 2012.
- The balance of universal and targeted services for families most in need of help is good. Programmes advertised to all families in the area through termly newsletters offer activities that engage new and existing families, including those who may be reluctant to do so. Additional targeted support, such as parenting groups, enables families with particular needs to gain new skills in a supportive environment.
- Most families in the area have regular contact with the centre, including children and families living in the most disadvantaged areas, and those living in workless households. Summer born children and children with disabilities are well represented in activities. However, the level of engagement with families from ethnic minority backgrounds is not at such a high level. The centre is aware of this and is actively pursuing ways to attract these families to use centre services.
- Almost all three and four year-olds are taking up their free education in good or better settings. The centre has worked closely with parents, so that the large majority of two year-olds will take up their free entitlement in September. Children that have been unable to access their chosen provision during the summer term have been well supported by the centre's 'Bookstart Corner' programme.
- Participation rates and attendance levels at sessions are high. Surveys and parent feedback show high levels of satisfaction. Parents feel comfortable at the centre and well-supported by staff. One parent expressed a view that was typical of many others, telling inspectors that staff, 'Go out of their way to help and make you feel important.'

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Children are provided with stimulating and interesting activities, both in the centre and in community venues. Activities such as 'Forest School' and 'Bounce and Rhyme' actively promote purposeful learning and provide plenty of opportunities for children to explore, be creative and learn independently. As a consequence, children are well prepared for their transition into early years provision.
- The centre works successfully to reduce inequalities and as a result children make good progress from their starting points. Tracking of children who have attended the children's centre shows that they are less likely to enter early years provision with levels of development below those expected for their age, and more likely to achieve a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage than children who have not used centre services.
- Effective cooperation and data sharing between professionals at an individual level means families' needs are accurately assessed. Intervention for children subject to child protection plans and children in need, is effective in ensuring vulnerable children are well protected. Staff make effective use of the Family Support Process (FSP), to ensure the risk of harm to children and families is reduced.
- Family support work is a strength. Staff provide individually tailored support in the home and in group

activities to improve parenting skills. They have designed a highly successful bespoke programme, 'Go MAD' which empowers families to 'Make A Difference' in their lives. As a result, a number of families have been able to get through times of crisis, and become much better equipped to make sensible future choices.

- Parents taking part in family learning opportunities such as 'Go MAD' workshops, healthy lifestyle courses and First Aid courses, make good progress in building new skills and their knowledge about children's health and safety needs, which is reflected in their learning journeys. However, there are currently insufficient opportunities for parents to progress to more formal learning, in particular opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy skills that will lead to employment. The local authority has plans in hand for developing a more co-ordinated approach to adult education provision in September, to extend opportunities.
- The centre provides a range of promotional activities, the 'Baby Café' and direct support from centre staff, to encourage mothers to breastfeed. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged through the centre's work to promote nutritious diets, oral health education and referrals to Health Trainers. However, health services fail to provide sufficient information on breastfeeding rates and children's weights, so that the centre is unable to measure how effective its work is on improving health outcomes.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre manager is totally committed to making sure local families enjoy healthy and fulfilled lives and overcome the personal challenges they face. She has built a hard working team whose members have the necessary qualifications, experience and expertise to respond well to children's and families' needs. The strong teamwork and high levels of commitment contribute well to improved outcomes for local families.
- Governance, leadership and management arrangements are clear, well understood and effective. At all levels, leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for development. A robust annual development plan with clear outcome and performance measures and challenging targets for delivery supports the further improvement of services.
- Resources are effectively managed, with services constantly under-review to ensure a good take-up of activities and that they meet the needs of the families in the area. Termly monitoring of staff deployment ensures a good balance of skills and knowledge is used to deliver good quality services.
- The local authority regularly monitors the performance of the centre through quarterly visits and the annual conversation. It provides comprehensive data to measure how well the centre is making a difference to the lives of families in the community. Clear actions are agreed to drive the centre's continuous improvement.
- Safeguarding matters are taken very seriously. Staff vetting procedures are thorough, and the skills of staff are kept up-to-date with on-going safeguarding training. Staff work closely with partners to reduce the risk of harm to children. They provide good practical support for families in some very difficult and challenging circumstances, such as support for parents with mental health issues and those suffering domestic violence, which helps parents to reduce the risk of harm to themselves and their children.
- Partnerships with some organisations such as libraries and health visitors are well-embedded, however other partnerships are under-developed. The recent partnership agreement with Social Care has led to some good joint working and the centre is doing more work with early years providers, however these partnerships are not yet having significant impact on outcomes for children and

families.

- Parents' views are taken into consideration at all levels. The time that some activities operate and the splitting up into two groups of one 'Stay and play' session are examples of changes made in response to parents views. They are also well represented on the advisory group and play an active role in challenging the work of the centre to drive improvements.

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 details

Unique reference number	20538
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	442868
Managed by	The governing body of Caister Infant, Nursery School and Children's Centre on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	661
Centre leader	Jenny Cuthbert
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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