

Nottingham, City of - Bulwell & Bulwell Forest

Steadfold Close, Crabtree Farm, Nottingham, NG6 8AX

Inspection dates	29–30 July 2014
Previous inspection date	25–26 May 2011

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
		Not inspected as a group	
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.

- Leaders and managers have insufficient resources to meet the needs of the high number of targeted young children and their families living in the area.
- Health partners do not provide the group with sufficient information to help it target its services precisely. As a consequence, only a minority of the priority families most in need of support are accessing the group's services.
- The monitoring of the provision by the local authority and those responsible for governance and leadership is not rigorous enough and is not driving improvements in services. As a result the group does not demonstrate good capacity to improve.
- Too few children make good progress and are ready for school. This is partly because there are not enough places for eligible two-year-olds to take up their entitlement to early education and some children do not access their entitlement at three and four-years of age. In addition, early years provision is not all of a good standard and the local authority early years team do not share sufficient information to help the group target its services.
- The group is not having sufficient impact on helping narrowing achievement gaps between different groups of children because there is insufficient engagement with children and services are limited in range, number and quality.
- Health outcomes are not improving well enough and too few parents enhance their education, engage in parenting programmes, training, volunteering or extend their workplace skills.
- Monitoring and tracking of the progress of children and adults attending the group's and its partner's services are not sufficiently developed. As a result, the group cannot sufficiently demonstrate the difference it is making to the lives of children and families.

It has the following strengths

- Staff remain enthusiastic and work hard to provide good support for the families they engage with.
- Safeguarding procedures including records of the support the group provides for vulnerable families are of a high standard.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Improve access to services by working with the local authority to ensure that:
 - the group has sufficient resource with the capacity to focus on providing early intervention services to targeted families including pregnant teenagers and teenage parents
 - health service partners and early years staff provide the group with appropriate information and data in order for them to target their services precisely and improve the engagement of target groups
 - there is sufficient high quality provision available for all children to access their free entitlement to early education at two, three and four-years-old.
- Improve the quality and impact of services by working with:
 - early years partners to provide support to targeted children so that they are ready for school and increase the proportion achieving a good level of development and help narrow gaps in educational achievement
 - health partners to increase the numbers of mothers who breastfeed their babies to at least six-to-eight weeks
 - adult learning providers to increase the range and take up of adult learning and training provision and implement a strong volunteering programme to help parents develop workplace skills and support community development.
- Strengthen leadership, governance and management by:
 - ensuring greater scrutiny and challenge of the work of the group by the local authority and partnership board
 - implementing effective monitoring and tracking of the progress of children and adults attending services provided by the group and its partners
 - ensuring effective assessment of children’s learning to plan for their next steps and to ensure all children make good progress
 - improving the range and quality of provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children’s centre group 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 one of the assistant managers, representatives from the local authority, and other staff from the group. Inspectors also met with a range of partners including those from health services, educational and voluntary sector organisations, and representatives from the partnership board. They listened to the views of parents and children. The children’s centre group leader was on annual leave at the time of the inspection.

The inspectors visited both centres and Big Friendly Gardens ‘Stay and Play’ session.

The inspection covered the following centres Bulwell Children’s Centre and Bulwell Forest Children’s Centre.

They observed the centres’ work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation. They looked in detail at a number of case files of children, including those subject to a child protection plan, those deemed to be children in need and others in receipt of family support.

Inspection team

Jean-Marie Blakeley, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Peter Towner

Additional inspector

Aileen King

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

Bulwell Children's Centre, which opened in 2006, is near Bulwell town centre and serves an area where seven of its ten lower super output areas (LSOAs) are in the 10% most deprived in the country and two are in the 20% most deprived.

It is based on a site with Crabtree Farm Primary School (URN 122476) and operates from the same building as The Pre-School Learning Alliance Bulwell Childcare (EY295475). These provisions are both subject to separate inspections. Their reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. There are 1466 children from birth to five-years-old living in the centre's reach area, of which 47.5% live in workless households.

Bulwell Forest Children's Centre opened to the east of Bulwell town centre in 2010. Five of the six LSOAs in its reach area are in the 30% most deprived in the country. There are 647 children from birth to five-years-old living in the area, of which 38.2% live in workless households.

The two centres were grouped together as 'Area 1' in the 'North Locality' of Nottingham in 2011. Nottingham City Council directly manages the centres within the Local Family Community Team of the Children and Families department. A Family and Community Support Manager manages the children's centres work and the Play and Youth work for children from birth to 19 years-of-age. The Bulwell Partnership Board comprising of professional partners is designated to oversee the work of the group.

Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge well below those typically expected for their age. The majority of families living in the reach areas of both centres are of White British heritage.

Target groups identified by the centre include: children subject to common assessment framework processes; those identified as children in need; priority families (disadvantaged families with long standing problems); teenage parents; those eligible for two year-old-early education funding; families experiencing domestic violence; disabled children and children living in households subject to domestic violence.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Inadequate

- Only a minority of families, including those expecting children, access the services and activities the group provides. The group does not have the capacity to meet the needs of all those children and families who may benefit from its services. This is because the majority of the work of the children's centres' staff is directed to supporting issues and crises related to five to nineteen-year-olds.
- Overall, the number of children and families identified by the centre as in need of additional support and accessing children's centre services is too low. Only a minority of teenage parents and pregnant teenagers are engaged in education, employment or training for example.
- Poor sharing of information by the health service means that the group cannot contact and register all new born babies. In addition, because relevant information is not shared with the group, staff cannot target two-year-old children who may benefit from its services following their two-year-old assessment. Health clinics provided in the centres are poorly attended.
- The group does not have accurate information on the number of disabled children in the area or of those that access its services and is therefore unable to support these potentially vulnerable children and their families.
- There are not enough places for eligible two-year-olds to take up their free entitlement to early education and some children do not take up their three-and four-year-old funded places. In addition, some nursery and childcare provision is not of a good standard. As a result, many children are not ready for school.
- Overall the large majority of families are now registered with the group. Outreach provision in Bulwell Riverside and through partnerships such as that with the Bulwell Community Toy Library help improve access for families. Good communication with the onsite primary school and childcare provider ensures sharing of information which benefits some families.

The quality of practice and services

Inadequate

- Too few children are ready for school because the quality and range of service are limited in range and number. There are not enough targeted sessions which focus on things such as communication and language. This reduces the centre's overall impact on improving children's learning. Staff plan a range of resources and activities for group sessions which are enjoyed by those parents and children that attend. However, assessment and monitoring processes are not sufficiently robust. As a result, it cannot fully demonstrate that the provision is having the intended impact and outcomes for all those attending.
- The local authority's early years team do not provide sufficient detailed information to the group to help it accurately plan and target its services. The group's work is not sufficiently helping to reduce the gap in educational achievement between children who are disadvantaged and their peers. As a result the centre is not contributing effectively to narrowing inequalities.
- The group does not have sufficient information on the number of parents that successfully access adult learning courses or training provided through its partners' provision. As a result, it cannot evidence success in parents progressing to qualification courses or enhancing their education or employability skills. In addition, the group is not doing enough to monitor and ensure all families that would benefit from accessing parenting programmes do so.

- Children and families enjoy the activities and sessions they attend. However, assessment of children's learning is not used sufficiently to plan their next steps in line with their level of attainment. As a result, although sessions engage children, the activities are not carefully planned and targeted in order to achieve specific and relevant outcomes and as a result progress is not rapid enough.
- Case files are of a high standard and demonstrate the good support staff provide for the vulnerable families that they work with. Clear, systematic guidance and procedures provide good support for staff in their work in helping to safeguard children.
- Families receiving one-to one family support benefit from enthusiastic, hardworking staff who build strong, honest and trusting relationships with them. Those adults that access parenting programmes increase their confidence which helps them gain control of their families and manage challenging relationships.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Inadequate

- Leadership, governance and management of the group are inadequate. The local authority's decision to extend the responsibility of the group to support families with children up to 19 years old has contributed to a lack of effective early intervention services for families with children from birth to five-years-old.
- Development plans are weak and lack sufficiently detailed key performance indicators, actions, and timelines. Issues identified at the previous inspection of Bulwell Children's Centre in 2011 have not been adequately addressed.
- Resources are insufficient to meet the needs of targeted families in the area. Leaders, managers and staff are aiming to address too many priorities and support an unsustainable number of families with high levels of need. The lack of the capacity of leaders and staff to focus on services for young children means that the quality of provision and outcomes for families are not improving sufficiently.
- The monitoring of the group's work by leaders and those responsible for governance is weak because detailed checks and interrogation of data and information to fully assess performance are not undertaken. There is insufficient focus on monitoring and challenging how well outcomes improve for priority families.
- Governance of the group has not been sufficiently developed. The Bulwell Partnership Board provides a useful forum for sharing information, resources and services across the area. However, with its broad remit and involvement in delivering services, it does not have an adequate role, defined terms of reference or the capacity to provide robust scrutiny or challenge of the group. Parents are not involved in the board.
- Leaders do not regularly observe and monitor the quality of the group's activities and link this to improving the provision. Supervision records lack detail and careful monitoring of precise targets and specific actions linked to the group's priorities. This hinders the group's improvement.
- Staff are mostly well-qualified but they are not deployed effectively to make best use of their qualifications and expertise in early years. This is because most of their workload is supporting the work of social care with children over five years of age and reacting to issues such as anti-social behaviour and the poor school attendance of older children.

- Although some members of the community have a reluctance to engage, the group and its partners have worked hard to increase the involvement of the families in steering the direction of local services. This has resulted in some well-attended community led events and a successful funding application to help strengthen the community.

- Safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. Sharing of information with social care partners and the use of the Common Assessment Framework result in the most vulnerable families, including children subject to a child protection plan, children in need and looked after children, being effectively protected.

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

Unique reference number	80061
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	442810
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2113
Group manager	Jane Richardson
Date of previous inspection	25-26 May 2011
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This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 20497 Bulwell Children's Centre
- 20498 Bulwell Forest Children's Centre

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