

# Inspection report for Clyde Children's Centre

---

<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Lewisham
<b>Inspection number</b>	366468
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 November 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Davies HMI

<b>Centre leader</b>	Cathryn Kinsey
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Centre address</b>	Clyde Early Childhood Centre Alverton Street Deptford London SE8 5NH
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8692 3653
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@clyde.lewisham.sch.uk

<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Clyde Early Childhood Centre URN: 100667
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Clyde Early Childhood Centre URN: 129019

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.

---

**Report published:** November 2012



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

No.100080

© Crown copyright 2012



## 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 with the headteacher, staff, parents, representatives of the governing body and advisory board, health and social care professionals and representatives of partner agencies and the local authority. The inspectors held informal talks with children and parents throughout the inspection

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Clyde Children's Centre is located in the Deptford area of the London Borough of Lewisham. It was designated as a phase one children's centre in 2004. It is managed by the governing body of Clyde Early Childhood Centre on behalf of the local authority. The centre shares premises with a nursery school which provides 87 places, with 24 wraparound care places and 22 child care places. The centre was built as a school and has been extensively remodelled to provide for family learning and support. Extensive, enclosed garden play areas surround the building. The centre manages the Playbus, mobile play and learning provision that serves isolated communities around the borough.

The headteacher currently manages the children's centre services as the post of children's centre manager is vacant. The work is supported by teachers, early years practitioners, volunteers and office staff who work flexibly across the daycare, family provision and nursery school. Health professionals, social workers, a speech and language therapist and outreach and family support workers from partner organisations assist the centre. An area advisory board, with parents among its members, is in place to give independent advice to the governing body. To meet its core purpose, the centre provides services at Clyde and in partnership at other children's centres and health clinics.

Most of the area served by the centre is among the 20% most deprived in the country, with severe deprivation experienced by a small minority. Over 45% of children in the area are living in poverty, which is double the average for the local authority area. A further very small minority of families are severely deprived but not counted on the poverty indices due to their undetermined immigration status. Mobility of the population and the proportions living in overcrowding and temporary rental accommodation are high. Very few families have access to outdoor play space. A very large majority of families are of ethnic minority heritage with the largest groups being families of Black African origin, mainly from West African countries and Somalia. Over two thirds of the centre’s users speak English as an additional language. Most children enter Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills and knowledge that are 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

Clyde Early Childhood Centre provides good all round support to families in the area through its children’s centre services. Inclusion is very effectively promoted through publicity, partnership working and outreach. A very large majority of families in the area (81%) take up the services on offer on site or where provided by partner organisations. The personalised care, guidance and support offered to families, particularly for children and parents speaking English as an additional language and those facing multiple disadvantages, are excellent. Outcomes are good with outstanding achievement for children and parents, considering their starting points and the barriers that they overcome. Families enjoy drop-in sessions and workshops immensely so that families, including those who have not previously accessed any family learning or support, attend regularly.

The centre successfully raises aspirations and engages isolated families through building highly positive relationships. Children’s needs are identified by key workers and services to support them are coordinated well so that children make outstanding progress in their learning. Those with skills that are below the expectations for their age group catch up quickly with their peers. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children in the area and their peers at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is narrowing rapidly and is now well below the Lewisham average of 25.3% in

2012. Adults make exceptional gains in understanding of their children's behaviour and learning. Parents get involved in their children's learning and are enthusiastic about developing their own skills.

The centre celebrates the area's rich cultural diversity and adeptly incorporates community languages into activities, parents comment that they feel a sense of belonging; they play and sing with infectious enthusiasm alongside their children at drop-ins. Families make rapid improvement in communication and language skills. The centre and partners give outstanding support to families who have no recourse to public funds so that they are empowered to find a range of help and their economic stability improves. A few parents gain valuable work experience as volunteers although this is not accredited. Support for adults to develop their basic skills and to learn English is good, with free classes and a crèche, although no certification is offered for few of the courses. Take up and completion rates are good. However, the cost of further accredited courses that would enable parents to progress and gain more recognisable employable skills limits the opportunities for parents to progress in training and gaining qualifications.

Family health and well-being improves through involvement with the centre. The environment that the centre has created is fully accessible. It offers a fine balance of security and welcome and a sense of a purposeful place for learning that is comfortable at the same time. Learning for children who live in cramped conditions improves rapidly as they are able to move freely between the indoor spaces and the gardens. Support for family safety is good and the families most at risk are safeguarded effectively.

Leaders and managers maintain a clear focus on Lewisham's priorities for children's centres. Service plans link well to these priorities and take into account particular local needs, although the data supplied by the local authority are not always specific to the local area. The headteacher has commendably led the centre through a period of re-organisation. The centre has maintained a focus on safeguarding and the well-being of families. Inclusion is central to all that the centre does and tackling unequal access to services drives decisions about services that are provided. Partners and families are effectively involved in evaluating activities. Established partnerships have been harnessed to sustain outreach and drop-in services, maintaining good value for money. Although partnership working is strong, the centre is managed as a stand-alone unit. The context and outcome data that the centre uses in self-evaluation are accurate but not always specific to the area. Most health and adult learning and employment indicators do not detail the centre's performance as distinct from the performance of all centres in the area or borough. With strong partnerships in place, particularly as part of the wider Early Childhood Centre provision, the centre has good capacity to improve the provision and outcomes further.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Work with the local authority and partner organisations to identify and use data that are specific to the area so that local needs are more sharply prioritised.
- Work with the local authority and partners to enhance and increase provision that supports parents on routes to qualification and employment through:
  - offering evidence, such as certificates of attendance, for courses and learning taken up by parents in the centre
  - linking with organisations that accredit and develop volunteering to improve opportunities for parents to gain recognition for their achievements
  - providing more courses in the future that support progression and further qualification in basic education skills and English as an additional language, with continuing support from a crèche.

### How good are outcomes for families?

<b>2</b>
----------

A large majority of families in the area take up baby health checks at clinics nearby. Staff at the centre routinely promote health messages to families and support them by giving information and referring children promptly to specialist health services. The centre's encouragement to families who have a history of avoiding health appointments contributes to rapidly improving rates of uptake of immunisations and to most development checks being completed on time. The centre supports mothers who are breastfeeding and local data show that the number taking up breastfeeding is increasing rapidly. Children choose from healthy snacks and drinks. Cooking activities are popular for whole families and a peer group to promote nutritious cooking is about to start in the centre's new community kitchen. Physically active lifestyles are promoted with buggy walk groups and with access to a safe garden area. However, many parents are not yet as keen as their children to play outside.

The positive relationships forged within the centre nurture emotional well-being and provide good support for children with challenging behaviour so that families feel safe in the centre. Parents targeted for parenting courses grow in confidence. Families talk of 'trust' in the centre and are confident to share concerns with staff. The centre's contribution to the Common Assessment Framework process and child protection plans means that joint work is focused and effective and there is a low rate of need to escalate concerns. Children who have been looked after by the local authority often return to their parents with ongoing support from the centre. Through home visits and outreach the centre helps families to assess the safety of their homes and the majority of parents are learning to manage the safety of their families.

Children's needs and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage are tracked closely. The excellent progress of children attending the nursery and daycare and of children attending stay-and-play drop-ins contributes to rapidly improving

achievement of children in the area as a whole. The percentage of children reaching an overall good level of development is higher than the average elsewhere in the local authority and is improving rapidly. The average for the four primary schools in the area has risen for three years to 70.4% in 2012 compared to 68.4% average for Lewisham. The percentage achievement gap is reducing steadily and at less than 20% across the area is notably narrower than elsewhere in the borough and nationally. Children’s excellent experiences of playing in a group at the centre enable the children to settle in to school well.

Parents’ learning is supported in English and in additional community languages. Fathers and young parents join in enthusiastically with their children. Most parents who are not working take up basic educational skills or English as a second language courses. Nearly all participants attending courses provided directly by the centre complete their courses. Some progress beyond level 1 to courses held by other providers in the community, although the mobility of the population means that the centre does not always have good information about the outcomes for adults as they move on.

Access to benefits and employment advice is an essential service enabling the majority of families to improve their economic stability. Families with no recourse to public funds are given information and practical assistance about help from private and voluntary sector organisations. Parents who volunteer at the centre have good success rates in moving on to employment, particularly in childcare. Parents attending the centre regularly give their views to centre staff and routinely contribute to the evaluation of services and activities. The parents’ forum is thriving and assists parents to understand and take up public services, including when their children move on to school.

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>1</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>2</b>

## How good is the provision?

2

Partner organisations contribute well to information about community and individual families' needs. The centre is aware of the cultural and social constraints that make families initially wary of giving personal details and builds up a picture of individuals' needs through ongoing observation and building up trust. Information sharing protocols with social care and health partners ensure that information about children and parents' additional needs is robust. The centre's plans are adapted to meet the areas needs, for example to provide more cookery courses, and the participation rate of target groups in greatest economic need is high.

The centre raises aspirations and provides many enjoyable opportunities so that children learn and progress extremely well. Support to learning is high quality and the provision of a crèche for adult courses makes universal and targeted courses accessible to all families, regardless of background. Provision for parents' personal development is also outstanding. Although parents who are engaged in classes for English as a second language at the centre complete courses, their achievement does not always lead to formal qualification or any award. Parents develop skills well by volunteering but the centre has not developed these opportunities to give tangible awards.

Emotional well-being is fostered with care, expert guidance and support that are threaded through all the centre's activities. Key workers give excellent attention to the speech and language development of children in their groups. This is coordinated well across all of the centre's services to remove barriers to individuals' learning. Sophisticated measures of children's involvement and parenting skills and attachment are used so that prompt intervention helps a very large majority to progress in personal development. In times of crisis, such as family illness or homelessness, the services and community spirit coordinated by the centre enable families to rebuild their lives quickly.

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>1</b>

## How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Leaders and managers of the centre have sustained services well throughout a period of reorganisation of early intervention services in the local authority area. The governing body of the school remains responsible for governance and is accountable to the local authority following a review of early intervention services implemented in



July 2012. Advisory arrangements are clearly understood by all partners and retain the strength of previous good partnership links. The leadership provided by the headteacher promotes consistently high performance from staff. Leaders and managers assess and focus services closely on key priorities which are clearly linked through service specifications to the borough's strategic planning. Services are coordinated across a wider area to ensure that needs are met. Partnership working ensures that the needs of the area are understood, although data on some key issues, such as health outcomes, are not always provided at the centre or area level to allow the centre to understand its impact precisely.

Outcomes are improving and momentum has been maintained as resources are managed well. Value for money is good. The focus on inclusion and equality drives the centre to improve its environment continually, with recent improvement to the outdoor area and facilities for community cooking to reduce inequalities for families living in deprived circumstances and for the very large majority who speak English as an additional language. The centre has not developed programmes to use all training and crèche resources to full potential while the centre manager post has been vacant, although the community play room is used intensively in line with needs. Monitoring of outcomes for families ensures that staff identify services and activities that are attractive so attendance is high and additional support is promptly secured.

Partnership working is well developed. Partners ensure that outreach continues actively. Outcomes for children most in need of protection, through multi-agency working, are good. All legal requirements for safe recruitment and staff development are implemented well. Risk assessments are thorough so that the premises are safe and secure. Partners are fully involved in evaluating the services of the centre and work with other centres ensures that specialist services, for example for young parents, are in place. Parents take up places on the area advisory board and a parents' forum has been influential in developing gate security and access.

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 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>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>2</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**

Clyde Early Childhood Centre nursery school provision was inspected in February 2011 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The overall effectiveness and capacity for sustained improvement were both judged to be good. The report is available on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Clyde Children’s Centre on 6 and 7 November 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you very much for taking the time to speak to us and for telling us about the work of the centre.

The children’s centre services at Clyde Early Childhood Centre provide good support to all aspects of family life.

The centre says that it aims to include as many families from the area as possible and it succeeds really well in reaching out to welcome families who are isolated or new to the area. We were really impressed to see that the centre focuses all its effort on making sure no one who needs any support for their child or themselves is left out.

The staff are welcoming and very knowledgeable. Although everyone is friendly, the centre builds special relationships for you with a key person you can trust for your child. This is really helpful to enable your children to settle in and get on well.

The centre celebrates the wealth of different cultures in the local community. We think the DVD of different songs that you sing in your home languages is a brilliant idea. Your enthusiasm for singing in the drop-ins is spectacular; you really make

everyone want to join in. This is a fantastic way for children and parents speaking so many different languages to learn together.

We were very pleased and impressed to see parents encouraging their children to learn. Children are very well prepared to move on to school – although parents told us they never want to leave Clyde! Children make very good progress in their learning as they move through drop-ins, daycare or the nursery school. Children starting from very low points catch up with other children of their age.

The centre gives a high priority to helping to keep you and your children safe and support your emotional well-being. The environment is wonderful and welcoming. You encourage your children to play in the safe outdoor areas because you know it is good for them to exercise. But we notice that very few parents go outdoors themselves. Come on! Put your coats on as you deserve the benefits of being outdoors too.

The guidance and support that the centre gives about all topics of family life and learning are excellent. You trust the centre with your worries. You told us about examples of the centre pulling out all the stops to find practical and financial help for parents in times of crisis, like family illness. Also, the centre teaches you how to find out information for yourselves.

Staff help and support children with speech and language difficulties, and other disabilities, very well. You rightly appreciate the help from therapists and the special needs coordinator on site who help to improve your children's learning when they have additional problems.

Partner organisations, like the Children's Society and the local education support group WALE, help the centre to reach out to contact you and to run groups. With their help the centre has kept up the drop-in groups that you enjoy.

The centre gives you good opportunities to gain work experience and to take up courses when you begin to learn English. We have asked the centre to find ways of giving awards, such as certificates for the volunteering and courses that you do. Also we have asked them to find ways of putting on more courses with a crèche so that you can progress to higher levels in basic skills and English.

The headteacher, governors and partner organisations have kept up the activities that are helpful to most of you. The day-to-day management of the centre provides a good programme of activities and this is good value for money. The decisions that the centre makes, like improving the community kitchen, are for the well-being of as many people as possible and are influenced by your opinions. Partnership working is important but we have asked the centre to find ways of collecting particular information that will help the centre to know how well it is doing on its own.

Because the children's centre activities are so well merged in with the nursery school and daycare, and the centre has strong partnerships and listens well to your views, we assess that the centre has good capacity to go on improving what it does even further.

We wish you and your children every success for the future.

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