

Inspection report for Stanley Park Children's Centre

Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	366406
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Centre leader	Fiona Lee
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Stanley Park Infants School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Stanley Park Play Safe Club EY287344

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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 49 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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with representatives from a range of partner agencies, frontline staff, the local authority and the centre's governing sub-committee. They spoke to centre users formally and informally. They observed the centre's work, visited a number of groups, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Stanley Park Children's Centre is a phase two centre which was designated in 2008. It is based on the site of Stanley Park Infants School. The Head of Centre, with overall responsibility for the centre, is also headteacher of the school. The centre opens for 48 weeks of the year, Mondays to Thursdays from 9am to 5pm and Fridays from 9am to 4pm. It is also open some Saturday mornings and at other times by negotiation. The building is fully wheelchair accessible. There is an outdoor area which children can access all year round.

A sub-committee is responsible for the centre's work. This is part of, and reports to, the school's governing body. The centre manager is responsible for day-to-day management and is accountable to the Head of Centre.

The majority of services operate directly from the centre, with a few groups running in local community buildings. Some of the services are offered in partnership with other organisations. Health partners also run clinics from the centre. An out-of-school club, run by a private provider, operates from within the school building.

The centre’s catchment area is mixed in terms of deprivation. The number of children under five living in workless households and those in receipt of Working Families’ Tax Credit are both below the national averages. The local population consists of 90% White British families, with 10% from other ethnic groups. Most children enter early years provision with a range of skills and abilities expected for their age. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, around 76% of children achieve at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is slightly below the national average.

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 families

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

Stanley Park Children’s Centre makes an overall satisfactory contribution to improving outcomes for families. It has some good features, including management and staff, who work effectively together to establish an accessible and well-respected centre. Groups run at the centre are well attended.

Staff are committed to meeting the needs of the majority of the families who access the centre. Centre staff are encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills through access to training. Staff form good links with partner organisations, particularly with health colleagues. The provision of baby-related clinics at the centre strengthens these links and provides an opportunity for families to view what is on offer at the centre. The centre is committed to building closer links with social care colleagues.

While the staff welcome all parts of the community, this is not fully reflected in the environment, resources and literature. Information about the centre is only available in English and is not reflective of the wide range of different languages of families who use or may use it.

Safeguarding is a priority and safer recruitment procedures are in place. Policies in relation to safeguarding have been linked with the school policy but procedures for reporting concerns in the absence of school staff are not clear. Outreach work and links with other organisations have a positive impact on families, for example through support with managing children’s behaviour and housing issues. However,

information available to the centre to target support at families most in need is not always shared with centre staff. Staff use local knowledge to effectively support families in times of need.

The centre provides a range of universal and targeted services. The targeted services are clearly focused on improving outcomes, including for users suffering from post-natal depression and those with disabled children. However, some universal services are not always as well focused.

The centre seeks the views of families through a range of methods, including the newly formed parents' forum. Although the views of families are obtained, changes to services as a result are not always communicated to them and there are missed opportunities to seek the views of hard-to-reach families. Staff complete evaluations about their groups and there are wider evaluations of services. The centre's self-evaluation provides a satisfactory picture of its work. There are some appropriate links between the centre's self-evaluation and its service development plan. However, weaknesses mean that services are not always sufficiently targeted, for example at the Tamil community. Data available from the local authority are not always sufficiently used and in some areas there is a lack of challenging targets. The centre engages with some of its target groups, including families with disabled children and teenage parents, however the rigour with which it tries to engage different target groups varies. Planning is not always closely linked to improving outcomes. These weaknesses mean that overall, the centre has satisfactory capacity to develop further.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Strengthen equality and diversity across the centre, ensuring information promotes understanding and is reflective of the diversity of families in the community.
- Strengthen the self-evaluation process by using data more effectively, setting clear target measures, providing clear links with the service development plan and involving others in the process.
- Develop systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of services, ensuring that they are targeted at those most in need of intervention and support and are having a positive impact on improving outcomes.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

In some areas the centre has a positive impact on improving outcomes for families, however this is not consistent across all outcome areas. The promotion of healthy lifestyles and supporting emotional well-being are high priorities. Midwives and health visitors run clinics at the centre where an extensive range of health-related

information is available. Target groups, such as those to support mothers with post-natal support, have been run in response to the centre identifying a specific need. Families develop a greater understanding of healthy eating through groups such as 'Big Cook Little Cook'. The centre provides healthy snacks for children and, as a result, parents report that their children are willing to try new foods. Breastfeeding rates are good and improving. Some mothers benefit from the breastfeeding peer supporters who offer practical support and advice with feeding issues. Baby massage sessions allow families to spend time together and evaluations show that parents build better bonds with their children as a result. The open access between the playroom and the garden encourages children to be physically active. The provision of a large canopy means that children benefit from using this area all year round. Data indicate that obesity levels in the reach area are reducing.

Promoting the safety of families is a priority. Families have positive relationships with staff, who are approachable and friendly. Parents commented to inspectors that, 'Staff truly have passion for their job' and 'They know you and your child by name.' Staff act as good role models for parents and carers. Case study evidence shows that structured parenting classes help parents to improve their relationships with their children. Early intervention strategies and good links with the outreach service and Early Intervention and Prevention Service (EIPS) ensure children are protected effectively against harm. Parents report that they feel safe when accessing services. The centre is involved with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for families who may need extra support, and case studies indicate that families benefit from this support, with both short- and long-term benefits. The centre works closely with the EIPS workers to support families from target groups and those most in need of support, including undertaking joint visits and supporting families in accessing the centre.

Activities at the centre are popular and families enthusiastically engage with and enjoy the activities. As one parent commented, 'The activities are amazing.' Parents develop knowledge through contributing to their children's learning journals and through displays about the Early Years Foundation Stage. Groups such as the Stanley Park Understanding Development Group provide parents with practical information about activities they can continue at home with their children. These activities ensure that children are well prepared for nursery and school and the impact can be seen through improving Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) scores. Data indicate that profile scores are increasing year on year.

Families have some opportunity to feed back on the work of the centre, including via annual satisfaction surveys. The centre has identified as a priority the need to involve users more in the centre and established the parents' forum at the beginning of the year. The centre has publicised the forum through such as newsletters and is looking at ways of how its work can be further promoted in the centre. Some families are involved in the governance of the centre although these numbers are small.

Some centre users benefit from attending courses at the centre and through undertaking roles, such as breastfeeding peer supporters. Staff signpost users to

local adult education colleges and Jobcentre Plus. Some users have benefited from courses to build their confidence in returning to learning, with some being successful in gaining paid employment. There are opportunities for users to attend some accredited courses.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

The extent to which children, including those from target 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	2
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	3
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	3

How good is the provision?

2

Space within the centre is well used and a range of quality services are matched to the needs of the families who use it. A small number of groups are run within the community. These groups are very popular with users and are of good quality. There is a clear focus on the Early Years Foundation Stage and information at the centre encourages users to learn about how to help their children develop.

Centre staff are effective in assessing the needs of families and this is supported through inter-agency working and close liaison between professionals. The centre has been successful in re-focusing resources aimed at specific target groups, for example by providing 'Stay and Play' sessions for children of different ages. They have been successful in engaging some hard-to-reach groups, such as fathers. Overall services within the centre are adapted to meet local need and participation rates are good and improving.

The centre has excellent links with the school and has developed good links with a number of community groups. Staff use their knowledge of local resources to signpost users to a range of services. Joint working with health partners is good and ensures that services reach those most in need. The accessibility of information available to the centre about families who are being supported by social services is variable.

The centre is committed to promoting learning and development for families. Information about local adult education courses and colleges is available at the

centre. The centre is committed to developing users' educational skills. There are opportunities for volunteering at the centre. For some of the groups, the intended outcomes for users are clear and shared with participants but for other groups the focus and impact on improving outcomes sometimes lacks clarity, for example with the childminding group. Achievements are celebrated and courses, such as first aid and baby massage, are very popular. Families report that they feel they receive a good level of support at the centre and that staff are very approachable. Families value the range of activities which provide them with opportunities to engage in their children's play, as illustrated by one parent who commented that the '... group is very good. I have noticed a big change in my son since they've started coming, especially with his speech and behaviour'.

Outreach services are good and reach some of those families most identified as in need. In addition to referrals from partner agencies, children's centre staff can refer families directly to the service. Case studies demonstrate the positive impact of this work in bringing about improved outcomes for families who access the service.

The centre, in conjunction with the school, has successfully identified gaps in children's learning around communication, language and literacy. This has become a focus for activities at the centre and results show that this work has begun to effectively reduce these gaps.

These are the grades for the quality of provision.

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

Governance arrangements are secure at all levels and lines of accountability are clear. The advisory board understands its role and receives regular reports about the work of the centre; from these reports the advisory board sets priorities for the centre. Staff work effectively together and are committed to improving outcomes for families in the community. Line management arrangements are clear and understood. Staff receive regular supervision from line managers and the senior team meet regularly.

The centre provides good value for money. Space is well used. The centre allows partner agencies to use rooms at the centre and is looking at ways to generate income through the use of the building. Communication between agencies is effective and case studies demonstrate the positive effect of this joint working. Sometimes it is difficult for information to be shared freely and the centre is aware

that this may impact on its ability to effectively support families. The centre is aware where these links need to be strengthened and strategies are in place to improve this. There is good signposting between services. Links with health and the Family Information Service are good and this ensures that services are well coordinated and bringing about positive changes for families.

The centre's self-evaluation is not yet fully robust. Data show good outcomes in most areas, including for some target groups and those most in need, but these are not always clearly linked back to the self-evaluation or to the service development plan. Senior managers are motivated in seeking further improvement for the centre and as a result some new services have been introduced, for example the Stanley Park Understanding Development group. Although participation routes in centre activities and services are good and improving there are ambitious targets in place to further improve them. Staff are proactive in registering new families and informing them of the services the centre has to offer; this includes identifying those families most in need and those from target groups. Centre users and staff, partner agencies and the advisory board do not fully contribute to the centre's self-evaluation, however, their views are fed into the self-evaluation through staff feedback to the management of the centre who complete the centre self-evaluation.

Effective safeguarding procedures and policies for recruitment and vetting of staff are in place and are shared between the centre and relevant school staff. The safeguarding policy is consistent across the school and children's centre. The policy lacks clarity for reporting arrangements in the absence of the school management team. Leaders have built effective links with health and social care professionals. However, sometimes information which would assist centre staff in effectively supporting families is not always easily available. Information about safeguarding procedures is included in the welcome pack for families. However, it is only available in English.

The centre promotes equality and diversity satisfactorily. The centre is aware of the diversity of their community and has worked to engage them in the work of the centre, with varying degrees of success. Where the centre has targeted services at specific hard-to-reach groups, for example, fathers, there is improvement in attendance rates. The centre staff have good knowledge of the community. There is limited information in community languages around the centre and information specifically about the centre is limited to English although the centre has access to translation services. Opportunities to celebrate and increase awareness of different cultures are not always fully taken. The centre has had some success in engaging disabled children, and fathers. The effectiveness and rigour with which the centre is trying to engage other hard-to-reach groups varies. Effective working between the school and centre has identified gaps in achievement for children. As a result, strategies have been put in place and data show that the gap is narrowing between the lowest 20% and the rest.

These are the grades for leadership and management.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	2
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	3
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	3

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

An inspection of the Stanley Park Stay Safe Club was undertaken on 1 November 2011 and received an overall judgement of good.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Complaining about inspections*, which is available from our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected the Stanley Park Children's Centre on 2 and 3 November 2011 and we judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We found that the centre provides you and your children with a good level of support. We agree with you that staff are warm and welcoming. They know you and your families well. As one parent told inspectors, 'They know you and your child by name.' Staff have worked hard to build links with partner agencies and some of you have benefited from these links when you have needed additional support, for example through joint home visits.

Security of the building is good and staff are vigilant about who enters the building. Staff are subject to rigorous employment procedures to ensure that they are suitable

to work with children. The safeguarding procedure for the centre is the same as for the school. Staff act as good role models for you.

The centre is good at promoting healthy lifestyles for you and your families. Activities, such as 'Big Cook Little Cook', encourage learning about healthy eating. This is further reinforced through the provision of healthy snacks at the centre. Your children benefit from the access to the outdoor play space which can be used in all weathers.

The community in which you live is rich in culture and very diverse and the centre welcomes all aspects of the community at the centre. The centre has been successful in engaging some areas of the community in its work. We have asked the centre to look at how it can more positively promote all areas of the community in its work and how families whose first language is not English are able to access information about what the centre can offer.

The parents' forum has recently been established and some of you are part of this. You are encouraged to complete 'post-it' notes with your comments about the centre although you are not always informed about any action the centre has taken as a result of your comments. The centre does not seek the views of the majority of you about the services of the centre and involve you in developing the centre. We have asked the centre to look at how you can become more actively involved in the work of the centre at all levels.

The centre self-evaluates the services that it offers. Although you have been involved in evaluations of services and satisfaction surveys, these do not always feed into the centre's self-evaluation. We have asked the centre to look into how to involve more you, centre staff and representatives from partner organisations in evaluating the centre. We have asked the centre to strengthen its self-evaluation and link it to its service development plan to ensure that it provides a comprehensive range of services and that challenging targets are set which will bring about further improvements for those of you who use the centre.

The centre runs a range of groups, some of which have a specific focus. The groups which have a specific focus are very effective in bringing about improved outcomes for those of you who use them. We have asked the centre to look more closely at the groups which it offers to ensure that they are having the most impact in supporting you in bringing about positive changes to you and your families.

Groups, such as baby massage and first aid, are run at the centre as a result of feedback from you. These are popular and are well attended. Some courses are accredited and your achievements celebrated through the presentation of certificates.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to meet us and those of you we spoke to around the centre and at groups who shared with us your thoughts and views. We are grateful to you all and wish you and your families every success for the future.

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