

Irthlingborough Nursery, Infant School and Children's Centre

Scarborough Street, Irthlingborough, NN9 5TT

Inspection dates	16–17 July 2014
Previous inspection date	Not inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
		Not applicable	
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:

- Despite good increases in registrations not enough of the families the centre has identified as most in need of its support are regularly engaged in, or benefitting from, the centre's services.
- The local authority, social care and health partners do not always share data and information in a timely manner which limits the centre's ability to accurately prioritise its services, respond to families' needs or demonstrate the impact of its work. Additionally, not all case files are of a high enough standard.
- The monitoring of services by the local authority and those responsible for governance and leadership is not rigorous enough and there is insufficient focus on checking how well the outcomes improve for target groups.
- The education achievement gap between the performance of boys and girls, and between the most deprived children and the rest, are not narrowing sufficiently.
- Not enough parents, especially those from workless homes, enhance their education, engage in parenting programmes, training, volunteering or extend their workplace skills.

It has the following strengths:

- Safeguarding of children and families is given the highest priority. Strong partnerships and sharing of information about vulnerable families help keep children safe.
- All families that access the centre receive a warm welcome and good support from the enthusiastic and committed staff team. As a consequence, parents unanimously say that that they are provided with 'fantastic support'. Good one-to-one family support is highly valued by those in crisis.
- The centre provides access to training and good support for early years providers which is helping to improve the quality of early years provision in the area.
- Good partnerships with the health visitor means all new born babies are registered with the centre. As a result, the large majority of families with babies from birth to twelve months, regularly access the centre's services.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Develop strategies to ensure most of the centre's target groups regularly engage with its services and activities.
- Work with the local authority, social care and health partners to improve the timeliness and sharing of data and information so that the centre can accurately target its services and respond to families' needs swiftly.
- Leaders, managers and those responsible for governance, should increase the rigour in monitoring services and analysing data in order to carefully evaluate the impact of the centre's services on its target groups.
- Find ways to increase the educational achievement of the most deprived children and that of boys in order to rapidly narrow the educational achievement gap with the majority of children that achieve well.
- Ensure more parents, especially those from workless homes, have access to and engage in parenting programmes, training, volunteering activities and improve their workplace skills.
- Improve the consistency and quality of record keeping on case files so that they are all of a high standard.

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 head teacher of Irthlingborough Nursery and Infant School, the centre manager, staff at the centre and senior staff from the Local Authority. They also met with representatives from partner agencies, parents, volunteers and representatives from the advisory board.

The inspectors visited a 'Stay and Play' session in Crow Hill and 'Messy Play', 'Baby Stay and Play' and a group to support deaf children, all held at the centre. The centre manager jointly observed a session with an inspector.

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

Inspection team

Lead inspector, Jean-Marie Blakeley

Additional inspector

Geoff Dorrity

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Irthlingborough Infant and Nursery School manages the children's centre on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council. Irthingborough Junior School is also situated on the same site. The schools are subject to separate inspection arrangements.

There are approximately 594 children under five-years living in the reach area.

The town is growing and there are pockets of deprivation in this mixed area with some more affluent parts and two social housing estates, Crow Hill and Allen Road. These fall within the 30% most deprived areas in the country. Around 17% of children live in workless households. Children's skills and abilities on entry to early years provision vary and are sometimes below those expected for their age. The majority of families in the area are White British.

The centre works collaboratively with partners and provides family support, 'Stay-and-play' activities and access to health and adult training.

The centre has identified the families most in need of its support as: lone parents; workless households; children with disabilities; families with children subject to a child protection plan or looked after children; families who are being supported through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or targeted prevention support; troubled families; children living with domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse issues; and foster carers.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The large majority of families are registered with the centre and more than half are known to the centre because they regularly access services and activities. This includes the majority of families the centre has identified as most in need of its support. However, not enough of the workless families living in the areas of most deprivation or lone parents are accessing the centre's services.
- The centre tries hard to provide services and activities in easily accessible community venues in an attempt to increase the participation of families. However, the high cost of renting a venue in Crow Hill and the lack of a suitable venue in Allen Road limits the centre's ability to target the families who live there.
- The local authority, leaders and managers do not routinely analyse data and other information in sufficient detail in order to monitor how well the key target groups regularly access relevant services and activities. As a result, the centre is not fully aware if sessions and activities are sufficiently focused or successful enough in engaging the majority families who are in most need of the support and guidance the centre provides.
- Effective partnerships with the health visitor and midwife ensure that all new born babies are registered with the centre. Health clinics provided in the centre and alongside centre activities held in outreach venues mean that the large majority of families with babies from birth to twelve months regularly access the centre's services. 'Baby Stay and Play'

and 'Messy Play' at the centre attract large numbers and are enjoyed by families.

- Most children that are eligible access their free entitlement to early education at two, three and four years-old. The centre has good contact with most of the early years providers and provides good support and access to training which is helping improve the quality of early years provision in the area. However, it provides little additional support directly to children once they access their entitlement.
- Strong partnerships including innovative practice such as regular meetings held at the local health clinic which include centre staff, doctors and the health visitor means that information on the most vulnerable families is shared well. The effective partnerships with local housing associations help increase access to services, including for some families who might be reluctant to do so.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- Although the overall percentage of children achieving a good level of development is improving, the centre and its partners are not focusing their work sharply enough in order to reduce inequalities and ensure good outcomes for every child. Gaps in the educational attainment between different groups of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not narrowing sufficiently. Some children start school with skills below those expected for their age. However, those that access the centre's activities are often better prepared when they start nursery provision than those that have not.
- Lack of timely data from health services means that the centre cannot fully measure or demonstrate the impact of its work on health outcomes. Some data is several years out of date which limits the centre's ability to accurately target its services. Sustained breast feeding rates although high are declining year-on-year and attendance at the breast feeding café is low.
- Despite the best efforts from the centre, social care staff do not always respond and share information with the centre in a timely manner. As a result, support for families is sometimes delayed.
- Not enough parents, especially those from workless homes access the courses provided through the partnership with family learning. Tracking indicates that whilst a few parents progress to qualification courses not enough adults enhance their education or employability skills. In addition, the centre is not doing enough to ensure all families that might benefit from accessing parenting programmes do so.
- Families that access the centre benefit from the warm welcome and good support provided by the enthusiastic and committed staff team. Parents that receive one-to-one family support report excellent impact on their families' lives and say things such as 'It's kept my family together' and 'We would have fallen apart without the centre.' However, monitoring records and case files do not always clearly demonstrate the impact on outcomes for families.
- The centre is working to achieve a balance between services for all alongside those for meeting specific needs. 'Stay and play' groups are well attended but not sufficiently by target groups. Families with deaf children benefit from a local support group led by a

teacher of the deaf. However, the centre does not have accurate data on all disabled children living in the reach area and does not routinely monitor their attendance.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership, governance and management of the centre require improvement. Monitoring by the local authority lacks sufficiently detailed checks and interrogation of data and information to fully assess its performance. This, in turn, has led leaders, managers and the very supportive advisory board to have an overly optimistic view of the impact of the centre's work. As a result, although the centre is improving, its impact on outcomes for the most deprived families is not rapid enough.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and staff receive appropriate training. The centre has regular access to the names of children living in the area who may be subject to a child protection plan, looked after children or those identified as in need and as a result engages with most of them.
- The centre manager is a role model for her staff by championing the safeguarding of children and the respect shown to families. She challenges parents of any unsafe practices and ensures staff have a good understanding of how to identify potential issues of safety. As a result, the centre plays a key role in helping reduce the risk of harm to potentially vulnerable children.
- Parents are actively involved in the evaluation and planning of services. Parents are involved in a parent's forum and are well represented on the advisory board. The centre regularly consults with parents and they feel valued because it uses their feedback to inform the development of services.
- Staff feel supported in their work through regular supervision and good opportunities for professional development. However, supervision records lack detail and careful monitoring of precise targets linked to the centre's priorities. Leaders do not regularly observe and monitor the quality of centre activities delivered by their own staff and link this to improving the provision.
- Resources are adequate to meet the needs of families in the area. The centre makes satisfactory use of its small base on the school's site and staff are adequately deployed.

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	21614
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	442776
Managed by	Irthlingborough Infant and Nursery School on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	594
Centre manager	Julie Sadler
Telephone number	01933 653765
Email address	jsadler@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

This template is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130186.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 130186

