

Scarborough Central Children's Centre

c/o Friarage School, Friargate, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO11 1HS

Inspection dates	4-5 March 2015
Previous inspection date	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.

- Adults have access to a good range of training and education opportunities. In addition, many choose to take up volunteer roles at the centre and in the community. This has led to adults developing new skills, building their confidence, self-esteem and gaining employment.
- Good partnership-working with the local school and childcare providers has led to a large majority of children, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, having the skills and knowledge that they require to start school.
- The centre shares and receives information very effectively with its partners, particularly health. This has resulted in a sharp rise in those choosing to register at the centre.
- A large majority of families, including those in most need, benefit from the help of the centre and the services it provides on a regular basis.
- The centre places a high priority on ensuring the health and safety of families and works very well with a wide range of partner organisations to keep children safe.
- The centre is led and governed well and is continually improving. Staff are highly proficient and have a good knowledge of the local area.

It is not outstanding because:

- Too many women smoke during pregnancy and too few choose to breastfeed their babies.
- Data are not continually used well enough to determine the centre's priorities, or help the centre to reflect on its performance and its impact on improving families' lives.
- Centre staff do not always find out whether all the activities they provide are benefiting families or are helping them to improve their lifestyles and life chances.
- Too few adults are involved in the parents' forum and the steering group.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Extend opportunities for families to learn further about the benefits of breastfeeding and not smoking, particularly during pregnancy.
- Strengthen self-evaluation and action-planning by making more effective use of the data provided by the local authority and ensuring that targets are more focused on improving life chances.
- Ensure that the evaluation of the centre's provision is consistent and captures more effectively the difference that all of the centre's services have on improving the lives of those that attend.
- Increase the contribution parents make to the governance of the centre and its future direction.

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 senior leaders, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with members of the steering group, representatives from the local authority and parents. The inspectors held meetings and visited activities at the Talbot Centre, and at Jitterbugs Day Nursery.

They observed the centre's work, looked at a range of relevant documentation and conducted a joint observation with a centre leader who takes the lead for early years provision.

Inspection team

Janet Stacey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip David Ellwand

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Scarborough Central Children's Centre is situated in Scarborough, North Yorkshire. The centre is a stand-alone centre and sits in the grounds of Friarage Primary School. The local authority is responsible for governance of the centre, supported by a steering group. The centre is currently part of a restructure programme taking place across the local authority.

The centre offers a range of services which includes family activities, family support and parenting programmes. Health services are offered at the local doctor's surgeries. 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.gov.uk/ofsted. Local data demonstrate that in general children are starting school with skills and knowledge typical for their age.

There are approximately 875 children under five years of age living in the area. The predominant families living in the area are of White British heritage. Within this area 9.5% of children live in workless households and 20% receive working family tax benefits. The centre has identified: teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers, minority ethnic families, children living in domestic abuse households and families that live in the most disadvantaged areas as those that need the most support.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The engagement of families is effective because staff provide good quality support, care and advice to those who are in most need. As a result, most children living in domestic abuse households, and the large majority of teenage parents and those living in the least advantaged areas, access the centre's activities regularly. The centre is astutely aware of the minority ethnic families living in the area and the very transient nature of this group. However, case files demonstrate that when families are residing in the area they access and benefit from services well.
- The centre works well with its key partners to identify expectant families and children under one year of age, with all these families being contacted and the vast majority registering at the centre. Good information-sharing enables leaders to plan services and activities precisely to meet their needs. As a result, staff are now successfully supporting most of these families as they prepare for the birth of their child.
- The centre is very good at reaching out to those families most in need of help and those considered to be the hardest to reach and less likely to engage. Parent support workers attend a wide range of professional, multi-agency group meetings. As a result, they know most families living in the area and provide timely, effective support and work successfully to help keep children safe.
- All those who are eligible for free early education are contacted and the offer is promoted effectively to them. This has resulted in almost all children aged two years of age taking up their offer, with most of those who live in the more disadvantaged areas attending good or outstanding childcare settings. Almost all children who are aged three and-four take up the offer of free nursery education places.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Despite its small size, the centre provides a very full programme of good quality activities that are balanced well between those available to all families and those designed to support those in need of

most help. Many services are offered in settings across the area to reduce inequalities and improve the quality of life for all families who engage with the centre.

- The centre plays an active part in preparing children for school. Activities such as 'Stay and Play' and the wide range of information provided to parents on child development, are having a very positive impact. The sharing of useful information about children's progress with schools and childcare providers has resulted in the number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception year, which is significantly above the national average.
- Centre managers and partners co-ordinate well the provision of adult learning courses to meet local priority needs and help users gain better literacy, numeracy and personal skills to move on to further learning or work. Staff effectively direct users to advice, information, guidance and help with accessing learning which leads to qualifications and employment. Increasing numbers of centre users are accessing new learning and skills and many spoke to inspectors of the positive difference this is making to their lives.
- The large majority of those families dependant on workless benefits and living in the most disadvantaged areas access sessions run by the centre and benefit from the advice and guidance of its staff and partners. Organisations, such as 'The Rainbow Centre', work with the centre to provide additional support and access for funding in crisis, further volunteering opportunities and courses to improve debt management and budgeting. One family described the staff as, 'My guardian angels.'
- Teenage parents receive a good range of support from the centre staff. Joint working with the Family Nurse Partnership results in intensive support for these young adults through pregnancy and beyond. Good clear referral pathways ensure that the centre is made aware of all expectant young mothers, so that packages of support can be put in place quickly to help them have a healthy pregnancy.
- Support for children and adults living in domestic abuse households is very good. Programmes, led by the centre, such as 'Kids Articulate', supports children to express and explore their feelings through the medium of art. In addition, the centre utilises the regular programmes run by Scarborough Domestic Abuse Service to support and tackle domestic abuse.
- Activities such as 'Cooking on a Budget' and 'Active Tots' is helping parents to learn how to provide children with healthy meals and take exercise. As a result, the number of obese children starting school is well below the national average. However, the centre has been less successful in encouraging mothers to breastfeed their children, or to consider stopping smoking during pregnancy.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The steering group provides strong support for the centre leader and is a useful channel for sharing information. Members, particularly the Chairperson, are astutely aware of the families that need the most support. However, they did not operate for twelve months due to the restructure taking place across the county and lost sight of the centre's self-evaluation of its performance and target-setting. As a result, they are not in as secure a position as they have been in the past in holding the centre sufficiently rigorously to account for its governance and effectiveness.
- The local authority provides the centre with a good range of useful data. However, this is not used as well as it could be to help the centre reflect on its performance, or to set challenging, measurable targets for improvements. The local authority has monitored the centre carefully with regard to registration and engagement of families, particularly those that the centre has identified as needing the most support. This aspect of the centre's performance has been extremely successful in reducing inequalities to access.
- The centre manager is clearly dedicated and enthusiastic in helping families to lead happier, safer lives in the area. She uses regular supervision, training and appraisal effectively to set individual staff goals, give constructive feedback and monitor the centre's performance. The manager has developed a staff team which is equally ambitious for the families in the area. Consequently, staff morale is high, despite the many changes to their roles and responsibilities taking place.
- Removing barriers is key to the centre's good work. They use resources effectively. For example,

staff work closely with translators to ensure that ethnic minority families benefit fully from all activities and support. Lifts and ramps at the centre ensure that disabled adults and children can take a full part in services and transport is arranged. In addition, free crèche places are provided for those that need financial support to engage in activities.

- Good case file recording captures extremely well the progress that families make in times of crisis. However, this is less evident in the monitoring of other services and activities that the centre provides. As a result, the centre does not always know just how much difference their work is making to improve families' lifestyles and life chances.
- The centre's policies and procedures to promote the welfare of young children are effective and a priority for everyone at the centre. Similarly, the centre's work with children subject to child protection plans, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or identified as being in need is successful in bringing about improvements for families and keeping children safe.
- Parents are involved in the steering group and attend the parents' forum. However, these are few in number and evidence as to how parents contribute to how services are decided upon and delivered is limited.

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

Unique reference number	22644
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	454028
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	875
Centre leader	Claire Tomlinson
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01609 798840
Email address	claire.tomlinson@northyorks.gov.uk

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