

# Nottinghamshire - Awsworth/Brinsley/Eastwood

Chewton Street, Eastwood, NG16 3HB

<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 December 2014
Previous inspection date	Not Previously Inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
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 group of centres is inadequate.

- The group's own information shows that only a minority of children from target groups sustain contact with children's centre services. This includes, children from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled children, lone parents and those living in the Awsworth area.
- A new county-wide approach to monitoring which children and families attend, and how often, is helping the centres to build an accurate view of the engagement of different groups. However, at present the reports are not always easily accessible to leaders and managers and do not provide a breakdown by activity. This restricts their usefulness in planning appropriate services.
- Sustained breastfeeding rates are very low and do not show signs of improvement despite concerted effort by volunteer peer supporters. In the most deprived area only 23% of mothers continue to breastfeed their babies at six-to-eight weeks.
- Not enough eligible children take up their free education entitlement. At 48%, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2014 in Eastwood was well below the national and local levels. In the same area, the gap between children who are eligible for free school meals and their peers, at 37%, is much wider than seen nationally.
- The systems in place show the number of adults accessing services but not what progress they are making or what impact particular services have on their economic well-being.
- Leaders have not fully addressed the recommendations raised by the Eastwood Children's Centre inspection in 2010 or set a rapid pace for improvement. As a result, the advisory board is still not sufficiently effective in holding the group's performance to account.
- Safeguarding procedures are not fully robust. For example, key information is missing from the records of safe recruitment or is inaccurately recorded by the centres. Likewise, records of safeguarding training and first aid are not routinely monitored by leaders and are incomplete.
- The effectiveness of management oversight of family case files is weak and does not help to drive improvements in practice. Some important documents are not updated on the electronic system used to record family support work.
- Local authority monitoring has not identified serious weaknesses in performance, and self-evaluation is overly optimistic in respect of all aspects of the group's work and its overall effectiveness.

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

- Ensure that the access of all target groups identified by the centres is tracked rigorously and that the large majority of children and families, including from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled children, lone parents, and those living in the Awsworth area sustain contact until their needs are met.
- Ensure that the very large majority of two-year-olds, and almost all three year olds, take up their free entitlement to early education.
- Improve the quality and impact of services by:
  - working with early years providers to improve achievement and narrow the achievement gap between children who are eligible for free school meals and their peers, particularly in the Eastwood area
  - working with adult learning providers to extend the range of adult learning provision so that more parents are able to achieve accredited qualifications to improve their economic well-being
  - ensuring that the progress of adults and targeted children is effectively tracked to show the difference that services make
  - improving breastfeeding rates so that a greater proportion of mothers sustain breastfeeding their babies at six-to-eight weeks.
- The local authority should monitor the group's performance rigorously and ensure that the rate of improvement is quickened and leads to the planning of appropriate services that enable improved outcomes for target groups.
- Ensure that the advisory board is chaired effectively, and that it is attended by a suitable range of partners who are trained to support and challenge the centres to improve more quickly.
- A full audit of safeguarding policies and procedures across the group should be undertaken immediately to ensure that:
  - all safe recruitment records are up to date
  - all staff have received appropriate training, including in first aid, and that this is accurately recorded
  - all risk assessments are updated
  - any safeguarding issues identified by the group's leaders are quickly actioned
  - case file management and quality assurance processes are effective and support best practice.

## 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 integrated services district manager; centre coordinator; members of the advisory board; senior local authority representative; child and family support lead; enjoy and achieve lead; and a range of partners. Inspectors also spoke with several parents, some of whom were active volunteers, and their children.

The inspectors visited Eastwood Children's Centre, Awsworth Children's Centre and the 'Stay and Play' delivered in Brinsley. A joint observation of a crèche was undertaken with the 'enjoy and achieve' lead.

The inspection covered the following three children's centres: Awsworth, Brinsley and Eastwood.

Inspectors observed the centres' work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Inspection team

Michael Blakey, Lead Inspector	Additional inspector
Karen Cooper	Additional inspector
Jean Samuel	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the group

Nottinghamshire – Awsworth/Brinsley/Eastwood Children’s Centre Group consists of three children’s centres which cover an area to the North of the Borough of Broxtowe. Eastwood Children’s Centre is purpose built and co-located with Brookhill Leys Primary and Nursery School. Awsworth Children’s Centre is housed in a small dedicated room within Awsworth Primary School. The former room used as Brinsley Children’s Centre, on the site of Brinsley Primary School, is now closed and services are delivered from venues in the community. The centres deliver a range of services including universal activities to promote children’s health and early learning; family support; and programmes to support adults’ learning and parenting skills. All three schools are subject to separate inspections and the reports can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The group of children’s centres is managed by Nottingham Children and Families Partnership on behalf of the local authority. An Integrated Services District Manager oversees three groups of centres across the Broxtowe district and this group of centres is managed on a day-to-day basis by a coordinator. One of the three groups in the Broxtowe district was judged to require improvement in June 2014.

The centres serve 19 geographical areas, of which five are in the top 30% least advantaged in England. There are approximately 2,190 children under five years of age living in the area: 895 in Awsworth; 613 in Eastwood; and 682 in Brinsley. The largest proportion of families living in the area are from White British backgrounds and there are approximately 7% of families of other ethnic backgrounds including Eastern European families from Poland and Latvia. Approximately 28.5% of children live in poverty, with the highest proportion of these living in the Eastwood area. Children generally start school with skills and abilities typical for their age.

The centre has identified the following target groups as those requiring additional help: children living in poverty; families experiencing domestic violence and mothers experiencing mental health issues.

The local authority also sets targets concerning the engagement of other priority groups including families from minority ethnic backgrounds, lone parents, disabled children, teenage parents, pregnant teenagers and those living in the Awsworth area.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Inadequate

- Access to services is inadequate because not enough children and families, particularly from target groups, sustain engagement with centre services until their needs are met.
- The ‘System One’ management information system, which is used by the centres to record their involvement with families, is being constantly developed to enable leaders to track the attendance of children and parents. The previous system included a range of activities, including sending letters to families as a meaningful contact, whereas the new procedures do not allow for this. As a result, although data is becoming more reliable in relation to whom the centres are really working with, leaders are unable to compare previous engagement with current access rates.
- Leaders and managers have identified three local priority groups. Of these, they do not routinely track the engagement of children and families experiencing domestic violence or mothers with mental health issues. They are also unable to demonstrate accurately the numbers with which they work.

- The range of services delivered across the reach area is not easily accessible, or frequent enough to engage families living in the Awsworth area, where only a minority of children are engaging with services overall. Although some families may access services in Derbyshire, the local authority has not agreed to share information to establish if this is the case and leaders cannot demonstrate that these families are accessing appropriate services.
- The centre group has recently improved its system to track the attendance of priority families and now has more accurate baseline data from which to target families and develop services. However, this information is not used sufficiently well to plan services and it is not easy for leaders to undertake their own analysis of engagement by some priority groups.
- The numbers of families attending parenting programmes is low. Likewise the numbers of children attending more focused activities such as the volunteer-led group for children and parents who speak English as an additional language, and the crèche for disabled children are generally low. Parents and partners also told inspectors that families of minority ethnic backgrounds do not tend to engage well with services.
- The proportion of eligible two and three-years-olds accessing free early education is not yet good enough at 67.5% and 84% respectively.
- Health visitors are now working more closely with the centres and are helping to register approximately half of newborn children at their first visit. Although information on births in the local area is used to encourage families who are registered to attend services, the centres are not able to use this to contact families who are not. Plans are in place to change the system so that parents opt out of registering with the children's centres, but these plans have not been implemented.
- In 2013–14, only a minority (43%) of children had contact across the whole group of centres, although the picture is improving with the large majority now registered and the majority engaging overall.

### The quality of practice and services

Inadequate

- The impact of the centres' services is inadequate because not enough children and adults access services, particularly from key priority groups and those living in Awsworth.
- Although systems are in place to track the progress that children make when they attend services, such as the crèche, the information from these assessments is not analysed sufficiently well to demonstrate the impact on children's progress. Additionally, outcome tracking tools have been in place since June 2013 to demonstrate the impact of family support but too few assessments have been used to show the difference the centres make to improving families' well-being.
- The progress that parents make as a result of attending adult learning programmes is not tracked sufficiently well, and so the centres are unable to demonstrate the impact on improving their economic well-being.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the Eastwood area is well below the 2014 national and local levels. Partnerships with local schools are weak, particularly with the co-located school in Eastwood. As a result, information sharing is inadequate and the centre is unable to demonstrate that it is contributing to improving achievement for children in the most deprived areas and reducing inequalities.
- Obesity rates are low across the area, as they are across Nottinghamshire. However, breastfeeding rates remain stubbornly low despite the concerted efforts of volunteer peer

supporters.

- Families who access the centres speak highly of the committed and professional staff who support them well. As a result, some families have powerful stories to share about the difference the centres have made to their lives. A father told inspectors: 'support is amazing' and a mother said 'this place was a life line at first'.
- The volunteer programme, which has been awarded the 'Investors in Volunteers' status has been successful in enabling a high number of adults to undergo work-related experiences in all three centres. As a result, some parents have been able to secure paid employment.
- Families experiencing domestic violence are supported well by the centre's partnership with Broxtowe Women's Project.

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

Inadequate

- The pace of improvement is not rapid enough and issues flagged by the Eastwood Children's Centre inspection in 2010 have not been fully addressed. For example, the advisory board is still not sufficiently effective in holding the group's performance to account.
- During the inspection leaders were able to confirm that all staff and volunteers had been safely recruited. However, leaders do not take adequate ownership for ensuring information pertaining to these checks is kept up to date and there were initially gaps found in the records held. Confirmations that checks are undertaken by the Central College on staff working in centres are not signed.
- Records of safeguarding training are not routinely updated and held in an easily accessible format so leaders do not have an accurate overview about child protection training.
- The monitoring of case files and supervision of health and family support workers are not robust enough to ensure case recording is always of good quality and that all families receive timely family support. Leaders are not always able to identify, on the case management system, the referrals or assessments undertaken to support children and families. This is partly because some information has not been scanned and there is a backlog. The local authority rightly recognise that this practice is not adequate.
- Leaders are not yet fully confident in navigating and using the 'System One' case management system, and as such are not fully able to quality assure this important work with families despite reading and authorising all entries on the system.
- Information sharing with health services is good. Likewise, information about children subject to Common Assessment Framework processes, looked after children, children subject to child protection plans and children in need, is shared in a timely fashion. Occasionally referrals from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are not followed through rigorously, so some families who are vulnerable do not receive the support they need in a timely manner.
- Observations of activities and services are undertaken, but not frequently enough to identify issues and drive improvements in practice. One example of an observation undertaken by the centre identified a lack of risk assessment at an outreach 'Stay and Play' session and stated that staff and volunteers did not sign in, but this was not then addressed.
- Leaders' self-evaluation processes and the monitoring of the centres' performance by the advisory board and the local authority have not correctly identified and addressed key weaknesses across

the group. Records of the local authority's annual conversation incorrectly evaluate access to services to be good, for example, when the large majority of key target groups do not take up services and targets have not been met.

- Staff performance management is not sufficiently robust, including for the centre coordinator. In addition, annual performance reviews do not always set targets, which will drive the group's better effectiveness and the quality of the recording of these reviews is not good.
- Although the centres' improvement plan is rightly focused on a number of key priorities, targets are not sufficiently specific or measurable and it is difficult for leaders to demonstrate the difference the group's services are making. The use of resources across the group is inadequate because not all key priority groups of children and families are being targeted and those living in Awsworth are not well engaged.

## 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.

**Group details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	80657
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	447651
<b>Managed by</b>	The Nottingham Children and Families Partnership.

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	2,190
<b>Centre leader</b>	Gail Watson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as a group
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 993 5750
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:gail.watson@nottshc.nhs.uk">gail.watson@nottshc.nhs.uk</a>

**This group consists of the following children's centres:**

- 20147 – Awsworth Children's Centre
- 20438 – Brinsley Children's Centre
- 21047 – Eastwood Children's Centre

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