

# Oakenclough and Poynton Children's Centre

Colshaw Drive, Colshaw Farm, Wilmslow, SK9 2PZ

<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2014
<b>Previous inspection date</b>	Not previously inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Access to services by young children and families		<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of practice and services		<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Attendance at some sessions is low and the numbers of families engaging with services offered are not yet high enough.
- A lack of live birth information from the health authority hinders the centre's ability to identify all those not using its services.
- The gap between the skills of disadvantaged children and others is not closing quickly enough.
- The centre does not track the success rates and progression for its adult learners sufficiently to measure the quality and impact of the provision.
- Actions from self-evaluation and local authority annual conversations are insufficiently specific and measurable to ensure rapid improvement.
- The information provided by the local authority provided does not enable the leadership, governance and management to judge the impact of its provision easily and accurately.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- Improved stability of management is giving staff a better understanding of the role of the children's centre and the difference it can make to children's lives and the resolve to accelerate the speed of improvement.
- Families from the most disadvantaged areas regularly use the centre's services.
- Very valuable support is provided to the families who find themselves in difficult circumstances.
- There is a strong focus on keeping children safe, both in the home and when attending the centre.
- The availability of on-site antenatal and postnatal services ensures that those who are expecting or have just had babies are well catered for.

### **What does the centre need to do to improve further?**

- Increase the number of families from the reach area that benefit from the centre's services by:
  - more effectively identifying and contacting those that do not regularly attend
  - identifying and using more effective methods to raise the profile of centre within the community.
- Improve the quality and impact of services for families by:
  - working closely with parents, childcare providers and schools to improve children's readiness for school and rapidly close the gap between disadvantaged children and others
  - developing and implementing effective tracking of the participation, outcomes and progression of adult learners and use this information to inform the planning of future services.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - working closely with health authority partners to agree protocols that will enable the sharing of information such as live birth information and other health indicators and use the information to plan provision and monitor the impact of services provided
  - working with the local authority to improve the quality of the information used by the centre to inform its self-evaluation of performance; ensuring that all information measures performance against the current population using proportional measures to assist the centre make judgements against inspection framework indicators in its self-assessment
  - developing quality improvement plans following self-evaluation and local authority annual conversations that provide specific, measurable and time bound outcomes for each identified action; closely monitoring progress towards achieving these actions, including the use of milestones where appropriate, to ensure rapid continuous improvement in the quality and impact of provision.

### **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. It was carried out at the same time as Knutsford Children's Centre.

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the manager of the centre. They also spoke to other staff who work in the centre, to representatives of the local authority as well as members of the advisory board. Conversations were held with staff from partner agencies, including a range of health professionals and staff from the adult and family learning services. Inspectors also spoke with headteachers and other educational professionals. Discussions with parents took place at different times during the inspection. Inspectors conducted an observation of an activity jointly with one of the centre staff.

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

**Inspection team**

Susan Walsh, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Parm Sansoyer	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

OakencloUGH and Poynton Children's Centre forms part of the Wilmslow, Knutsford and Poynton (WKP) collaborative in Cheshire East North Locality. Poynton Children's centre merged with OakencloUGH Children's Centre in 2013 to create OakencloUGH and Poynton Children's Centre. The centre offers early childhood services including family support and health services, as well as aspects of adult education. The Poynton satellite centre is open two days a week and offers access to universal services. The day-to-day management and provision of service delivery is the responsibility of the local authority. The collaborative has a single Advisory Board which provides governance. The children's centre manager was appointed in May 2013, after a period during which leaders and managers frequently changed.

The centre serves a large area that includes rural areas and outlying villages. The proportion of children who live in workless households is low, but there are small pockets of deprivation where the proportion of children living in families with low incomes is above the national average. The vast majority of families are from White British backgrounds.

The centre offers early childhood services, including family support and health services, as well as aspects of adult education. Child care (Mini V Preschool) and after school care (Little Treasures Kids' Club) is offered at Poynton Children's Centre site. These provisions are inspected separately and the reports are available on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Most children enter nursery and reception classes with skills that are above those typical for their age.

The centre has identified workless households, young parents, families where parenting is a significant issue, families where there are mental health issues and families with children aged from birth to two years as groups most in need of its support.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

### Requires improvement

- A minority of families accesses the centres services; this reduces the centre's impact on improving the life chances for families. Although the large majority of families with children under five from the immediate area uses the centre, only a small minority of families who live in outlying areas take advantage of what is offered. Parents themselves feel that the centre is not well enough known.
- The delivery of antenatal services and postnatal services on site ensures that the needs of those who are expecting children are met well and encourages families to register with the centre. The centre does not have fully secure information about the number of under fives living in the area it serves, but it appears that the large majority of families are registered with the centre. However, only a minority of families then go on to use the centre's services.
- While the centre knows why some families most need their support, lack of important information from key partners makes it difficult for the centre to know just how many families live in the area, including those with children aged 0-2 years, that are not accessing the centre's services. However, effective partnership-working at a local level is helping to identify some families.
- Many of the families from the most economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods, where there are higher levels of worklessness, make good use of the services. This includes young parents, families where parenting is a significant issue and those with mental health issues. However, the centre has more limited knowledge of those who are less likely to attend, who live in other more advantaged areas served by the centre.
- The very large majority of three- and four-year-olds access their funded early education places. The number of eligible two-year-olds that are accessing their funded early education place in the range of good and better early years provision in the area has improved. This is due to the concerted

effort to encourage families to take up their places. However, over a third of children are still not accessing their places and are missing out on the extra support that is available to them.

### **The quality of practice and services**

### **Requires improvement**

- The centre offers an appropriate range of services that are open to all and those for the families that the centre has identified as in most need of their support. However, only a limited amount of activities are delivered in the wider community. The centre focuses some of its services mainly at families living in less affluent areas. Although these families often take advantage of the services offered, only a minority of families across the area served by the children's centre benefit from the activities that are provided. This limits the impact the centre has on improving families' lives.
- The proportion of children who have a good level of development in the area served by the centre is well above the national average. However, the levels of development reached by disadvantaged children is below average. The gap between the levels of development of this group of children and children who are not disadvantaged is not narrowing. The on-site Early Years Service is working hard to further enhance the quality of early years provision in the area, including the quality of support provided for those children who are in danger of falling behind.
- Although there has been focused work on language development, including through a valuable partnership with speech and language therapists, more general work on school readiness has been limited. For example, an event provided in the centre during summer holidays was not well attended. The centre has recently started to develop links with local providers of private education and voluntary providers of early years education, but links with local schools are generally underdeveloped.
- Adults benefit from appropriate opportunities to attend courses delivered in the centre. However, the process for tracking attendance and progress of this provision is insufficiently developed and only anecdotal evidence of the impact is available.
- The individual support provided for families is of a high standard. It is valued by families, because it improves life chances and reduces inequalities. Parents say that if they have a problem 'Staff rally round and sort them out'. Case files and records are maintained appropriately and children's and parents' voices play a central role in planning the type of support given to a family. This means that the support is carefully tailored to a family's individual need. Advice and guidance is particularly strong for those in workless households. For example, a very good partnership with the Citizens' Advice Bureau is very effective in supporting families to access their full range of benefits and to manage their debt more efficiently.
- The teenage parents' group is no longer running, but those that attended report that the group and more particularly the support provided by staff has made a considerable difference to their lives.
- Parents report that they find courses relating to parenting valuable and that these have a direct impact on the way they manage their children's behaviour. The centre is working on developing a more universal approach to offering parenting advice.
- It is sometimes difficult for the centre to measure its impact on healthier lifestyles because of lack of secure health information, however there is good access to health professionals on site. Breastfeeding rates are generally above the national average and this can be linked to the provision of support groups. There is strong focus on mental well-being and the 'Butterfly Group' is providing valuable support for those who may be in danger of developing postnatal depression.

### **The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management**

### **Requires improvement**

- The new leadership team have recently and successfully merged two teams of staff, making the best of individual skills and talents. A clear and shared sense of purpose has been developed, together with a determination to secure continuous improvement, although there is still more to do make sure that more families take full advantage of the services offered by the centre.
- Staff make appropriate use of the good quality resources and spacious accommodation to provide a

variety of activities and services. There are plans to take more services out into outlying areas in order to make activities more accessible to a greater range of families.

- Performance management and supervision are well organised. Staff share best practice and undertake useful training to extend their expertise.
- The lack of protocols for sharing information including about live births, makes it difficult for the centre to increase access for families. The information that the centre does have is not always accurate, clearly presented or accessible and important information about health is not readily available. This restricts the way information can be used to plan services or to measure the impact of the centre's work.
- Although the local authority works closely with the centre, especially in its day-to-day operation and provides valuable support, it does not always provide sufficient challenge to further accelerate the pace of improvement. There is a lack of rigour in the way the local authority monitors the centre's performance and in development planning, which has insufficient numerical targets and milestones.
- Staff take their duties relating to safeguarding seriously and their work is supported by the application of comprehensive policies and procedures. Staff make effective use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process appropriately to assess need and to decrease levels of risk. There is good collaborative working with social care to ensure good cooperation and information-sharing. A high priority is given to supporting children subject to a child protection plan, children in need and looked-after children. Additionally, good quality information is provided to parents on e-safety and child sexual exploitation, which helps parents to keep their children safe.
- A joint advisory board benefits from a good level of participation from partners and a few parents. The board received good training to prepare it for its support and challenge role and the effectiveness of this can be clearly seen in the board's minutes. However, the limitations with available information restrict the board's ability to fully challenge the centre's performance.

**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.

**Children's centre details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	22223
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	447561
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	3015
<b>Centre leader</b>	Liz McVeigh
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01625 374180
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