

# TEN5 Rainbow Children's Centre

13 Old Pier Street, Walton on the Naze, CO14 8AW

<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 June 2015
<b>Previous inspection date</b>	Not Previously Inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
	Previous inspection:		
		Not previously inspected	
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:

- The numbers of entitled two-year-olds taking up a free early education place is too low.
- In the area, boys' skills are lower than girls'. The centre has started to use the information it has to target its work to help boys to improve, and to track the impact of its work on children's performance, but this is at an early stage of development.
- The involvement of families at centre activities that are open to all is variable. The centre does not keep a close enough check on the reasons why families, including those from priority groups, do not attend these sessions, or courses that run over a few weeks. Adults, particularly those from priority groups, are not helped enough to participate in education or training that will improve their chances of securing employment.
- Parents are not given enough information about how to keep their children safe when using modern technology such as internet connected mobile phones.
- The information recorded in case files lacks detail so it is difficult to check which actions have worked best.
- Targets set for the centre by the local authority are too broad for the centre to be able to easily demonstrate how it has improved and the difference this has made to families' lives.
- The centre's advisory group is not working well enough to help the centre to improve. In particular, parents are not involved enough in the centre's development.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- Most partnership working is strong. Committed and experienced staff work hard to improve the lives of families. The good quality support and care provided by the centre is appreciated by families.
- Most three-year-olds are enrolled in early education settings and most four-year-olds are in schools.
- The numbers of children reaching a good level of development in the early years has increased markedly over the last three years.
- The needs of priority groups are assessed well and the outreach work they receive is effective.

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

- Improve the way that the centre engages with families so that:
  - at least most entitled two-year-olds take up their free early education place
  - more families, particularly from priority groups, join in sessions and courses run by the centre and that their attendance improves.
- Increase the impact of the centre on families' lives by making sure that:
  - data and other information about families is used effectively to target support that will help boys to achieve as well as girls
  - adults, particularly those from priority groups, receive guidance and support to help them participate in education and training that will improve their employability
  - parents are provided with information about how to keep their children safe when using modern technology including mobile phones with internet access
  - the tracking of priority groups is recorded in enough detail so that the impact of actions taken and the progress made by families can be evaluated precisely.
- Strengthen the leadership of the centre by making sure that:
  - the local authority sets precise and measurable targets to improve the centre's impact on families
  - better use is made of all the information, including data, gathered by the centre to identify the priorities for targeting of the centre's resources
  - staff accurately monitor and evaluate the progress made by families and the reasons why some families do not attend longer courses
  - the advisory group, and parents in particular, are able to contribute fully to the centre's development.

## 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, or spoke to, the centre manager, the children's services manager, representatives from Barnardo's and the local authority, school, pre-school and nursery staff, centre staff including volunteers, representatives from health, social care and adult learning, and parents and their children.

One inspector visited a 'Stay and Play' session at Weeley village hall, a 'Sticky Fingers' session at Emmanuel Church Hall in Walton and the Letterbox Nursery to talk to the deputy leader.

Evidence from recent satisfaction surveys completed by 282 families was taken into consideration by inspectors.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Inspection team

Alison Cogher, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Ann Janssen

Additional inspector

Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson	Additional inspector
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## Full report

### Information about the centre

TEN5 Rainbow Children's Centre is situated in an area which is a mix of small seaside towns and rural communities in which 1,664 children under the age of five live. The vast majority of families who live in the area are from White British backgrounds. A few of the areas served by the centre have considerable levels of unemployment and families in receipt of benefits. Significant priority groups identified by the centre include families where parents are not in employment, lone and teenage parents. The centre also keeps a close eye on obesity levels in each of the areas served by the centre, children in need and those subject to child protection plans.

Following the reorganisation of children's centre provision in 2012, TEN5 Rainbow Children's Centre was designated as a hub centre. Services are provided at the centre and from six other venues in the area. In partnership with other providers the centre provides the full core offer of early education and health services, family support and adult learning courses.

Most children enter early education with skills typical for their age, but a considerable proportion are at a lower stage of development in language and communication, manual handling and writing. The performance of boys is below that of girls.

The centre is managed by Barnardo's on behalf of the local authority. A centre advisory group liaises with a district board who in turn inform the 'Starting Well' group of the North Essex Local Children's Partnership Board.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The centre has been successful in increasing the number of families, including those expecting children, who are registered and taking advantage of the activities and services it provides. The vast majority of families are known to the centre. Most children are registered and the large majority engage in centre activities. Almost all three and four-year-olds attend early education provision in either pre-school or school settings.
- The centre identifies its priority groups and most are registered. The majority of workless and lone parent target families engage with the centre. Most families with two-year-olds are registered and the large majority of those eligible are taking up the offer of a free early years education place. However, approximately one third of those eligible are not accessing a free two-year-old place and some of these children live in areas where families are experiencing the greatest challenges.
- Partnership working with most agencies is strong. Links with health and social care are good and links with midwifery services are developing. Information is shared to ensure expectant families, priority groups, and the most vulnerable, including children in need and those subject to child protection plans, receive the guidance, care and support they need. Partners are confident in making referrals to the centre because they know that families will receive the help they need.
- Outreach work is effective. Centre staff support vulnerable families who might not otherwise access the centre in ways that suit them. Most of the parents receiving this one-to-one support are from priority groups. Their needs are assessed accurately and they receive help with for example, improving their parenting skills or money management.
- The majority of families from priority groups regularly engage with activities and those that commit to courses that take place over a period of weeks usually complete them. Attendance more generally at sessions and for longer courses is very variable so some families are not benefitting as they could. The centre does not routinely check why families have not attended.
- Satisfaction surveys and discussions with parents demonstrate how the centre is appreciated . Those attending the centre say they feel welcomed, valued and supported and that as a result of what the centre offers they are able to better their lives in aspects such as how to improve their parenting and how to eat healthily.
- Good links with pre-schools and schools has led to improved provision that is helping more children to achieve a good level of development. Parents receive valuable guidance about how to select a place at a setting that will suit their child's needs best.
- Promotion of centre services is good. The centre's website provides very good information and what the centre can provide is available at all the venues used for activities. For example, when attending baby clinics run by health visitors, centre staff provide new parents with information about courses they can attend such as baby massage.

### The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- Families who attend the centre's activities regularly, or receive one-to-one support are given good advice and the help they need to improve their lives. Staff provide good role models for parents. Families from priority groups are encouraged to attend parenting courses. Typically, these families complete the courses they attend and are clear about how they have helped them to improve their parenting skills.

- Although improvement has been secured there remains a marked difference between the achievement of boys and girls. The centre does not use the information it receives well enough to unpick where the boys in most need of extra support live, so resources can be precisely targeted. Recently completed work conducted by centre staff and partners, including the speech and language service, is now identifying how all children, but boys in particular, can be helped to improve. Work is also being conducted to improve children's experiences when they start school. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this work.
- Centre staff work closely with health partners to provide a range of services, and give consistent messages that have improved the health and well being of families. Obesity levels have fallen overall to levels that are close to the national average, and breastfeeding rates are above average. Healthy eating and the importance of exercise are promoted well during courses run by centre staff.
- Safety in the home is given a high priority and includes aspects such as how to store food safely and the use of electric socket covers. Not enough information is provided to help parents keep their children safe when using modern technology such as mobile phones.
- Adult learning is not targeted well enough at those living in households where no-one is in paid employment. A range of adult learning courses, including literacy and numeracy, are available and are delivered at venues across the community. Centre staff attend some of these sessions to promote the centre's services. However, there is no structured approach to help adults plan their engagement in learning to help them gain the qualifications that will increase their chance of securing employment, and only just over a third complete the courses.
- Parents' views are sought following centre activities and are generally very positive. Comments such as 'staff are a shoulder to cry on' and 'the atmosphere is warm and friendly.' were typical of those expressed by parents during the inspection. The centre responds positively to suggestions from parents about how to improve the activities it organises.
- There is a good level of support for families suffering from domestic abuse or experiencing financial problems. Families with an adult or child with a disability or special educational need are supported very well.
- The opportunity to volunteer is promoted and managed well. Volunteers benefit from robust induction procedures and access to training that has helped some to move into paid employment.

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

Requires improvement

- The local authority sets performance targets for the centre but these are not precise enough to allow the centre to be able to demonstrate clearly its progress towards achieving them, or indeed that it has met them.
- Information provided by the local authority is improving and the centre has started to use it, and other information it has available to target its resources precisely, and to monitor thoroughly the impact of the actions taken.
- The advisory group is not working effectively to support the centre's development. Attendance at meetings has been very variable and parents are not represented well enough to ensure that their views and ideas contribute to the improvement of centre services.

- Centre leaders are aware of the importance of safeguarding. Staff and volunteers are safely recruited and well trained to keep children safe including from the potential risks associated with modern technologies that allow internet access. They recognise that they could do more to help parents understand the potential dangers to their children of, for example, access to mobile phones.
- Displays and easily accessed information in the centre provide guidance for parents and staff on what to do if they have safeguarding concerns. Staff work closely with other agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children. Families who have children subject to a child protection plan, child in need or subject to early help assessments have clear plans for improvement. Case files kept by staff are regularly updated and reviewed but they sometimes contain too little detail for the centre to be able to see clearly the positive impact of the support it has provided. Families in crisis, receive very prompt practical support to help them make positive changes to their lives.
- Checking on the quality of staff performance in delivering activities is good. They are challenged to improve and are provided with access to good personal and professional development courses. Staff make a good contribution to the efficient day-to-day running of the centre.
- Changes in staff roles and responsibilities, and the changes to the local authority procedures for leading and managing children's centres have hindered the rate of progress made by the centre. Professional, collaborative working practices between the local authority, Barnardo's, partners and the centre are beginning to enable improvements to be made to the quality of what the centre is able to offer. The centre's self-evaluation accurately reflects the centre's position during this transition period. The positive attitude of all staff, together with their determination to improve what they do to help families, are strong indicators of the centre's ability to speed up the rate of improvement.

**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>	23127
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	455047
<b>Managed by</b>	Barnado's on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,664
<b>Centre leader</b>	Sally McInerney
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not Previously Inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01255 850859
<b>Email address</b>	sally.mcinerney@barnardos.org.uk

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