

Tenterfields Children's Centre

Tenterfields, Halesowen, B63 3LH

Inspection dates	12–13 June 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

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

- A large majority of families are registered with the centre but not enough lone parents and those from workless households are using the centre's services.
- Insufficient parents, especially those from workless homes, engage in training or extend their workplace skills. Where they are supported to do so, there is no consistent system in place to follow up how well they do.
- The collection of data to plan and monitor services and the impact they have on children and families is not fully effective to enable the advisory board to challenge the centre effectively.
- Parents are not involved in advisory board meetings or are sufficiently involved in shaping the services offered by the centre.

This centre has the following strengths:

- The centre is very welcoming and inclusive. It meets the needs of the Yemeni community particularly well through a wide range of activities.
- Effective partnerships with early education providers and health services ensure that children are ready for school and have a healthy start to life.
- Staff work well with social care staff and other professionals to give good individual support to those families most in need.
- Leaders, managers and governors have an accurate view of the centre's strengths and weaknesses and have put suitable plans in place to make improvements.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the engagement of lone parents and those from workless families by finding out why more do not use the centre. Use this information to refine services so that the large majority regularly access them.
- Extend the opportunities for more adults, particularly those from workless homes to improve their economic stability by:
 - working more closely with training providers to extend further training and development opportunities
 - monitoring the progress of adults who access further training and development opportunities and use the information to plan future services.
- Strengthen the level of challenge from the advisory board in decision-making by:
 - improving the collection of data to provide the members with a clear picture of the families using the centre's services and the difference they are making to their lives
 - involving parents and families more in developing the centre by ensuring they are represented on 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 two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, the local authority, the children's centre manager; members of the governing body and advisory board; parents and users of the centre; and representatives of organisations who work in partnership with the centre.

The inspectors visited activities taking place in the centre. Inspectors jointly observed one activity with the centre leader.

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

Inspection team

Steve Nelson, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Aileen King

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Tenterfields Children's Centre operates in the Halesowen South ward from one site. The centre provides services for families, by commissioning them from a range of partners and by working in partnership with health visitors and midwives in the shared delivery of services. Activities are planned with other local children's centres to ensure a full range of services is available to families.

The range of activities offered by the centre includes support at the local community baby clinic, antenatal birth clinic, breast-feeding support and baby massage. The centre has links with health visitors, community midwives and speech therapists. It signposts families to a range of providers that offer adult education, volunteering opportunities, and activities designed to support parents and carers back into employment and training.

The centre manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre. The advisory body consists of representatives from partner organisations and key stakeholders that work with the children's centre and the local authority.

The children's centre has 1,035 children aged under five in its area. The vast majority of the families living in the area are from White British backgrounds. A growing number of families using the centre are from the Yemeni community. Two communities within the centre's area fall within the 10% and 30% most deprived areas nationally. About 28% of children and adults who live in the area come from homes that are dependent on benefits and where no-one is in work.

When they start early years provision, the majority of children have skills, knowledge and abilities that are similar to those expected for their age.

The main priority groups assessed in need of the centre services are families living in deprived areas and the Yemeni community.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The large majority of children and their families in the area, including those in the most deprived areas, and those from the Yemeni are registered at the centre and access services. However, only half of the other families with young children living in the area regularly engage with the centre and this requires improvement. Even though the numbers are increasing, families from workless households and lone parents do not access services frequently enough.
- Leaders know the area well and work with partners to deliver services out in the community. For example, the weekly 'Little Treasures' Toddlers Group sessions provided at the Highfields Estate, are attended well by families from priority groups.
- Children and families access a range of services when they are in regular contact with the centre. Attendance is high at good quality stay-and-play sessions such as 'Cheeky Monkeys' run by the centre's own staff. Fortnightly appointments at the Citizens Advice Bureau case support session also have high take-up rates.
- The centre has been successful in engaging with the growing number of Yemeni families. The weekly English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) sessions with crèche places at the Hasbury Church of England Primary School are received well. Participants comment that they are more confident when interacting with the local community as a result of improving their English language skills.
- Weekly health visitor clinics have improved access to early childhood services for families and those expecting children. The family support team make contact with all families with new born babies and carry out home visits to assess the health of the baby and the home environment. This ensures that families who need help are supported effectively until their needs are met.
- The centre works well with local early years partners to ensure nearly all eligible two-year-olds living in the most deprived areas take up their entitlement to early education. Most three-year-olds known to be eligible for free early years education have taken up their place, which supports their improved learning and development.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The centre's range of activities and groups provide a good service for those attending. However, the impact of services requires improvement because not enough families who are most in need such as lone parents and workless households attend sessions regularly.
- The impact of centre services on families' economic well-being is not well established. Volunteers are very well supported and gain valuable skills that have helped them back into work. However, not enough families, particularly from workless households, have been helped to take up training. Procedures to track and measure the centre's effectiveness in making a difference to the life choices and chances of this priority group are in the early stages of development.
- The centre promotes the benefits of healthy lifestyles well. The weekly 'Buggy Walks' along with the 'Walkers Club' sessions in the community is having a positive impact on improving children's health and well-being. The rates for child obesity are lower than those seen nationally. Increasing numbers of mothers continue to breastfeed their children until they are six-to-eight weeks old; giving babies a healthy start to life.
- Play and learning experiences for children accessing the centre activities such as 'Saturday Family Fun Days' and the 'Time Together' stay and play are well planned and enjoyable. Effective

partnerships with local schools, pre-schools and childminders, support children's school readiness and assist their smooth transition to school. This work is successful in reducing inequalities as reflected in the narrowing achievement gap between local children and others nationally over time.

- The 'Time for Twos' provision for two-year olds, alongside the 'Rattle and Rhyme' and 'Tiny Tenters' groups, home learning visits and parent workshops, are beginning to improve children's early social, communication and language skills. Additionally, these approaches are helping parents to recognise how to support their children's language development more effectively.
- Families who attend the children's centre invariably receive good support and guidance. Staff work particularly well with vulnerable families who need specialist support and attention in areas such as behaviour management and parenting skills. The centre has been effective in assisting teenage, workless and lone parents to deal with housing and benefits issues, sort out debt problems and overcome feelings of isolation.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the centre's impact on improving outcomes for local families is too variable. After a period of change, centre leaders are now developing the centre's services and the effectiveness of leaders in driving positive change is improving rapidly.
- The local authority supports and challenges the centre through the annual conversation process, their regular visits and the analysis of the centre's performance data. These all have a positive impact on the centre's performance together with target setting. For example, as seen in the increasing number of registered families from disadvantaged areas.
- Governance is developing through the work of the advisory board which provides suitable oversight of the work of the centre. Self-evaluation appropriately identifies the centre's strengths and weaknesses and there are clear improvement plans in place. However, the collection of data is not sufficient to allow the advisory board to accurately monitor the impact of all the services provided to families in order to challenge the centre. Parents are not represented on the advisory board and their contribution to shaping the centre's performance or helping shape delivery is limited.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Safe recruiting procedures are appropriate and staff have received relevant training. Policies and procedures to promote safeguarding are suitable and understood by staff. E-safety is appropriately promoted and adults are aware of the risks associated with using computers and social media.
- The centre works well with social care staff to ensure families remain safe and there is effective intervention for children in need, those subject to child protection plans and for children being helped through the Common Assessment Framework procedures, including looked after children. Case studies demonstrate that the centre's involvement has helped to reduce the level of support needed for some highly vulnerable families.
- Resources are used effectively to meet the needs of young children and families in the area. The staff have worked hard to build the trust of families from diverse backgrounds who enjoy attending because of the welcome they are given. Staff feel well supported through regular supervision and the opportunities they have for on-going professional development.

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.

Centre details

Unique reference number	23135
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	450407
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,035
Centre leader	Caroline Moylon
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01384 818563
Email address	cmoylan@caslon.dudley.sch.uk

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