

# City and Holbeck Children's Centre

Hunslet Hall Road, Beeston, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS11 6TT

**Inspection date** 18–19 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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:

- Not enough lone and workless parents are actively engaged in services. The centre has not ensured that sufficient numbers of parents are engaged in activities focused on improving their economic stability and independence. Centre tracking shows the progress made by individual parents who enrol on courses but it is not always clear what difference this makes in the longer term or to improving worklessness in the community.
- Participation across some groups such as parenting classes and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is particularly low and this is not acted on swiftly enough to determine why and to engage more people who might benefit.
- Data and information available to the centre are not always analysed well enough to confirm that services are having an impact for families. Furthermore, local authority priorities and targets are not consistently used within the centre development plan, preventing a faster pace of improvement and hindering strategies for the advisory board to manage and challenge performance.
- Parents' role on the advisory board is not clearly understood, preventing the effectiveness of their contributions.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- Weekly allocation meetings promote effective collaborative working between health and centre staff. This ensures a swift assessment of need and a well planned route to centre and outreach services.
- Family outreach workers are well trained, knowledgeable about their community and resourceful in their efforts to meet the needs of each family with whom they work. Increasing outreach services, alongside opportunities for sharing staff with particular expertise, ensures a wider range of services for families when resources are tight and builds the capacity for further improvement.
- Comments such as 'This centre has been the making of me', confirm that parents enjoy strong and meaningful relationships with staff which builds trust and a willingness to make difficult but positive changes in their lives.

- The protection and welfare of children remain at the forefront of the centre’s purpose.

### 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. It was carried out at the same time as New Bewerley Children’s Centre.

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors and one additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre coordinator and the borough manager for 4Children, centre staff, officers from the local authority and workers from the family outreach support team for City and Holbeck Children’s Centre. They also met with health, education and early years and adult learning partners, parents and representatives from the advisory board and health professionals. They looked at the centre’s view of its own performance, the centre’s development plans, a sample of the centre’s policies and procedures, a selection of case studies and a range of other relevant documentation. Visits to activities were undertaken jointly with the centre coordinator, who also attended meetings along with a representative from the local authority and 4Children.

The inspectors visited outreach services at New Bewerley Children’s Centre, St Matthew’s Community Centre, Parkside Health Centre and Mumspace based at the city centre Mothercare.

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

### Inspection team

Gillian Bishop	Her Majesty’s Inspector, Lead Inspector
Jayne Utting	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Jean-Marie Blakeley	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

City and Holbeck Children's Centre is situated in Beeston, south of Leeds city centre. The centre delivers services from a portable building with access to outdoor space. It is co-located with City and Holbeck Children's Centre Nursery. Both are managed by 4Children. The reach area consists of six super output areas, five of which fall into the top 10% most deprived in the country. There are approximately 830 children aged from birth to five years living in the reach area. The locality has a high level of worklessness with 38% of children under five living in workless households compared to the Leeds average of 20%. Around half of all the children living in the reach area are from Black and minority ethnic groups. Mobility rates within the reach area are high. As part of the 'Early Start Team' in Leeds, the Health Visiting and Children's Services teams work collaboratively to provide one service for the children and families within the city. The centre itself is part of the Joint Extended Schools and Services (JESS) cluster, with three other children's centres and one Health Visiting Team. The other three centres in the cluster are New Bewerley, Windmill and Hunslet. New Bewerley was inspected at the same time as City and Holbeck.

The centre is managed by 4Children on behalf of the local authority. It works most closely with New Bewerley Children's Centre and shares an advisory board. The range of services provided includes family outreach support, health services, parenting, volunteering and adult education. The area has the highest proportion of looked after children, children in need and children on child protection plans in Leeds. A reduction in the number of looked after children is a key priority for this area.

Children generally enter early years provision with skills, knowledge and abilities that are below those expected for their age, especially in communication and language and personal, social and emotional development. The proportion of children for whom English is an additional language is much higher than the national average. The on-site nursery provision was not part of this inspection as this is inspected separately. The report is available on the Ofsted website at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the centre more rigorously tackles the social disadvantage associated with long-term worklessness in the reach area by:
  - increasing the engagement of more lone and workless parents in activities and services focused on improving their economic stability and independence
  - identifying both workless and lone parents as a clear target within its action plan
  - working more effectively with relevant partners in order to improve pathways into education, volunteering and training so that more parents gain work-based skills and future employment
  - improving the sharing of relevant information with partners in order to better evidence and monitor the progress of individuals.
  
- Monitor participation rates across all services more effectively to ensure participants, particularly those from target groups, access the full range of services available to them and sustain their engagement.
  
- Ensure that the advisory board provides more effective challenge to the centre about its performance by:
  - ensuring all members, but particularly parents, clearly understand their role
  - improving the collation and analysis of data and information to inform the evaluation of outcomes more systematically particularly in relation to parents' access and achievements within adult learning opportunities
  - developing the centre's delivery plan so that all key priorities are clear, and there are specific measurable targets for each that enable the centre to better evidence the impact of the whole range of work they undertake.

### Inspection judgements

#### Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The 'Early Start' team brings together health, children's centre and social work colleagues and provides a model of best practice for the accurate assessment and early identification of need. As a result, referrals into the centre and access to early help has increased.
- Overall, the large majority of families are registered with the centre and registrations and engagement levels are steadily increasing over time. Priority given to reaching families in the most vulnerable and socially deprived areas of the community ensures services reach those who need it most.
- The large majority of disabled children, young and teen parents and children and families from Black and minority ethnic groups are accessing a range of pertinent services. However, lone and workless parents are not sufficiently targeted, preventing access to information, services and courses which may improve their social independence and financial circumstances.
- In some circumstances, data are used well to identify needs, to target services in particular areas and to breakdown barriers to access. For example, 'Messy Play' is very well attended at St Matthew's Community Centre, crèche provision is available to support parents' access to courses and outreach support is increasingly used to support families in their own homes. Support for families with disabled children is often offered on a one-to-one basis at home. As a result, the centre offers a good range of services which all families can engage in.
- Participation rates across services are too variable. Targeted activities, such as the '0-6' parenting course and ESOL, fail to attract sufficient participants and sustain their engagement, preventing parents, particularly those from target groups, from completing the course.
- Take up of free nursery entitlement for three- and-four-year-olds is improving, although local schools report that some children join them without any pre-school experience, making their

transition to school more difficult. However, the centre is actively engaging with a wide range of partners to identify children missing out on this entitlement.

- Assessment at age two shows children make good progress as a result of early intervention work provided by the centre. In addition, the centre have been proactive in supporting a small number of childminders to achieve accreditation to provide care for children in receipt of funding. The local authority have wider plans in place to tackle the significant shortfall in funded provision across the JESS cluster.

### **The quality of practice and services**

Requires improvement

- The role of the centre in improving employability skills is underdeveloped.
- Adult learning is not effectively tracked or evaluated so the centre is unable to show the impact services have on reducing high levels of worklessness. The centre facilitates some opportunities for a few parents to volunteer in addition to a Jobs Club, Financial Fitness and access to guidance and support from a Jobcentre representative. However, the impact of such opportunities is not systematically analysed so the extent to which families benefit is unknown.
- A weekly allocation meeting promotes effective collaboration and communication between key partners and ensures assessment of need is swift and services appropriately targeted. Families at risk of domestic violence, children on child protection plans, children in need or who are looked after are well supported, improving their protection, circumstances and welfare.
- The 'Preparation, Birth and Beyond' course for new mothers and fathers successfully educates them about how to manage such a significant change, remain strong as a family and be good parents. However, centre participation data do not reflect the engagement level confirmed by midwives.
- The priority given to reducing high obesity levels and increasing low breastfeeding rates at six-to-eight weeks is showing positive results with improvements in relation to both. However, attendance at the breastfeeding group tends to be low particularly by target groups.
- Well planned activities such as 'Messy Play' are helping to make sure more children are ready for the transition to school due to the priority given to improving children's communication and language and personal and social skills. Families thoroughly enjoy this session and some parents report that it has increased their understanding of their child's development and helped them to think about how to support their children's learning at home.
- The on-site early years provision is improving steadily following a concerted effort by 4Children and the local authority to raise the quality of care and learning. Progress wheels show that children who engage with early years services make good progress in their learning despite low starting points.
- There is a trend of improvement in Early Years Foundation Stage profile scores across the reach area but the achievement gap between the lowest achieving children and their peers is widening. The centre is unable to demonstrate the difference their activities make towards narrowing achievement gaps between different groups of children because they have yet to investigate this impact.
- Parents report that they feel safe in the centre and are confident to share their concerns due to the strong sense trust they have in staff. Posters and displays are well used to raise awareness about domestic abuse and initial family assessments include a home safety check reducing the risk of accidental injuries within the home.
- Parents consistently report good levels of care, guidance and support. They value the strong support provided by the family outreach workers who go 'that extra mile' to escort them to hospital appointments, provide up-to-date information about welfare and benefit changes and who are extremely resourceful and able to locate food parcels and low-cost furnishings when it is likely there is none to be found. 'She manages to help when all seems lost' reports one thankful parent.

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

Requires improvement

- Leadership and governance of the centre are sound. The centre coordinator is experienced and well qualified for her role. Secure good performance management processes are provided by 4Children and the local authority through their commissioning arrangements. Financial management is secure and resources for families are appropriately deployed and utilised.
- 4Children implement a robust annual conversation which tackles underperformance through quality improvement visits and plans. Tracking systems such as 'Family Pathways' are embedded and inform individual case studies and outcomes. However, a broader analysis of data is not used to inform outcomes at a community level or against outcomes for target groups.
- The advisory board is highly supportive of the work of the centre. However, recent minutes and discussions show that the challenge provided by the board to drive forward the improvements needed is limited. This is due in part to a lack of clear, measureable success criteria for some priorities, which makes it more difficult for members to evaluate the centre's on-going performance. However, the advisory board has played a key role in improving take up rates of vitamins to address the high infant mortality concerns as a result of their data analysis.
- Priorities within the centre development plan are informed by self-evaluation and analysis of local authority data ensuring services are matched to need. However, local authority priorities relating to the 'three key obsessions' are not sufficiently evidenced in the centre's development planning.
- 'Project Plans', informed by data, provide a secure rationale for particular services such as ESOL. However, the advisory board and centre leaders do not use data well enough to make sure changes to priorities are identified sooner, to question performance or outcomes for families more closely or set targets for improvement.
- Safeguarding arrangements, policies, procedures and practices are robust and a strength of the centre. Case files are well documented and maintained to a high standard by family outreach workers. They are securely audited, ensuring children and families are appropriately protected.
- The centre is working tirelessly and collaboratively with partners to reduce the high numbers of children in the area who become looked after or subject to a child protection plan with evidence of success. The implementation of the Common Assessment Framework is used effectively to assess need, tailor support and monitor progression for families.
- Staff working with families whose circumstances make them most vulnerable understand child protection thresholds and how best to assess and meet families' needs. This is due to effective training and professional supervision. Good communication between family outreach workers, nursery staff, health and other agencies ensure historical information can be used to tailor their packages of support.
- Parents regularly contribute their ideas and views which are used to improve service planning and delivery. A few parents participate in more formal decision-making processes via the advisory board. However, this role is not clearly understood, preventing a more successful link between the board and the views of the wider community.
- Parents speak very highly of the centre and satisfaction rates are high. The centre strives to create a fully inclusive environment where families feel safe, supported and respected.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	20736
<b>Local authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	427558
<b>Managed by</b>	4Children on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	832
<b>Centre leader</b>	Emma Goulthorp
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 242 7050
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