

Redcar and Cleveland – East Children's Centre Group

Park Lane, Guisborough, TS14 6NT

Inspection dates	26–27 November 2014
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.

- Those responsible for leadership, governance and management and the multi-skilled staff team are passionate and enthusiastic about helping children and their families. Together they assist them to make the best start in life. As a result, the centre group is in a strong position to continually improve their services.
- Good partnerships are in place with a wide range of partners. Effective marketing of the group's high-quality services and close work with health colleagues has led to an increase in the number of families accessing the group's services. In addition, a large majority of young children and their families, especially those identified by the group as most in need of support, are attending activities and adult training programmes.
- Safeguarding is given high priority. Families whose circumstances make them vulnerable benefit from extremely well-coordinated advice and support from the Early Help team and a wide range of partner agencies. The progress that these children and parents make is well supported by staff and carefully followed by the group.
- The group works well with childminders and private providers of early childcare, including some schools, to ensure that most offer good-quality provision. The promotion of funded education places for eligible two-year-olds is highly effective. The vast majority of two, three and four-year olds take up early years funded places.

It is not outstanding because:

- The drive to promote breastfeeding is not yet having a significant effect as only a small minority of mothers choose to breastfeed their baby for a significant length of time.
- The group does not always set precise measurable aims in its development plans. As a result, it is harder to measure the impact of the centre's work. In addition, the advisory board have yet to appoint an independent chairperson.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Better promote the advantages of breastfeeding to prospective parents to increase the number of mothers choosing to do this.
- Ensure that all aims in the group's development plans are precise and measurable.
- Appoint an independent chair of the advisory board.

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 Early Help senior leaders, members of staff and key partners. Discussions were held with members of the advisory board, representatives from the local authority and parents.

The inspectors visited activities and meetings that took place at Guisborough, Loftus, Skelton and Saltburn.

The inspection covered the following centres; East Cleveland Children's Centre and Guisborough Children's Centre.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation and undertook a joint observation of an activity with the Early Help Leader.

Inspection team

Sue Pepper, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Joan Cawdron	Additional inspector
Sheila Iwaskow	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

Redcar and Cleveland – East Children’s Centre group became operational in April 2012. It consists of two centres: Guisborough and the East Cleveland Children Centre, which are located 12 miles apart. The Guisborough area includes Hutton and Westworth wards; Lockwood, Saltburn and Skelton. The East Cleveland area includes Brotton and Loftus wards. The group offers services at an additional four other sites situated in Skelton, Saltburn, Lingdale and Whitecliffe. The local authority oversees the work of the group at a strategic level and the Early Help team are responsible for day-to-day management arrangements. The group have a shared advisory board.

The group offers a range of services which includes family activities, family support and parenting programmes. Health services are offered at activities and health drop-in clinics delivered across the group. Linked childcare provision is provided at Rosedene Nursery in Saltburn. This provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements and the report is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Local schools report that some children enter early years provision with skills and knowledge below that typical for their age.

There are approximately 2,665 children under five years-of-age living in the predominately rural area which the centre serves. The majority of families living in the area are of White British heritage. The Guisborough Children Centre wards have large areas of affluence with small pockets of deprivation where a minority of children live in homes which are situated in the 30% most deprived postcodes. The East Cleveland Children Centre wards have large areas of deprivation situated in the 30% most deprived postcodes with small pockets of affluence. Higher levels of unemployment are found in the Lockwood, Loftus and Brotton wards. The centre has identified children living in the most disadvantaged areas, workless households, children in need and those subject to child-protection plans, vulnerable two-year-olds and teenage parents as in most need of their support.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Good information sharing with health partners about new births and early contact with families has contributed to the successful identification and engagement of a large majority of children living in the community, particularly those who are sometimes reluctant to participate. This enables Early Help staff to quickly support families and prevents the escalation of some challenging situations, thereby greatly reducing the numbers of children being referred to social care.
- Families living in the most disadvantaged areas, children in need or on a child-protection plan and teenage parents benefit from good-quality services delivered in their own homes or at any of the well-established venues. Good partnership working with social care ensures that families who are in most need of help are swiftly identified and very well supported through effective advice.
- Families have access to a good range of useful information, advice and guidance about early childhood services. An innovative approach to advertising funded nursery places for all children, particularly two-year-olds, on the back of well-known retail stores till receipts and on bus tickets has been highly successful. Staff also send a special ‘golden ticket’ to eligible families’ homes, particularly where there is worklessness or a low income, to ensure a greater take-up of places. The vast majority of two, three and four-year olds also take up early years funded places.
- Good attention is paid to promoting greater equality of access to the group’s services, particularly for families most in need of support, such as those with disabilities who may attend the respite group. A range of high-quality activities are also provided for those vulnerable two-year-olds who are not eligible for funded places. Good quality crèche facilities support adults to access parenting programmes and a minibus is available to transport families across the large rural community to access services.
- Families and some prospective parents make good use of the regular Health Drop-in clinics. Specific

activities, such as 'Come and Play', which run on different days across the group sites, effectively meet the needs of families until they no longer require support. The group's informative website and parent friendly pocket sized 'activity planner' keeps parents well-informed about the services being delivered and where they are operating from.

The quality of practice and service

Good

- The quality, range and relevance of the services provided by the group are good, with the right balance between those available to all and those supporting specific parents. Effective debriefing meetings take place after the delivery of vibrant services so that staff can discuss in depth if the needs of the children and the outcomes of the session have been met. This ensures that the impact of practices and services in improving children's well-being and improving the lives of families is maximised.
- A strong drive is in place to promote a greater understanding of how to improve the health and safety of children. However, an embedded bottle-feeding culture means the numbers of mothers choosing to breastfeed their baby for a significant length of time remains stubbornly well-below the national average. Dedicated staff build close, trusting relationships with parents and the number of parents self-referring themselves to services is growing. Staff are committed to improving families' life chances and reducing inequalities for the children that live in the area. Typical comments from parents are, 'Staff make me feel welcome and give me advice without patronising me.' and 'I now think and behave differently to the person I was.' Staff sensitively support attendance at nurturing programmes, such as 'Mellow Parenting'. Some parents attend additional training opportunities to further improve their confidence, family life styles and their child's well-being.
- Children's skills and abilities are quickly assessed and their progress is regularly observed and monitored to track and highlight improvements. Children with additional needs are very well supported. Parents take an active part in their child's progress and are provided with helpful practical ideas on how to support their child's enjoyment of learning at home.
- The group has pioneered a project called 'Get ready for Nursery' to help children be prepared for school. The success of this venture has led to this project being rolled out across the borough so that more children benefit from it. Overall, data from the schools that the group is working directly with show an improvement in the number of children achieving a good level of development and the gap between the lowest 20% and others is beginning to narrow.
- Tracking and monitoring of adults shows that when they attend accredited and non-accredited courses these lead to good progress and improved employability prospects. In addition, structured support is in place to help adults to volunteer either informally or formally in the group's activities and services.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The dynamic leaders and the local authority have managed a period of significant change and restructure effectively, whilst continually driving improvement. Staff say that supervision arrangements have improved. Staff well-being is now at the forefront of each meeting and, as a result, staff morale is high.
- Staff have access to a good range of training which further develops their skills. They act as good positive role models, have innovative ideas and use resources effectively. Staff are well deployed and used effectively and efficiently across the borough to promote greater consistency of practice and strong relationships. Consequently, parental satisfaction is high.
- Safeguarding vulnerable families underpins the centre's work. An effective referral and assessment system enables accurate and early identification of need. The group provides an exceptionally good programme to help support victims of domestic abuse and reduce inequalities. Children in need, looked-after children and those on a child-protection plan are also very effectively supported. Parents learn to recognise early signs of abuse and the impact it has on their children. A parents' forum is well-established and they share their views with the advisory board. Staff also use several

strategies to gain wider parental ideas to shape services such as 'You said, we did', the comments tree, questionnaires and meetings.

- The group's advisory board is relatively new. Membership is growing and members are enthusiastic and they have a good overview of the centre group's performance and knowledge of where further improvement is required to reduce any inequalities. However, the centre leader is acting as the chairperson until an independent person can be appointed, therefore independent challenge is not as secure as it should be.
- Evaluation procedures are well-embedded and self-reflection is accurate. The group have a range of improvement plans in place to tackle relevant issues. However, not all plans are precise or have clear measurable aims which can easily be used to fully monitor the centre group's good performance.

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	80151
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	454551
Managed by	The local authority.
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2,665
Centre leader	Eleanor McFadyen
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01287 626158
Email address	eleanor.mcfadyen@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 21019 East Cleveland
- 21324 Guisborough

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