

# Tennyson's Children's Centre

c/o St. Bartholomew's School, Derby Road, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 1BP

**Inspection dates** 19–20 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
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.

- Leadership, governance and management are successful at all levels and steer the work of the centre effectively. The centre manager leads by example and ensures the centre builds for continuous improvement.
- Children are well prepared for school. The range of activities offered by the centre provides a good level of support for young children's development, particularly in their communication and language skills. Activities offered by the centre also encourage children's development and positive attitudes to learning.
- Partnership work is a strength. This includes strategic partnerships with health and also partnerships with local community providers who support families' enhanced well-being.
- A large majority of families who need support receive the help they require. This includes well-run activities designed to meet their particular needs, including early language support, parenting classes, and individual one-to-one work in the home.
- Parents value the centre, their opinions are taken into account, and they help with the efficient running of the centre.
- The centre provides good value for money because it makes efficient use of its resources and is effective in improving the outcomes for priority families.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Registration rates are good for most target groups. However, health visitors are not yet sharing live birth contact details consistently with the centre. This means that the centre cannot assess all needs precisely and support children's earliest development.
- The children's centre has not been able to develop the relationship with Jobcentre Plus so that parents receive early employability support to help them prepare for their return to work.

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

- Encourage health visitors to register and share all new live birth contact details with the centre. Use this information to check whether the hardest to reach parents and their children are known to the centre and access its services quickly.
- Develop the relationship with Jobcentre Plus so that parents receive the local advice they need to help them to enhance their skills and return to work.

### 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 centre staff, parents and users of the children's centre, the local authority, the children's centre manager and the school headteacher. The inspectors also discussed aspects of the children's centre work with members of the confederation of local schools, members of the governing body and advisory board, and representatives of organisations who work in partnership with the centre.

The inspectors visited activities taking place in the children's centre. They also visited a parenting course taking place in a local school. The 'Play and learn' session, in the local community centre, was observed jointly with the children's centre manager.

They also looked at a range of relevant documentation.

### Inspection team

Teresa Kiely, Lead Inspector	Additional inspector
Sue Metcalfe	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Tennyson's Children's Centre includes the areas of Haslemere, Hindhead, Beacon Hill, Grayswood and Shottermill. It shares the same site as St Bartholomew's Primary School. It currently provides outreach services at Shottermill Infant School and High Lane Community Centre. These schools are subject to separate inspection arrangements. The centre uses a mobile play-bus to support families in isolated rural communities and delivers a range of activities in partnership to help meet its core purpose. The centre has reduced opening hours that operate four days a week.

The local authority has contracted responsibility for Tennyson's Children's Centre to the governing body of St Bartholomew's Primary School. The advisory board, who provide advice and guidance, includes parents, partners, school governors and members of the confederation of local schools. The centre manager reports to St Bartholomew's headteacher.

The children's centre has 881 children under the age of five living in its area. The families it serves are predominantly White British. The area is affluent, with small pockets of deprivation. The proportions of children living in households reliant on benefits, or where their parents are out of work, are relatively low. Children's skills and levels when they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage are broadly typical for their age.

The main priority groups assessed as being in need of the centre's services are two-year-olds eligible for free early education, and families living in Hatchetts Drive and Rackfield.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families **Good**

- The centre has worked hard to increase its registrations. It is now reaching a large majority of families; registrations for priority groups are increasing rapidly. However, sharing live birth contact information between health visitors and the children's centre has proved to be a challenge that still requires further work.
- The centre has a good relationship with the linked health visitor, and centre staff attend the local baby weighing clinic and the two-year-old assessments. This has helped the centre to build up its knowledge of the needs of expectant families and those with very young children, and offer them support when they need it.
- The centre is successful at encouraging the participation of disadvantaged families in its target area. It is now working in a range of ways to further improve its services to these families. It has recently used local knowledge, parent questionnaires and partner links to find out about how best to continue to support these families, particularly those living in need.
- A large majority of families that the centre has identified as most needing its support receive appropriate support from the centre. This includes work with very vulnerable families, and universal and specific work to develop children's readiness for school, and work with parents to support their parenting skills.
- Families living in rural areas receive regular support from the mobile play-bus. Outreach work in local schools and community venues encourages families to access services when they would otherwise be unlikely to do so.
- The centre has been particularly successful in using its links with the local confederation of schools to further encourage access for disadvantaged families, and identify and offer support to meet their needs.
- The centre supports families to access free early education. Most eligible two-year-olds take up their early years place. These children and their families form a target group who have had 100% sustained contact with the centre. The centre continues to monitor and support their needs well.

**The quality of practice and services****Good**

- The centre has developed a number of partnerships that benefit families. For example, eligible two-year-old children living in Hatchetts Drive and Rackfield have taken up their free early education places. These children have also benefited specifically from 'Play and learn' sessions which help develop early language skills.
- The centre's work to improve outcomes for families not only includes health and adult education, but also local ventures such as Haslemere Museum, where family learning is supported successfully.
- The partnership with the local confederation of schools provides a range of support for children and their families when children start school. The children's centre manager liaises and works with home school workers who have been employed by the confederation, to enable vulnerable school families to receive the support they need.
- When children are beginning to talk but require more help, they benefit from a carefully tailored programme. Parents learn how to effectively support their children's developing language skills during these sessions.
- Teachers in the local schools value the 12-week transition programme the centre provides to help children who need a little more support to prepare for school. They say this makes a real difference to the way that children start school, and helps them to become successful learners and reduces inequalities.
- The centre regularly tracks the progress of the children it supports, and can show the benefits of its support as children enter school. Most children are working within age-related expectations when they start school.
- When families are supported more individually, the centre maintains case files and records to a high standard. Evaluations clearly show the positive impact of the centre's work on improving families' well-being. Centre activities such as first aid and training in e-safety help young children to be safe.
- Parents attending parenting courses are helped to improve their children's well-being and their own parenting skills. After attending, parents say they can better help their children with homework and manage their children's behaviour. Through this type of course, parents are much better equipped to deal with problems.
- The centre signposts parents to the help they need to access training, support and advice to improve their chances of employment. Volunteers gain from effective links with local volunteering agencies. However, links with Jobcentre Plus are underdeveloped and are not effective at providing local support for parents planning to return to work.

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

- There is robust leadership, governance and management of the centre. Staff training, supervision and performance management arrangements are good and are central to the centre's good effectiveness.
- The centre's manager is highly competent. She has developed the work of the centre significantly in a number of ways and leads by example. She has pursued the training to enable her to support her colleagues in their delivery of activities. The training plan for the centre supports staff development well and staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in the work they do.
- Since the reorganisation of the advisory board last year, the centre has benefited from the good challenge, support and advice that it offers. The headteacher of the school that has oversight of the centre is actively involved in evaluating and improving the quality of activities provided.
- The centre manager and the advisory board know the strengths and improvement areas for the centre. They monitor the work of the centre effectively. They know that registrations, despite improvement, are not yet at a level that will enable them to identify the impact of their work on all families most in need.
- The local authority offers appropriate advice and challenge. The centre reaches the targets set by the local authority. Health targets in the centre's area are met successfully.

- The centre has used its partnership with the confederation of local schools to deliver a robust programme of school-readiness.
- Families contribute to the effective running of the centre in a number of ways. Parents are members of the advisory board and also attend the parents' forum. They support with the day-to-day activities, such as helping to organise seating for 'Griff the Dragon' to sing at 'Play and learn' sessions. Parents appreciate the work of the centre and the difference it has made to their lives. One parent spoke for many when she said, 'I can't recommend it enough.' Another parent said, 'I know my daughter is in a safe environment here.'
- Safeguarding policies and practice meet requirements. Procedures and policies are in place, and understood by all. The centre works successfully with its key partners to reduce the risk of harm to children. When necessary, it provides effective intervention and support for children subject to a child protection assessment, identified children in need, and those supported by the Common Assessment Procedures including looked after children.
- The centre provides value for money because, although the centre opens on a part-time basis, it provides a wide range of activities that are matched very well to the needs of vulnerable and targeted families in its community.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	23133
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	451711
<b>Managed by</b>	The governing body of St Bartholomew's Primary School

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	881
<b>Centre leader</b>	Rachel Gardiner
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01428 644485
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="http://www.tennysonschilrenscentre.co.uk">www.tennysonschilrenscentre.co.uk</a>

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