Sharston Sure Start
Children’s Centre

Poundswick Children’s Centre, Poundswick Lane, Sharston, Manchester, M22 9TA

Inspection dates

| Previous inspection date | 22–23 April 2015 |
|------------------------------------------------|
| Not previously inspected |

Overall effectiveness

<table>
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<tr>
<th>This inspection: Requires improvement</th>
<th>Previous inspection: Not previously inspected</th>
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Access to services by young children and families

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The quality of practice and services

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The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

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Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Not enough children and families from those groups that the centre has identified as in most need of support are regularly engaged in its activities.
- The centre does not have a robust system in place to track children’s progress and the gap in achievement between the majority of children and those in danger of falling behind is not closing rapidly enough.
- The centre has not succeeded in improving the proportion of mothers who sustain breastfeeding or in reducing obesity for young children.
- Data and management information provided by the local authority and used by the centre and its partners are not always sufficiently accurate or analysed in enough depth, particularly about families living in the area and key health information. As a result, leaders do not have the necessary information to set precise targets for improvement and to show the full impact of the centre’s work. This hinders sharper evaluation and monitoring by leaders and the advisory board to drive the centre forward.
- Parents are not sufficiently involved in developing the centre and they are not represented on the advisory board.

This centre has the following strengths:

- Parents feel welcomed, valued and speak highly of centre staff who treat them with respect. They consider the centre to be a safe place where they are able to drop in at any time for friendship and support.
- Good partnerships with a range of professionals enhance the centre’s provision and help ensure that families in need of extra support receive good care and guidance in a timely and consistent manner.
- Young parents benefit from a supportive atmosphere in which they learn good parenting skills and develop their confidence.
- Opportunities for parents to access courses and improve their basic skills, language and employability skills are good.
What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of those children and adults that the centre has identified as in most need of its support, who make regular use of its services.

- Improve the impact of centre practice and services for children and families by:
  - working with health partners to increase the number of mothers who sustain breastfeeding for at least six-to-eight weeks and reduce obesity levels in young children
  - improve tracking systems and partnership working with early years partners to monitor children’s progress and rapidly close the gap in achievement between the majority of children and those in danger of falling behind.

- The local authority should work more effectively with Barnardo’s, centre leaders, partners and the advisory board to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the centre’s work by:
  - ensuring that all data provided to the centre, particularly about families and children living in the area and key health information, are up to date, accurate and analysed in enough depth so that they give centre leaders a clear picture of the impact of services on families’ lives
  - establishing clear and measurable performance targets for all aspects of the centre’s work
  - involving parents more in shaping the services that the centre offers and ensuring their voices are heard at a strategic level 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 the Barnardo’s children’s services manager and team manager and local authority representatives. They also held meetings with centre staff, parents, members of the advisory board and a number of partners, including health, education and children’s social care professionals.

The inspectors visited a number of sessions including, ‘Inbetweenies’ and ‘Baby Registration’ sessions.

They observed the centre’s work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, such as the centre’s self-evaluation document, action plan, a sample of case studies, parent evaluations, key policies and the centre’s safeguarding procedures. Throughout the inspection they also took the opportunity to talk with adult and child users of the centre.

Inspection team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tara Street, Lead inspector</th>
<th>Additional Inspector</th>
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<td>Qaisra Shahraz Ahmad</td>
<td>Additional Inspector</td>
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Full report

Information about the centre

Sharston Sure Start Children’s Centre is a stand alone centre which covers the areas of Sharston, Peel Hall, Crossacres and Benchill South. It offers a range of services which include child health services, family play sessions, parenting programmes, adult learning and family outreach services.

There are approximately 871 children aged under five years living within the area, of whom 710 live in the 0-30% most deprived areas in the country. Most families served by the centre are of White British heritage with a small but growing South Asian, African and Eastern European community. Levels of unemployment are high, with 38.1% of children living in households dependent upon workless benefits. Most children enter early years provision with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age. There are three local primary schools in the area and childcare provision is delivered by a range of providers. These are subject to separate inspection arrangements and the reports are available on the Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted.

The centre has identified pregnant teenagers and teenage parents, workless households and children’s school readiness as those most in need of its support.

Governance of the centre has been provided by Barnardo’s on behalf of Manchester local authority since 1 April 2015. The centre has an advisory board that is shared with two other local children centres, that includes providers, delivery partners and members of the local community.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

- Most families from the area, including those living in the most deprived areas, are registered with the centre. However, the centre is not managing to engage and maintain contact with the large majority of these families, particularly those in workless households, young children getting ready for school, minority ethnic groups and those experiencing domestic violence.
- Information sharing between health partners has a positive impact on providing coordinated early support for children and families. For instance, the close partnership working with health partners and attendance at the baby registration clinic ensure that the centre knows about expectant mothers and all new births within the area. As a result, families’ individual needs are assessed quickly and appropriate packages of support put in place.
- The small number of families, who are identified as in need of support and referred to the centre for one-to-one help, engage well with outreach workers and partner agencies. For instance, young parents and pregnant teenagers benefit from outreach workers close liaison with the teen midwife, counselling service and Connexions. The centre works effectively with Lorna Lodge housing unit for young mums where they deliver ‘Stay and Play’ sessions and workshops such as ‘Food and Mood’ and ‘Sleep Well’.
- 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: ‘I look forward to coming to the centre and the staff are so supportive, I love it’, ‘I get lots of support and advice and it’s a safe, friendly place’, and, ‘Everything is much better now’. However, not enough families are currently benefiting from the services provided by the centre.
- The large majority of eligible two-year-olds, and most three- and four-year-olds access free nursery education. Centre staff carefully monitor the eligible two-year-olds who do not take up the offer and help these children to attend centre activities, which promotes their social and communication skills.
The quality of practice and services

- Families who access the centre’s services benefit from an appropriate range of activities, including those that are open to all and those which are specifically designed for those identified as most in need of support. However, the low numbers of some groups who have been identified as in need of support engaging with these services hinders the centre’s overall impact on reducing inequalities and improving life chances.
- The uptake of immunisations and child development checks is high, but not all of the centre’s health-related aspirations are met. In particular, the proportion of mothers who keep breastfeeding for at least six-to-eight weeks is reducing and is below both the local and national average. The number of children in Reception Year who are obese has increased. In addition, the lack of regular, up-to-date key health information prevents the centre from monitoring more effectively the impact of its work and responding more quickly to need.
- The centre works appropriately with local schools and some early years providers and is working to extend these links further. Overall, there is a trend of improvement in Early Years Foundation Stage profile scores across the area for the majority of children. However, the gap between the lowest achieving children, those on free school meals and the rest has increased and the centre is unable to demonstrate how it is helping to reverse this trend and get children better ready for school.
- Staff have recently begun to track and monitor the progress that a small number of children make when accessing centre 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.
- Outreach 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 good range of opportunities through one-to-one support in the home to extend their parenting skills and knowledge. Parents learn how to deal with issues such as safety in the home, domestic violence, mental health and managing their child’s behaviour, which has a positive impact on the course of family life.
- Families who use the centre have access to a good range of family and adult learning courses, including ‘Parent Survival’ courses, ‘English for Speakers of Other Languages’, basic English, mathematics and computer sessions. This effectively builds their confidence, raises aspirations and enhances their employment opportunities. The systems to track adults’ progress towards learning and employment provide clear evidence of the centre’s impact on increasing economic well-being.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

- Data and management information provided by the local authority and health partners about the engagement of some families identified as in most need of support and key health information are not always accurate, up to date or analysed robustly enough with partner agencies. As a result, leaders do not hold a sufficiently clear picture of the full impact of the centre’s work regarding the take-up of services and the improvements being made for the families who access them. This weakens the ability of the advisory board and the local authority to offer challenge regarding the centre’s ongoing performance.
- New centre leaders and the well-attended advisory board have an appropriate knowledge of most of the strengths and weaknesses of the centre, and the priorities for development. The local authority and Barnardo’s check on the centre’s performance appropriately through an annual review and ongoing monitoring of services throughout the year. However, precise, measurable performance targets are not always set by the local authority or by the centre in the action plan. This hampers leaders and advisory board members from robustly monitoring the impact of the centre’s services on reducing inequalities for children and families effectively and in ensuring further improvements.
- 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 gather a wide range of parents’ views on the quality of services or to ensure that their voices are heard on the advisory board.
The new management and staff team are well qualified, show enthusiasm and are highly committed to improving families’ well-being. They have begun to implement a number of new initiatives, such as starting a young parent group but it is too soon to see any impact.

Staff supervision is regular, supportive and leads to appropriate training. Leaders regularly monitor the quality and impact of services and take swift steps if they are not good enough. Resources are used to good effect to meet the needs of those families who attend regularly.

Good arrangements are in place to promote the safeguarding and welfare of children. Case files demonstrate that the Common Assessment Framework process and partnership working are effective. For example, staff effectively support those who are subject to a child protection plan, looked after children or who are identified as being in need to help to reduce safety concerns and improve families’ circumstances. ‘Outreach staff are amazing. They are very responsive and proactive’, and, ‘they get things done!’ are typical comments from partners about outreach staff.
What inspection judgements mean

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Judgement</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for children and their families and, as a result, inequalities are reducing rapidly and gaps are closing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Requires improvement</td>
<td>Performance is not as good as it might reasonably be expected to be in one or more key areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>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.</td>
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Children’s centre details

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<tr>
<th>Unique reference number</th>
<th>22678</th>
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<tr>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspection number</td>
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<td>Managed by</td>
<td>Barnardos on behalf of the local authority</td>
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Approximate number of children under five in the reach area: 871

Centre leader: Emma Hawley

Date of previous inspection: Not previously inspected

Telephone number: 0161 234 4716

Email address: emma.hawley@barnardos.org.uk
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