

# Inspection report for St Cuthbert with St Matthias Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
<b>Inspection number</b>	365848
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Vale

<b>Centre governance</b>	The Student Welfare Committee of the Governing Body of St Cuthbert with St Matthias CE primary School
<b>Centre leader</b>	Stephen Boatright
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	St Cuthbert with St Matthias CE Primary School
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Chelsea Open Air Nursery and Children's Centre, Cheyne Children's Centre, Violet Melchett Children's Centre

The inspection of this Sure Start children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

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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 co-located primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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

The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the senior leaders, representatives from the local authority and many partner agencies, including a wide range of health service workers and linked organisations. A meeting was held with the Student Welfare Committee (governing body). Inspectors met with parents, child minders, and other users of the centre. They visited child care, for example 'play and stay', and other services on different linked sites. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of documentation, including evaluations of services, safeguarding policies and procedures, case studies, other records, development plans and the local authority's locality evaluation form.

## Information about the centre

The centre was first designated in 2010 and since January 2011, St Cuthbert with St Matthias Children's Centre has worked with three other children's centres in a locality model to deliver the full core offer for the south of the borough. In reality, the centre has only been within the new building extension for a year and thus only been offering the full range of services for a year. This area of London has high levels of wealth alongside pockets of poverty. The locality includes areas that are among the 30% most deprived nationally. Around a quarter of the children in the borough are considered to be living in income-deprived households, many of whom are within the reach area of this centre. The overall unemployment rate is above average. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the locality with skills generally below the level expected for their age. The large majority of the population are Arabic speakers or from other White heritages, with the remainder a mix of different ethnicities.

The centre is situated in the heart of Earls Court. It includes St Cuthbert with St Matthias CE Primary School, inspected and reported on separately from this inspection. Most of the childcare is provided in other locality centres. The after-school and holiday play centre held here is registered separately and was not part of this inspection.

The centre meets all elements of the core offer, which include integrated childcare, health services, family support and outreach along with a wide range of other services such as:

- child minder drop-ins
- fathers' group sessions and Saturday morning sessions
- parenting courses
- healthy living
- health clinics
- breastfeeding advice and support
- family support which also links to housing, debt advice
- school application support
- behaviour support
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- teenage mothers support, 'Break 4 You'.

A committee of members from the school's governing body, known as the Student Welfare Committee, make up the governing body for this centre. However, the local authority has retained governance of the locality model and convened a locality group to oversee the centres collectively. The senior leadership team includes the headteacher from the linked primary school and the other three heads and leaders from the children centres to which this centre is linked.

## 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

The centre is outstanding. This is because, along with its link partners, it is improving the outcomes for families and their children exceptionally well. As one mother

explained, 'I call them (staff at the centre) my family because they really focus on you.' The warm welcoming atmosphere greets all who enter and the centre is highly inclusive.

There are a wide range of services, activities, and courses available and the small but well-organised accommodation is extremely well used. In the short time that it has been fully open, the demand for the centre's services are such that no room is ever left 'empty!' Excellent organisation on a day-to-day basis ensures that the facilities are utilised extremely well. Safeguarding is paramount and central to all that the centre does. The centre is always busy; whichever corner you turn around, there is something going on supporting families and their children. This is extremely positive but in turn it is causing its own problems in that the centre and its users are outgrowing the present management structure which is in place.

A strength of this centre is the way that its staff reach and support those families who are, for whatever reason, more isolated. Not only do they support and help those families with individual needs but they make outstanding links with other partners and services in the community. Users are overwhelmingly positive about the centre. They are particularly appreciative of the family outreach work available for them. 'They are always there for you, whenever you call nothing is too much trouble' is a typical comment from parents about the support they have received. Leaders and managers, however, are not complacent; they continuously strive to reach more families and to target support where it is most needed. Staff make a real difference to families in times of crisis by taking action, offering a listening ear and supporting parents in finding those services which will be able to help them best. This in turn has a highly positive effect in helping children in their health, social, emotional, physical and learning development. Staff constantly review what is on offer and are not afraid to change and adapt what they are doing in order to meet the ever-changing requirements of those who use the centre. Along with this regular review of what they are doing, supported by the local authority's 'big picture' overview, the close links created between the centres through the work of senior leader team really support and enhance the services which are on offer. Senior leaders, along with frontline workers, consistently follow up leads with both families and individuals in order to ensure that they are doing all they can to reduce any inequalities in the help provided. Services are extremely well coordinated, both within the centre and across its locality and other centres, positively promoting healthy lifestyles, family support and learning. This is a major reason why the centre has outstanding capacity to continue to improve. Whilst governance from the school committee is good and well supported by the senior leaders and local authority, it does not truly reflect the centre's users, nor has it established its own self-evaluation of the centre, as it is reliant on the local authority locality evaluation. All involved are well aware of this and plans are in place to review and refine this in the future as the centre goes from strength to strength.

## What does the centre need to do to improve further?

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Review the structure and make-up of the governing body so that it not only more closely reflects the centre's users but also ensures that the role of the governors is more clearly defined within the local authority's locality model.
- In order to fulfil the increasing demands on the centre, establish its own independent management structure, to include a self-evaluation form which reflects the individuality of the centre itself.

## How good are outcomes for users?

<b>1</b>
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The centre and its link partners are having a highly effective impact on improving outcomes for families. The promotion of healthy lifestyles and the support that is given to the emotional well-being of its users are central to all services. Health professionals such as midwives and health visitors deliver services and clinics directly from the centre. Parents really appreciate this as, for some, it has been difficult in the past to get to other surgeries and consequently they have missed appointments. The centre has offered outstanding support to promote breastfeeding. One mother told of the difficulties she had breastfeeding her last baby. Through the links with the centre, she was offered breast feeding support; this in turn led to her taking a qualification in becoming a breastfeeding counsellor and now she is supporting other mothers in any difficulties which they may be having. This is excellent practice. The percentage of mothers in the locality who are still breastfeeding after six weeks is exceptionally high compared to the rest of the United Kingdom and is in no small part due to the excellent support they receive. Other parents and carers spoke of how they now have a much better understanding of what constitutes a 'healthy' meal for their children and their families as they have attended sessions on healthy eating and cookery clubs. Centre users also commented on how much better informed they are on safety and how to keep their children safe. In a link centre, parents are offered high quality safety equipment at cost price.

All services within the centre ensure that families stay safe. Families have outstanding positive relationships with staff. As one young parent commented, 'Day or night she's (family support worker) always got time for me, I couldn't cope without her.' Staff know the families they support well and, at any one time, up to 60 families and their children are being supported. Case study evidence shows that parents have access to high quality parenting courses which help them with everything from behaviour management issues to improving the relationships they have with their children and within families. Some parents were quite emotional in expressing their gratitude for the help they have received. Sleep clinics are exceptionally popular and a real strength of support.

The centre believes very strongly in early intervention in order to ensure that

children are protected and families given the right help and support for their individual needs. Looked-after children and those known to social services and those involved with a Common Assessment Framework are looked after very well. Parents stated that they feel safe within the centre itself and they are very appreciative of the crèche, where they feel their children are safe as well. There is currently little involvement from the users of the centre in its governance but their views and opinions are listened to and acted upon.

Although there is no direct child care at the centre, parents do use the crèche when they attend ESOL classes, parenting classes and other services and learning sessions. The children in the crèche benefit from a wide range of stimulating play experiences, and quickly develop positive relationships with their carers. Educational courses for adults are of good quality, with increasing success rates in improving levels of literacy, numeracy, spoken English and routes into further education and employment. Many users having successfully completed Level 1 and are eagerly moving on to Level 2. Because of the newly opened crèche facility, the ESOL and adult learning classes are extremely popular; 'Without the crèche, I would not be able to come and learn English and learn new things' is a typical comment. The centre, in conjunction with the local library, has its own 'miniature' library where parents and carers can borrow books on a weekly basis. This is proving very popular as it means that parents in the locality do not have to catch a bus to get to the library. It is having a positive effect on developing young children's early love of books. One mother said that she had noticed that because of this facility, which she uses weekly, her second child was much more motivated and advanced in her language skills than her eldest child.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

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

## How good is the provision?

<b>1</b>
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Outstanding multi-agency working and integration of services ensure that there is close liaison between all professionals. Excellent signposting endeavours to pass on, and to find, relevant support and information. All involved as one parent commented are, as one parent commented, 'just like one big family'. Assessments of users are very comprehensive and well documented, and confidentiality is paramount. These often detailed plans for support are regularly evaluated with regard to how the users are progressing. Exceptional care, guidance and support are seen in the regular phone calls to 'see how things are going', to follow up something or just to 'say hello'. The case studies seen reflect some exemplary practice. Not only is the centre there for emotional support but also for practical help. One disabled father explained how the centre has helped him to become mobile again through signposting him to where he could get help. He had not been out of his flat for several months before getting his mobility scooter. As he told the inspectors, 'Without the support of the centre, getting me mobile I would not be able to get my son into school, now I can take him myself every morning.'

The range of services and activities are wide ranging and successfully reflect the needs of the users. There is confidential guidance to help those who have suffered domestic violence. Other support includes help with housing needs, or guidance for parents to get back into work. Targeted support helps to ensure that all families are included. The number of teenage pregnancies in the locality is falling. This reflects the excellent outreach work that has been happening to support the falling numbers. A group known as 'Break 4 you', specifically for teenage mothers, is having some excellent success in enabling these mothers to continue in gaining qualifications. For example, one has moved on to a midwifery course following the educational support she has received. This has a positive impact on both her and her child's emotional health. The needs of one-parent families are also very carefully planned for. A number of mothers spoke about being sad and feeling unable to cope with parenthood when they first join the centre. They soon benefit from being at the centre or having home visits, so that, in their own words, they 'have grown in confidence', saying 'I know I can do it now.' Many have been signposted effectively to other services. The outstanding regular childminder drop-in group enable childminders to meet together and to share best practice.

Several users commented on the excellent home visits which they have received, including toy loans and book loans to support their children's development. A number also talked about how less isolated they feel following these visits. Not only are they visited at home but the care and support goes beyond this. Trips out have been organised and whole families can develop their knowledge and skills through family outings together. One father commented how beneficial he has found these trips; 'The trip to the zoo created new horizons for our family as isolated life can be very boring.'



These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

<b>1</b>
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The headteacher's commitment to develop and to support the continuous growth of the children's centre is notable, given an already heavy work load. The amount of services, including multi-agency co-operation it provides, is expanding as it meets the ever-increasing needs and demands of its users. All concerned are aware and have plans to review the management structure in the light of the success of the centre. A considerable amount of time by both governors and the headteacher has been designated to ensuring that the new building for the St Matthias centre, although small, is well designed and resourced extremely well to meet these needs. The centre has no individual self-evaluation form; this is incorporated within the south locality model, which the local authority has provided for all the children's centres in the locality. Whilst this is useful and holds relevant information, it does not pertain to the particular individuality of each individual centre and their clients. This does not, however, stop each service group or activity continuously reviewing and assessing their performances to a very high standard and reflecting on and altering what they offer accordingly.

All involved in the centre have the highest aspirations to ensure the very best for the centre users and for the wider community. The centre's development plan currently is within the school's development plan; it is clearly focused, and accurate. Safeguarding is given a high priority. Policies related to safeguarding are good. Staff are well trained in child protection arrangements and there are rigorous procedures for vetting staff, safer recruitment and volunteers. Staff training is given a high priority. Staff are highly sensitive to the trauma of domestic violence and its victims' needs, and are highly supportive.

There are excellent and clear structures and systems in place for sharing information between different agencies in order to keep children safe. Risk assessments are robust.

Equality and diversity are supported extremely well throughout the centre. The inclusion of all is at the heart of all that the centre does and achieves. The centre

recognised that there are increasing numbers of users who are new to learning English and so has increased the number of English Language classes on offer. These are very popular and successful and make a significant contribution to improving the language development of the whole family. The centre is working hard to increase children's (and their families') language and literacy skills. This is effective. The Early Years Foundation stage data shows that the gap is narrowing and this area of development is improving. Children with disabilities are catered for well in a purpose-built centre in another part of the local authority. No children are excluded if their parents cannot get them there, and transport is provided.

The local authority keeps detailed analysis of data relating to the centre and the numbers of families it continues to reach. This shows the outstanding improvement made in many areas and is why the centre gives excellent value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected St Cuthbert with St Matthias Children's Centre on 29–30 June 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall and we know that those parents and carers and staff to whom we spoke and who use the centre agree.

We are very grateful to you for all your time and help in coming in to visit us and for spending time talking to us. We really appreciated also those of you who translated for us so that we could get the views and opinions of all of you, including those who are not so fluent in English. All of you said how much the centre helps you, your families and your children. We were genuinely moved by some of your stories and the trust and close relationships that have been built up between you and some of the staff. Health visitors, midwives and family support and outreach teams were all praised for the way in which they help you to make improvements in your lifestyles and to improve the health and emotional welfare of your families. If they are unable to help you themselves, you said they are very good at putting you in touch with other organisations or agencies that can help you. Some of you told us how the centre has helped you in getting out and about, even just in leaving your homes and helping to get you to the shops. You talked about how staff both here and across the other centres have helped you in sorting out financial difficulties or helping you into training or to find a job. Most of all, many of you mentioned how the parenting classes have really helped you in your relationships with your children, in the sleeping classes and, in particular, in dealing with your children's behaviour.

The centre is a safe and secure environment for you and your children. All the staff are very good at, and very well trained in, signposting you to other services or activities they believe will be helpful. Many of you spoke very highly about the ESOL classes, which are very popular, and even more so now that you can leave your children in the crèche.

The senior staff lead and manage the centre very well. But, as it continues to grow, we have asked them to review the way that the centre is managed so that it not only more fully represents your views but also continues to grow and blossom.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).