

Birmingham - Kings Norton Group (Wychall Hub)

Wychall Children and Family Centre, Staple Lodge Road, Birmingham, B31 3EH

Inspection dates	16–17 September 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.

- The number of families registered with the children's centres and using services has increased significantly in the last three years. The very large majority of families living in the areas of highest deprivation use services and receive highly relevant support and guidance.
- Children and parents benefit from good quality learning and development opportunities. Parents use what they have learned at the centre in their home life with good outcomes, such as a decrease in the number of children who are overweight or obese.
- Leaders and managers, especially at a local level, have a very clear focus on what they need to do to help to improve the life chances of the more vulnerable families in the area served by the centre. They target the centre's resources efficiently using the combined knowledge of parents, staff and partners effectively.

It is not outstanding because:

- Leaders and managers do not always use the information they have from their monitoring of the centres and activities well enough for it to have maximum impact.
- The centres do not have detailed enough information from the local authority of the whereabouts of two-year-old children living in the local area who are eligible for funded nursery education or the detail of individual schools' Early Years Foundation Stage scores.
- The number of two-year-olds accessing funded nursery education is increasing rapidly but there is insufficient capacity in early years settings for this to continue.
- The special educational needs of some children are not always identified early enough through the two different assessments undertaken by health and early years provision.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

■ The local authority should:

- work with centre leaders and managers to increase the number of early years places available for eligible two-year-olds
- secure a means of sharing information about eligible two-year-olds to increase the number of families accessing free places even further
- secure a means of sharing a more detailed breakdown of individual school's Early Years Foundation Stage scores to enable the centre to focus its delivery in more detail
- follow its quarterly monitoring procedure fully to make sure that action points raised for the centre are checked for progress and impact.

■ The centre should:

- consider conducting joint assessments of children at two-years-old to provide a holistic assessment in order to reduce the risk of potential special educational needs being missed at an early stage
- routinely make sure that recommendations to improve practice in groups and activities which result from monitoring are acted upon.

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 one Additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, the children's centre manager, members of the strategic management group, commissioned service partners, staff and representatives from health, social care, adult learning, housing and children's social care.

The inspectors visited Wychall Children and Family Centre, Camp Lane Children's Centre, Reameadow Children's Centre and Manningford Hall.

The inspection covered the following centres Wychall Children and Family Centre, Camp Lane Children's Centre and Reameadow Children's Centre.

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

Inspection team

Joanne Smith Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cliff Rose

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Walsh

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

Birmingham has 61 children's centres organised into 16 localities each of which has main centres acting as hubs with satellite centres across the reach area. Within the Kings Norton locality there are two hubs: Kings Norton Children's Centre and Wychall Children and Family Centre. This inspection is of Kings Norton Wychall Children's Centre hub and the satellite centres at Camp Lane Children's Centre and Reameadow Children's Centre. Kings Norton Wychall hub commissions Allens Croft Children's Centre to deliver services in the Druid's Heath part of the area served by the centre. The centre delivers parenting and family support, adult and child activity groups, health appointments, adult learning, volunteering opportunities and speech and language therapy.

The local authority leads one centre and commissions the governing bodies of Wychall Primary School and Camp Lane Nursery School to lead the group of centres. A strategic group leads and manages the group of centres, reporting back to the governing bodies and local authority. The group is managed by a children's centre manager. The strategic group is made up of the headteachers of Wychall Primary School and Camp Lane Nursery School, representatives from the schools' governing bodies, the children's centre manager and a local authority representative. The most recent inspection reports for the schools can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. A steering group with members from partner agencies and parents contribute to the governance of the centre.

Around 3600 children aged under five years live in the area served by the centre. The large majority of families in the area are of White British heritage, with a slightly larger population of minority ethnic heritage families in the Reameadow area. The area served by the centre is socially diverse. The Wychall area has large pockets of multiple deprivation which fall into the top 10% most deprived areas nationally, while Reameadow has low levels of deprivation. The proportion of children living in workless households varies across the group's reach area from 15% to 27%. The centre has focused its work on families living in the 0 to 10% most deprived areas. Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- There has been a sharp rise in the number of families, including those expecting children, from the centre's priority groups actively using centres' services. The centres work very closely with a wide variety of partners to identify families with young children in the area they serve, particularly those who fall into one or more of its priority groups.
- Innovative strategies are used to encourage families whose circumstances may make them less likely to use the centres. One such example is Wychall Children's Centre hosting a clinic for mothers who use drugs.
- Children who are identified as having special educational needs and their parents are very well supported. They receive high quality guidance and assistance from the centre which is greatly valued. Nevertheless some children do not have their needs identified through health or other progress checks until they start school because the process is not yet joined up to provide a full picture of any gaps in their development.
- The current emphasis for the centre is to register and engage with families living in the areas of highest deprivation. In addition, however, there is a strong recognition that this alone does not make a family vulnerable. Leaders successfully give high priority to working with families who meet the criteria for two or more of their target groups, for example a lone parent from a minority ethnic background.
- Very good local knowledge is used well to provide activities and services that are relevant to the very different communities in the area. Families in areas that have rather less deprivation are reluctant to travel into the areas with higher levels of deprivation so activities are provided locally. This enables the centre to work with the full spectrum of families in the area it serves.
- The number of two-year-olds whose parents take up the offer of a funded nursery education place has increased by 20% in the last two years. While this is still not high enough this represents the significant and sustained effort by the staff team to identify and contact eligible families. This work is hampered by the local authority's inability to share accurate, detailed information with the centre and a lack of places for two-year-olds in local early years provision.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Families' needs are assessed carefully by staff and partners who deliver family support. High levels of relevant and focused support results in significant and measureable impact on families in areas such as improved parenting, mental health and child development. This is an effective, preventative measure which has helped some families avoid the need for high level work with the children's social care team.
- Adult education provision is well planned to meet the needs of local families and especially those from the centre's priority groups. Staff conduct a thorough needs analysis using identification of target groups in the area, robust data, feedback from parents and evaluation of past programmes.
- The varied adult education offer includes short workshops and taster courses to engage and interest reluctant learners, as well as longer academic and vocational courses designed to improve learners' employability and wider life chances. Adults know what their next steps are in their learning journey and there is good evidence of learners moving into employment and volunteering.

- There is a relentless focus on improving the quality of early years provision. Monitoring is accurate and areas for improvement are identified for staff, however, these points are not always followed up at subsequent monitoring visits. Nevertheless, there are good quality, relevant activities provided for parents and children across the area served by the centre that capture their interest and they enjoy sessions together. Children who attend centre activities quickly improve what they know, understand and can do.
- The centres place a strong emphasis on providing activities to improve how well children speak and listen because Early Years Foundation Stage scores across the area served by the centres highlighted this as an area in need of improvement. Children's progress is carefully tracked to refine the work done and more children now work within age related expectations for communication and language when they start school. However, the local authority does not share information about the outcomes for individual schools in the area hindering the centres' ability to tailor their work even more closely to local need.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centres have a strong and well-understood management and accountability structure. Leaders and managers have good systems in place to monitor the quality and effectiveness of services, which leads to the staff having very clear and focused targets for improvement. However, at times the information gained from observation and reviews is not followed up swiftly enough. For example, the local authority hold quarterly monitoring reviews with leaders and set short term improvement actions, but they do not review the centre's plans or progress against the actions at the next quarterly review.
- Staff have regular one to one supervision sessions with their line manager. This provides staff with good pastoral support and opportunities to identify personal training needs. Managers also use these sessions to promptly and effectively tackle any areas of underperformance through the use of clear action plans.
- The centre manager collates and analyses information about the centres' performance efficiently and provides clear reports to the local authority, strategic group and steering group. The strategic group are perceptive and challenging because they are provided with accurate information about the area and the centre's performance by the centre manager. As a result the centres have highly relevant, clear and measureable targets for their work and are reducing inequalities and improving life chances for families in the area.
- Staff have a good understanding of the policies and procedures for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children who use services or receive their support. Families who have children subject to a child protection plan, child in need plan or early help assessments have clear, timely plans for support and improvement. Staff have regular case file review meetings with their managers to check progress and quality, and identify any concerns arising from their work.
- Across the area served by the centres resources are carefully planned for and used. A good example of the thought given to resources and the needs of the area is the centre's decision to employ a speech and language therapist to support the need for children to improve their speaking and listening skills. The decision to do this was taken because the waiting list for the local authority service was too long and having a detrimental effect on children's progress.

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	80408
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	451710
Managed by	The governing bodies of Wychall Primary School and Camp Lane Nursery School on behalf of the local authority and the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	3600
Centre leader	Katie Birrane
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0121 464 3169
Email address	k.birrane@wychall.bham.sch.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 23692 Wychall Children and Family Centre
- 21676 Camp Lane Children's Centre
- 22477 Reameadow Children's Centre

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