

Village Green Children's Centre

Moorlands Church of England Primary Academy, Moorland Way, Great Yarmouth, NR31 9PA

Inspection dates	11–12 September 2014
Previous inspection date	15 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	inadequate	4
Access to services by young children and families		Good	2
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:

- Everyone involved with the centre has worked very hard since the last inspection to improve services and register more families. Many improvements have been made with regard to safeguarding, assessment and the planning of services for families. However, it is too early to see how well some changes work and the difference they make on a long term basis.
- Partnerships with some organisations are under-developed which limits the centre's opportunities to work with children and families in a timely and fully co-ordinated way.
- The centre cannot measure its effectiveness in contributing to health outcomes because of a lack of information from health partners.
- The quality of some case files and case supervision records are variable. This makes it difficult in some cases to monitor the progress made by families and to ensure everything is being carried out to ensure their safety and well-being.
- Breastfeeding rates are low and well below the national average.
- The procedures for checking how well children and adults do in their learning are not yet sufficiently developed.

It has the following strengths:

- Most eligible children take up their entitlement to funded childcare places.
- The local authority and Moorlands Church of England Primary Academy provide good support to the centre that has led to improvements since the last inspection.
- Families who need support appreciate the help they receive from the centre.
- Most families from the area are registered and engage with the centre including those identified by the centre as being in most need.
- Parents are very happy with the services provided by the centre. Activities are popular and well attended.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure supervision of case files is used to identify and address any shortcomings in record keeping and that the outcome of any supervision is accurately and appropriately recorded.
- Work with social housing providers to ensure families in need of support receive help in a timely and coordinated way.
- Improve systems for tracking adults' and children's progress so that leaders are able to monitor:
 - children's progress across all learning and development area in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - the long term impact of the centre's work for adults and children.
- Work 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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, the head teacher and chair of governors of Moorlands Church of England Primary Academy, representatives from the lead agency - The Diocese of Norwich Education Academies Trust (DNEAT), an officer from the local authority and centre staff. They also met health partners, parents, early years practitioners and the chair of the advisory board.

The inspectors visited Chatterbox and Baby Bloom sessions.

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

Inspection team

Susan Smith, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ann Taylor

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Village Green children's centre is a stand-alone centre situated in the village of Belton. It shares a site with Moorlands Church of England Primary Academy (URN: 140189), which manages the centre on behalf of the local authority. Registered day-care (URN: EY368940) is on site and currently managed by the centre. Both the school and day care are subject to separate inspection arrangements. The school is also responsible for the governance of the centre supported by an advisory board. 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, Mill Lane community centre and Bradwell community centre.

There are 817 children aged under five years living in the children's centre area, most of whom are from White British backgrounds. The area is very mixed socially and economically, with one third of families being economically advantaged and around an eighth of families in the 20% to 30% most disadvantaged areas nationally. There is a low number of lone parents and low income families.

Families face a varied range of challenges; the centre has identified its main priority groups as children and families living in workless households, two- year- old children who are eligible to take up the entitlement to free education, young parents and children in need.

Most children enter early education with skills that are lower than those expected for their age, especially in communication and language development.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Since the last inspection there has been a drive by leaders, staff and partners to improve the numbers of children and families, including those expecting children, registered for centre services. Activities have been promoted more widely. As a result, numbers have noticeably improved and the very large majority of children and families are now registered with the centre.
- The proportion of children who take-up their two-year-old funded place in early years settings has improved in recent months as a result of the effective targeted work of the centre staff. Now, most eligible children living in the centre's catchment area make use of their free early years sessions to help them gain a head start in their learning and development.
- Families with babies and toddlers access good quality activities and services to promote early communication skills. The centre recognises that many local children have speech and language delay and offer sessions, such as Chatterbox and Music Makers, to help promote good communication skills.
- Consideration is given to where the centre delivers activities. Although the majority of activities are based in Belton, there are well attended groups taking place further afield to cater for those families who do not live close to the children's centre.
- Families have access to a range of services and activities to promote good health. 'Play and Weigh drop-in' and 'Baby Bloom' groups ensure that parents have easy access to health professionals who provide advice and support for weaning, establishing sleep routines and general safety issues. Access to support for breastfeeding is not strong. 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 quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The range of activities and services provided at the centre are appropriate and increasingly becoming better matched to the needs of families as the centre staff have an improved understanding of the needs of local families.
- The provision of ante-natal services is not as good as it could be. Centre leaders are fully aware and are trying hard at a local level to build upon the growing relationship with midwives and health to provide more services to support expectant mothers. At a strategic level, the local authority is working closely with the health trust to form a formal working arrangement.
- Families are highly satisfied with the quality of services at the centre. Parents receive good personal support, advice and guidance from staff. They value how this has helped them face problems, to engage in what the centre has on offer, meet new friends and break down any barriers due to feeling isolated or depressed.
- The centre provides training, support and guidance for volunteers. As a result, volunteers support the centre's work well and develop a range of employability skills. Several have progressed to further education, or in to employment.
- The provision of courses for adult learners is developing well with new E-learning English and mathematics courses about to start. A new partnership agreement about to be launched to improve the sharing of information, in order to track adults' progress on their journey to improved qualifications and employment. At present, this is in its infancy so it is too soon to measure the

impact of this new initiative.

- Tracking systems and files recording what children have learnt are held for children who attend crèche. Planning for crèche takes each child's requirements into consideration, which has a positive impact on the progress they make. Sometimes, the next steps to help crèche children move on are not clear enough.
- The systems to track the longer term impact of the centre's activities for children in all areas of learning and development of the Early Years Foundation Stage are not yet fully in place.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The arrangements for governance are evolving. Effective joined up working between the local authority, interim executive board (IEB) and the advisory board have provided sufficient challenge to drive the continuous improvement of the centre through a period of considerable uncertainty. Transition arrangements are in place to transfer the governance from the IEB to the newly formed governing body.
- Time has been taken to recruit governors with the required skills and drive to continue to push improvements at the centre. The governing body has recently convened a sub-committee to specifically evaluate the work of the centre. However, these arrangements are yet to be fully embedded.
- The effectiveness of the advisory board has been fully reviewed and has resulted in the formation of four champion groups. Each champion group has been successful in attracting membership from a range of agencies and stakeholders. Early indications are that these groups are set to drive improvement and provide an appropriate level of challenge, while promoting effective partnership working.
- Since the last inspection there is a much better focus on recognising the families who are in most need of support. Centre leaders are aware that they need to 'drill down' further into the information and neighbourhood intelligence to identify the harder to reach families who are not accessing services and plan how to engage with these specific groups.
- Self-evaluation of the centre's effectiveness has been completed. As a result, leaders broadly know the centre's overall strengths and where improvement is needed.
- Partnerships with some organisations are well-embedded; however, other partnerships are under-developed. The recent partnership agreement with social care has led to some good joint-working. Partnerships such as those with midwives, health partners and social housing providers have yet to be fully developed.
- Appropriate performance management arrangements are in place. Staff feel well supported and have access to good training opportunities to enable them to further develop their skills and knowledge. This enhances staff's ability to meet the needs of the community in which they work.
- Staff report that supervision of the work they do with individual families is helpful, challenging and reflective. However, records of supervision are of poor quality and do not reflect the comments made by staff. Consequently, in some case files the record keeping was not orderly.
- The centre's work in safeguarding vulnerable children, including looked after children and those

subject to child protection plans is strong. Considerable work is done to assess the needs of the most vulnerable families and those identified to be at risk. The Common Assessment Framework procedures are implemented well.

- Effective links with children's social care, health professionals and other agencies ensure a fully integrated approach towards early intervention and preventative services.
- Resources, including staff deployment, are used appropriately to meet the needs of children and families. The provision of crèche places and, in some circumstances, funding for transport costs, supports those in most need of access to services.
- Parents' views are sought after sessions and they are adequately involved in decision making through representation on the advisory board and champion groups. Parents show a high level of satisfaction with the centre, with many keen to show their appreciation of the work done to improve their lives.

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	23419
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	447543
Managed by	Moorlands Church of England Primary Academy on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	817
Centre leader	Evelyn Treadwell
Date of previous inspection	15 October 2013
Telephone number	01493 789562
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