

# Keynsham and Chew Valley Children's Centre Group

Keynsham Children's Centre, 65 West View Road, Keynsham, BS31 2UE

**Inspection date** 28–29 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>Previous inspection:</b>	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 group has been very successful in identifying the families who need most support and ensuring they make use of the services. Most of those priority groups are registered and the large majority of all of them have had contact with the centres. For example, 82% of rurally isolated families use children's centre services.
- Very well-established partnerships, especially with health services are having a positive impact on how many families are known to the centres and in the support that is given. Health visitors are based at both locations and very good exchange of information means that families are very well supported.
- There are excellent levels of care, guidance and support, especially for families who are experiencing traumatic events in their lives. Staff who work on a one-to-one basis with families provide much appreciated, very high quality support. They are knowledgeable, well trained and make excellent use of other services to provide tailor-made support. Families typically say, 'Staff never give up; they have really helped tremendously.'
- Children who need most support make good progress at the centres and when they move on. Their individual needs are met well and their development is tracked very effectively. Parents are also given useful guidance to help with their parenting skills through groups such as Tiny Tots and the Parents' Support Group.
- Leadership, governance and management are good at all levels. Resources are managed well on a day-to-day basis by the group service manager. Advisory board members carry out their duties diligently. There is a shared vision amongst everyone connected with the centres. Consequently, the centres continue to improve strongly.

### It is not outstanding because:

- There are no systematic methods to see what the longer term benefits are for adults who are supported by the centres to return to work, education or to improve their financial situation. This prevents services being even more finely tuned to meet their specific needs.
- Although parents have very positive views of both centres, not enough are involved formally through parents' forums, as volunteers, or through attending the advisory boards.

## 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 Keynsham and Chew valley.

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the group service manager and the centre coordinators. They met representatives from the local authority, members of both advisory boards and a wide range of partners including from health, voluntary and commissioned services. They also spoke with parents.

The inspectors visited both centres and one of the community venues used by Chew Valley Children's Centre. They observed several sessions taking place, including one jointly with a centre coordinator.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including implementation plans, a sample of case studies and safeguarding policies and procedures.

## Inspection team

Joan Lindsay	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Graham Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the group

The Keynsham and Chew Valley group consists of two children's centres located in the Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) district. The service manager who is responsible for this group also has responsibility for another group of three centres. The centres are managed by the local authority with governance provided by two separate advisory boards. The Keynsham Children's Centre is a phase two centre designated in 2008. It is located in a large extended Victorian house in Keynsham. The centre offers childcare provision for two-year-olds eligible for free early education (URN EY368164); this provision is subject to a separate inspection. The report can be downloaded at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). The Chew Valley Children's Centre was designated in 2011 as a phase three centre. It opened in January 2011 in a new purpose-built building on the site of Chew Valley Secondary School (URN 109306). Prior to the building opening, services were delivered from local community halls in the Chew Valley area. Neither children's centre has been inspected before; the secondary school is subject to a separate inspection.

The district covers a diverse and very widespread geographic area. There are 1,079 children aged under five living in the Keynsham centre's reach area. This centre is based in an area of wide-ranging social and financial differentiation, with pockets of need and a level of unemployment that rose following the closure of a major employer. Of the 13 defined areas in this centre's reach area, only two are in the highest 50% deprivation band nationally.

The Chew Valley centre has 787 children aged under five living in a very extensive rural area encompassing more than 120 square miles. Whilst it is a predominantly affluent area, with eight out of its 12 defined areas falling within the 70% most advantaged nationally, there are a number of families that are affected by rural deprivation and isolation.

The community living in both centres' reach areas is predominantly of White British ethnicity. Data show that overall the proportion of young children in workless households is about 22%. Children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at levels in line with those expected for their age.

The group identifies families living in its least advantaged areas, teenage parents, workless households with young children and rurally isolated families as priority groups who need most support.

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

- Develop systematic systems to track the longer term benefits to families of the foundations laid by the centres and their partners, so that the impact of services can be measured and they can be even more finely tuned to meet the needs of priority groups by:
  - working with various partners to evaluate, follow-up and exchange information about the impact on adults who are signposted by the centres
  - consistently recording the outcomes of support from the centres or their partners, for example when families have been given employment or benefits advice.
- Encourage more active involvement of parents in the running of the centre by increasing the number of volunteers and rigorously promoting participation on the parents' forums and the advisory boards.

## Inspection judgements

**Access to services by young children and families** Good

- The group has been proactive in ensuring that a high proportion of all of its priority groups are known and use services. This has been helped greatly by having health visitors based in both centres and much improved exchange of information, for example about new births. All teenage parents are in contact with the centres as are 82% of young children living in rural isolation, 81%

from the relatively disadvantaged areas and 74% from workless households.

- The group is very effective in checking which families from priority groups are using the services. Those who do not are followed up. For example, the families of all two-year-olds who are eligible for free early education are contacted and supported to make use of this. A shortfall of places led to the Keynsham centre setting up a 12-place nursery specifically for those children.
- The work the centres do in the community is particularly effective in meeting the needs of local families. This is especially in the rural area around the Chew Valley centre through sessions such as Messy Play held with a baby clinic at Temple Cloud village hall. The specific nature of those families' needs, such as isolation, transport and worklessness, are well understood and addressed by the centre.
- Access to services is not yet outstanding because there is still a small minority of families who are not using the group's services. Consultation is taking place at the moment to establish why. In addition, whilst the large majority of families from workless households access the centre, this is lower than the other priority groups.

### The quality of practice and services

Good

- The quality, range and relevance of the group's services are all good. Universal services, which are open to all, are balanced well with 'invitation only' activities such as Speech and Language Toddler Time and Early Support Stay and Play. Close links with the local authority's early years team, childminder groups, local schools and the work of staff such as the children's centre teacher ensure that outcomes for children who need additional support are good.
- Effective systems are in place to track children's progress individually or through session 'Play Diaries'. One-to-one support in the home, via the 'Flying Start' programme, supporting eligible families to benefit from free early education and a wide range of parenting programmes, all ensure that children who need most support are ready for school.
- The gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and the rest at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is lower than that seen locally and in England. This reflects the work done to support children who need it most.
- Breastfeeding rates for babies aged between six and eight weeks are improving and above national levels. The proportion of Reception age children at an unhealthy weight is slightly above the local area level. However, initiatives such as Cook It sessions are beginning to have an impact. Parents feel well supported in this regard.
- 'It doesn't matter how miserable you are, they know how to help.' This common view sums up the excellent levels of care and support provided for families with often complex and multiple needs. One-to-one support for families from the group's outreach workers and excellent information exchange have led to dramatic positive changes to families' circumstances and relationships and have ensured that children who are most vulnerable are kept safe.
- The work done by agencies and charities as well as the centres has been effective in improving families' lives through getting the families back to employment or accessing benefits, but the way the longer term impact is followed up is patchy.
- Not enough parents are actively involved through volunteering, giving their views at parents' forum meetings and attending the advisory board meetings. This is especially so in relation to families from the centres' priority groups. However, the recent appointment of a proactive volunteer coordinator has already led to several enquiries from those in the community.

### The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- There is a tangible sense of effective teamwork across the group and amongst its partners as a result of the strong leadership of the service manager.
- The centre uses its resources well to provide a wide range of universal and targeted services which make a positive difference.

- Staff supervision, including from the children's centres' social worker for those who work with the most vulnerable families, and regular training are all very effective.
- The local authority provides good support. It is developing the way it monitors the centres so that targets set are even more precise, measurable and challenging.
- Members of the two advisory boards have a good understanding of the problems facing both centres. The boards are representative of the distinct community each centre serves. Members are supportive and are clear about the centres' performance and the impact on reducing inequalities. However, there are not enough parents who attend either board regularly.
- Information sharing amongst partners, such as health and social care, has been developed to a highly effective level. This is instrumental in providing a wealth of tailored support through, for example, the centres' use of the Common Assessment Framework process. Group staff participate fully in meetings with multiple agencies to support families subject to child protection plans, where children are deemed to be in need or are looked after. This has led to demonstrable improvements in those families' lives and has reduced inequalities.
- Reducing the risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults is given a very high priority across the group. All staff are alert to any safeguarding concerns and appropriate action is taken and fully recorded, such as if a child shows signs of abuse. All appropriate safe recruitment checks are undertaken, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks.
- Families are unanimous in their positive views of the centres and staff whom they often describe as 'truly amazing'. Parents' and children's views are regularly taken into account. In fact, the centres' implementation plans are written from a child's point of view. The Chew Valley Children's Centre was recently awarded the Gold Children's Charter Award by The Children's Society in recognition of the way 'children's voice' is incorporated into its work.

**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 group details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	80589
<b>Local authority</b>	Bath and North East Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	428568
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1866
<b>Group manager</b>	Julia Finney
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 395400
<b>Email address</b>	julia_finney@bathnes.gov.uk

**This group consists of the following children's centres:**

- Keynsham
- Chew Valley

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