

Wiltshire – Chippenham Group of Children's Centres

The Rise Children's Centre, The Oaks, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 1DU

Inspection dates	26–27 November 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
Access to services by young children and families		Outstanding	1
The quality of practice and services		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for children and families

This group of children's centres is outstanding

- The fully committed and dedicated manager puts children and families at the heart of everything the group does. Staff find the manager's leadership inspirational and her passion for the work of the group contagious. The group is fully involved in strong partnership work across the area.
- Exceptionally high numbers of families are registered and engaging with the high quality sessions and programmes on offer. No one is turned away, which has resulted in a registration rate of 100%, and almost all families have engaged with the centres in the last year.
- The group has the highest ambitions for its families, although these are not always fully reflected in the targets set by the local authority. Managers and coordinators are tenacious in their work to develop families' skills and strengths. The results of this can be seen in the high proportion of adults that participate in courses and programmes with positive outcomes.
- There are over 100 volunteers working for The Rise Trust. Many parents and carers have become volunteers and some have progressed further to become members of staff within the group. In this way the group is raising the aspirations of the whole community.
- The centres are making an excellent contribution to children's learning and development in the area. The very large majority of eligible two-year-olds are taking up their entitlement to free early education places.
- Direct work with families is sensitive and effective, providing stability for many families experiencing crisis. Parents are highly positive about this support, including those whose children have additional needs. Sometimes the quality of the work undertaken with families is better than the quality of case recording, but the views of the parents and children are always recorded and considered.
- The leaders, managers and staff know the local community exceptionally well. Services adapt and change in order to meet local needs. For example, a satellite centre has been opened at a local school to ensure that families with the greatest needs have good access to services and some services are delivered in town centre venues as this is where the families naturally congregate.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

The local authority should:

- Ensure that partners in health and children’s social care share best practice in case file recording with outreach workers so that the quality of recording always reflects the quality of the family support work delivered.
- Work in partnership with the group to set bespoke targets, including further narrowing the achievement gap for children from the most deprived parts of Chippenham.

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, a seconded inspector and an additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the local authority and Chief Executive Officer of The Rise Trust, who is the group manager. They spoke to the service manager, centre coordinators and advisory board members. Inspectors also met many members of staff, parents and volunteers, as well as partners from the local community and education, health and children’s social care services.

The inspectors visited all three centres, as well as a children’s centre satellite base at Charter School, a local community hall and co-located early years provision.

The inspection covered the following centres: Kings Rise, Spring Rise and The Rise.

The inspectors observed the centre’s work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Penny Fisher, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Fiona Bridger-Wilkinson	Seconded Inspector
Penny Matthers	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the group

The group of children’s centres is led and managed by The Rise Trust on behalf of the local authority. It consists of The Rise, King’s Rise and Spring Rise Children’s Centres. The Rise Trust is a local Christian charity. There is one advisory board, known as the Super Advisory Board, which is chaired by a local parent.

The three centres became a group in the spring of 2013. The Chief Executive Officer and founder of the trust is the children’s centre group manager. Each centre has a centre coordinator, but all staff work across the three centres. Spring Rise was designated as a centre in 2006, The Rise in 2008 and King’s Rise in 2009. The centres offer a range of services, including health services, family play sessions, adult learning and family support.

Two of the three centres have been previously inspected. In July 2012, Spring Rise Children’s Centre was judged to be outstanding, and in January 2013 The Rise was also judged to be outstanding. All three centres are open full time and are linked to Rise Early Excellence Centres, which are inspected separately. Attached to the King’s Rise Children’s Centre is a satellite base at Charter School. The centres are linked to the local Frogwell, St Paul’s and King’s Lodge Primary Schools, but do not share leadership and governance with them. There are also after-school clubs and an opportunity group linked to the centres, which are managed and inspected separately. Inspection reports for these provisions and schools can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The group serves approximately 2,380 children under five and their families. The area is socially and economically diverse, with areas of some affluence and real deprivation located side by side, both within Chippenham itself and the surrounding area. The population is largely White British; only 6% of children in the reach area are from minority ethnic groups, which is slightly below the Wiltshire average. The reach area covers not only the town of Chippenham, but also the more rural villages of North Wiltshire. Although many of these are highly affluent and sought-after locations, there are some pockets of deprivation and hidden need. Children’s skills vary when the children start in early years provision and Reception classes in local schools.

The centres’ priority groups, as agreed with the local authority, are: teenage and young parents; vulnerable two-year-olds entitled to free early education; families experiencing domestic abuse; and families from minority ethnic groups. Underpinning all of the work of the group is a focus on those families from the most deprived parts of the area.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Outstanding

- Strategies to increase the number of families accessing services have been highly effective. The group works relentlessly to ensure that all of the families in the reach area are known to the centres, including those expecting children.
- Data show that the centres have engaged with 98% of families in the area within the last year. Effective agreements with health partners at a strategic level allow the sharing of new birth data and strong links with local midwives and the health visitors enhance the group’s ability to register all families. For example, health clinics held within all three centres ensure vulnerable families are identified and supported early.
- The centres have clearly defined priority groups that are identified using the latest local authority data and excellent knowledge of the local communities. Overall, 90% of families from these target groups are accessing services. This reflects the group’s tenacious work and strong reputation in the area. Improved information sharing regarding families known to children’s social care has also enhanced the group’s ability to target priority families. Staff are proactive in contacting social

workers to see if there is a role for the outreach workers in plans for these children.

- The young parents' pathway effectively identifies vulnerable expectant young mothers and ensures that almost all teenage and young parents are engaging with the group's services. The centre uses a range of relevant communications to keep in touch with families, including text messages and social media. The very large majority of lone parents are engaging with services across all three centres.
- In King's Rise and The Rise centres, most families from minority ethnic groups are engaging with services, and in Spring Rise 78% are engaging. The centres promote community cohesion well and are fully inclusive. Speakers of other languages access the Include group, which is a volunteer-led session that provides opportunities for parents to build meaningful and supportive friendships. Children are encouraged to celebrate their ability to speak a second language, which supports maintenance of the home language and, therefore, development in both languages.
- The proportion of two-year-olds that are taking up their entitlement to free early education is very high at 91%. However, the group is aiming higher than this and is currently out in the community ensuring that all eligible families are aware of their entitlement to this provision. Most children attend good or better settings, including some taking up places with good quality local childminders.
- The group is extremely proactive in taking services to communities, rather than waiting for them to come to centres. This has enabled priority families to access services more easily. For example, the development of a satellite centre and Early Excellence Centre at Charter School, one of the most deprived parts of the area, means that more families are now accessing sessions and programmes, as well as taking up local early education places.
- The staff are skilled in building and maintaining highly positive relationships with priority families, with many parents taking up opportunities to attend courses. The provision of a childminding scheme supports parents with child care, meaning they can access courses such as parenting programmes and focus fully on their learning.

The quality of practice and services

Outstanding

- The group is providing excellent opportunities for early years providers to meet together and share good practice. There is strong evidence of the effectiveness of the centres' work with vulnerable two-year-olds, whose progress is carefully tracked and monitored. Almost half of the funded two-year-olds in the area have made accelerated progress within the last year, which is highly positive.
- Results at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage improved in 2014 and are above county averages. Importantly, the proportion of children from the most deprived parts of Chippenham achieving a good level of development increased significantly in 2014 to above the county average. However, as found nationally, there remains a gap between these children's achievement and their more affluent peers in the area, although it is narrowing.
- Parents are empowered by the frequent opportunities provided to develop their parenting skills. Good numbers are not only starting parenting programmes, but completing them. All courses are evaluated fully to show the impact of the programme on parents' learning in both the short and longer term; data show high and improved levels of confidence in all aspects of parenting.
- Adults' learning and progression are central to the services provided. Good pathways are provided into a wide range of learning opportunities that engage parents over several years and lead to improved self-esteem and better life chances. Services are effective in developing confidence in readiness for work. A large majority of adults from priority families complete courses to improve their employment chances, which is highly positive.
- Parents that spoke to inspectors praised the non-judgemental and caring staff. They spoke of a new found confidence, for example to continue on to other courses; one parent described herself as 'thirsty' for more learning. There were many who spoke of how the centres had changed their lives and those of their children, including families that have experienced domestic abuse. Parents value feeling part of a 'family' at the centres.
- Sensitive and skilled outreach workers often take the lead professional role in joint and multi-agency team around the child work in the area, and are now working with children at primary school in order to ensure consistent support for the families. The staff work hard to engage families that need

their services most and improve parenting over a significant period. Common assessments are of good quality and lead to positive outcomes, such as improvements in children's behaviour.

- Family outreach worker files are well laid out, with generally comprehensive recording that includes the child and parent voice and evaluations of families' progress throughout. Files are reviewed and audited regularly. However, staff have not had the opportunity to share good practice in case recording and case management with health and children's social care partners, which would ensure greater consistency across all family support work in the area.
- There is a strong sense of community volunteering within the trust. Parents told inspectors of their willingness to give something back to the centres. Good systems are in place to recruit and retain the high numbers of volunteers who provide good and effective support for a wide range of families.
- The group's work is contributing well to the Healthy Child Programme. A very large majority of health outcomes in the area are at least in line with county averages. The proportion of mothers continuing to breastfeed their babies six to eight weeks after their birth is above the county average. Parents are provided with good information regarding health issues, and courses that help parents learn to cook healthy and economical meals are highly popular.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Outstanding

- The group manager is an inspirational leader; her high expectations and the highly supportive learning environment she has created result in a strong and reflective staff team. Staff find the manager's leadership style empowering and all staff demonstrate a real passion for enabling families to grow. Regular supervision, appraisals and observations of practice identify next steps for further improvement. Training opportunities, funded by the group, have been successfully taken up by the well-qualified staff team.
- Services continuously develop and evolve, reaching more priority families year on year. The trust has a track record of outstanding provision; two centres within the group have been previously judged to be outstanding. Staff have continued to build on this excellent practice following the move to three centres and the formation of a children centre group.
- The centres are seen as 'essential' services within their communities. Partners told inspectors, 'The benefits of the centres are felt across the town.' The centres take their services to the community to ensure families can access services easily. For example, good quality stay and play sessions are delivered at St Paul's Church Hall and the group makes use of facilities at a leisure centre in the town centre.
- The voice of parents is comprehensively gathered through regular consultations, informal parent forum groups and questionnaires. Therefore, parents play a full role in the design and delivery of services. Parents, including those with children with additional needs, feel valued, listened to and included. One parent summed up the feelings of many when she thanked the group for their support and 'being part of our challenges, frustrations and also the joys of parenting'.
- Parents are vital to the governance of the group. Many parents are members of the Super Advisory Board, which is also chaired by a parent. Parents' views are therefore pivotal to decision making and are driving improvements. The board is well informed regarding the group's work and priorities. One parent member of the board summed up the importance given to their role by saying, 'Without the parents there is no Rise.'
- The local authority has clear and comprehensive performance management processes in place. The annual conversation challenges the group's performance and results in group service targets. These are monitored effectively on a quarterly basis, but could be more sharply focused on driving further improvement for this high performing group. The group is on track to meet all of these targets and also sets its own more challenging targets, reflecting the drive towards continuous improvement.
- Outreach workers play a full role in supporting families with high levels of need, including those who are in care, subject to child protection plans and those in need. Likewise, the Common Assessment Framework processes are used well to provide highly effective early help.
- Policies and procedures to safeguard children all meet requirements. All staff are checked for suitability and have attended an excellent range of safeguarding training. Staff are fully aware of

when to make a referral and work effectively with social workers when children are the subject of child protection and child in need plans. Social workers are confident in the ability of outreach workers to safeguard families appropriately.

- Partnerships within the community are excellent and very well established. The group is well represented on local partnership and multi-agency forums. Partners from schools, health, children's social care and community groups praise this 'valuable resource', outlining successes such as increasing parents' understanding of the needs of their children and breaking down barriers to learning.
- The group makes excellent use of the skills of the parents that use services, as can be seen in the high numbers of volunteer and parent-led activities. Very good links with community groups mean that all opportunities for additional funding are taken up. For example, this year, a local charity is funding a young parent worker within the group. This excellent use of resources means that the group is able to sustain and grow services to meet the needs of target families.

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	80275
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	454814
Managed by	The Rise Trust on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2,380
Group leader	Pauline Monaghan
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as a group
Telephone number	01249 463040
Email address	paulinem@therisetrust.org

This group consists of the following children’s centres:

- 21678 King’s Rise
- 22488 Spring Rise
- 23249 The Rise

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