

Revoe Children's Centre

Revoe Children's Centre, Grasmere Road, Blackpool, FY1 5HP

Inspection date 25–26 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
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:

- While an increasing number of families are participating regularly in children's centre activities, this is not yet the large majority. Centre data relating to the engagement of families, including identified target groups, lack clarity and interrogation. This prevents the centre developing and targeting its services more effectively, in order to secure the sustained contact of a larger number of families.
- Priorities set out in the centre's development plan are accurate but not all have measurable success criteria. It is therefore difficult for staff to demonstrate when they have been successful in meeting their targets across the whole range of work they undertake.
- The local authority has developed systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision offered to local children and families. However, these are not yet fully embedded and do not have a strong enough focus on the impact of the services provided.
- The progress children aged birth to two years make when they attend some children's centre activities is not recorded sufficiently well. Planning and delivery of activities for these children require improvement, including a focus on supporting parents to increase their understanding of their children's development so they can continue to encourage learning at home.
- Systems to track adults' progress in their learning, particularly when signposted to courses provided off-site, do not provide clear evidence of the centre's impact on increasing economic well-being.

This centre has the following strengths:

- The acting children's centre manager, ably supported by the local authority, advisory board and senior leaders from Revoe Primary School, has skilfully guided the children's centre through an extended period of reorganisation, while continually improving service delivery and the skills of the staff team. As a result, this centre has made significant improvements since the last inspection.
- There has been a clear, concerted drive to ensure the safety and well-being of all families and children in the centre's reach. The impact of this work is evident throughout the centre and, without exception, parents and partners commented on how safe they felt within the centre.
- The dedicated team of centre staff and family support workers provides much-needed support to some of the most vulnerable families in the community. This, combined with effective partnerships, has secured the engagement of some families who might otherwise have chosen not to participate.
- Overwhelmingly, parents and partners told inspectors how transformed the centre is compared to a year ago. 'It's so much more friendly and bright these days, there's a real buzz when you come in.'

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the acting children's centre manager, the assistant headteacher of Revoe Primary School and other members of the senior leadership team, family support workers, crèche workers, activity workers, outreach workers, officers from the local authority, representatives from adult learning and Jobcentre Plus, as well as partners from Blackpool Coastal Housing and Women's Aid. They also met health, education and early years partners, parents, childminders, volunteers and representatives of the advisory board. They looked at the centre's self-evaluation and delivery plan, a sample of case studies, safeguarding procedures and a range of other relevant documentation. Visits to activities were undertaken jointly with frontline staff and the assistant headteacher. A local authority representative also attended all team meetings.

Inspection team

Jayne Utting	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tara Street	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Revoe Children's Centre is located in Blackpool. The town is ranked the sixth most deprived authority in England and first for concentration of deprivation. Abuse and neglect represent the biggest need areas for safeguarding in this authority. The proportion of children in need under these categories is higher than seen elsewhere. The qualified skills base is low, with an estimated 17.8% of the working-age population having no formal qualifications. Most local families are from a White British background with around 9% of families representing a range of minority ethnic groups.

There are 10 children's centres across Blackpool. These are divided into North and South locality areas. Revoe is a stand-alone centre in the South locality. It has a reach of 810 children under the age of five years. The centre does not share services with any of the other four centres in this locality and has its own manager and advisory board. The advisory board feeds into Revoe Primary School's Interim Executive Board. The local authority commissions Revoe Primary School to deliver children's centre services.

Early years provision is provided through a number of early years settings, school nursery classes and childminders within the locality. Children generally enter early years provision with skills, knowledge and abilities that are below those expected for their age, especially in communication and language and personal, social and emotional development. The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above the national average. The primary school and nearby early years settings were not part of this inspection as they are inspected separately. The reports are available on the Ofsted website at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Improve access to services by young children and families by using available data more effectively to monitor, understand and inform engagement levels across the reach area and support the identification of families and particular target groups who are less likely to engage with centre services.
- Improve the quality and impact of provision for children aged birth to two years by:
 - continuing to develop staff's understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to improve the quality of their planning and teaching
 - supporting parents to better understand the links between activities and their children's development so that they are confident to support ongoing learning in their homes.
- Extend opportunities for adults, particularly those who are unemployed, to enhance their economic stability by implementing procedures to track and measure the progress adults make when they access courses or programmes outside the centre, and use these data to help plan future services.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, governance and management by:
 - continuing to improve the accuracy and use of data so that resources can be targeted more carefully and a more precise analysis of the centre's performance can be achieved
 - improving the centre's development plan so that all key priorities are precise, have measurable success criteria and contain well-informed targets
 - improving the quality of evaluation so it has a sharper focus on assessing the quality and impact of services.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Through a range of effective partnerships, particularly with health professionals, the large majority of families with children aged from birth to four living in the reach area are known to the centre. Leaders have an improving understanding of the needs of the community and are using this to plan and deliver a range of services. However, while the number of children and families engaging in activities is increasing, this is not yet the large majority.
- The quality of data held by the local authority has improved significantly since the last inspection. However, the accuracy and interpretation of some of these data require improvement, particularly in relation to establishing accurate baseline figures for target groups.
- As a result, the centre does not always use data sufficiently well to monitor participation levels across the reach area, including finding out why some target groups do not attend services or fail to participate regularly. This impacts on the centre's ability to securely demonstrate meaningful, sustained engagement in some activities.
- Through effective consultation and outreach work, centre staff are working with an increasing number of young parents and families from minority ethnic groups. The centre has been proactive in developing some strong partnerships at a local level. These include links with the local hostel, the Muslim community, Women's Aid and the Together Centre, which provides support for families with disabled children and children with additional needs. This has facilitated the engagement of an increasing number of dads, lone parents and families of disabled children.
- Centre staff are proactive at working with other agencies to promote a joined-up approach to family support work across the area. The Early Assessment Team ensures families at risk are quickly identified and offered support by the most appropriate agency. This, combined with representation on key strategic local groups such as multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs), has facilitated the engagement of an increasing number of families, including those experiencing domestic violence and low mood.
- All staff members within the children's centre, including the reception staff, crèche, activity and outreach workers and the senior leadership team have worked relentlessly to provide a warm, bright and welcoming feel to the centre. Parents told us this is why they want to come back and use services: 'We love coming here every week, the staff are great and I feel listened to.'
- The uptake of free entitlement to early education for three- and four-year olds is high at 96%. The centre has successfully supported parents of the large majority of two-year-olds from disadvantaged families to take up their free entitlement to early education.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- Well-qualified family support workers complete detailed assessments of families in most need, including those with children who have been subject to a child protection plan or a child in need plan. Assessments include comprehensive information from a range of agencies as well as parents' views.
- The quality of some universal children's centre activities for children aged birth to two years requires improvement. Staff do not always use their knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage well enough when planning and delivering sessions, nor is the progress made by children attending sufficiently evidenced. In addition, parents do not always gain a clear understanding of their role in supporting their children's learning and development.
- The senior leadership team have accurately identified communication and language as a key area for development. They have worked closely with colleagues to plan focused activities designed to improve the development of early communication skills. However, the number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year remains stubbornly below both the Blackpool and local authority average at 35%.
- Partnership working with midwives, health visitors and breastfeeding support workers (Star Buddies) has helped to ensure that breastfeeding rates are improving across the reach area at a faster rate

than for Blackpool as an authority. Activities with a clear focus on improving children's physical development, as well as basic cookery courses, have also contributed to a reduction in obesity rates in Reception-aged children.

- Good-quality parenting programmes are helping parents to develop positive relationships with their children and improve their skills in keeping them safe. One parent spoke powerfully about how the children's centre had listened to him when others would not, while others commented on how much behaviour had improved at home. 'I can enjoy my family again,' said one parent.
- Effective support is provided for parents and children who have experienced domestic violence. One-to-one counselling is offered, and those who are able to also attend group programmes that help improve their confidence as they take steps to move forward with their life.
- A range of family learning opportunities ensures that parents are able to participate in programmes that help to build confidence and develop literacy and numeracy skills. However, the centre does not always receive information about courses that individuals have completed outside the centre. This makes it difficult for leaders to track and measure accurately the longer-term impact for families in order to inform and influence ongoing planning.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- This children's centre has been through a period of significant change. Through the efficient use of resources, it has successfully improved the services it delivers, while simultaneously increasing the number of families accessing activities. Given the transient nature of the community it serves, this is testament to the quality of leadership, governance and management which continues to improve rapidly.
- The local authority, acting children's centre manager and senior leaders from the primary school have worked hard to implement an effective strategy for improvement, with a clear, renewed focus on ensuring children and families are kept safe. The newly appointed children's centre leader now has a solid foundation from which to improve further the quality and impact of this children's centre.
- The advisory board is highly supportive of the work of the centre and members have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. The confidence of the advisory board to offer challenge to centre leaders has been strengthened through training provided by the local authority.
- Priorities identified in the centre's development plan are accurate. However, the centre's ability to measure accurately the effectiveness of its work is hindered by a lack of specific measurable targets within this plan.
- Systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of centre activities, while thorough, do not focus sufficiently on impact. As a result, staff do not always identify key issues that might improve practice and engagement at a faster rate.
- The use of available data regarding the engagement of local families requires some further refinement to ensure that it better captures all meaningful contact by families in children's centre activities, including the participation of target groups. This restricts the centre's ability to both evidence and monitor its performance accurately and means that data are not currently being used as effectively as they could be to inform ongoing planning.
- Staff are well qualified and knowledgeable. Systems for supervision and continuous professional development are now established and staff say they feel well supported and more valued as a result. 'I feel part of it, I am listened to and my views are valued now,' said one staff member.
- The complementary work of partners is used well to support the key challenges of the area such as reducing domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse and the number of children at risk of harm. This ensures the efficient use of resources and prevents duplication.
- Duties relating to safeguarding are taken very seriously. Policies and procedures are thorough and the Continuous Assessment Framework is used appropriately to reduce levels of risk. All staff have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of procedures to keep children and families safe and

this is supported by regular training.

- Parents using the centre feel they are listened to and well supported by sensitive staff who are described as 'life-changing'. Parents feel that the centre is open to anyone in the area and new parents appreciate the support they have received, particularly from the dedicated team of parent volunteers.

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 well-being 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

Unique reference number	22497
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	443609
Managed by	Revoe Primary School on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	810
Centre leader	Sara McCartan
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2013
Telephone number	01253 798016
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