

Nottinghamshire - North Leverson/Retford Central

Arlington Way, Retford, DN22 6EA

Inspection dates	28–29 January 2015
Previous inspection date	Not Previously Inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
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 children's centre group is good.

- The centre group has been very successful, particularly in the last year, at increasing the number of families who are known and registered. The large majority of those living in the area who are most in need of support access the centres and make good use of the services on offer.
- A good range of services are located at community venues across the area, which is a great benefit for many families who cannot easily travel to the centres. Friendly and supportive staff work hard to build trusting relationships with families. They have a good knowledge of the varied issues facing families in their community.
- Family support work is focussed on helping those most in need. Strong partnerships and sharing of information result in services being joined-up effectively to provide a good level of individual care, guidance and support to families. One parent described the calmness, routines and happy house that the centres had helped her and her partner to create for their family.
- The take up of funded early education places for eligible children aged two, three and four years old is high.
- Good leadership, management and governance enable the centre group to clearly focus on improving services.
- Effective planning, underpinned by a thorough process of ongoing review, and monitoring by the local authority, mean that the centre group has a good capacity to sustain future improvement.

It is not outstanding because:

- Not enough one and two year old children are regularly engaging in centre group services, particularly in the Retford Central area.
- Despite some good collaborative work to raise achievement, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development, and in particular boys, is below levels seen locally and nationally.
- Quality assurance monitoring of activity sessions are not yet used consistently. Consequently, there is some variation in the quality of provision offered, particularly from commissioned services.

What does the centre/group need to do to improve further?

- Increase the engagement of children aged between one and two years of age, particularly in the Retford Central area, so that a large majority regularly access the centre groups services.
- Work even more closely with early years partners to rapidly increase the proportion of children, and in particular boys, reaching a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Strengthen the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of all activities and use the information obtained to inform professional practice in all areas of the groups' work to ensure that the delivery of activities is consistently good.

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. The centres that form part of this children's centre group are: North Leverton Children's Centre and Retford Central Children's Centre.

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the children's centre group coordinator, district manager and a locality manager from the local authority. They also held meetings with centre staff, parents, members of the local advisory group and a number of partners, including health, education and children's social care professionals.

The inspectors visited sessions held across both centres in the group including 'Stay and Play', 'Bumps and Babes' and 'Sure Tots on Tour'. An inspector jointly observed a session with the early years development manager. They involved the children's centre group coordinator and locality cluster centre coordinator in all team meetings.

They observed the centre group's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, such as the group's self-evaluation, action plan, a sample of case files, parent evaluations, key policies and the group's equality and safeguarding procedures. Throughout the inspection they also took the opportunity to talk with adults and children.

Inspection team

Tara Street, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Maureen Deary	Additional inspector
Catherine Hairsine	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre group

Nottinghamshire – North LeVERTON/Retford Central Children’s Centre formed as a centre group in April 2013. It consists of two previously stand-alone children’s centres: North LeVERTON Children’s Centre and Retford Central Children’s Centre, that have merged and share services, including staff, and one overall leader. The group offers a range of services and activities including: health, family play sessions, parenting programmes, adult education, family support and crèche facilities.

There are approximately 1,216 children under five years old in the area, of which 68% live in the most deprived areas in the country. The families that the centre group has identified in most need of its support are: those living in low income households, pregnant teenagers and teenage parents, families of minority ethnic backgrounds and those living in rural areas or who are isolated.

Most families are from White British backgrounds with a small, mixed minority ethnic community including Eastern European and Asian families. Levels of unemployment are high, with 20% of children living in households dependent upon workless benefits and many of the existing jobs are low paid. Most children enter early years provision with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age.

Governance of the centre group is provided by the Nottinghamshire Children and Families Partnership (NCFP). The day-to-day management and delivery of services are the responsibility of North Nottinghamshire College, which is a member of the partnership. The group has a local advisory group which is shared with another local children’s centre group that includes providers, delivery partners and members of the local community.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Over the last year, there has been a strong drive by leaders, staff and partners to increase the number of children and families registered and engaging in the centre group’s services. As a result most are registered and the large majority of families identified as in most need of support are engaging in services. This includes those expecting children, low income households, pregnant teenagers and teenage parents, minority ethnic communities and rural and isolated families.
- Families benefit from a good balance of services that are open to all and those which are specifically designed for those identified as need of additional support. Home visits, particularly in the North LeVERTON area, are aimed at reducing inequalities for families and form part of the centre group’s effective outreach work. Family support workers provide good support in the home and in the two centres to engage families that are hard to reach.
- Staff work hard to ensure that the centres are warm and welcoming to families. This means that those less likely to engage feel comfortable coming to the centres to access services and activities. Typical comments from parents include: ‘staff are great, they helped me to get everything sorted and we are doing really well now’ and ‘I feel very included, they really helped me and my children to make friends and become a part of the community.’
- Effective joint working with most professionals enables the centre group to provide good packages of individualised support and services for families, thereby successfully improving their health, social and economic welfare. For example, close links with speech and language therapists mean that children benefit from expert early help and families report an improvement in their confidence and

communication skills.

- The very large majority of eligible two year olds and all three and four year olds are accessing their funded early education place in the range of good and better early years provision in the area. This is due to the concerted effort of centre staff to encourage and support families to take up their place.
- However, only a minority of one and two year old children are in regular contact with the centre and therefore benefiting from its services, particularly in the Retford Central area.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- A good range of well-located services are offered to children and families. A sensible balance is achieved between those available to everyone and those designed to support those families identified as in need of support. As a result the take-up by families most in need is high.
- Knowledgeable and supportive staff provide good support, care and guidance. The strategy to take services out into the community and to where they are needed most, such as local early years settings, schools and HM Prison Ranby is proving successful in helping improve the lives and well-being of families. The centre group works successfully with young parents to enhance their confidence and parenting skills, thereby helping to reduce any inequalities.
- The centres' work to promote healthy lifestyles is seen in the good and rising level of mothers breastfeeding and a decline in the number of mothers who continue to smoke whilst pregnant. Staff provide good advice and support to help parents better understand how to keep their children safe and happy. For instance, health and family support workshops provide helpful advice on weaning, sleep routines and behaviour management.
- Partnerships with all schools and early years providers in the area are strong. Together, they share effective practice, access training and have high aspirations for improving the lives of children and their families. Outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are improving; however, these are still below both local and national levels. In addition the proportion of boys achieving a good level of development is low and has reduced in the North Leverton area. The group is working well with partners to analyse this data and plan future work to help reverse this trend.
- Families who use the centres have access to an appropriate range of family and adult learning opportunities, including advice about parenting and domestic violence programmes which builds their confidence and raises aspirations. The large majority of workless families access both accredited and non-accredited courses and every opportunity is taken to provide opportunities for additional qualifications that enhance their employment opportunities and improve life chances.
- The volunteering programme is well structured. Volunteers are supported positively in developing their planning and delivery skills, which enable them to run sessions themselves such as the 'International Group' and 'Fun on Friday'. A number of past volunteers have successfully moved into paid work.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre leader is totally committed to making sure local families enjoy healthy and fulfilled lives and overcome the personal challenges they face. She has built a hard working team who have the necessary qualifications, experience and expertise to respond well to the needs of children and families. This, combined with clear procedures for working with key partners, has secured real and

sustained improvements for a large majority of families and represents an efficient use of resources.

- Governance arrangements are effective. The local advisory group is very well attended by a wide range of partners and parents who keep a close eye on the work of the group, providing good levels of support and challenge. It reports regularly to both the Nottinghamshire Children and Families Partnership and the local authority who work very effectively together to monitor and review the group's performance. This culminates in a robust annual conversation that challenges the centre's self-evaluation and identifies key strengths and areas for further development.
- Parents regularly share their views of the sessions and activities they attend through parent comment boards, session evaluations, parent forum meetings and newly established 'Time to Talk'. In addition the chair of the local advisory group is a parent. As a result parents are instrumental in shaping services and wider decision-making.
- Safeguarding matters are taken very seriously. There are robust checks to ensure that staff, partners and volunteers are suitable to work with young children. Ongoing training on aspects of child protection ensures that staff skills are up-to-date. Robust early help procedures result vulnerable families, including children subject to a child protection plan and looked after children, being effectively protected. In addition, close supervision alongside regular and detailed case file management helps to identify any potential weaknesses in recordings, ensures that family files are kept up to date and progress for families is routinely reviewed.
- Well thought out performance management systems, including supervision and appraisals, are helping to drive up the quality of services and provision. Leaders are successful in tackling individual issues of underperformance. However, there are some aspects of quality assurance, particularly with commissioned services that are less effective. The quality assurance monitoring that does take place is not yet sufficiently embedded or robust, and is not always well linked to professional development. Consequently, some activities are not always 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/Children's centre group details

Unique reference number	80670
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	454065
Managed by	The Nottinghamshire Children and Families Partnership on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1216
Centre leader	Sharon Christiansen
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01777 713930
Email address	sharon.christiansen@nottshc.nhs.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 22181 North Leverton Children's Centre
- 22496 Retford Central Children's Centre

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

(Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

