

Summer House and New Woods Children Centre Group

Summer House Children's Centre, The Summer House, Clare Road, Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, NG17 5BB

Inspection dates	1–2 October 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected as a group

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	2
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 group of centres is good.

- Highly committed leaders and staff are successfully reducing inequalities for families by providing good quality services that are consistently improving.
- Very effective relationships with a wide range of professional partners, including those in health, schools and social care encourage the sharing of information at a local level. This has helped to ensure that a large majority of families access services.
- Valuable support is provided for families who find themselves in challenging circumstances. Parents praise the quality of the help they receive from staff.
- The group works exceptionally well with local private and voluntary providers of early years education to ensure that children are very well prepared for when they start school.
- The centres which make up the group are at the heart of their local communities. The group has been very active in supporting developments in the neighbourhood and therefore improving the quality of life for a wide range of families.

It is not outstanding because:

- There is still more to do to ensure that most low income and workless families access services.
- Breastfeeding rates remain stubbornly low and the number of mothers who smoke during pregnancy is increasing.
- Relatively few parents undertake accredited courses in English and mathematics and of those who do, the success rate is low.
- The local steering group does not always provide governance that has sufficient challenge and there is insufficient involvement of parents with children under the age of five in the group.

What does the centre/group need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of families from the reach area that benefit from the group's services. Specifically focus on those in workless households or with low incomes, by doing more to identify and contact those that do not regularly attend the children's centre.
- Improve the impact services on outcomes for families by:
 - ensuring that the groups' efforts to improve breastfeeding rates have a greater impact and doing more to reduce the rates of mothers smoking in pregnancy
 - encouraging more users to access courses that will improve their literacy and numeracy so that they have better employability skills
 - making sure that the information about the take up and completion of courses is effectively analysed and used to inform the way future services are planned.
- Improve the impact of governance by:
 - providing training for the advisory board so that members are able to offer a greater level of challenge
 - making certain that parents with children under five are better represented on the board.

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.

The centres that form part of this children's centre group are Summer House Children's centre and New Woods Children's Centre.

This inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the leaders of the centre. They also spoke to other members of staff who work in the centre and representatives from the Nottingham Children and Family Partnership as well as the local authority and members of the advisory board. Conversations took place with staff from partner agencies including a range of health professionals and staff from the adult learning services. Inspectors also spoke with headteachers from local schools, staff from private and voluntary providers of childcare and staff from children's social care. Discussions with parents took place at different times during the inspection.

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

Inspection team

Susan Walsh, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Tara Street	Additional Inspector
Patricia Hornsby	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the group

The group consists of Summer House children's centre and New Wood children's centre. The day to day management and provision of service delivery is the responsibility of Nottingham Children and Family Partnership (NCFP), a consortium of three organisations: North Nottinghamshire College, Family Action and Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust as part of a three year contract awarded by Nottinghamshire County Council in June 2013. The group is guided in the provision of services by the requirements of Nottinghamshire County Council. An advisory board oversees the work of both centres.

Summer House Children Centre is situated in the Sutton East area of Ashfield and New Woods Children Centre is situated in the Sutton North area of Ashfield. New Woods Children Centre is attached to Healdswood Nursery and Primary School (URN 122488). The proportions of children who live in workless households and families with low incomes are above the national average with both communities facing similar issues of high unemployment. The vast majority of families are from White British backgrounds but there are rising number of families from minority ethnic groups including those from Eastern European backgrounds.

The group offers early childhood services including family support and health services as well as aspects of adult education. Childcare is offered at New Woods Children's centre. This provision is inspected separately and the reports are available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Most children in enter Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are below those expected for their age.

The centre has identified as particular target groups: children living in workless households, young parents, and families from minority ethnic groups.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- A large majority of children and families in the area are registered with the group and have good access to the wide range of good quality services that are offered. Active involvement in the local community including partnership work with health professionals, social care and schools ensures that the staff are made aware of families, including those expecting children, that are in the most need of their services.
- Staff work hard to ensure that both centres are warm and welcoming to families. This ensures that those less likely to engage feel comfortable coming to the centres.
- The numbers of families from priority groups accessing the centres is rapidly improving. However the numbers of families with low incomes including those who are not working are not improving quite as swiftly as the proportions of teenage parents and families from minority ethnic groups. This is because systems are not always fully effective in identifying families who do not attend regularly.
- Many services are either based in the centres or have staff who are regular visitors. This together with very effective communication between partner agencies ensures that the large majority of families in priority groups are seen by early intervention services.
- A strong partnership with the Family Nurse Partnership means that teenage parents get access to the help and support they need. There is an increasing focus on ensuring that the needs of families from minority ethnic groups are met including the needs of local Polish families.
- Assessment at two is being used very effectively to identify children who need early help. The group helps families to access the help they need. For example, when children need additional help in developing their speech.
- The very large majority of three- and four-year-olds and eligible two-year olds are accessing their funded early education place in the range of good and better early years provision in the area. This is due to the concerted effort of the group's staff to encourage and support families to take up their places.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The centres deliver a wide range of well-planned, good quality services which are open to all families and some which are specifically aimed at those families identified as most in need.
- Sessions such as 'Mucky Pups' are very much appreciated by parents. In addition, parents have good opportunities to be involved in compiling a scrapbook journal of their children's progress whilst attending centre sessions. This helps to increase their awareness of how they can support their children's learning at home.
- Partnerships with local schools and providers of early education are excellent and ensure that children are well prepared for school. The group successfully runs a range of highly individualised programmes such as, 'listening and attention', and 'big bag of emotions' in local schools and nurseries to support children identified as needing extra support with their language and social and emotional development.
- The monitoring of the progress children make across the range of early years provision and schools in the area is thorough and gaps in their attainment are identified. In response, highly effective and well attended staff training is provided to help narrow inequalities.

- The 'muddy footprints' conference inspired staff and successfully enhanced the quality of provision in local schools and settings. As a result, the majority of children living in the most deprived areas achieve a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and gaps between outcomes for different groups of children are narrowing.
- Families, who find themselves in complex and chaotic situations, receive prompt attention from the groups' staff. Health and family support staff work very closely with key agencies and organisations to provide effective early interventions and support families in time of need.
- Health partners including health visitors and midwives run clinics and practical activity sessions in conjunction with the group's staff to raise parents' awareness of healthy lifestyles. Partners report that this work has been very successful in reducing the percentage of children in Reception who are obese and increasing the uptake of immunisations.
- Despite a focused effort by the group's staff and partners the number of mothers who continue to breastfeed at six-to-eight weeks remains stubbornly low and the percentage of mothers who smoke during pregnancy is high and increasing.
- Relatively few parents undertake accredited courses in English and mathematics and of those who do, have limited success. The group has recently made some improvements to the tracking of learners but it is too soon to see an impact. The group does not routinely gather or use summary data on adult learning to capture the progress and destinations of parents, and referrals to other training providers.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Leaders, managers and staff are enthusiastic and passionate about improving families' lives. They work hard to continuously improve the quality of provision across the group and improve life chances of families. This combined with clear procedures for working with key partners, has secured real and sustained improvements for a large majority of families.
- Staff make good use of the good quality resources and available space to provide a variety of groups including the use of venues in the neighbourhood to meet families' needs.
- Challenge from the NCFP and the local authority has been reinvigorated since the arrival of managers who are new to their roles. Outcomes are carefully monitored and suitable targets are set which the group leaders, managers and staff strive to achieve.
- Data is used appropriately to plan and shape services and to identify precisely areas for improvement.
- Performance management and supervision are well established and systematic. Staff keep abreast of best practice and undertake useful training to extend their expertise and as a result they are highly qualified.
- Staff take their duties relating to safeguarding seriously. Policies and procedures are comprehensive and the Common Assessment Framework process is used appropriately to assess need and to decrease levels of risk. The centre provides good support for looked after children, as well as children who have been identified as being in need or who are subject to a child protection plan. This is helped by a very good working relationship with colleagues from social care.
- Members of the local steering groups are keen and enthusiastic and have a detailed understanding of the needs of the immediate community. Much time is spent exchanging information about the work of the various services. However, relatively few questions are asked about the quality of services,

how staff are managed and about measurements of the impact of the group. This is because members have had limited training and are sometimes unable to fully understand the comparative performance of the group in national terms and therefore to know precisely how effective the group is in reducing inequalities for local families.

- The group obtains and uses the views of parents well to shape the service and make improvements. However, the parents' forum is not always well attended. Additionally parents of children under five are underrepresented on the advisory board.

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/Group details

Unique reference number	80673
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	447604
Managed by	The Nottingham Children and Family Partnership on behalf of the local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1829
Centre leader	Jenny Wells
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as a group
Telephone number	01623 510946
Email address	jenny.wells@nottshc.nhs.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- URN 22974 Summer House Children's Centre
- URN 22109 New Woods Children's Centre

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