

# Inspection report for South Camberwell Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Southwark
<b>Inspection number</b>	383547
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 October 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jan LLOYD HMI

<b>Centre leader</b>	Charlotte Wilson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Dog Kennel Hill Primary School (100786) Last inspected September 2011
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Not applicable

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.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings or held telephone conversations with centre staff, the headteacher and head of early years at Dog Kennel Hill School, advisory board members, parents' forum members, representatives of the local authority, health service professionals and partners as well as parents and carers. Inspectors observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation including case studies.

## Information about the centre

South Camberwell Children's Centre (the centre) is a phase one centre in the London Borough of Southwark and opened in March 2006. Its services were put on hold in 2010, although the parental outreach worker continued to work with families in the area. It fully reopened in March 2012 with a centre manager, the parental outreach worker and an administration officer. The centre does not have its own building but uses three sites, Dog Kennel Hill Primary School, where it has an office, Camberwell Grove Early Years Centre and Albrighton Community Centre. All the sites are within a short walk of each other. The centre provides a range of services for families and children from prenatal to five years of age and works in partnership with a wide range of services. The headteacher at the school has overall management responsibility for the centre but day-to-day management is the responsibility of a part-time centre manager. The governing body for the school manages the centre on behalf of the local authority and is supported by an advisory board.

The area served by the centre has pockets of affluence and deprivation. It is mainly residential with a very wide range of housing and consists of nine lower-layer super-output areas, four of which are in the bottom 30% most deprived in the country. In 2010, there were 1,030 children under five years old living in the area, almost three quarters of whom were from a minority ethnic group. In 2011, over 30 different languages were spoken by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. An

estimated 338 children up to the age of four are living in workless households. The percentage of eligible families benefiting from the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit is just above 25%. When they start early years provision, the majority of children have skills, knowledge and abilities that are typically below those expected for their age.

## 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**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good children’s centre with an enthusiastic and motivated team. The headteacher and the head of early years provide strong leadership and support to the centre. The centre delivers a wide range of services and activities that meet the needs of children and families. A high priority is given to safeguarding and keeping children and families safe and protected, and the centre works hard to ensure that this is maintained across all of its sites and all of its work.

The number of children under five years registered at the centre has risen rapidly to 48% of the total in the area. The percentage of children from minority ethnic groups has increased and now reflects the local community. However, there is lower participation from young parents under 20 years of age and from fathers within the local area. The percentage of children gaining at least 78 scale points across the Early Years Foundation Stage improved from 63% in 2011 to 75% in 2012. The percentage gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has reduced from 31% in 2011 to 28% in 2012. These outcomes reflect the focused and targeted planning that has been undertaken in key areas and which has resulted in good outcomes.

The centre works very effectively with its parents to identify needs and plan relevant activities. One comment sums this up: ‘All the staff are fantastic. They really care for us and our children and will do anything to help.’ The parents’ forum is very active and a number of parents sit on the advisory board. Parents enjoy a range of activities and courses focusing on both the needs of their children and on their own development. As one parent said, ‘It is really lonely being a parent. Initially, I came here to meet people and for somewhere to take my children but now it has become

much more and gives me opportunities to learn.’ However, currently, there is little provision to encourage and support parents moving into employment.

The outstanding work with a wide range of partners contributes to the good achievement of outcomes. Partnership working with the health services has seen a large reduction in obesity and overweight children, and breastfeeding rates for mothers are high, as are the rates for immunisation for measles, mumps and rubella.

The centre very effectively uses feedback from parents, data and information to analyse its performance and services. The self-evaluation form is comprehensive and self-critical, and very effectively informs the development plan, which currently runs for three years from 2011, when the new centre team were appointed, to 2013. The plan identifies success criteria and targets, and tracks the progress made in each year.

The good leadership and management, the significant improvements in the last year, and the comprehensive and good self-evaluation and development plan show that the centre has a good capacity for sustaining improvement.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Increase contact with young parents under 20 years of age and fathers by targeting outreach activities and provision for these groups.
- Improve the prospects of parents progressing to further learning and employment by encouraging them and providing training opportunities and support that improves their economic well-being.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

<b>2</b>
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Outcomes for families are good overall. A large majority of families are engaging with health services. The percentage of mothers partially or fully breastfeeding at six to eight weeks from birth is nearly 87%, higher than elsewhere in the local authority and significantly higher than the national average. The centre actively promotes healthy eating and there is a reduction in the obesity rate for five-year-olds from just above 12% in 2011 to almost 8% in 2012 and a significant reduction in the number of overweight children. Fruit is served as refreshments at activities. Parents particularly like the cookery classes and the opportunity to adapt existing recipes. A music and movement group has started on Saturday mornings to encourage exercise and healthy lifestyles.

Parents feel safe when using services at any of the three sites used by the centre. Security on check-in is meticulous for all users of the sites. The centre carries out thorough risk assessments on activities and keeps detailed records. On home visits, centre staff discuss health and safety with parents and check for a smoke alarm. If there is none, they get in touch with the Fire Brigade who come in, provide a free smoke alarm and work with the family to plan an escape route from their building.

Parents report that they are now more aware of personal safety. The centre works collaboratively with all agencies to minimise the risk of harm to children. Work with families, where there is a Common Assessment Framework in place, shows that there is sustained improvement in their outcomes with well-planned ongoing support and provision.

Children, parents and carers enjoy coming to the centre. 'It's great because there's always something to do.' Activities such as Bookstart and Maths for Families help children develop their listening, communication and other skills for the future. Their achievement is good, as reflected in the very positive Early Years Foundation Stage profile. Children make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for the transition into nursery school. 'This has helped my older child to settle into nursery as they already know the staff and the environment.'

Parents actively contribute to the decision making and governance of the centre. The Play and Say session on Friday mornings enables parents to meet as a forum to discuss areas of interest, ideas for activities and have visiting speakers. The parents' forum works very closely with the advisory board and representatives are actively involved in the meetings. Contact with fathers is relatively low but improving and the centre is piloting a workshop specifically for them.

Parents access information and support on welfare benefits, tax credits and job vacancies. Training is available to support them in developing their skills such as Maths for Families and English for speakers of other languages. However, currently, there is no strategy to encourage parents to consider employment and to offer targeted training opportunities and support. The centre does put vacancies from the local Jobcentre on the noticeboard in the community centre and is planning to provide support for 16-to-25-year-olds.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for families*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>

## How good is the provision?

2

The centre very effectively uses the data from the local authority to identify its key target groups and to develop a programme of support and activities to meet their needs. As the centre does not have a building of its own, outreach work is very important. As one parent said, 'The outreach worker is amazing. She walks the streets and we all talk with her.' Parents are very enthusiastic about the parenting courses and say how much more confident they now feel. In particular, parents report that the About Boys Course has resulted in improvements in their sons' development and behaviour. It offers strategies to provide boundaries and discipline.

The centre works in excellent partnership with other agencies to assess thoroughly the needs of target groups and plans a joint programme of activities and support. Participation rates and attendance levels are good and feedback from parents both within the centre and from the local authority's annual parental satisfaction survey shows how beneficial the activities are. The centre celebrates the involvement and success of its children and parents through displays of children's work and photographs. All parents receive an attendance certificate when they complete a course.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good and the thorough planning and assessment ensures that families receive effective and individualised support across their key areas of need. Parents comment on how quickly the centre responds to any crisis and how they feel able to ask for help. The centre introduces families to external agencies where this is appropriate.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The governance and accountability arrangements are clear and well understood with a very committed and involved parents' forum and advisory board. A school governor with extensive early years experience chairs the advisory board meetings. Regular meetings with the head of early years and the headteacher at the school support and monitor the performance of the centre. The comprehensive self-evaluation and development plan effectively prioritises and sets challenging targets for improvements. The centre has an annual away day for the advisory board, partners, the parents' forum and other parents. This reflects on the work of the centre and looks at future ideas and plans including inviting visiting speakers to contribute to the

meetings.

The centre delivers good value for money. Since January 2011, the registered number of families has risen from 95 to 914 at the end of September 2012 with a significant increase in the number of targeted families. The use of the three delivery sites, which the community already uses, places the centre in the heart of the local community and encourages access to a wider group of users.

Diversity is effectively celebrated by highlighting cultural festivals during the year. Planned activities reflect the different cultural backgrounds of children and families using the centre. The centre supports parents who do not speak English or have poor literacy or communication skills by providing effective training and support. The centre runs a Saturday club so that parents who are working can take part in its activities. All courses and training are supported by provision of free crèche facilities.

The centre has successfully risen to the challenge of how to ensure safeguarding on all of its three sites and provides an overarching policy to bring together the separate policies of the three sites. This fully meets statutory requirements and works alongside the school's policy, procedures and guidelines. The service level agreement with partners clearly outlines the safeguarding requirements. Safeguarding is on the agenda of every team meeting and staff supervision so that any concerns or issues can be discussed and recorded.

The outstanding partnership working ensures that partners are actively involved in the development and delivery of a wide range of very well-integrated activities and services that meet the centre's core purpose. The centre meets with partners to plan activities and to ensure that they are tailored for individuals and families. The very effective partnership working enhances opportunities for families in the area, including those from target groups, and has a very positive impact on outcomes. The partnership work with the health professionals results in tailor-made support for families and excellent outcomes in breastfeeding rates, and reductions in the rates for obese and overweight children. The very close partnership working with the three sites the centre uses ensures that families see these as the children's centre rather than just accommodation.

*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 effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its</b>	<b>2</b>



<b>statutory duties</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>2</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>2</b>

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

None

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the South Camberwell Children's Centre on 25 and 26 October 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank all of you whom we met for telling us about how much the centre helps you, your families and your children. You told us how friendly and welcoming the staff are and how much your children enjoy coming to the activities. We have asked the centre manager to encourage more parents under 20 years of age and fathers to become involved with activities.

You told us about all the different activities that take place but we were only able to visit a small number of them. We particularly enjoyed the Bookstart session and saw how much your children enjoyed themselves. It is particularly useful that you are able to book out library books to take home. The Family Maths session was great fun and involved tests, puzzles and games as well as making a measuring game to take home. It showed that mathematics can be fun and gave you ideas for using it with your children. The Play and Say session on Friday morning lets your children take part in a wide range of activities while you have an opportunity to sit and talk with other parents about how the centre is run and discuss ideas for future activities. We were very impressed with your involvement in decision making at the centre and hope you realise how important that is. Some of you attended last year's annual Away Day where you were involved in discussions on future plans for the centre. Some of you talked about how lonely it is being a parent and that coming to the

centre has helped you make friends and realise that there are other parents facing the same difficulties as you.

Many of you told us how useful the parenting courses are and how they help to give you confidence with any issues you are having with your children. We were very interested in the About Boys Course and how it helps you better understand your son's development and behaviour. You also talked about the new Music and Movement group on a Saturday morning, which encourages exercise and a healthy lifestyle for families with children aged four years and under. That, combined with the healthy cooking classes, is really supporting you in becoming healthier. We are concerned that there are few courses to support you in becoming employed in the future and we have asked the centre manager to prioritise this.

All of you told us how safe you feel on any of the sites the centre uses and we were able to see the excellent systems that are in place to keep you and your children protected and safe. All of the sites have secure systems for checking in so that staff know who is on site. The centre staff are trained in how to safeguard children and they make sure that everyone working with you is suitable to do so.

We saw how hard the staff work and how well the centre is run. The centre works in excellent partnership with a large number of other organisations and agencies to ensure you have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities and have access to specialised support when you need it most.

Thank you for welcoming us into your centre and giving up your time to talk with us. We could see how much you and your children really enjoy coming here. Our discussions with you and the staff helped us to make the decision that this centre is good overall. We wish you, your families and the centre all the very best for the future.

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