

# Farnborough Road First Steps Children's Centre

Farnborough Road, Birkdale, Southport, PR8 3DF

## Inspection dates

Previous inspection date

18–19 November 2014

Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Staff know the community well including its most vulnerable groups. They target support and advice appropriately and effectively to meet individual family's needs. As a result, most families, particularly those hardest to reach, engage with activities and are using the centre's services.
- Referrals, outreach work, universal services, observations and assessments are all used effectively to identify needs and match families to the right services they require. Timely, robust assessment of children leads to early referral to specialist services. As a result, many are leading happy healthier lives due to the centre's good support.
- Highly effective partnerships with most schools and all day-care providers ensure families receive good advice, guidance and support. These partners work well with the centre to ensure good transition arrangements are in place and children are well prepared for school.
- High-quality parenting courses delivered by skilled and knowledgeable staff equip, encourage and support parents through their various stages of parenthood. As a result, many parents in the area now understand how to meet their own and their children's needs.
- Leadership, governance and management of the centre are very effective in most aspects. The centre manager is constantly looking at new ways to do things better and takes clear action to make improvements when required. As a result, the centre is in a strong position to continually improve the quality of its work and its impact on the lives of families.

### It is not outstanding because:

- The centre does not always set clear priorities in its service delivery plan so that everyone can understand what the centre needs to do to further improve the life chances and opportunities for families living in the area.
- The centre does not always track adults' progression into further learning and/or employment. As a result, they are not yet in a secure position to be able to fully demonstrate the difference its adult learning programmes make to those who attend.

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

- Implement more effective arrangements to monitor the progress and success of parents attending adult education courses and activities designed to help them gain employment or improve their family's finances.
- Improve action planning by ensuring that all targets are specific, measurable and focused sufficiently on improving outcomes for 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 three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority and parents. The inspectors visited activities that took place at the centre and at Kingsmeadow Children's Centre and St John's Church Hall.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation and undertook a joint observation of an activity with the centre manager.

**Inspection team**

Janet Stacey, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ken Fisher	Additional Inspector
Sue Pepper	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Farnborough Road First Steps Children's Centre is situated in Birkdale Southport. In 2012, Farnborough First Steps merged with Kingsmeadow Children's Centre to form one centre. Services continue to be offered at both sites. The governing body of Farnborough Road Infant School is responsible for governance of the centre, supported by an advisory board.

The centre offers a range of services which includes family activities, family support and parenting programmes. Health services are offered at the centre and at Ainsdale health and well-being clinic. Linked childcare provision is provided by private and voluntary early years organisations in the local area. These provisions are subject to separate inspection arrangements and are available on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Local schools report that in general children in the reach area enter early years provision with a range of experiences and skills typical for their age. However, some children are not as skilled in communication and language.

There are approximately 1,213 children under five years of age living in the area of which 15% are reliant on workless benefits. The predominant families living in the area are of White British heritage. First Steps Children's Centre covers Birkdale and Ainsdale and parts of Dukes, Ravenmeols and Harrington wards. Birkdale and Ainsdale as a whole are fairly affluent areas. However, 50% of children in Ainsdale live in homes which are situated in the 30% most deprived postcodes in Southport. The centre has identified children living in workless households, lone parents and vulnerable two-year-olds as in most need of their support.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Families benefit from good quality services which are open to all and those specifically for the families identified as most in need of help. Outreach visits are used very effectively to engage both adults and children at home and to explain what the centre has to offer. In addition, staff quickly contact new families moving into the area to tell them about the centre. As a result, almost all families, including those expecting children are registered with the centre and most access services because they understand what help is available and how the staff and partners can support them.
- The centre has established strong and productive partnerships with early years providers, most schools, health and social services. These enable the centre to obtain accurate information about families most in need of support, including unemployed adults, lone parents and children under two years of age that need perceptive intervention and support.
- Families make good use of the linked midwifery and health visiting services throughout the area. Health services are timetabled into the activity programme and held at nearby clinics. This helps families to access a well-integrated programme from ante-natal appointments to parenting classes to child health checks. Health visitors are proactive in referring families for support when any specific additional need has been identified.
- The staff ensure that most eligible two-year-old children take up their funded place at an early years setting. The vast majority of these places are at settings that are of at least good quality. Almost all of the three- and four-year-old children eligible for funded places take up the offer.

### The quality of practice and services

Good

- The quality, range and relevance of the services provided are good, with the right balance between those available to all and those supporting specific parents. Swift support is available in times of crisis, particularly for those that the centre has identified as most in need, such as lone parents, children living in workless households and vulnerable two-year-olds. As a result, these parents report

- improvement in their self-esteem, confidence and in their understanding of their children's behaviour.
- Partnerships with most schools, early years providers and childminders are excellent. Schools speak highly of the collaborative work with families that encourage and promote children's readiness for school. Focused work has taken place in the centre, in day-care settings and schools to help develop children's communication and skills. Activities such as 'Babbling Babies', 'Rhyme Time' 'Start Right' and the school readiness programme are effectively increasing children's opportunities to learn and use newly acquired interaction and communication skills in different situations.
  - The centre ensures that parents have access to a suitable range of adult learning courses, volunteering opportunities, information about job vacancies and vocational training. However, staff do not track adults to monitor their attendance or their level of progress. Consequently, staff are not yet in a position to know which adults, particularly those unemployed, need additional support to continue learning, or know how many adults have managed to gain employment.
  - Parenting courses are delivered to a high standard. They are well attended by parents, including lone parents, those with children under two years and those not in employment. Parents report how much they value the support, guidance and information not only to help with managing their children's behaviour but also to help reduce feelings of isolation and stress.
  - Good quality health-focused services are available through close collaboration with health visitors and midwives. Activities such as 'Little Chefs' teaches children and adults healthy eating habits and portion control. As a result, almost all children are starting school at a healthy weight. A large majority of mothers breastfeed their children. However, only a minority choose to breastfeed their children in the Ainsdale area. The need for a more focused approach to address this is not evident in the centre's service delivery plan.

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

Good

- Leadership at all levels is effective and underpinned by a secure framework of policies and procedures that staff understand well. The centre manager and the headteacher of Farnborough Road Infant School work exceptionally well together. Both are fully committed to improving the life chances and reducing inequalities for the children that live in the area. The centre manager has a superb knowledge of the area and the issues affecting the families living in it. She has established some very good partnerships and has a tremendous ability to be creative, innovative, and resourceful. This has resulted in the centre offering a very good range of services in various venues despite limited resources and a very small staff team.
- The centre manager uses regular supervision, training and appraisal effectively to set goals, give constructive feedback and monitor the centre's performance. Staff are passionate about their work and have access to a very good range of training opportunities to support their continuous professional development.
- Governance arrangements are clear and the advisory board is well represented and well attended. Members are enthusiastic and provide a good level of challenge to assist the centre in moving forward. The local authority regularly monitors the performance of the centre. In addition, it provides appropriate data to the centre. However, while the centre's development plan focuses on the families it has identified as most in need, it does not fully analyse and always use data to set clear baselines on which to measure its progress. As a result, the centre is not yet in a secure position to fully demonstrate that it is making a sufficient enough difference to the lives of families in the area.
- Parents feel free to give their views through the parent representatives on the advisory board or via Facebook. Recorded evaluations report a high level of satisfaction with the quality of services. Families are well involved in the running of the centre; for example, parents shared their ideas and views on midwifery services and consequently helped shape the future of health services in the area.
- Safeguarding children is firmly at the forefront of the centre's work. Effective referral processes between partners and the centre ensure that the right support is provided swiftly to families, including those whose problems have been assessed using the Common Assessment Framework process, those subject to a child protection plan, looked after children and those identified as in need.

## 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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	21141
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	455071
<b>Managed by</b>	The governing body of Farnborough Road Infant School
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,213
<b>Centre leader</b>	Sally-Ann Croughan
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01704 572579
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