

# Newton Heath Sure Start Children's Centre

Great Newton Street, Off Droylsden Rd, Newton Heath, Manchester, M40 1WT

<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2015
<b>Previous inspection date</b>	9 July 2010

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

## Summary of key findings for children and families

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

- The centre does not always receive timely referrals or sufficient information from social care partners and health professionals. As a result, outreach staff cannot always make a contribution to joint planning or effectively support some families who may benefit from accessing the centre's services.
- The centre has not succeeded in improving the proportion of mothers who continue to breastfeed for at least six-to-eight weeks. In addition, work to improve health outcomes is hampered by insufficient sharing of robust and timely key health information with the centre.
- Not enough workless adults participate in further education, training or volunteering opportunities to improve their chances of employment. Systems to track and monitor their progress are not sufficiently well developed.
- The advisory board, while supportive, does not provide the centre with sufficient challenge about the effectiveness of its practice and services. Targets for improvement set by the local authority and the centre leaders are not realistic or matched precisely enough to the reach area to drive improvement further sufficiently.
- Parents are not sufficiently involved in decision-making to help the centre to move forward.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- Parents appreciate the warm welcome offered by centre staff and the access to good quality resources in activity sessions. Staff are approachable, well-informed and persistent in their aim to engage with families and to help those that they know of identified as in most need of support.
- Children and parents enjoy the good quality activities, such as 'Adult and Toddler Group', 'Baby Bliss' and 'Ready for School', that help them to move on in their learning and personal development. As a result, children are increasingly well prepared for transition into school.
- Families who attend are supported well to make good use of the services and activities offered in the centre, to ensure that their needs are met.
- Staff are well qualified and receive regular training to develop their skills. They are motivated and increase parents' confidence in their parenting skills and sense of self-worth successfully.

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

- Improve access to services, by:
  - ensuring that social care partners and health professionals improve the timeliness of referrals and the sharing of information about families in need of support, so that centre staff can contribute to joint planning and provide swift early support for those who may benefit from engaging in the centre's services.
- Improve the impact of the centre's practice and services for children and families, by:
  - collaborating more closely with health partners at a strategic level to secure more robust and timely information, so that leaders can measure more accurately the impact of the centre's health promotion work
  - working with health partners to increase the proportion of mothers who sustain breastfeeding for at least six-to-eight weeks
  - increasing the opportunities for adults, particularly those from workless homes, to develop their skills through adult and accredited learning and volunteering to enhance their chances of employment
  - developing tracking systems to monitor how well adults make progress when they access courses or programmes, and using the data gathered to help plan future services.
- Improve leadership, governance and management, by:
  - ensuring that the local authority and others in leadership and governance set more precise and challenging locally-defined targets to drive centre improvements
  - improving the rigour with which the advisory board challenges the centre's leaders and holds them to account for its work
  - developing parents' role in making decisions to help the centre improve and shape the services it offers.

## 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 Family Action children's centre manager, children's services coordinator, assistant director 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 including, 'Adult and Toddler Group', 'Ready for School' and 'Baby Bliss' sessions.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, such as the centre's self-evaluation document, action 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
Ken Fisher	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Newton Heath Sure Start Children's Centre is a stand-alone centre. It offers a range of services which include child health services, family play sessions, parenting programmes, adult learning, family outreach services and a sensory room.

There are approximately 1074 children aged under five years living within the area, of whom 1011 live in the top 30% most deprived areas in the country. Most families served by the centre are of White British heritage, with a growing diverse mix of minority ethnic communities. Levels of unemployment are high, with 47.7% of children living in households dependent upon workless benefits. Most children enter early years provision with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age. Childcare provision is delivered by a range of providers in the area. These are subject to separate inspection arrangements and the reports are available on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

The centre has identified lone parents, workless households, two-year-olds and families identified as in greatest need through the 'Troubled Families Programme' as those most in need of its support.

Governance of the centre has been provided by Family Action on behalf of Manchester local authority since 1 April 2015. The centre has an advisory board that includes providers, delivery partners and members of the local community.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

### Requires improvement

- The centre is informed of children who may be supported by other agencies through the 'Troubled Families' programme, which includes those who may be subject to a child protection plan or identified as in need. However, recent changes to referral systems for families identified as in need mean that outreach workers do not now always receive any referrals or requests for services from health professionals quickly enough. In addition, this has also impacted on how well social care partners involve the centre in joint working in a timely manner. As a result, only a small amount of outreach family case work is undertaken and some families do not have swift access to services or support from the centre.
- Centre leaders have accurately identified the families most in need of its support and have registered the very large majority of the children living in the area. This is a direct result of the increasing partnership work with health colleagues to ensure that the centre is aware of most of the expectant parents in the area.
- The centre is successful in engaging with the majority of families living in the most deprived areas and those families with children under three years of age. Regular 'Outreach Drop-In' sessions, alongside targeted door-knocking, are helping to engage some lone parents, workless households and those families who are less likely to participate in centre services. Families' participation in services is monitored appropriately to ensure that those most in need of support attend.
- Staff effectively build trusting relationships with the small minority of families who access outreach support and are persistent in their aim to engage them in centre services. They have a good knowledge of the varied issues surrounding some families, including those experiencing financial difficulties, isolation or mental health issues. For instance, a parent told inspectors that: 'Outreach staff really helped me, if not for their support I would have lost my children. You only have to ask for help and they are always there for you. They are fantastic.'
- Staff work hard to make sure that parents are aware of all the help that 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 in good or better early years provision.

**The quality of practice and services****Requires improvement**

- The centre works closely with health partners to support families to lead healthier lifestyles. For instance, antenatal, postnatal and 'Healthy Child Drop-in' sessions are delivered weekly in the centre. Groups such as, 'Busy Bodies' and 'Tots On The Move – Baby Bliss' sessions promote fun physical exercise for children and parents. As a result, the proportion of young children who are obese has reduced and is now below the Manchester average. However, the proportion of mothers who keep breastfeeding for at least six-to-eight weeks is below both the local and national average. In addition, the centre does not always receive robust and timely key health information from its partners about families living in the area. This hinders sharper and more rapid monitoring of the full impact of its services.
- Regular contact with some workless families living in the area is maintained and they are offered an appropriate range of parenting courses and family learning. However, the centre and its partners are unable to demonstrate that enough of these adults access accredited learning courses, including English, mathematics and computer skills, or training and volunteering opportunities to help to improve their chances of finding employment. Systems to track adults' progress towards learning and employment are not sufficiently well developed. As a result, the centre is unable to provide clear evidence of how it is improving the economic well-being of families and raising aspirations.
- Partnerships with all schools and early years providers in the area are strong. Together, they share good practice and identify areas for development through the well-attended 'School Readiness Forum'. As a result, they have high aspirations for improving the lives of children and their families. Programmes such as, 'Ready For School' are effective in helping children to gain the skills necessary to start school and in supporting parents to understand better how they can support their child's learning. As a result, outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are improving and are above the Manchester average.
- Families who access the centre's services benefit from an appropriate range of good quality activities. Outreach workers identify, plan and provide support appropriately for the small minority of families that are referred to them and identified as most in need of support. Consequently, these parents enjoy a range of opportunities through one-to-one support in the home to deal with issues, such as domestic violence, housing and managing their child's behaviour. This has a positive impact on family life.
- Some parents have good opportunities to enhance their parenting skills and increase their understanding of how to keep their child safe by attending relevant courses. For example, parents enjoy regular safety awareness events and courses on managing children's behaviour. As a result, the centre is improving life chances and reducing inequalities effectively.

**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 priority families.
- The new Family Action centre manager and the coordinator for children's services have worked hard to gain a good awareness of most of the centre's strengths and weaknesses quickly. They are committed to driving further improvements with the support of the local authority that provides an appropriate range of management information and data to enable leaders to monitor the centre's ongoing performance.
- However, targets for improvement set by both the local authority and centre leaders are not always realistic or precisely matched to the needs of the reach area. This hampers leaders and advisory board members from monitoring robustly the impact of the centre's services on reducing effectively any inequalities for children and families and from ensuring further improvements. As a result, the centre is not in a secure position to demonstrate fully that it is making a sufficient enough difference to the lives of families in the community.
- The well-attended advisory board is supportive and receives appropriate information about the

centre's performance, including the quality of practice and services and the management of staff performance. However, the new centre leaders recognise that the advisory board does not challenge sufficiently or hold the centre to account for its work in reducing inequalities with enough rigour. Members of the advisory board do, however, demonstrate a clear commitment to addressing this issue in a timely manner.

- There are not enough opportunities for parents to contribute to shaping the future direction of the centre. For example, too little has been done to gather a wide range of parents' views on the quality of services or to ensure that their voices are heard effectively in the advisory board.
- New managers are ably supported by a small but well-qualified staff team who are dedicated to improving provision and reducing inequalities. Staff are supervised well and attend a good range of relevant courses to further their skills and experience. 'They are a fantastic staff team, nothing is ever too much trouble' is a typical comment from health partners.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. At the time of inspection, the centre was not involved in supporting any children identified as children in need, looked-after children or those who are subject to a child protection plan or the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Evidence seen from very recently closed case work shows that when outreach staff do provide support for these families, it is of good quality, records are well maintained and families' circumstances improve.
- The centre provides a good environment for the delivery of services. Centre leaders work hard to ensure that financial resources are used as well as possible to meet the needs of the community and to avoid duplication of partner agencies' work.

**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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	22136
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	464706
<b>Managed by</b>	Family Action on behalf of the local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1074
<b>Centre leader</b>	Sandra Wright
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 227 3518
<b>Email address</b>	sandra.wright@family-action.org.uk



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