

Inspection report for Coin Street Family and Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Lambeth
Inspection number	366469
Inspection dates	25 – 26 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Joan Lindsay

Centre governance	Coin Street Community Builders
Centre leader	Jenny Deeks
Date of previous inspection	Not Applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not Applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Coin Street Family and Children's Centre EY357851

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Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

An inspection of the registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, senior leadership team, trustees, staff and representatives from the local authority. They also held meetings with partner agencies, including the health services, parents, carers and other users of the centre. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of documents, including key policies, the centre's development plan, user surveys and the centre's evaluation of its services.

Information about the centre

Coin Street Family and Children's Centre is situated in the diverse community of Waterloo, South Bank and Bankside, in the London Borough of Lambeth. It is managed by the Coin Street Centre Trust under the umbrella of Coin Street Community Builders. Since 2007, it has been based in the purpose-built Coin Street neighbourhood centre. The area it serves is very varied due to its central London location. There are many prestigious business and cultural organisations but also a high level of social housing and significant deprivation. The centre's reach area also includes parts of the London Borough of Southwark and is very culturally diverse with 25 different home languages spoken in the area. Two of the three Super Output Areas covered by the centre are ranked among the most deprived in the country with the third being in the top 30%. There is a very high rate of teenage conceptions, high levels of obesity among children, low literacy rate among adults and a significant proportion of children living in workless households.

The centre has developed around the 64 place day-care nursery and also offers family support programmes such as in childcare and helping adults return to work,

and a range of health services in conjunction with local partners. There is also an outreach programme aimed at encouraging 'hard to reach' families to access services that include an employment and training service.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management

1

Main findings

Coin Street Family and Children's Centre is outstanding. The centre is highly effective in improving the lives of the increasing number and diversity of families who use it. The outreach work that is taking place is excellent, as is the partnership with health services. The Head of Centre, who has been in post for less than a year, has had a significant impact on the way services are integrated and expanded, to the great benefit of the users. Trustees are very proactive in the management of the centre and they share the vision for improvement, along with all layers of staff. There is a palpable sense of commitment from all levels of management including the parent forum and advisory board, to continue to improve and extend what is on offer to a wider field. Equality and diversity are, as one trustee stated, 'core principles that migrate all the way down' and drive improvement. This, plus a lack of complacency, leads to there being an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

Safeguarding procedures are outstanding and permeate through the centre. The way the centre works in partnership with others is also excellent. It has been particularly beneficial in helping parents return to work and in health care provided as midwives and other health professionals work from the centre. The work and support that the centre gives to the most vulnerable families are exemplary, especially when they find themselves in times of crisis. This is based on the excellent assessment of individual needs. However, an area of relative weakness is the centre's current lack of extensive data about the wider area as the two local authorities it serves do not yet have all the information and what they do have is presented in very different formats. The centre is now developing its own method of capturing the information. A consequence of this is that, while evaluation of the centre's work is good, it is not outstanding as there is not the information available to carry out a highly specific analysis. In addition, the centre development plan targets are not specific or quantifiable enough to measure impact in depth.

Those who use the centre are extremely satisfied with what it has to offer and feel they have a real voice in developing the services to meet their needs.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Establish methods of obtaining relevant data to supplement that provided by the local authorities and primary care trusts to enable development targets to be measurable and time-specific.

How good are outcomes for users?

1

The centre is doing much to establish healthy lifestyles for centre users through specific programmes such as 'Cook N Eat' and facilitating access to health care professionals to encourage and sustain breastfeeding. Well-attended family support courses have a strong focus on healthy lifestyles. However, programmes to help with stopping smoking have only just been established and there are, as yet, no facilities for users to purchase healthy snacks in the building.

Adults and children are kept very safe when at the centre through tight security at the entrance and strong staff awareness. The children who are most vulnerable and those who have child protection plans are very well monitored and supported. The Common Assessment Framework is used well to identify needs and to monitor support and their progress. The centre can point to notable successes where parents have been encouraged and funded to access services such as the nursery which has led to very rapid progress being made in the way children develop their basic skills and personal development. Paediatric first aid is included in the well-attended parenting skills course for new mothers run by midwives.

Children and adults show very high levels of enjoyment of the wide range of activities available to them. The centre has been particularly successful in supporting dads and male carers with 'Saturday Stay and Play' sessions and a dads' group. This has led to children enjoying a wide range of activities with their fathers/carers such as camping, seaside visits and also experiencing exciting activities on their doorstep such as the London Eye. One father stated, 'It's been so good to have somewhere to bring the kids at the weekend and to meet other dads.' Parents report that the high level of support they have received has helped them with their parenting skills so that children's social and emotional development is much enhanced and children behave well. Educationally, the percentage of children who achieve 78 points or more at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been improving year on year.

Very positive relationships are prevalent throughout the centre. Parents who were initially very hesitant to access the facilities are now its most vocal ambassadors and

make a very strong contribution to decision-making through the parents' forum, working parents' group and dads' and male carers' group.

One of the centre's many strengths is the adult training, support and advice to enable them to return to work. Working extremely well with other partners such as the National Theatre, parents are given the confidence to retrain or re-enter the job market. Parents with low levels of literacy or who speak English as an additional language have their skills improved through highly effective courses. Their achievements are celebrated very well, further enhancing their confidence. There are many notable successes due to the high quality advice and guidance given by the centre's staff.

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	1
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	1
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	1

How good is the provision?

1

The centre assesses the needs of the community well and the excellent outreach work is fundamental to this. Common Assessment Frameworks are regularly reviewed and staff have a highly detailed knowledge and understanding of the centre users and their families. However, the centre is hampered to some extent by the lack of statistical information from the two local London boroughs it serves and from the primary care trusts, to enable it to make finally honed assessments of the needs of the wider area.

Very well run programmes, some targeted at the most vulnerable users, have had excellent outcomes in encouraging them in their educational and personal development and their parenting skills. Those spoken to say they have gained very helpful knowledge in relation to breastfeeding and how to cope with their children's behaviour. They feel less isolated and very much part of a community now.

There is a good range of services meeting the needs of the wider community and the centre is very reactive to suggestions from users. The centre has improved the number of contacts with lone parents, fathers and minority ethnic groups

substantially in the past year. However, without accurate and user-friendly information about the immediate locale, the centre has been slower to meet the needs of more specific groups such as smokers and teenage parents. Both areas are now being addressed. Parents and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although few in number, are very well supported and fully included in the centre.

The quality of care, guidance and support for families is exceptional. The impact of the family, parenting support and outreach work is outstanding. The addition of another member of staff in this area means that the centre can now reach further afield and target more vulnerable and deprived groups. Since the start of the year, an additional 25 contacts have been made as a result of outreach work. Excellent relationships with staff enable parents to have a very high degree of trust in them, turning to them in times of crisis. Home visiting and perseverance have led to more families accessing the centre and gaining significantly from it. Midwives and health visitors are also highly effective in the support that they give.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	1
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

Governance and management of the centre are outstanding and key to the centre's excellent capacity to improve even further. The more effectively joined-up nature of the way the centre is run has had a significant impact on the outcomes for users. The trustees are very proactive in the management of the centre. Their high levels of skill, experience and passion for the work of the centre mean that they can be challenging and proactive. The advisory board represents the users and partners to a high degree and as such its views are highly regarded and acted upon by the trustees and management. The centre benefits greatly from sharing the building, expertise and community programmes of the Coin Street Community Builders. Senior leaders have very high expectations of staff that are shared with them and with the centre's many partners. However, the development plan does not yet fully reflect those expectations, largely due to a lack of useful data to enable targets to be more specific and measurable. This has been recognised as a relative weakness by the centre which is now in the process of implementing its own data collection and analysis.

Resources are managed very effectively. Activities are costed carefully and evaluated according to their success so that the centre provides good value for money. For

example, the 'Saturday Stay and Play' is an expensive programme to run but is considered very valuable in improving access for fathers and working parents and helping their parenting skills in the process.

Equality and eliminating discrimination are at the core of the centre's work. The centre responds swiftly to any concerns, such as when a parent felt another was being racist. Staff responded immediately and effectively so that there was a greater level of understanding and parents continued to attend thereby benefiting from what the centre offers. Some previously hard to reach groups, such as the Bengali community, have been encouraged to come to the centre as a result of strong partnership work with health services and the highly effective outreach work on local housing estates and schools. The modern and bright building is completely accessible for wheelchair users and children and adults with disabilities are fully included and well supported.

Safeguarding is paramount in the centre. There are very robust procedures and continually reviewed records are kept of everyone connected to its work. Trustees play a highly important monitoring role in this aspect. Staff training is extensive with all staff trained to at least Level 1 and several staff trained to Level 2 in safeguarding. Early notification of any child protection concerns leads to swift action that is recorded in the centre's confidential files. Staff who work with children and vulnerable adults are extremely watchful and alert to concerns and are very clear about procedures.

Self-evaluation is accurate although at times over-modest as the centre's management is far from complacent. Views of users are continually taken into account gathered from parents' forum meetings, the advisory board and through 'feedback fortnight' surveys. Changes are made as a result of evaluation, for example the time and day of a 'Stay and Play' session was changed to target more vulnerable and needy families. However, evaluation has been limited to some extent by the lack of in-depth data about the user groups which means it has been more difficult to accurately measure impact.

Partnerships with other agencies are outstanding and reflect the hard work centre staff have put in to meet the needs of users. For example, health visitors, midwives, a nutritionist and links with childminders have all contributed greatly to the outcomes for users of the centre. Antenatal appointments now take place in the centre five days a week as a new health suite has been opened. Outreach work in a local school means that parents get a taste of what the centre can offer and joint ventures take place to encourage more usage of the centre. Parents new to the school are visited by Coin Street staff. Local businesses support the centre very well, providing opportunities for users to visit the theatre, exhibitions and get involved in the rich heritage on their doorstep.

The community is constantly encouraged to engage with the services offered through high quality leaflets delivered to each household, through the highly effective outreach and through being signposted and referred by local health organisations.

Satisfaction levels are very high. For example, of the many users spoken to informally and formally during the inspection, there was nothing but praise and gratitude for the services offered and the support given. Many users had been given a sense of self-worth and confidence that had been absent before and this is having a very positive impact on their relationships with their children and hopes for the future.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	1
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	1
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	1

Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The inspection of the early years and childcare provision in the nursery was carried out immediately before the inspection of the children's centre. Findings from this inspection have contributed to the children's centre report and judgements on outcomes for users and the effectiveness of the provision.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Coin Street Family and Children's Centre on 25 and 26 January 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding.

During our visit we looked at the centre's plans for development and numerous other documents, we spoke to a very wide range of partners working with the centre, visited some of the activities and spoke to members of staff and those who manage the centre. Those of you who spoke to us were unanimous in your praise for the centre and especially how it had helped you grow in confidence in various aspects but in particular in the way you parent your children.

Many of you were especially positive about the outreach work done from the centre and described how its perseverance eventually tempted you in and so enabled you to access a wealth of support, advice and guidance. This had led some of you to work opportunities and to a greater involvement in the running and management of the centre. Your parenting skills and knowledge of how to keep your children safe and healthy have also benefited greatly.

There is a great sense of team work and professionalism among all the staff and managers of the centre and although the Head of Centre has been in post for less than a year, she has already had a very strong impact on the way the centre is run. Partnerships are excellent and so you can access the expertise of midwives, health visitors and employment advisers in the wonderful building in the heart of your community.

Everyone in the centre has safeguarding at the heart of what they do and so your children are very safe there. Policies, procedures and risk assessments are very robust. The very high levels of care, guidance and support that staff give, especially to those whose needs are greatest, are very effective because staff know everyone and their particular problems well and can quickly access the right support.

To help the centre improve even more we have asked that leaders work on obtaining more detailed information about the different groups in the local area so it can support them and recognise how the centre is helping all its users so that targets can be set and measured accurately so the centre's work improves even more.

Thank you very much for contributing to the inspection by being willing to give your time to talk to us and express your wholeheartedly positive views.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.