

Leicestershire - Blaby, Oadby & Wigston

Kingsway North, Braunstone Town, Braunstone, LE3 3BD

Inspection date 10–12 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	Select
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.

- Very effective partnership working with health professionals and other partners ensures that the children's centres have a good understanding of the families within the locality and most families are registered..
- Needs analysis, involving a wide range of partners, is used well to identify and deliver those services most in need in the locality and as a result the large majority of those families most disadvantaged are served well.
- Access to adult and family learning programmes is good with many examples of adults increasing in confidence and gaining qualifications.
- Family outreach workers are good role models, know their families very well and ensure individual needs are met.
- The strong commissioning process ensures the provision of high quality services.
- Parent volunteering is being used very effectively to plan and deliver a range of services and activities and is contributing well towards maintaining an appropriate balance of universal and targeted services.
- Highly committed management and staff have a very strong and effective focus on continuous improvement.

It is not outstanding because:

- Children living in Braunstone do not achieve as well as their peers locally or nationally.
- Too few two-year-old children are not routinely taking up their entitlement to free education and too many children in the locality are accessing early childhood settings that are not yet good.
- The large amount of information available is not yet fully used to provide systematic measurement of the impact of the services provided.
- A minority of targets are not sufficiently specific and measurable, lack clarity in completion deadlines, or do not provide milestones for measuring progress to ensure that all actions lead to a rapid pace of improvement.

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 of Her Majesty’s Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with: the manager of the Children’s Centre in the locality and the locality co-ordinator; senior leaders and managers in the local authority at borough and county level; family outreach workers; early years practitioners; volunteers; representatives for commissioned services; and representatives of the locality partnership board.

The inspectors visited the five centres.

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

Inspection team

Mike White	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Deborah Udakis	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Karen Cooper	Additional inspector
Lesley Talbot Strettle	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

Services for children and families in Blaby, Oadby and Wigston are delivered in five locality areas. The children's centre service is managed directly by the local authority at both county and borough level. The locality partnership group, comprising key partners, assists in the governance. The centres that form part of this children's centre group are: Braunstone Town Children's Centre, Countesthorpe Children's Centre; Huncote Children's Centre; South Wigston Children's Centre; and Wigston Magna Children's Centre.

The District of Blaby is located in the county of Leicestershire to the South West of the city of Leicester. The District is made up of 18 wards and covers an area of 50 square miles. The North of the District is mainly urban whilst the South is mainly rural. There is a low BME population in Blaby, particularly compared with England with white British families making up 88.5% of the population. Whilst overall levels of deprivation are low some parts experience higher levels than others. Just over 1300 children are living in income deprived households.

Oadby and Wigston is a small urban Borough situated to the South East of Leicestershire and is the smallest in area of the districts in Leicestershire. The largest ethnic group is white British making up 73% of the population with the second largest being Asian at 22%. Whilst overall levels of deprivation are low some parts experience higher levels than others. Just over 1100 children live in income deprived households.

Both Blaby, Oadby and Wigston have greater numbers of adults with no qualifications than the England average.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Improve children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by:
 - developing and implementing an effective action plan with key partners, targeting all early childhood providers in the locality who require improvement to drive improvements and to 'get them to good' as quickly as possible
 - promoting the benefits of early education entitlement funding to increase its take up.
- Ensure that the wide, and increasing, range of available information is systematically used in reporting to the locality partnership group to provide a clear and detailed picture of the impact of the universal and targeted services being offered.
- Ensure that targets on all action plans are specific and measurable, that timescales for their achievement are sufficiently detailed, and that milestones for measuring progress towards their achievement are consistently included.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Leaders carefully identify key target groups based on an accurate analysis of demographic information. They work in close partnership with key agencies, professionals and parents to carefully consider and implement a range of good quality and highly appropriate services, activities and groups designed with the needs of children and families in mind. This results in most children being registered with the children's centres which maintain contact with the large majority of families from most disadvantaged groups.
- Those families considered to be in greatest need are well represented in all aspects of provision. For instance, the centre has successfully engaged with all Traveller families living within the locality, providing a range of services, including health, within the traveller communities. Disabled children and children with special educational needs are well served within the area. All services are inclusive and welcoming to all. The large majority of disabled children and children with special educational needs are attending good childcare and early year's provision in the locality.
- Families, who find themselves in complex, chaotic, and at times dangerous situations, receive prompt attention at the centres. Partnerships with key agencies and organisations are used effectively to provide early interventions and support to families in time of need through high quality commissioned services.
- Volunteering within centres is increasing with parent volunteers accessing a professional programme of training induction and supervision. They play a critical role as volunteers supporting and delivering a good range of services, including stay and play type activities.
- The centre has correctly identified that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in Countesthorpe is well above the national average and in most other localities at the national average. However, Children living in Braunstone do not achieve as well as their peers locally and nationally. The large majority of early years and childcare provision across the locality is good but it remains that too many children are accessing early childhood settings that are not yet good. The take up of the two-year-old entitlement to access early education entitlement funding is improving but still low with just under half routinely taking up their places.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Partnerships with a wide range of providers are very effective in meeting outcomes for target families. Health partners including health visitors, midwives and change for life-style coaches successfully run clinics and practical activity sessions in the children's centres. Young parenting courses are delivered with youth service staff in the community. The children's centres work closely with specialist organisations to support families with disabled children, learning difficulties and/or life shortening illnesses to ensure that families receive the best support and guidance.
- Provision is well planned, well-resourced and the accommodation is very good. The children's centres listen well to the needs of target families and respond with a good range of programmes and activities which are flexible and adapted to ensure that family's needs are met. The children's centres provide good opportunities to improve parenting knowledge and skills through very effectively planned activities, programmes and specific sessions to support behaviour management.
- Transition systems are very effective through partnership working with local schools enabling children to settle quickly into school. This is achieved through frequent meetings between the heads of early years' departments and children's centre staff. The children's centres plan a good

range of learning experiences for both parents and children such as learning through play and these help children to be better prepared for the transition to school.

- Access to adult and family learning programmes is good and the children's centres work closely with health visitors and other referral organisations to ensure that the provision meets the needs of families well. Parents are encouraged to complete course and self-evaluation for each programme to monitor their progress, identify areas for further development and explore long-term employability/self-development aims. A range of accredited courses are offered in centres and in other venues in the community with many examples of parents building their confidence and gaining qualifications.
- Care, guidance and support are good and reflected in views expressed by parents such as 'staff are amazing and really helped me through some very rough times'. The children's centre staff are good role models, know their families very well and ensure individual needs are met utilising appropriate partners where necessary. Contact with families is regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure support is on-going and effective.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The leadership and staff work hard to continuously improve the quality of provision and improve the life chances of children and adults in the area. Good progress has been made in addressing the recommendations from the Wigston Magna Children's Centre inspection in 2012. Other inspection reports from the Leicestershire area are used well to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- The well-established locality partnership group (LPG) provides effective monitoring of the centres' performance. The group has a good representation of partner organisations and includes parents. In addition to receiving frequent performance reports the LPG has recently strengthened quality improvement by implementing a process of direct observation of services and activities. Although relatively new this process is already showing some positive impact.
- The local authority supports the group well. In addition to its annual conversation a number of quality monitoring visits throughout the year have a good focus on improving the quality of the services.
- Commissioning arrangements are good. Annual needs analysis involving key LPG partners clearly identifies the services needed to support those families most in need of support. A good range of qualitative and quantitative performance measures are regularly reviewed to ensure that high quality and effective services are being delivered.
- Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous. Good practice is included in key policies and procedures which are regularly reviewed. Leaders, staff and volunteers, all access regular and relevant professional training to ensure they maintain their awareness of signs and symptoms of potential abuse. Strong and effective support is provided to families living with domestic violence which is a common feature in several child protection cases. The centre takes a prominent and valuable role on key strategic and multi-agency child protection conferences and meetings.
- Overall the range and quality of management information is good and used well to measure the impact of most services on individual families. However, as recognised in the self-evaluation report, the systematic reporting of outcomes is currently too fragmented and not all data from adult and family learning is shared effectively to track learners' progress and measure its impact of over time.

- Parents' views are collected effectively and used well to shape services. The parents' forum is very active and well represented by parents from families most in need of help and support. The parents' forum has been instrumental in ensuring that some centre based activities threatened with closure due to financial constraints have remained open as parent led groups following appropriate training.

- The process of self-evaluation has good involvement of staff and LPG members. The self-evaluation report provides an accurate picture of the strengths of the provision whilst correctly recognising areas for improvement such as the variation in Early Years Foundation Stage achievement and the low take up of the two-year-old free entitlement to education. The quality improvement plan includes actions to address these issues but it is too early to judge the impact of these actions. Action plans are generally good however a minority of targets are not sufficiently specific and measurable, lack clarity in completion deadlines, or do not provide milestones for measuring progress towards their achievement.

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 Children's Centre Group details

Unique reference number	80049
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	430099
Managed by	The Leicestershire local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	8,300
Centre leader	Louise Rossol
Date of previous inspection	N/A
Telephone number	0116-2750246
Email address	louise.rossol@leics.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 20405 Braunstone Town Sure start Children's Centre
- 20839 Countesthorpe Sure Start Children's Centre
- 21582 Huncote Sure Start Children's Centre
- 22782 South Wigston Sure Start Children's Centre
- 23590 Wigston magna Sure Start Children's Centre

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