

Shakespeare Children's Centre

Shakespeare Avenue, Burmatofts, Leeds, LS9 7HP

Inspection date 20–21 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
		Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	3
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Although a large majority of families that live in the area, including those from target groups, are registered and accessing services at the centre, leaders and staff have yet to use evaluations effectively to track the progress that these families are making to further improve their life chances.
- Not enough children in the area achieve good levels of development at the end of the Reception Year. There are not enough nursery places available to meet the needs of the number of disadvantaged two-year-olds in the area, to help prepare them better for school.
- The centre does not effectively promote adult education, training and volunteering to help more adults improve their chances of employment. The tracking of adult learning is not secure.
- The centre is yet to develop a broad enough programme of activities, with more targeted work, to further improve the health and well-being of young children and their families in the area, regardless of where they live. In particular, levels of childhood obesity are too high.
- Leaders, including those with governance responsibilities, have not put in place precise enough targets aimed to bring about improved outcomes for families.
- Members of the management team do not astutely analyse and use the data provided to them by the local authority to identify trends and steer the direction of the centre's work more effectively.

This centre has the following strengths:

- Families in crisis benefit from well-coordinated support from the centre staff. Case studies clearly demonstrate this is helping to reduce the risk of harm to children and to improve lives.
- The centre offers good care, guidance and support because the outreach workers know the community and families well and the issues they are facing.
- The new centre manager has clearly focused her efforts on the priorities identified for the centre and is driven to further secure 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 three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, members of staff and partner professionals from other agencies. Discussions were held with a number of members of the advisory board, representatives from the local authority and parents.

The inspectors visited activities at the Nowell Mount Centre.

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

Inspection team

Parm Sansoyer, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Ken Fisher	Additional inspector
Cathryn Parry	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Shakespeare Children's Centre is a single centre. It opened in 2008 with its dedicated facilities for delivery onsite until July 2013. The main base for the delivery of services is now the Nowell Mount Centre, which opened in April 2014, with the offices and childcare provision remaining at the Shakespeare Children's Centre site. A range of services including health services, family play sessions, parenting programmes, adult education and outreach services are offered. The centre manager took up post in September 2013.

The two wards covered served by the centre are among the 10% most deprived areas in the country. There are 614 families with children aged under five years living in the area. The latest data show that 30.7% of children are living in households dependent upon workless benefits. The majority of housing is social housing and private rental. There is a high percentage of minority ethnic heritage families in the area, including Black African, Caribbean and Pakistani, with an increasing number of Eastern European families, including those who are new to the country. Approximately 41% of families are White British. The main social issues affecting these areas are families living on workless benefits, social isolation, domestic abuse and mental health. The centre has identified these families as their key target groups. Most children living in the area enter early years provision with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age.

The onsite linked Shakespeare Primary School and Shakespeare Daycare are subject to a separate inspection and the reports are available at www.ofsted.gov.uk. Governance of the centre is provided by Leeds local authority in conjunction with an advisory board.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Improve access by:
 - tracking more closely the progress of the target families accessing services and the impact of the centre's work in improving outcomes for families
 - developing a broader programme of activities with more targeted work to further improve the outcomes for young children and their families, in particular, those living in areas of greatest need.

- Improve the quality of practice and services by:
 - tracking adult learning, providing further opportunities for accredited learning and training, and promoting volunteering roles to enable adults to develop the skills they need to aid employment
 - working more effectively with key partners to provide increased opportunities for more children to achieve good levels of development, and for parents to learn how to support their children so that more children are ready to learn when they start school
 - working more effectively with partners and further developing the programme of activities available to families to help further reduce obesity in children.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - targets in the centre's action plan are more specific and measurable
 - the centre leadership team examines data so that it is used more effectively to analyse local needs, shape provision and identify any emerging trends.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- A large majority of families in the area are registered and accessing services at the centre. However, centre leaders and staff do not routinely track families' progress and assess how meaningful this engagement is in order to ensure they are having a significant impact on improving outcomes. As a consequence, the centre is not in a secure position to show how well its support is helping to improve the lives of these families.
- The recent change of premises has resulted in the vast majority of activities being delivered from the new Nowell Mount Centre site. This means many of the families who live close to the original base at the Shakespeare Children Centre site will have to travel further to use the services. Some of the families spoken to during the inspection report that they will no longer be able to access these services as the distance is too far to travel. Consequently, they will no longer benefit from these services.
- During the period between July 2013 and March 2014 when there were not any designated facilities, the centre manager and staff worked hard to keep as many groups as possible available within the community. They have worked collaboratively with a local children's centre, key partners and by using some community venues. However, the centre manager and staff recognise that while they worked hard in keeping families engaged, they have not been as focused in ensuring this engagement has been meaningful. They also acknowledge that the programme of activities is too narrow and therefore not having as much impact as it could in improving outcomes for families in the area.
- Home visits form part of the effective outreach support that assists families who are most in need and has been used particularly well during this difficult transitional period. The outreach staff know the community very well. They target support and advice effectively, particularly for those families in crisis, and continue to work with them until their needs are met.
- Not enough two-, three- and four-year olds are taking up their entitlement to free early education. The centre is just starting to identify the children within its area that have yet to take up a place. In addition, although the centre manager, local childcare providers and the onsite school have been proactive in trying to increase capacity, there are not enough places available locally to meet need. The centre reports that this remains a clear priority and more consultation is underway.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The centre has identified the target groups and individual families most in need of support and intervention. Staff provide good quality care, guidance and support to these families, many of whom are facing issues such as social isolation, poverty and domestic abuse. Staff work hard to engage those families who are new to the country and those who speak English as an additional language, to help reduce inequalities. Despite the language barriers, staff have still managed to establish themselves at the heart of this local community.
- The centre works closely with the local childcare providers, the early years team from the local authority and the onsite school to support school readiness. However, although there is an improving trend, only 42.0% of children reach good levels of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile. Too many children still start school with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. The centre's programme of activities is not yet sufficiently targeted or broad enough to provide more opportunities for parents to help support their children's learning and school readiness.
- The centre works well with health partners to share data, targets and strategies to help meet health-specific targets. Breastfeeding rates and the take up of immunisation are high in the area. However, the percentage of children in the Reception Year who are a healthy weight remains low. This is recognised by the centre and staff have recently introduced a 'Happy Harvesters' group aimed at children who live in the local flats. Families come along to be physical, learn about the importance of fresh produce and health eating. However, currently there is not a broad enough

range of activities on offer to help further combat obesity levels in children.

- The centre works with partners to provide English for speakers of other languages classes. These are well attended and valued by participants. However, the centre does not yet promote effectively enough what else is available in the area to help adults develop the basic skills and qualifications that they need to enter the workforce. It does not track the progress of those who have been signposted to such activities. As a consequence, many children in the area continue to live in disadvantaged households. The centre supports a volunteer programme but the numbers of adults taking up these opportunities are low.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The new centre manager has worked hard to keep staff motivated during a number of significant changes. She works extremely closely with the local authority, which is supportive of the centre. Together, they place a clear focus on the main priorities identified for the centre. However, the priorities in the centre's action plan are not precise enough to help the centre more easily focus on what to improve and how to measure outcomes for families. Therefore, they have yet to ensure that all of the centre's resources are being used effectively to meet the needs of targeted children and families living in the area to further reduce inequalities.
- The centre manager has rightly prioritised the rejuvenation of the advisory board and introduced a parents' forum. The board has a broad representation from professional partners and parents, they understand their roles and responsibilities and are keen to provide challenge and drive improvement. However, it is too early to see the impact of this as yet, as it is unclear how well informed they are about: the quality of practice and services; data on the centre's performance; the use of performance management; what is being done to drive improvement; and how effective the centre is in closing the achievement gap for families.
- The centre manager and staff are clearly committed and driven by their work with children and families'. However, centre leaders do not use data or the information that they receive from the local authority well enough either to show the full effect that services have on improving the lives of families or to better focus the centre's work.
- Information sharing and referral processes between partners and the centre ensure that families in crisis receive swift support. Staff use the Common Assessment Framework process well to offer tailored support and those who are subject to a child protection plan are equally as well supported.
- The centre manager has identified that there are some minor inconsistencies in the records that staff keep of the support they offer and the home visits undertaken. In response to this, more robust systems have been introduced to audit files more regularly and support and coach staff.
- The centre manager follows local authority procedures for staff recruitment, vetting and safeguarding. Staff are well qualified and have regular supervision and training to address any aspects of their work that may require improvement.
- Parents speak very highly of the new centre manager and the established staff team. They report that they are caring and have a genuine interest in them and their families and all feel welcome regardless of their race and religion.

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 details

Unique reference number	22673
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	444722
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,130
Centre leader	Vanessa Hawkins
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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