

Mossley Children's Centre

The Rowans, Mossley, Lancashire, OL5 9DR

Inspection dates	5–6 November 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
Access to services by young children and families		Good	2
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:

- Too few two-year-old children are accessing their free entitlement to good quality free early education.
- The centre has not succeeded in improving health outcomes relating to breastfeeding or smoking during pregnancy.
- There are not enough opportunities for adults to access courses, employability programmes or volunteering which help to improve their long-term employability. The progress of children and adults is not tracked carefully enough.
- Some data provided by the local authority and health partners are not always helpful in enabling centre leaders, governance and managers to easily monitor its performance and fully reflect the impact of all aspects of its work. In addition, the partnership group are not fully effective in challenging the centre's on-going development and holding it to account.
- Parents are not sufficiently involved in developing the centre, they are under-represented on the partnership group and no parent forum is currently running.

It has the following strengths:

- Most local families are registered with the centre and the large majority regularly access its services, including those identified as in most need of support.
- Parents feel welcomed and valued. They speak highly of centre staff who treat them with respect and consider the centre to be a place where they are able to drop in at any time for friendship and support.
- Centre staff work closely with a range of partners, including social care professionals to provide a good level of individual care, guidance and support to families both in the centre and through outreach work.
- Staff have good opportunities to undertake further training, qualifications and reflect and share professional expertise which is embraced by this motivated staff team.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more children aged two years access their entitlement to free, good quality early years education.
- Improve the impact of practice and services on health outcomes for children and families by working more closely with health partners to:
 - reduce the number of mothers smoking during pregnancy
 - increase the number of mothers who sustain breastfeeding for at least six to eight weeks.
- Extend opportunities for more adults, particularly the unemployed, to enhance their economic stability by:
 - increasing the promotion and participation in adult-learning programmes including English, mathematics and information and communication technology courses and volunteering programmes to aid progression into further education and employment
 - developing tracking systems to monitor how well children and adults make progress when they access courses or programmes and use data gathered to help plan future services.
- The local authority should work more effectively with centre leaders and the partnership group to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the centre's work by:
 - ensuring that all data, particularly on the engagement of some families identified as in most need, is clear and robust and that they have access to locality based health data to enable them to more accurately measure its performance and fully monitor the impact of all aspects of its work
 - increase the role of the partnership group so that they play a more robust role in the monitoring of services to enable them to provide rigorous support and challenge and hold the centre to account
 - involving parents more in strategic decision making, for example, by establishing a parent forum and ensuring their voices are heard in the partnership group.

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 the children's centre acting team manager, local authority strategic lead for early help and Chair of the partnership group. They also held meetings with centre staff, parents, members of the partnership group and a number of partners, including health, education and children's social care professionals.

The inspectors visited a number of sessions held during the inspection including, 'Postnatal group', 'Micklehurst Tots' 'Childminding group', 'Rhyme Time' and jointly observed a session with a member of the early years provider development team. They also involved the children's centre acting team manager and local authority strategic lead for early help in all team meetings.

Inspectors looked at a range of relevant documentation, such as the centre's self-evaluation, development plan, a sample of case studies, parents' evaluations, key policies and the centre's equality and safeguarding procedures. Throughout the inspection, they also took the opportunity to talk with adult and child users of the centre.

Inspection team

Tara Street, lead inspector

Additional inspector

Ken Fisher

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Mossley Children's Centre is a standalone centre, situated within the grounds of Micklehurst All Saints Church of England Primary School. It offers a range of services which include child health services, family play sessions, parenting programmes, adult education, family outreach services, a sensory room and crèche facilities.

There are approximately 708 children aged from birth to five years in the reach area, of which 17.6% live in the 0-30% most deprived areas in the country. The families that the centre has identified as in need of its services and support are: supporting child development and readiness for school, unemployed households and two-year-olds who are eligible for free education entitlement.

Most families are from White British backgrounds. Housing is mostly social or private rental with some pockets of high affluence and privately owned housing. Levels of unemployment are high, with 18% of children living in households dependent upon workless benefits. Most children enter early years provision with knowledge and skills that are in line with those typical for their age. There are links to the five local primary schools and four early years providers. These are subject to separate inspection arrangements and the reports are available on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Governance of the centre is provided by Tameside Borough Council, in conjunction with a partnership group that includes providers, delivery partners, members of the local community and users that attend the centre. There is a newly appointed acting manager in place at the centre who is supported by a team manager.

Inspection judgements

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

- Effective liaisons with partners ensures that the centre knows about expectant mothers and all new births within the area. This means key partners and the centre gain a good understanding of the needs of individual families. As a result, most families are registered with the centre and a large majority of families identified as in most need of support regularly access services. This includes two-year-olds, workless households and those children living in the most deprived areas who are shown to be less well prepared for school.
- Staff work hard to ensure the centre provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere. This ensures that those less likely to engage feel comfortable coming to the centre to access services and activities. Typical comments from parents include: 'A very welcoming centre and very helpful staff'; 'There is a good range of information available in the centre' and 'it's a great opportunity to learn about child rearing from each other and to make new friends'.
- Family intervention workers provide well-targeted support for families which ensure that help is on hand when they need it most. Parenting programmes delivered on an individual basis, in family homes, increases access to learning for some of the most vulnerable and isolated families.
- Staff work hard to make sure that parents are aware of all the help which may be available to them including their children's entitlement to free early education. As a result, most three- and four-year-olds take up their places. However, not enough two-year-olds are taking up their places and as a result, some children who would benefit from access to high quality early years provision are not doing so. The centre is closely monitoring those eligible two-year-olds who are not accessing free early education, to ensure their needs are being met.

The quality of practice and services**Requires improvement**

- The centre provides an appropriate range of services that are open to all and those which are specifically designed for those identified as most in need of support such as, 'Baby Group', 'Rhyme Time', 'Baby Babble and 'Toddler Talk'. These groups are well attended and as a result have a positive impact on the well-being of families.
- The number of children who are obese in the Reception Year is low, but not all of the centre's health-related targets are met. In particular, the proportion of mothers who keep breastfeeding for at least six to eight weeks is low and the number of mothers who continue to smoke during pregnancy is high. The lack of centre reach specific health data in both these areas prevents the centre from monitoring more effectively the impact of their work on improving life chances and responding more quickly to need.
- The centre works appropriately with local schools and early years providers. There is a trend of improvement in Early Years Foundation Stage profile scores across the area, including those children living in the most deprived areas. Early years workers have begun to track and monitor the progress that children make when accessing activities. However, these are in the early stages of development and as a result, the centre is unable to demonstrate the impact of its work effectively on improving outcomes for children and on reducing inequalities.
- Parents who attend activity sessions appreciate the opportunity to learn from each other and receive good advice about caring for their children. For example, parents attending the postnatal group learnt about how to keep their children safe in and around the home.
- There are not enough courses, adult education, training and volunteering opportunities to help parents to improve their English, mathematics and computer skills, which limits their progress towards paid work and their ability to support their children's learning. The systems to track adults' progress towards learning and employment do not provide clear evidence of the centre's impact on increasing economic well-being.
- Family intervention workers are very knowledgeable and demonstrate good levels of professional expertise. They carefully identify, plan and provide support for those families identified as most in need. As a result, parents enjoy a range of opportunities through one-to-one support in the home to extend their parenting skills, knowledge and how to deal with issues such as domestic violence, mental health and managing their child's behaviour, which has a positive impact on the course of family life.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management**Requires improvement**

- Leaders, governors and managers appropriately use data and local information to identify priorities and to measure the impact of their work. However, data provided by the local authority, particularly on the engagement of some families identified as in most need of support are not always clear or drilled down in enough depth. Furthermore, health data is not always available at a centre area level. As a result, it is not always helpful in enabling the centre and partnership group to accurately and easily monitor its performance or fully reflect the impact of all aspects of its work with families.
- Governance and accountability arrangements are clear. The newly re-structured partnership group contains a good mix of committed professional partners and representatives from the local community such as, the police, housing and youth services. They receive an appropriate range of information about the centre's work and how well the performance of staff is managed. However, the centre recognises the need to strengthen the capacity of the partnership group to further challenge the centre's on-going development and how effectively they check the impact of the centres services on reducing inequalities.
- Parents' opinions are sought and used appropriately to monitor and make changes, for example, to the day and times of activity groups. However, there are not enough opportunities for parents to contribute to shaping the future direction of the centre. For example, not enough has been done to establish a parent forum or to ensure that their voices are heard in the partnership group.
- The acting centre manager and his team are highly skilled, hard-working and ambitious to improve. Resources are of good quality and are used well to meet the needs of those who access

centre services. For instance, premises are well maintained and are used flexibly to meet users' needs.

- Robust safeguarding policies, procedures and practices are in place and adhered to. Strong multi-agency partnerships and good use of the Common Assessment Framework procedures ensures that children who may be more vulnerable receive coordinated early help. Those subject to a child protection plan, looked after children or who are identified as being in need are well supported by the centre.
- Family case files are maintained to a good standard by family intervention workers and clearly record positive improvements in mental health, economic stability and safety of families.
- Staff feel valued and well supported in their roles and identify supervision arrangements as being a very positive feature of management. They keep abreast of best practice, undertake useful training to extend their expertise and, as a result, are highly qualified. For example, staff commented that; 'Training opportunities are focused on the work we do and self-development is high on the agenda'.

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	22060
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	451664
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	708
Centre manager	Jon Horlock
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01457 837334
Email address	jon.horlock@tameside.gov.uk

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