

Moorends Children's Centre

Marshland Road, Moorends, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN8 4SB

Inspection dates	20–21 May 2015
Previous inspection date	9–10 June 2010

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Access to services by young children and families		Inadequate	4
The quality of practice and services		Inadequate	4
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a centre that is inadequate.

- The centre does not engage enough families in the area. In addition, staff do not know how many families from those most in need are regularly accessing and benefitting from centre services.
- Leadership, governance and management, while improving, are weak. Development planning does not make use of realistic targets to drive improvement. In addition, the centre's self-evaluation system does not focus sufficiently on improving life chances for the families living in the area.
- The lack of an active advisory board means that no-one is acting as a critical friend to the centre. In addition, parents do not have a voice to help shape services.
- The centre does not track the progress that either adults or children are making. This includes two-year-old children in receipt of nursery education funding and children attending school readiness programmes.
- There are no opportunities for adults to attend accredited and vocational learning programmes or parenting courses, or to help develop their children's communication skills. In addition, no adults are taking up roles at the centre as volunteers.
- No activities are in place to help tackle some of the long-standing health issues in the area.
- Due to staff shortages, some families that have been referred for support are waiting to receive a service.
- While risk assessments are in place, these do not cover the potential risk of a child leaving the building unescorted.

This centre has the following strengths:

- Partnership and multi-agency working have greatly improved since the previous inspection.
- The new leadership team has realistic understanding of the centre's weaknesses and is keen to address these.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Improve access by:
 - increasing the number of families engaging with the centre's services, particularly those that the centre has identified as in most need of support
 - developing effective systems that can monitor attendance and participation rates and identify any families that need specific support who are not engaging with services.

- Improve quality and practice by:
 - developing clear procedures to track and monitor how the centre's services are helping families to lead happier, healthier lifestyles
 - working with early years partners and schools to track the progress that two-year-old children in receipt of nursery education funding are making and to become involved in the school readiness programmes running in the area
 - putting in place activities to help parents support their children's early communication skills
 - working with adult education providers and Jobcentre Plus to put in place a suitable range of training and learning opportunities for adults to gain qualifications and improve their chances of gaining employment
 - putting in place parenting programmes at the centre
 - working with health partners to put in place suitable activities to help parents understand how to improve their health choices and lead healthier lives, and become involved in the progress check at age two
 - putting in place opportunities for adults to take up voluntary roles at the centre.

- Improve leadership, governance and management by:
 - putting in place a clear action plan that contains measurable targets, uses effectively the data made available to the centre, and is focused on making a difference for the families that need the most support
 - making sure that the self-evaluation process is rigorous, focused on monitoring the quality of services and reflects on whether the centre is doing enough to help improve the life chances of families living in the area
 - re-instating the advisory board to help support and challenge those responsible for running the centre and to help drive forward the centre's performance
 - ensuring that the local authority provides sufficient resources and capacity so that the families that have been referred for specific support do not have to wait for this service
 - developing clear procedures to capture the views of parents and children so that they contribute consistently to the centre's governance and to determining and shaping future services
 - making sure that robust systems are in place to reduce the risk of children leaving the building unaccompanied.

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 advisory board, representatives from the local authority and parents. The inspectors visited activities that took place at the centre and undertook a joint observation of 'Baby Fun' with a senior leader.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation. They also visited a multi-agency development team meeting.

Inspection team

Janet Stacey, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Anne Ashworth

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Moorends Children's Centre, known as The Hedgerow Children's Centre, is situated in Moorends, Doncaster. The centre is a stand-alone centre and shares its site with the local library and Buttons Day Nursery. Previously, Action For Children was accountable for the management of the centre but in 2011 the local authority took over this responsibility. There have been significant changes to the management and staffing structures that relate to Doncaster's early help services over the last year; currently, one of Area Service Delivery managers who has overall responsibility for the East of Doncaster is managing the centre until a newly appointed manager takes up the position in June 2015. Staffing within the centre has also changed significantly.

The centre offers a range of services which includes some family activities and family support. Health services are offered at the centre. 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 reports of their quality are available on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Local schools report that, in general, children in the reach area enter early years provision with a range of experiences and skills below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language.

There are approximately 463 children under five years of age living in the area. The families living in the area are predominantly of White British heritage. Most families live in areas which are the 20% most deprived within the country. Within these areas, 44.1% of children live in workless households. The centre has identified the following groups as those that need the most support: children living in households experiencing domestic abuse, children with language delay and children living in workless households.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Inadequate

- Health partners have helped centre staff to register most families. This means that most of those families expecting children are known to the centre. However, due to several changes of staff during the restructure of services and a decline in activities, families have drifted away from the centre. There are some signs of improvement but currently only a minority of families are accessing services. The centre is doing little to encourage adults and children to participate in relevant services, including those who may be less likely to do so.
- While the centre is aware of the family groups that need the most support, staff do not track whether or not they are attending services. As a result, staff are not in a position to be able to identify accurately how many families from these groups are regularly engaging with, and benefiting from, the centre's services.
- Staff are aware that communication and language delay is an issue for local children. However, the centre is not involved in the progress check for children at age two that take place with health partners. As a result, staff do not have a clear picture of which children in the area have been assessed with needs, or how to contact them to help them access services.
- Although the centre obtains data about the number of families referred to social services for domestic violence support, staff do not track these families. As a result, they do not know how many of these families they are registering or how many are accessing services.
- The latest census indicates very high levels of unemployment in the area. However, staff do not know who these unemployed families are, or have systems in place to try and find them. Consequently, they are unaware whether these families are receiving the support that they need to help take their children out of poverty.
- Most children entitled to free nursery education, including two-year-olds, are taking up the offer, but

the centre does not work with childcare providers to track the progress these children make.

- The centre has successfully addressed the issue raised at the previous inspection regarding the need to establish better partnership working with a wider range of professionals. The 'Thorne and Moorends Collaborative' and the Multi-agency Development Team (MDT) have started to enable the centre to obtain more accurate information to help identify the families most in need of support. While this is a promising move forward, it is too soon to see the long-term impact of this partnership working on improving the life chances for more families living in the area.

The quality of practice and services

Inadequate

- The centre's activity programme is not sufficiently balanced between services which are open to all and those specifically for the families identified as most in need of help. In addition, the early help family support team is depleted due to staff illness. As a consequence, the centre is not able to deliver an effective outreach programme for all those who need support. 'It's like everything has stopped and we need to build it back up again,' was a poignant statement made by a member of staff.
- Families with more complex needs, particularly where children are at most risk, do receive swift, effective and timely partnership support from the intensive family support team and social services. The MDT meetings include centre staff who also play a key part in helping these families. However, there are virtually no services or activities running at the centre. Therefore, while this support is recognised as vital in keeping children safe from further harm, following the support, there is little scope to enable these families to become independent, make choices and take control of their lives.
- Staff do not have systems through which to track and measure the impact of the centre's support, or the work of partners to which they signpost or refer families. Consequently, the centre does not have robust information to demonstrate the overall effectiveness of its work with these families, nor is it in a position to show that it is helping to reduce inequalities.
- Although health professionals are now prominent at the centre and both ante-natal and post-natal sessions take place weekly, centre staff do not fully utilise this partnership. For example, the percentage of children who are obese when starting school is high, as is the proportion of women smoking during pregnancy. In addition, the number of women choosing to breastfeed their babies is extremely low. Although all those spoken to know that these are prominent issues, no activities, and very little support, are in place to tackle them. As a result, too many children are not being given the healthy start in life that they need.
- The centre does not build into its activity programme, or involve other agencies in providing activities designed to help parents develop the necessary skills to support their children's speech, communication and language needs. As a result, too many children are starting school without the ability to be a skilful and confident communicator.
- Since the previous inspection, the centre has established stronger links with local childminders. Data show that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is only slightly below the national average for children from similar backgrounds. However, staff have not built strong enough links with childcare providers and schools to assist with the school readiness programmes that are running in the area.
- Although high unemployment is recognised in the area, the centre has not put in place a range of adult and family learning opportunities. In addition, links with Jobcentre Plus have not been established. Also, while the value of volunteering is displayed within the centre, no-one is taking up this opportunity or being actively encouraged to do so. There is no systematic tracking of adults to ascertain whether any are working towards further education or employment.
- Parenting support in the home is offered for families receiving intensive support, however, no parenting groups have been offered at the centre over the past year. As a result, too few families are receiving the vital support that many of them need to help them gain confidence in their abilities and skills as parents.

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

- Governance is weak. Staff absence and changing roles at local authority and centre level have had a detrimental impact on the centre's ability to break down long-standing social, economic and health barriers that affect many families in the area.
- The local authority has failed to monitor the centre's performance since it was inspected in 2010. As a result, most issues raised at that inspection have not been addressed. However, a new Assistant Director for Early Help, who came into post in February 2015, immediately commissioned a full audit of the centre's performance, resulting in this centre being correctly judged by the local authority as offering an inadequate level of service. The new Assistant Director is supported by a credible management team and committed staff. Together, they are focused and clearly know what needs to be done. While this indicates a level of capacity for future improvement it is too soon to see the long-term impact this commitment will have upon improving performance and quality.
- Leaders and managers have not reflected on, or evaluated the centre's performance effectively. In addition, the process for setting targets for the centre's services is poor. These targets do not focus sufficiently on delivering facilities that will improve the lives of young children and their families, nor do they sufficiently consider the impact of the centre's work on reducing inequalities or improving life-chances.
- Following the previous inspection a well-attended advisory board was established at the centre. However, this ceased in July 2014 and there are no plans to re-start this group. As a result, key partners and parents are not providing the monitoring and challenge needed to drive improvement in the centre, and the centre is failing in one of its statutory requirements.
- Significant changes to management arrangements have had a negative impact on the delivery of activities. However, managers have now been able to recruit new staff and a more settled team is in place. Supervision arrangements are now embedded and staff are starting to benefit once again from a training programme to give focus on meeting families' needs.
- Resources within the centre are of good quality and generally managed well on a day-to-day basis. However, the lack of staff resources has resulted in the centre not being able to narrow the gap in the overall health and well-being for all young children and their families in the area, particularly those whose circumstances make them disadvantaged or vulnerable.
- The culture of safeguarding is generally well embedded. Case files are completed to a suitable standard and demonstrate that in times of crisis families receive well-tailored, effective support. Good relationships with social services and intensive support result in effective joined-up services for children that are subject to a child protection plan and those that have been assessed under the Common Assessment Framework. However, some families with less extreme needs are waiting for support and while risk assessments are in place, these do not cover the possibility of a child leaving the building unescorted.
- Parents spoken with stated how much they value the centre staff and how they have gained confidence in using, in their home, the strategies that they have been taught. While the parents' voice is captured through the 'Chains of Thought', there are no mechanisms in place to feed back on the views shared by parents, nor are there any systems in place for parents to have a voice in helping to shape services at the centre.

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	22039
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	464695
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	463
Centre leader	Mark Needham
Date of previous inspection	9–10 June 2010
Telephone number	01405 818158
Email address	mark.needham@doncaster.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

