

Gorton South Children's Centre Sacred Heart

Glencastle Road, Gorton, Manchester, M18 7NE

Inspection dates	17–18 March 2015
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

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

Summary of key findings for children and families

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

- Too few children and adults use the centre's services regularly, including those the centre has identified as most in need of its support.
- The centre has not succeeded in improving health outcomes relating to breastfeeding or obesity for children entering Reception Year.
- Systems for monitoring and tracking the progress of children, and of adults accessing further education or employment, are not sufficiently well developed.
- Data that are shared between the local authority, health partners and the centre are not always accurate, up to date or timely enough. As a result, leaders, managers and those responsible for governance do not have the necessary information to measure the full impact of the centre's work. This also means that they cannot set robust performance management targets to drive the centre forwards.
- Systems to check the quality of all aspects of the centre's work are not sufficiently well embedded.

This centre has the following strengths:

- Effective partnerships with health professionals have resulted in almost all local families, including those expecting children, being registered with the centre.
- Parents appreciate the warm welcome offered by the centre and the access to good quality resources in activity sessions and the toy library. Staff are approachable, well-informed and help users to develop their parenting skills and confidence.
- Young parents and children with complex needs receive good support to improve their confidence, health and well-being. 'I'm always confident centre staff will follow through on support needed, often going above and beyond', is typical of comments from partners.
- Families are well supported to make good use of all the services and activities offered across the four centres in the area and in other community venues, to ensure that their needs are met.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of children and adults who use the centre's services regularly, including those the centre has identified as most in need of its support.
- Improve health outcomes for children and families by working more closely with health partners to:
 - increase the number of mothers who sustain breastfeeding for at least six-to-eight weeks
 - reduce obesity levels in young children.
- Develop tracking and assessment systems that more accurately measure the impact of the centre's work on:
 - children's readiness for school, including increasing the proportion of children achieving a good level of development and narrowing the achievement gap between the lowest achieving children and the rest
 - adults' learning and development, qualifications achieved and employment gained to demonstrate the impact of learning on their longer term economic well-being, and use this to plan future services.
- The local authority should work more effectively with the centre leader and the advisory board to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the centre's work by:
 - ensuring that all data which it provides to the centre, particularly about families and children living in the area and key health information, are accurate and up to date so that they give centre leaders a clear picture of the impact of services on families' lives
 - establishing clear and measurable performance targets in all aspects of the centre's work
 - developing the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of all centre services, including the accurate recording and improved outcomes of outreach work in case files.

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 the children's centre manager and local authority representatives. They also held meetings with centre staff, parents, members of the advisory board and a number of partners, including health, education and children's social care professionals.

The inspectors visited a number of sessions in the locality including, 'Stay and Play', 'English for Speakers of Other Languages', basic literacy and numeracy classes, 'Work Club' and 'Wrigglers, Rollers and Crawlers'.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, such as the centre's self-evaluation, improvement plan, a sample of case studies, parent evaluations, key policies and the centre's safeguarding procedures. Throughout the inspection, they also took the opportunity to talk with adult and child users of the centre.

Inspection team

Tara Street, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Parm Sansoyer

Additional inspector

Barbara Wearing

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Gorton South Children's Centre Sacred Heart is a stand-alone centre which shares services, including some staff, and one overall leader and advisory board with two other centres in the area. It offers a range of services which include child health services, family play sessions, parenting programmes, adult education, family outreach services, crèche facilities and a sensory room.

There are approximately 1,452 children under five years living within the area, all of whom live in areas identified as among the 0-10% most deprived in the country. Although there is a diverse mix of residents, the large majority of families are from White British backgrounds. Levels of unemployment are high, with 31% of children living in households dependent upon workless benefits. Most children enter early years provision with knowledge and skills that are well below those typical for their age. There are links to the three local primary schools and three early years providers. These are subject to separate inspection arrangements and the reports are available on our website: www.gov.uk/ofsted.

The families that the centre has identified as in most need of its support are: lone parents, workless households, pregnant teenagers and teenage parents, children who speak English as an additional language, two-year-olds who are eligible for free education entitlement, and those families identified as in greatest need.

Governance of the centre is provided by Manchester local authority, in conjunction with an advisory board, which includes providers, delivery partners, members of the local community and users that attend the centre.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The centre has accurately identified the families most in need of its support and has registered almost all of the children living in the area. However, it is not managing to engage and maintain contact with the large majority of these children and their families. This means that many children and families are not making the most of the services offered by the centre. This includes those living in workless households, lone parents, children who speak English as an additional language, two-year-olds who are eligible for free education entitlement, and those families identified as in most need of support.
- Effective partnerships with health professionals, including attendance at health visitor allocation meetings, ensure that the centre knows about expectant mothers and all new births within the area. This means that key partners and the centre gain a good understanding of the needs of individual families.
- The centre is particularly successful at engaging with pregnant teenagers and young parents. They regularly access the weekly 'Young Parents Drop-in' group which effectively builds their parenting skills and confidence.
- Effective joint working with most professionals enables the centre to provide appropriate packages of individualised support and services for families, thereby improving their health, social and economic welfare. For example, close links with speech and language therapists and the Rodney House assessment provision team mean that children with identified complex needs benefit from expert early help. In addition, families with children who have autism receive effective support and guidance through the charity-run 'Autumn Group'.
- Staff work hard to make sure that parents are aware of all the help which may be available to them, including their children's entitlement to free early education. As a result, most three- and four-year-olds and the large majority of two-year-olds take up their places. Recent initiatives by the centre to provide early intervention and support to the families who are awaiting a place, such as the 'Learn

2Gether' group, are too new to show any impact.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The centre provides a broad range of activities for those who attend, both in the centre and at outreach venues in the community. However, the low number from some groups who have been identified as in need of support that engage with these services reduces the centre's overall impact on improving life chances and on reducing inequalities.
- The uptake of immunisations is high, but not all of the centre's health-related aspirations are met. In particular, the proportion of mothers who keep breastfeeding for at least six-to-eight weeks is low and has decreased. The number of children in Reception Year who are obese has increased. The lack of regular, up-to-date health information from health partners hinders the centre from more effectively monitoring the impact of its work and responding quickly.
- The centre works well with local schools and early years providers who are all committed to improving the life chances of children. However, although improving, not enough children achieve a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the gap between the lowest achieving children and the rest is increasing. Centre leaders recognise that the centre has not done enough work to help reverse this trend and get children better ready for school, particularly in their speech and language skills.
- Staff have begun to track and monitor the progress that some children make when accessing centre sessions. However, next steps are not consistently identified to help staff plan activities or to help children make progress more quickly. As a result, the centre is unable to demonstrate the impact of its work effectively.
- Parents have engaged in a wide range of adult and family learning courses and volunteer programmes, such as 'English for Speakers of Other Languages', basic English and mathematics, 'Work Club' and the 'Working Well' sessions. These programmes are effectively improving the employability skills of those who participate. However, the systems to track adults' long-term progress and measure the centre's effectiveness in this area and to plan future services to meet needs are underdeveloped.
- Parents appreciate the opportunities to learn from each other and receive good advice about caring for their children through the available parenting courses. As a result, those that attend receive good care, guidance and support when they need them most. They are effectively improving their confidence and parenting skills which have a positive impact on the quality of family life. 'They have helped me get back to who I am,' is a typical comment from parents.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership, governance and management are not ensuring that the centre's services are making a difference to enough local families. Data provided to the centre by the local authority and health partners are not sufficiently accurate or up to date. This is particularly the case in relation both to local families identified as in most need of support and to key health information. This weakens the ability of the advisory board and the local authority to offer challenge regarding the centre's ongoing performance about the take-up of services and the improvements being made for families who access services.
- The local authority appropriately checks the centre's performance through an annual conversation and ongoing review of services. The advisory board contains a good mix of committed professional partners and parents from the local community. They receive an appropriate range of information about the centre's work and how well the performance of staff is managed. Some performance targets are set. However, the lack of accurate data and robust analysis hampers leaders and board members from effectively checking the impact of services and more effectively challenging the centre in order to secure further improvements.
- The centre leader and her small team are well qualified and keen to improve. As a result, a number

of new initiatives have recently been implemented, such as programmes to support families with domestic violence. However, these initiatives are too new to demonstrate any impact.

- The centre is welcoming, and its resources are of good quality and are used appropriately to meet the needs of those who access centre services. For instance, families can access the full range of services offered across the four centres and other community venues in the area.
- Centre leaders do not regularly carry out quality assurance monitoring of centre sessions and services or routinely evaluate improvements in practice to assess their impact. Consequently, they cannot demonstrate that activities and services are consistently good.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are effective, and statutory requirements are met. Well qualified outreach workers, who provide low-level support to families, receive appropriate levels of professional supervision and training. This ensures that they understand how best to assess and meet the needs of the vulnerable families. However, outreach case files do not consistently demonstrate robust recording of the support provided to families or of the resulting improved impact on their lives.
- Teams within the local authority Family Recovery Service model provide higher level support to families identified as in the greatest need. They make effective use of the Common Assessment Framework to safeguard children subject to a child protection plan, looked after children or those who are identified as in most need. This has a positive impact on their well-being.

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	21275
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	454018
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,452
Centre leader	Janet Dexter
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0161 245 7180
Email address	janet.dexter@manchester.gov.uk

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