

The Lemon Tree Children's Centre

Lothian Way, Hull, HU7 5DD

Inspection dates	24–25 June 2015
Previous inspection date	30 June 2010

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The centre provides good access to services, information and support that are well matched to the needs of families from priority groups.
- The quality of information sharing and referrals between the centre and its key partners is good. As a result families with the most needs are accurately identified and they receive early support and help.
- The range and quality of services provided to families from the centre, during home visits and at various locations within the centre's catchment area are good. As a result the large majority of families regularly participate in relevant centre activities and services.
- Partnership arrangements are highly effective and ensure the centre responds well to the needs of families and can provide a wide range of resources to meet their needs.
- Leadership, management and governance are highly effective. Performance monitoring of the centre's work is thorough and ensures that the centre continually improves the quality and impact of its work.

It is not outstanding because:

- The centre's work to improve children's learning and development is not yet having sufficient impact on increasing the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development.
- Not enough parents from the most deprived areas participate in accredited adult learning courses.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen partnership work with adult learning providers to ensure a greater number of parents from the most deprived areas complete accredited adult learning courses.
- Extend work with early years providers and partners to increase the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by:
 - increasing take up rates for two-year-old free funded places
 - strengthening work with parents to develop further their understanding of how their children learn and develop.

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 centre leader, local authority managers, and representatives from partner organisations, such as health, schools, nurseries and charities. They also met members of the advisory board, volunteers, centre staff and parents.

The inspectors visited the Bude Park and Dorchester sites. They observed sessions such as 'Early Intervention' and 'Music and More'. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including centre policies, evaluations, self-evaluation reports and case files.

Parents' views were taken into account from meetings with them and from evaluations they completed.

Inspection team

Priscilla McGuire, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Barbara Wearing	Additional inspector
Sue Pepper	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

The Lemon Tree centre is a stand-alone centre within the north locality of Hull. It covers the Bransholme East, Bransholme West and Kings Park wards. Services include health support, adult learning, parenting training, family support, volunteering programmes and early years activities. The centre is managed directly by the local authority and supported by an advisory board. Staff work across all three sites. In April 2011, Lemon Tree became a hub for two other children's centres and now operates as one centre with three sites. The centre covers geographical areas previously covered by Dorchester and Bude Park centres.

There is a private day-care nursery at all three locations. These are The Lemon Tree day nurseries within the Bude Park and Lemon Tree sites and Brightstart at the Dorchester site. The nurseries are subject to separate inspection arrangements. Their reports can be found at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

The centre is located in a very disadvantaged part of Hull. Data show that a high percentage of children live in poverty in the Bransholme East and West areas. Rates of poverty are higher than the average for Hull. Most families live in social housing and are of White British heritage.

There are approximately 2,500 children under five years living in the area. Most children enter early years provision with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. The centre has identified teenage parents, children of families who live in the most deprived parts of the area and families with disabled children as priority groups.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families Good

- Most families are registered with the centre and have good access to services. The needs of expectant mothers are also served well through services such as the 'Doula' and 'Bumps' programmes.
- The centre provides a good range of 'parent-friendly' information in print and also on social media. Good-quality information about health, education, safety and other topics is provided at the centre. Information provided helps to develop parents' knowledge and awareness about issues that are relevant to their own and their children's well-being.
- Staff make good use of display areas in the centre to promote key messages. For example, a 'safety tip of the month' board provides regular information to families about safety in the home and elsewhere. At the time of inspection, the board displayed useful information about risks associated with poisonous substances such as bleach.
- A large majority of families from priority groups, such as teenage parents and those living in deprived areas, access services until their needs are met.
- The quality of information sharing between the centre and its key partners is good. In some instances, a formal agreement between the centre and a partner ensures that information and data are shared well. In other cases, referrals and signposting work well because of the good and productive relationships centre staff have built up with other professionals and staff from organisations such as health, housing associations and charities.
- Most three- and four-year-old children who are entitled to access free early years places do so. The proportion of two-year-olds who access a place is not as high. However, rates are strongly improving as a result of the determined and collaborative efforts of centre staff and local authority staff.
- Staff use home visits and a range of venues in the community to bring services out from the centre to families. This ensures that those who are more reluctant to use services or face barriers that prevent them from easily accessing services, have the same chances as everyone else. Venues used

in the community include churches and also a pub, which is used during the day time to host a successful breastfeeding group.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The quality and range of services open to all families and those that are targeted at specific groups are good. Sessions such as 'Baby and Me', 'Baby Massage' and 'Tippie Tails' are well organised and help to promote families' well-being and improve the quality of families' lives.
- The needs of priority group families such as teenage parents are assessed well and matched to the most appropriate service. For example, the centre works in partnership with a targeted pregnancy support worker to meet the specific needs of teenage parents and other mothers with priority needs.
- Centre and health staff, such as health visitors and midwives, focus their energies on responding to key local priorities around healthy eating and breastfeeding. As a result obesity rates are lower than national rates. However, breastfeeding rates are not as high as they should be. This is because of a strong 'bottle feeding culture' in the area. However, rates are slowly improving and breastfeeding is actively promoted through the combined efforts of centre staff and breastfeeding peer mentors.
- Parents benefit well from the centre's well organised volunteering programme. Data, information and case study examples show that the programme enables parents to develop effective personal and employability skills and so improve their life chances. As a result a significant number of parents progress from volunteering into employment.
- The quality of informal adult learning through courses such as parenting, baby massage and other programmes is good. They help to develop parents' knowledge and skills. However, not enough parents participate in accredited adult learning courses such as mathematics and English.
- There is a coordinated approach to developing provision within children's centres and early years providers, such as nursery schools. For example, data are analysed on a termly basis to identify gaps in children's learning and provision. However, the centre's work is not yet having enough impact on the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although rates are improving and are higher than the average for the rest of Hull, they are lower than the national rate.
- Parents are rightly proud of what they have achieved with the high-quality support of centre staff. They speak very highly of staff. They comment on how staff 'go the extra mile' and 'bend over backwards' to ensure they receive effective support when life gets difficult.
- Staff are skilled at organising sessions to promote children's learning. They provide positive role models to parents. However, in sessions, they sometimes miss opportunities to discuss with parents how they can support and reinforce their children's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre responded well to recommendations made at its previous inspection in 2010. As a result the quality of leadership, governance and management has been strengthened despite external pressures resulting from funding reductions. Leaders and managers know their community well and work very well together to meet the needs of the community.
- The centre is managed very effectively by a good leader. She leads by example and has the support of a strong and well-qualified team. Staff are well supervised and their personal objectives are closely aligned to the overall objectives for the centre. They are also well trained and complete courses which are highly relevant to the needs of families.
- Governance through the local authority and the advisory board is effective and incorporates performance management of staff and good use of data to monitor the impact of the centre's work. It also ensures that the good-quality services provided help to reduce inequalities and promote inclusion for families, such as those with disabled children, who are a priority group. The representation of partner organisations and parents on the advisory board is good and meetings are

well attended.

- There is rigorous scrutiny of both the quality and impact of the centre's work by the local authority, the advisory board and a commissioned external consultant. A key outcome of this process is that ambitious performance targets are set for the centre. This drives improvement and ensures that the centre is constantly striving to do better and reduce inequalities still further within the local area.
- Another layer of effective scrutiny of the quality of the centre's work is provided through the 'mystery shopper' programme. It is used to randomly test the quality of front-line services, such as telephone responses to enquiries.
- 'Chatterbox' works as a 'roving' parents' forum at the centre. It is facilitated by a parent volunteer who visits all centre sessions to gather views from as wide a range of parents as possible. These views are reported back to the advisory board; this ensures parents' views are a key part of the decision-making process.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures, including early help assessments, are effectively implemented. The centre receives regular information about families with children subject to child protection plans, children in need and those who are looked after. Through close and effective work with social care staff, centre staff meet the needs of these families well. In addition, through specialised training they have received in 'routine enquiry', staff have become skilled at identifying both obvious and the more hidden signs of domestic abuse.
- The centre's work with a range of partners such as those representing health, education, charities and housing is highly effective. As a result the range of services and resources provided for families is very relevant to families' needs. Other resources such as staffing and accommodation are good.

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

Unique reference number	23206
Local authority	Kingston upon Hull City of
Inspection number	464697
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2,500
Centre manager	Elaine Warhurst
Date of previous inspection	30 June 2010
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