

North Somerset – Central Children's Centre Group

c/o Clevedon Children's Centre, The Barn, Great Western Road, Clevedon

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:		
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 is a good centre.

- Most children and families from priority groups are making use of the services. Particularly good partnership working with health and social care partners ensures families are identified. Most families in the area are registered at the centre.
- Staff go out of their way to make sure families get the quality service they need.
- Staff work sensitively with families and children, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families, those who are eligible for funding for early years education and those with additional needs, to provide good quality support and suitable activities.
- Strong partnerships are developed and maintained to provide good quality services to families. The centre works with a wide range of agencies to provide a good range of activities.
- Families value the good provision and develop their confidence and well-being. The creative sessions are a particular favourite.
- Strong local partnership groups are well run and work collaboratively together. The chairs of the groups are knowledgeable and members provide a good level of challenge that drives improvements.
- Good strategic leadership and good day-to-day management, together with close monitoring by the local authority, mean this group is in a good position to improve further.

It is not outstanding because:

- Strategies to encourage and engage more families to participate in activities have been slow. The participation rate has not increased at the same speed as registrations.
- Systems which check the impact that the centres have on the families they serve have not yet been fully developed. There are no detailed records to show what difference the centres are making to families lives.
- The outside play areas at the centres are under-developed and are not used fully to promote children's learning in all areas of early years education.

What does the centre/group need to do to improve further?

- Increase the numbers of families that regularly participate in activities through ensuring that centre premises are used as fully as possible
- Improve the systems used to check the difference that the centres have on:
 - adult learning, so that it is easy to see the longer-term impact of learning on the lives of adults, to check on quality and to drive further improvement
 - casework, so that the centre can see the difference it is making to the lives of children and families, and so continue to improve practice.
- Improve the quality of outside play areas so that they better support children's learning.

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 Clevedon Children's Centre, Yatton Moor Children's Centre and Yeo Valley and Rural Outreach.

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, senior leaders, managers from the local authority, centre staff, and health, education and social care partners. They also met early years practitioners, a Community Learning Officer, community services providers, a speech and language therapist, volunteers, childminders and representatives from the partnership group.

The inspectors visited the centres to observe activities, including a parenting programme, play sessions, a crèche, a breastfeeding support group and a baby group. Joint observation of a parenting programme was undertaken with the manager at Yeo Valley Children's Centre.

The inspectors looked at the centres' self-evaluation, action planning, a sample of case files, case studies, parent feedback and safeguarding procedures. They observed the centres' work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Penny Mathers, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Joyce Cox	Additional inspector
Peter Towner	Additional inspector
Megan Dauksta	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

North Somerset Central Children's Centre Group is one of two groups covering this locality, the other being North Somerset North Children's Centre Group. The local authority manages both groups and a Community Family Team Leader works with both. Two Children's Centre Leaders are responsible for the Central Group's three centres, which are Clevedon, Yatton Moor, and Yeo Valley and Rural Outreach. All centres have part-time staff and are open on a part-time basis. Services are offered from the centres and from various community venues. Three partnership groups oversee the governance of the centres and the chairs of these boards meet regularly with managers. Clevedon Children's Centre serves the town of Clevedon and provides services integrated with health, social care and the youth service. Yatton Moor Centre is a small centre in the middle of Yatton, attached to Yatton school. Yeo Valley and Rural Outreach is also on a school site with a pre-school provision. These schools are subject to separate inspection arrangements and their reports can be found at: <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Priority groups have been identified as:

- children from birth to two years who are eligible for funding through North Somerset's scheme
- children who are eligible for two-year-old funding for early years education
- children supported through child protection and children in need plans
- children from minority ethnic groups, especially those from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families
- families who have English as a second language
- young parents
- children with additional needs
- families supported through the 'troubled families' programme.

Most of the population is White British, with small numbers of minority ethnic groups. Most children start school with skill levels above those typical for their age. A few children live in workless households and a few families are eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit.

The locality covers a geographical area of 40 square miles. Clevedon is a seaside town 12 miles from Bristol. The population is made up of a mix of retired people, families and young professionals, many of whom commute to work in Bristol. Pockets of deprivation exist alongside areas of affluence. Yatton is a small town surrounded by several small villages, while Yeo Valley and Rural Outreach covers the largest and most rural area. There is a Traveller site within this area.

This group of centres offers a range of universal and targeted services, including health and antenatal clinics, breastfeeding support, parenting programmes, 'messy play', 'stay and play', adult learning, Citizens Advice Bureau, housing benefit surgery, holiday activity sessions, and childminder and family support.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Registrations have increased over the past three years so that most families are now registered. A strong partnership with agencies helps to identify families and children and ensures those most in need access services, including young parents and children with additional needs. These families stay engaged until their needs are met.
- Those expecting children get good access to the centre. Midwives run convenient antenatal clinics at Yeo Valley and Clevedon, and the National Childbirth Trust runs sessions at Clevedon. The health visitors are very supportive of the centre and make sure families get an early introduction to the services.
- The participation rate overall has not increased at the same rate as registrations. However, the participation rate since the start of the year has improved. The centre is on track to achieve a

challenging target this year.

- Managers have a strong focus on engaging with families who are otherwise hard to reach. The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families have particularly good access to services shared by others. They enjoy activities, hold the centre in high esteem and attend regularly.
- Staff use a monthly tracking system to check levels of engagement closely, and appropriate follow-ups are made to check on the well-being of families. Families in most need regularly use the centre.
- Takeup of free early education by eligible two- to four-year olds is high. Staff are relentless in their efforts to ensure all families who wish to take up places are able to do so. All children are placed in good or outstanding settings.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Staff are skilled at coordinating services such as help with housing, support for mental health issues and domestic abuse. Staff are very child-focused and professional. Particularly sensitive work has been successful with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families, who are now keen to take up the offer of support with reading for their families. A valuable 'Traveller Tots' play session is now available.
- Very good collaborative working with the health visitors has resulted in more babies being breastfed, with the percentage of mothers breastfeeding at six to eight weeks higher than the national rate. A sociable and successful breastfeeding group is run jointly with health visitors. Mothers appreciate the good level of practical advice and support.
- Good support is provided through parenting programmes and, when needed, some sessions can be taken to families' homes. Young parents grow in confidence, learn how to promote children's speech and improve their parenting skills. Parents appreciate the support, with one mother saying, 'They have helped me at my lowest; if you need someone, they are always there.'
- All centres provide a very welcoming environment for everyone; staff are friendly and supportive. Healthy lifestyles are promoted through the provision of healthy snacks. Safety advice includes tips for e-safety and paediatric first aid so that parents know how to keep their children safe.
- Staff have a high commitment to promoting speech and language, and they work well with children who have multiple and complex needs. Families who are learning English as a second language have been carefully consulted about their needs and, as a result, a 'new beginnings' group has been set up especially for them and those families new to the area.
- Good communication and regular meetings ensure families can move easily between services. Staff attend 'team around the child' meetings and complete multi-agency assessments. Good, close collaboration with the 'troubled families' team has resulted in effective work with children subject to a child protection or a child in need plan, and ensures the children are kept safe.
- Highly effective work with early years partners includes visits and regular meetings. Staff keep a close check on how well the most vulnerable children, including those under two who are eligible for funding for early education, are getting on. Support for childminders is very good and includes training and promotion of high standards in early years education.
- Very good partnerships with headteachers ensure children make a smooth move into school and any barriers to learning are removed. Staff closely check on children's development so they make good progress. Children who have received intensive support from the group settle well, make good progress and typically achieve a good level of development in school.
- Systems to record, monitor and evaluate some aspects of the centres' work are underdeveloped. Adult learning is not fully evaluated to see the impact on families' lives. Case files are not analysed to evaluate the long-term impact that the work of the family support workers is having on the families.
- Outdoor areas at Yatton are very small. Limited facilities are provided in the outdoor areas for developing writing skills, reading and the promotion of numeracy, especially at Yatton and Clevedon centres. Children do not have enough additional ways of experiencing learning and play in the outside areas.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The local authority provides good strategic leadership. Challenging targets are set and progress is closely monitored to ensure the centre is effective in reducing inequalities for children and families. The managers' strong focus on targets has resulted in increased registrations over the past three years.
- The three local partnership groups are well organised and provide a good level of challenge. Parents are regularly part of the groups. Chairs of the groups meet together, are well informed and are very keen to bring further improvements to the communities they represent.
- Good partnerships have resulted in a number of beneficial service level agreements, including those with Bookstart and Springboard, who support children with additional needs. Managers develop relationships well and are quick to spot any barriers to information sharing. A wide range of activities and sessions are run successfully.
- Safeguarding is well promoted. Staff attend frequent multi-agency training and know whom to contact if they have a concern. Safe recruitment procedures are followed well and there are comprehensive policies and procedures in place.
- Managers and staff are dedicated, well trained and well qualified. They have a determination to improve the services they offer and work well together as a team. There is a supportive environment both for the staff and for the families they work with.
- Parents are consulted about their needs. Parents report a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the provision. Group and individual needs are well met and parents' views are valued. The consultation with Gypsy, Roma and Travellers and families with English as a second language has been particularly innovative and effective in meeting their needs.
- Managers use a good range of methods to check on the quality of services. Supervision and staff appraisals are regular and appreciated by staff, case files are audited and observations of activities are undertaken. Staff have good access to professional development and make good use of the plentiful resources.
- Ways to check the success of some of the provision are underdeveloped. It is not always easy to see the difference the centres are making to the families' lives. Individual casework records do not fully summarise the outcomes achieved over time. Systems to evaluate the outcomes of adult learning are under- developed in terms of seeing what difference the learning makes to learners' lives.
- Centres are only open on a part-time basis, so there are periods when they are not being used. Parents sometimes find it hard to drop in and there are limits on when families can use the centres for contact visits. Opportunities for volunteers are restricted due to the part-time nature of the provision.

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 Group details

Unique reference number	URN 80777
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	455163
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2405
Centre leader	Jenny Kingston
Telephone number	01934 426440
Email address	clevedonchildrenscentre@n-somerset.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- URN 20757 Clevedon Children's Centre
- URN 23711 Yatton Moor Children's Centre
- URN 23714 Yeo Valley and Rural Outreach

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