

South Tyneside - Hebburn Jarrow Children's Centre

Campbell Park Road, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear, NE31 1QY

Inspection dates	9–10 December 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
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 local authority is committed to ensuring that children and families get the best start in life, remain healthy and aspire to a brighter future. Key to achieving this has been the successful re-focusing of children's centres work onto the most vulnerable families in the community, with good impact. Senior managers, leaders and governors have skilfully guided the group through this period of re-organisation, whilst continually improving the quality of service delivery and up-skilling staff.
- Strong, effective partnership working, particularly with health and social care, has facilitated the sharing of information about families living locally. This has been used alongside the local authority's own detailed registration data to plan and deliver a range of good quality services which engage the large majority of local families, including those identified as most in need.
- A high take-up of two-year-old funded places in good quality settings, combined with the implementation of the new 'integrated two year old assessment,' has ensured that those children most in need of early intervention are identified and access the support they require.
- The highly effective team of outreach workers provide much needed support to some of the most vulnerable families in their homes. This has secured the engagement of a number of families who might otherwise have chosen not to access services.

It is not outstanding because:

- The group has been without a full-time manager for six months. The centres' performance over this time has instead been closely monitored by a range of partners and managers, ensuring improvements have been sustained. However, without a coordinated approach to collating this evidence of impact across the full range of the centre's work, it has been difficult for staff to see and evaluate their impact and contributions. This has at times hindered the ability of the advisory board's parent members to contribute fully to decision-making.
- Despite a good range of training opportunities, the information held by adult and community learning on completion, success and progression rates is not always used systematically to track the learning journey of all adults or to plan new ongoing programmes.
- Health outcomes for families in relation to sustaining breastfeeding and reducing the number of mothers smoking during pregnancy, whilst improving, are not yet good enough.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen leadership, governance and management by:
 - ensuring a coordinated approach to collating evidence of impact across the full range of the centre’s work, enabling staff to see and evaluate their impact and contributions, and
 - presenting this information in a clear way that makes it accessible to the advisory board’s parent members, encouraging both their participation and their ability to contribute fully to decision-making.

- Further drive continuous improvement across the group by ensuring that information held by adult learning on completion, success and progression is used systematically to track the learning journey of all adults and target groups and to plan new on-going programmes.

- Build upon the existing strong partnerships with health colleagues to improve health outcomes for families across the reach area, particularly in relation to sustaining breastfeeding and reducing the number of mothers smoking during pregnancy.

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 two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors and one additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the children’s centre cluster manager, the manager of children’s centre and childcare services and members of the senior leadership team including quality managers. In addition, inspectors also met with outreach workers, officers from the local authority, social workers, the South Tyneside Adult and Community Learning team, Groundwork and other local training partners. They also met health, education and early years partners, parents, volunteers, community entrepreneurs, Options, local headteachers and representatives from the advisory board. They looked at the centre’s self-evaluation and improvement plan, a sample of case studies, safeguarding procedures and a range of other relevant documentation. Visits to activities were undertaken jointly with the children’s centre cluster manager and outreach workers. Representatives from the local authority also attended all team meetings. They also jointly observed two sessions with the centre cluster manager.

The centres that form part of this children’s centre group are South Tyneside Early Excellence Centre, Jarrow Children’s Centre and Primrose Children’s Centre.

Inspection team

Jayne Utting, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Pamela Blackman	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Eileen Grimes	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

South Tyneside Hebburn/Jarrow Children’s Centre group operates across three centres; South Tyneside Early Years Excellence Centre, Primrose Children’s Centre and Jarrow Children’s Centre. The day-to-day management and provision of service delivery is the responsibility of the local authority. The group has a single advisory board which provides governance. The cluster manager was appointed in September 2014. The centre offers a range of services which includes family activities, family support and parenting programmes, maternal health services and family learning.

The reach population is around 1,940 children aged nought to four years. Worklessness in the area is a key issue, with around 36% of nought to four year olds living in a household dependant on benefits. Over 95% of the population are of White British heritage. The centre has identified young parents, lone parents, black and minority ethnic families, children with a disability and children living in workless households as groups most in need of its support.

Early years provision is provided through a number of early years settings, school nursery classes and childminders located within the locality. Children’s skills and abilities on entry to nursery and reception class are variable although reported as below those typically expected for their age especially in communication and language and personal, social and emotional development. The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The primary schools and nearby early years settings were not part of this inspection as they are inspected separately. The reports are available on the Ofsted website at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Staff working across this centre group have a good understanding of the needs of local families. This understanding is informed by the centre’s own activities and an accurate analysis of the data provided by the local authority. It is enhanced by effective partnerships with local agencies, particularly health and social care. As a result almost all families in the Jarrow/Hebburn reach area are known to the centre group, including those expecting children.
- Through effective consultation and outreach work, centre staff are working with the large majority of young parents, families of children with disabilities, lone parents, black and minority ethnic groups and an increasing number of workless families. The centres have been proactive in developing some strong partnerships at a locality level, for example with local support groups and health. This has facilitated the engagement of an increasing number families experiencing domestic violence, low mood and ensured the provision of good support for families of children with disabilities.
- Group centre staff are proactive in working with other agencies to promote a joined up approach to family support work across the area. A close working relationship with the ‘Early Response’ team ensures families at risk are quickly identified and offered appropriate support, often preventing them from reaching the threshold for statutory intervention.
- The commitment of outreach workers to visit all parents following the birth of a baby has been effective in securing engagement in centre activities, as well as the early identification of any difficulties they might be experiencing. Where the need for support from other agencies is identified, partners report that families are often more willing to work with them due to the reassurance and support already received from the centre team.
- The uptake of free entitlement to early education for three and four year olds is good. The group have been extremely proactive in identifying those families who are eligible for two-year-old funding and as a result the numbers accessing this is high at 71%.

The quality of practice and services**Good**

- Well-established partnerships with services across the reach area, combined with an in-depth understanding of local needs has ensured the group offers an appropriate balance of good quality and inclusive specialist provision, including those open to all and sessions specifically for those identified as most in need. This includes an integrated approach to the completion of two-year-old assessments by health and early years professionals.
- The work of centre staff, particularly quality managers, has ensured that all early years settings in the reach area have been judged to be good or better. This has had a positive impact on narrowing the gap for the most vulnerable children. Data show that children who start at settings significantly below expected levels make rapid progress, with a majority achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception Year.
- The group has worked closely with families of two-year-olds to improve their development in relation to communication and language, as well as physical and social development. Close tracking of children who have undertaken the ‘Basket of Opportunities’ initiative (Boo) has shown that those children who took part were on average nearly six months ahead in terms of language, social and physical development when measured against those who did not take part.
- Families consistently report the range of provision is improving their understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy, including good dental hygiene. However, the percentage of mothers continuing to breastfeed and the number choosing to stop smoking during pregnancy, whilst improving, is not yet good enough. Centres and partners continue to develop strategies to address this including health clinics, peer support groups and attendance at other local activities such as infant feeding groups, ‘Jumping Jacks’ and ‘Buggy Pump’.
- High quality parenting programmes are helping parents to develop positive relationships with their children and improve their skills in keeping them safe. One mum spoke powerfully about how the course had changed her life, and equipped her with the necessary skills to keep and take good care of her baby. As a result, the centre group is improving the well-being of children and families effectively.
- Well-qualified outreach workers complete in-depth assessments of those families in most need, including those with children who are subject to a child protection or a child in need plan. Case files include comprehensive information from a range of agencies as well as parents’ views, wishes and feelings. As a result of this good work, eighteen cases have been de-escalated this year.
- Parents enjoy a wide range of opportunities to extend their skills, knowledge and confidence and to raise their aspirations. Many parents have accessed and successfully completed training with a strong focus on functional skills and seeking employment, including family learning, English and mathematics qualifications. However, the information held by adult learning partners on completion, success and progression is not used systematically by the group to track the learning journey of target participants or to plan new programmes in line with identified need.

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

- The children’s centre improvement plan identifies key priorities for the reach area and is based securely on an accurate interpretation of available data provided by the local authority, as well as additional information from key partners about the needs of local families. As a result leaders, governors and management have a good understanding of the needs of the community.
- There is good evidence available from partners and the group’s staff team which clearly demonstrates how work towards these priorities has reduced inequalities and led to sustained improvements in the lives of many local families. ‘Every parent who has previously been in care should have to attend this course’ said one mum, ‘my life is changed forever.’
- However, without a dedicated group lead, there has not been a co-ordinated approach to collating all this evidence from staff and partners in order to consistently monitor the collective performance and impact of the group’s work across the reach area.
- Whilst the strength of leadership provided by senior officers has ensured that this has not impacted

on service delivery and outcomes for families, including the effective use of resources, the absence of a clearly presented overall picture of performance has also made it more difficult to encourage parents to participate fully in partnership meetings and to contribute to decision-making.

- Staff are well-qualified. Opportunities for continuous professional development are encouraged and staff feel well supported and highly valued. Senior leaders regularly monitor the quality of the group’s activities delivered by their own staff and partner agencies, encouraging an ethos of reflective practice.
- Membership to the advisory board is good and includes key partners including health professionals, social care, headteachers and parents. This brings a variety of skills and knowledge to the board and has ensured the maintenance of a sharp focus on identifying and supporting the most vulnerable families in the area.
- Safeguarding procedures are met ensuring staff and partners working with families are suitable to do so. All staff complete safeguarding training and effective use is made of the recently introduced ‘Early Help Assessment’ to assess need, tailor services and reduce risks to children.
- Opportunities for parents to share their views and influence service development are improving. This includes the on-going development of the parent’s network as well as opportunities for parents to run their own activities, for example, the parent-led playgroup.
- The appointment of a new and experienced cluster manager has already had a significant impact on the day-to-day operation of the group. Partners report that the centre group is now in an even stronger position to move forward.

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	80601
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	447645
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,940
Centre leader	Lisa Rutherford
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0191 428 7650
Email address	lisa.rutherford@southtyneside.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children’s centres:

- **21622 Jarrow Children’s Centre**
- **22419 Primrose Children’s Centre**
- **22780 South Tyneside Early Excellence Centre**

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