

Osmondthorpe Children's Centre

129 Rookwood Road, Osmondthorpe, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS9 0LX

Inspection dates	24–25 March 2015
Previous inspection date	11 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
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:

- The take-up of funded places for two-, three- and four-year-old children is too low, especially for two-year-olds. Close partnerships with schools are in place, but are not yet used to identify the difference the centre is making to children's readiness for school.
- Despite improvements in the use of data since the last inspection, data are not yet used well to check the difference the centre is making, for example, to adult learning. This affects self-evaluation, which is over-generous, and limits the amount of challenge offered by the local authority.
- Some of the targets to improve services are too vague and set in many different documents. This makes it difficult to check how much progress has been made, or to hold staff accountable.
- The advisory board still does not represent the full range of partners and the board is not fully involved in checking the quality of the centre's work. Some members need more training to understand what is expected of them in their role.
- The leaders struggle to analyse and use information from their many different consultation methods to show how many parents are involved in decision-making about the centre's services.

This centre/children's centre group has the following strengths:

- Most families use centre services, including most of the groups identified as most in need of support, such as the teenage and lone parents, families in workless households and families from a minority ethnic background.
- Outreach workers deliver good quality sessions from the centre and in the community. The large majority of families continue to use services until their needs are met.
- Most children in the area attend the on-site childcare, where tracking shows that the large majority of children make good progress in their learning.
- Case files are well-written, take families' views into account and are checked well. Good supervision of staff is used to confirm that children and families are safeguarded well

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Improve the governance, leadership and management by:
 - improving the use of data to ensure that self-evaluation is based upon more accurate evidence of the difference the centre is making, for example, to adult learning and employment prospects
 - improving the challenge offered by the local authority by basing it on more accurate evaluation of the impact the centre is having on improving family life chances
 - streamlining the many different targets into a more manageable number of measurable targets with clear milestones against which the progress towards the targets can be checked
 - improving the way staff are held to account for their contribution to the centre's improvement targets
 - widening the representation of the range of partners on the advisory board. Provide training for members who feel less secure about their roles, so that they can confidently challenge the centre and become more involved in checking the quality of centre services and the difference this makes to local lives.
- Improve children's readiness for school by:
 - increasing the take-up of funded nursery education for two-, three- and four-year-old children
 - working more closely with local schools so that the leaders can better demonstrate the difference the centre is making to children's readiness for school
 - ensuring that there is a consistent understanding of the proportions of children in the area who achieve a good level of development, in order to better support children as they move to school-based early years provision.
- Improve the collation and analysis of feedback from consultation, so that the leaders are more able to check whether their services remain responsive and relevant to families' needs, and to clearly show the involvement of parents and centre users, including those families most in need, in decision-making about centre services.

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, staff, partners, the senior leadership team and representatives from the advisory board and local authority.

The inspectors visited the Osmondthorpe Children's Centre site, including the on-site day nursery.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, policies and procedures including information from consultations.

Inspection team

Linda McLarty, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Philip David Ellwand

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Osmondthorpe Children's Centre is a stand-alone centre governed and managed by the local authority. The centre has an on-site day nursery, which is inspected separately. The report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

In September 2012 Osmondthorpe Children's Centre and Gipton Children's Centre joined with the East Leeds Health Visiting team to become the Early Start Team, working in partnership to share information and referrals. A joint advisory board oversees the work of the Osmondthorpe and Gipton children's centres. Osmondthorpe Children's Centre serves a community within the top 30% most deprived areas nationally, in an area of mixed social and private housing. There are approximately 640 children under five years living in the centre's reach area, 54% of whom live in the top 6% most deprived area. Services offered by the centre include family play sessions, family outreach support, family learning, health services, referrals to adult education services and parenting courses.

The majority of families are of White British heritage, although recently more from Eastern Europe have moved into the area. Unemployment is high at 22.2% and 26% of families are in receipt of benefits. The centre has identified teenage parents, lone parents, workless households, and black and minority ethnic families who speak English as an additional language as most in need of their support.

Children enter school-based early years provision with skills and capabilities well below the levels typically seen in children of their age.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- 'Always there when you need them.' is how parents describe the staff team, who are very skilful at building trusting relationships with families, who consequently share their needs because they trust they will be met. Staff have a good range of professional partners, for example, in the Early Start Team, who also identify families' needs early and work well with centre staff to meet them. The large majority of families, including families considered to need specific support, use centre services from pregnancy onwards and until their needs are met.
- The recent appointment of an additional outreach worker has helped the team to reach out to families who are less likely to use the centre's services. However, although outreach work is effective, the attractive, newly refurbished centre premises are under-used. Despite some very good-quality activities, such as baby massage, attendance is low at some sessions, which leaders say is partly due to families not realising the building work carried out last summer is now complete and the centre is fully open again.
- Good partnership work has helped providers to increase the numbers of adults attending and completing adult learning and employability opportunities. However, the leaders have already identified that the arrangements they have in place with their partners to measure and record the take-up and completion of adult and community learning courses needs to improve further.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- Most children in the area attend the on-site childcare, where tracking clearly shows that the large majority of children leave the nursery having made good progress, often from low starting points. However, leaders do not work with the schools to confirm this, or to compare the levels on entry between children of families using centre services and those whose families do not use the centre. This would enable the centre staff to demonstrate the difference they are making to children's readiness for school.
- Staff use information from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores to identify the weaker areas of learning and use this to plan the educational programme in the on-site nursery. They

recognise that too few children in their area reached a good level of development compared to the national average, although they are unsure of exact proportions. They are seeking more accurate information in order to further support their planning for children's transition to school, and to reduce inequalities.

- Case studies and comments by centre users demonstrate that parenting courses and support are making an important difference to the quality of their lives and of those of the children. 'I'm happy to tell other parents, they all need to go to sessions like this and work better with the children.' said one parent during the inspection.
- Partner organisations also provide additional opportunities to improve parenting skills, including for families with children with additional needs. Sessions such as baby massage provide good-quality information, advice and guidance to improve parents' knowledge and skills, and are highly enjoyable.
- Despite using many different ways of consulting with adults, the centre could not provide clear evidence of the proportions of adults who develop a good understanding of their responsibilities regarding their children's well-being, safety and welfare. However, discussion with parents and partner agencies indicate that the staff team are contributing well to this, and the weakness is not in the quality of the work done by staff but in their systems to measure the effect.
- The records of case files are well maintained and regularly checked. Staff can convincingly show that their extensive outreach work and family support improves life chances and prevents many families needing social care support. The use of systems, such as the Common Assessment Framework, to record this support is still developing, and increasing this has already been identified as a priority for the centre leaders.
- The leaders and local authority are working hard to increase the numbers of adults who volunteer in the centre and gain some of the skills necessary for future employability, because they are aware that the current take-up is too low.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The leaders and local authority have made significant improvements since the last inspection in their understanding and use of data to measure the difference the centre is making to local families. However, this rightly continues to be identified as a continuing area for improvement by the local authority and the centre management. This has affected the accuracy of the centre leaders' evaluation of the impact of the work of the staff team.
- The centre's work is overseen systematically by the local authority. Support is focused strongly on helping the leaders to track the difference made to those who need the most support and identifying any barriers there might be to these families using centre services. However, precise challenge is limited because the authority has an over-optimistic view of the centre's performance.
- There are a large number of targets recorded in different documents, such as in the centre's development plan, the manager's performance targets, the 'Team around the setting' plan and the areas for improvement identified by self-evaluation. Although this shows a strong commitment to improve the services, there are too few direct links between these documents. Many of the targets lack clear milestones, which also makes it difficult to measure the progress being made.
- There are supportive relationships between the local authority and the staff team, and between the manager and her staff. The centre manager assesses her staff well against their personal targets, carefully checks their well-being and has built a strong team, which shares her own dedication, enthusiasm and hard work. However, staff are not held closely to account for their contribution to the centre's improvement targets.
- The advisory board has improved since the last inspection; they are increasingly supporting and challenging the centre's work. Some key partners do not have time to attend meetings, so the manager finds other ways of securing their involvement. However, overall attendance at meetings varies too much.
- Some board members who missed the training delivered earlier this year have requested training to support their role, and this would enhance the board's ability to challenge and hold the centre to account, and to contribute to the design of centre services.

- The partnership with the Early Start Team is highly effective in helping staff identify families' needs early, and to meet those needs swiftly. This helps to reduce some of the inequalities caused by the circumstances families can find themselves in.
- The centre gives a very high priority to safeguarding and has effective systems to ensure the protection of users, their family and of staff. The manager is trained in safeguarding supervision. She checks carefully that her team are protecting families well and delivering good quality of care, including for children who have a child protection plan, and those in the care of the local authority.
- Consultation is frequent, using a large variety of methods, but information is not collated effectively to show what percentage of parents, including those from families most in need, are involved in decision making about centre services.

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	22275
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	453942
Managed by	The local authority.

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	644
Centre leader	Janine Wallace
Date of previous inspection	11 March 2014
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