

Derby, City of - Locality 2

First Steps, 60 Cockayne Street North, Derby, DE24 8XB

Inspection dates	21–23 October 2014
Previous inspection date	Not applicable

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
		Not applicable	
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 group of centres requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Leaders and managers have taken steps to ensure that the overall proportion of families from the locality who use the centres is improving. However it is not yet good enough and too few families from some priority groups access and use services.
- Although the quality of adult learning is good, parents are not given sufficient guidance and information about what they can do after they have completed their courses.
- Parents do not have enough opportunities to become involved in decision making about the work of the group
- Not enough comparative data are used by leadership, governance and management to monitor the full impact of all aspects of the group's work.

It has the following strengths:

- Staff work hard to make sure the centres offer families a warm and welcoming environment. This ensures that those less likely to use services, feel comfortable when they visit the centres.
- The quality of information sharing between the centres and the partner organisations they work with is generally good. As a result some families with the most needs receive early help and support.
- Families have access to a wide range of effective and tailored support on a one-to-one basis as well as through group sessions. Parents who have accessed this help comment very positively about the impact of the support they receive.
- The group has been particularly effective in promoting safeguarding and meeting the needs of women whose lives have been affected by domestic abuse.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Increase the overall proportion of families from the locality and from all priority groups who use the centre, to ensure that at least a large majority of families are engaged
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership, governance and management by:
 - Ensuring that a clearer distinction is made between target groups, targeted families and local priorities so that targets for these can be set and effectively monitored
 - Improving the quality of systems used to capture and collate data to ensure the group can fully and accurately demonstrate the impact of its work, particularly its home visit work
- Ensure families who complete adult learning courses receive appropriate guidance and information about 'next steps' and progression opportunities into further education and employment.
- Re-establish the parents' forum and increase the representation of parents on the advisory board so that parents have regular opportunities to contribute to decision making.

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 four Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with leaders, managers and staff from the centres and the local authority. They also met representatives of partner organisations such as health, schools, churches, early years providers, Jobcentre Plus and members of the advisory board. They also met parents.

The inspection covered the following centres Boulton, Alvaston, Sinfin, Chellaston and Odmaston Allerton.

Inspectors visited all centres and observed activities such as ‘Stay and Play’, ‘Messy Play’ and adult learning classes. They also looked at the group’s self-evaluation document, action plan, case files and other relevant documentation. The views of parents were taken into account from interviews and reviews of evaluations.

Inspection team

Priscilla McGuire, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Tara Street	Additional inspector
Judith Elderfield	Additional inspector
Joan Cawdron	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

City of Derby - Locality 2 Children's Centre group consists of five centres which came together as a locality in 2012. Alvaston centre shares its site with Lakeside Primary School (URN: 112738) and childcare provision is offered by external providers at Sinfin Children's Centre (URN: EY467568) and Omaston Allenton (URN: EY440848). Inspection reports for these are available at ofsted.gov.uk.

The local authority supported by an advisory board provides governance of the group. A group manager manages the group but at the time of the inspection, was on long term sick leave. The group is part of a locality multi-agency team which provides services to children and young people aged 0-19. A locality management team manages services across the locality. In conjunction with other organisations, services provided by the group include parenting support, employment support and advice, activities for children, adult learning, volunteering opportunities, family support and health services. These are provided from each of the five centres within the group and also from community venues such as church halls.

Around 4,800 children under five live in the area served by the group. Levels of deprivation vary. Some communities such as the one served by Chellaston have few significant areas of deprivation and other communities such as the one served by Osmaston Allenton, have many. The number of children who live in poverty is also variable across the locality.

On average, a higher percentage of families in the locality have a household income under £15,000 per annum than the rest of Derby. Most families in the locality are of White British heritage. The highest proportion of families from minority ethnic groups, live in the area served by the Sinfin centre.

Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision with varying levels of skills and knowledge.

The group has identified the following as priority groups: Families living with domestic violence, teenage parents, fathers and male carers, families with drug and alcohol issues, children in need and children subject to a child protection plan.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The overall proportion of families who use the centre is improving but not yet good. Not enough families from all priority groups, in particular, teenage parents and families with alcohol and substance misuse issues use the centres. However, this has been recognised as an area for improvement and an action plan to increase participation is being implemented. It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of this.
- Most families from the locality including expectant mothers are registered with the centres and have access to services and information provided at each centre. On a monthly basis, staff carefully monitor attendance rates of targeted families or families from particular

priority groups. They use this information to plan how best to increase participation rates in centres such as Sinfin, which do not perform as well as others.

- Most three- and four-year-olds and the large majority of two-year-olds, access free early years provision. Places for two-year-olds are limited which accounts for the lower proportion who take up places. The local authority has recognised that take up rates of two-year-olds are not good enough and is creating additional places at centres such as Boulton.
- Staff work hard to make sure the centres offer families a warm and welcoming environment. This ensures that those less likely to use services feel comfortable when they visit the centres and also feel confident to approach staff for help.
- The quality of information sharing between the centres and the partner organisations they work with is good. The weekly multi-agency 'Vulnerable Children's Meeting' (VCM) is used particularly well to ensure information about families who are identified as having the most needs, including expectant mums, is shared and used to provide early help and support.
- To ensure families, particularly those with the most needs, can access services, home visit work is a key part of the outreach work of the group. In addition, in partnership with other organisations, services are offered in venues across the locality such as church halls.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The quality of services and activities for both children and adults is good. However, because not enough families regularly use the centres, the impact of what the centres offer is limited.
- Sessions such as 'Stay and Play', 'Messy Play' and 'Stay and Grow' are well planned and appropriately linked to Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes. These sessions help parents develop their knowledge, skills and ability to support their children's learning and development when they are in the centres and at home.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is below national rates. However, comparative data from the last two years shows a strong improving trend. In addition, data show that inequalities are being reduced because attainment for children eligible for free school meals and those who live in the most deprived areas has increased significantly over the last year.
- Staff carry out thorough and detailed assessments of families' needs. They use tools such as the 'Early Help Assessment' to identify needs and match families to the most appropriate service. Staff also work particularly well with social care teams to support families whose children are subject to child protection plans or are identified as in need.
- Families have access to a wide range of effective and tailored support on a one-to-one basis as well as through group sessions. Parents provide examples of how as a result of the exceptional support they have received, they have been able to overcome significant problems caused, for example by the death of children, low levels of confidence, post

natal depression, financial problems and housing issues.

- The quality of adult learning on courses such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and parenting is good. Through these courses, parents develop good skills and knowledge and on accredited courses they gain qualifications. In addition, a significant number develop good skills and knowledge through volunteering. However, parents are not given enough advice and guidance about how they can progress from courses or volunteering into further education or employment.
- The group is making good progress towards meeting some of its health targets. Through the good work to promote breastfeeding and support mothers, breastfeeding rates are now broadly in line with the target set for the group. However the picture is more mixed for obesity rates. In areas such as those served by Sinfin and Boulton centres, rates are too high.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership, governance and management require improvement because performance monitoring arrangements are not effective enough. A 'performance wheel' which ensures key monitoring activities are carried out and a variety of action plans have been produced to drive improvement across the group. However, the local authority's annual conversation and the group's own self-evaluation processes do not provide leaders and managers with enough comparative data to ensure rigorous monitoring of performance.
- The computerised system used by the group to collect and record data about impact and performance is not effective enough. For example, it does not allow activities such as home visit work to be automatically included in data collated about use of services. As a result, it lacks the ability to easily and accurately reflect and track the impact of all aspects of the group's work.
- Governance arrangements through the local authority and the advisory board are well established. The representation of professionals from health, schools, Jobcentre Plus and other organisations on the advisory board is good. Through effective use of their local knowledge members of the board work in conjunction with the centres to plan how best to respond to local priorities.
- The group takes its responsibility for safeguarding seriously. Arrangements and policies to promote safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures are effective. Staff work very closely and effectively with social care teams to minimise the risk of harm to families. Safe working practices for staff are also very well promoted.
- The group has been highly effective in meeting the needs of one its key priority groups: families whose lives are affected by domestic abuse. As result of the high quality training they receive, women improve their understanding about the cycle of domestic abuse and learn how to reduce the risk of physical and emotional harm to themselves and their children. In addition, staff who specialise in domestic abuse training work with schools to provide early help and early intervention for girls who may be involved in, or at risk of entering, abusive relationships.

- Parents' views are valued and satisfaction surveys and 'suggestion boxes' are used appropriately to capture their views. However, the representation of parents on the advisory board is too low and the parents' forum is no longer running. As a result, there are too few opportunities for parents to become involved in key decision making about the centres' work.

- Resources are of a good quality and used appropriately across the locality to meet the needs of families. Staffing resources are adequate and supervision arrangements are well organised. However, the delivery of some services has been affected by the unexpected absences of staff due to sickness.

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.

Group details

Unique reference number	80254
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	447633
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	4,800
Centre leader	Sarah Goodman
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01332 715620
Email address	sarah.goodman@derby.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 20373 Boulton
- 20659 Chellaston
- 22730 Sinfen
- 23720 Alvaston
- 22274 Osmaston Allenton

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