

Inspection report for Victory Primary School and Children's Centre

Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	406984
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Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Victory Primary School – URN 100815
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	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 with the centre manager, the headteacher, representatives of the local authority, members of staff, partner agencies, including a representative from health, members of the advisory board and governing body. They also held informal discussions with families using the centre services.

Inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation. This included key policies, the centre's self-evaluation documents, the centre's development plan and data about users of the centre.

Information about the centre

Victory Primary School and Children's Centre is a phase two centre that was designated in 2008. It is managed on behalf of the local authority by the governing body of the school. The day-to-day management of the centre is the responsibility of the children's centre manager and the headteacher is designated as the head of centre. The centre has experienced some turbulence in leadership with three changes in headteacher between August 2011 and December 2011. The headteacher took up post in January 2012 and the centre manager took up post in December 2011. The centre employs one part-time outreach worker and has one volunteer. The advisory board contributes to the management of the centre and is chaired by a member of the governing body. It includes representatives from a number of community and statutory partners and parent representatives.

Overall, the centre serves one of the 30% deprived areas nationally. There are 515 children under five living in the centre's catchment area, with around 37% of children under five considered to be living in poverty. The area has a high proportion of high-rise social housing, including the Heygate Estate and Aylesbury Estate. Both these areas are subject to a regeneration programme resulting in a significant level

of mobility in the population. The local population comprises of a variety of ethnic backgrounds, with around 79% from different minority ethnic groups. The ethnicity data for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage show that around 55% of children are from Black, Black Caribbean families and 21% of children are from White British families. Approximately 28 different languages are spoken in the community, these include, French, Spanish and Yoruba (Nigerian dialect), Arabic and Bengali. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities when they enter early years provision are typically below the levels expected for their age.

The centre is open from 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday for 48 weeks of the year. It offers multi-agency services for children under five years and their families. These include family learning, 'Stay and Play' activity sessions, midwifery services, family support, including outreach, and sign posting for those seeking employment. The centre runs a crèche for some of its activities. The majority of services are run from the centre. The centre also uses facilities in the school and community venues, including Crossways Community Hall, Aylesbury Health Clinic and Cuming Museum.

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

The Victory Primary School and Children's Centre makes a good contribution to improving outcomes for families. The centre is highly welcoming and considered by families as an inclusive place in the community, where they feel respected and safe. A key strength of the centre is the care, guidance and support offered to families through outreach work, particularly for those families who are identified as more vulnerable or experiencing difficulties in their lives. Parents were keen to share how the centre has helped them to feel less isolated and make changes in their lives. Parents reported: 'It is a blessing to me. I was depressed and alone and now I am a happier person' and 'I was longing for a hug. This centre is like a family to me'.

The centre has been on a long journey since January 2012 with the appointment of new centre leaders. This recently established leadership team provides a clear sense of direction and purpose, which is driving improvement. As a result, the centre has a good capacity to improve further. This is because leaders and managers are focused on securing improved outcomes for children and families. They have introduced

systems to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of services to ensure they are matched to the changing needs within the community. The centre uses available data and local knowledge to identify need, plan and review services. As a result, and despite a transient population, the numbers of families accessing services is growing significantly. The centre is reaching a large majority of families from minority ethnic groups and an increasing number of families from other target groups including lone parents, children with disabilities and fathers. Self-evaluation is accurate and supported by evidence of impact on outcomes. The development plan sets out clear targets for improvement aimed at priority areas. However, the current system in place to show the impact of its work is not yet tracking the longer-term benefits for children when they move to the next stage in their learning. In addition it is not consistently tracking if adults progress onto further training or gain employment, which impacts on the evidence available to demonstrate how families are developing economic stability and independence.

Parents from different target groups, including those from minority ethnic groups and those identified as most in need of intervention and support, contribute well to the parent forum, known as 'Coffee Mornings'. They enthusiastically share their views which contribute to shaping services, such as 'Splish splash', a mother's only swimming session provided by the centre to accommodate a variety of cultures including Muslim women.

Children's safety and well-being are enhanced by the effective implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff initiate Common Assessment Framework (CAF) referrals effectively to ensure families receive the most appropriate level of support and intervention. Effective partnership working ensures children with disabilities are supported well and receive specialist support, such as 'KIDS', the portage home learning service.

The provision to help children and adults learn and develop is good. Parents and their children enjoy the range of activities and opportunities to interact with others. For example, the session 'Theatre Tots' helps children to develop confidence and promotes language and communication skills. Parents feel such activities help prepare their children for pre-school or nursery. However, very recent information shared with the centre shows the majority of the CAF referrals made during the last 12 months include a request for speech and language therapy, particularly for boys and children from families who speak English as an additional language. The centre is now considering how to enhance the opportunities it provides for parents to support their children in developing communication and language skills.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Enhance opportunities for parents to support their children in developing language and communication skills, in particular for boys and those who speak English as an additional language, to further aid their children's readiness for pre-school or school.
- Develop further the systems to monitor and measure the longer-term impact of the centre's services by:
 - working with the local authority, early years providers and schools in the area to develop a system to track the achievement of children when they move on to the next stage in their learning
 - developing a consistent method to track the progress made by adults who have access to training courses.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Data show that the centre is contributing well to the improving health of families. Around 80% of children are breastfed at six to eight weeks and immunisation rates are 86%, which are above both the national and London average. The promotion of families' emotional well-being is an important aspect of the centre's work. Parents told us how counselling sessions with 'Place4Parents' helps them to deal with different 'stresses' in their lives so they can focus on being better parents. Families are well engaged with the centre's priority to reduce obesity rates. Parents and children enjoy preparing fun, delicious and nutritious dishes during cooking sessions such as 'Crafty Cooks'.

High regard is given to promoting safety at the centre and community venues and as a result, children and families feel safe when accessing services. Parents have developed a greater understanding of first aid through attending 'Save a Life' courses and safety in the home sessions. This has increased their knowledge of how to prevent accidents in the home and keep their families safe. Parents are gaining confidence in their parenting skills such as safe ways to manage children's behaviour as a result of attending parenting courses such as 'Empowering Parents Empowering Communities'.

Families are enthusiastic about attending the centre. They make good progress in achieving personal, social and educational goals. Children behave well and families show high levels of respect for each other. This is supported through sessions such as, 'Whippersnappers' where children and adults embrace multicultural aspects through dance and music. This enables children to develop social skills and become inquisitive learners. Overall, data show that the number of children in the centre's reach who achieve a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage has increased in the last three years and at 69.5% is above the national average. The percentage gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and the rest is

closing. Initial tracking of children who move into Victory Primary School shows they make good progress but systems to track the longer-term achievements of children when they move to other pre-schools or schools are not in place. The local authority is beginning to work with the centre to help the longer-term impact to be assessed.

Children achieve lower scores in the area of communication, language and literacy. Activity sessions, such as 'Diddi Dance' effectively promote children's communication and language skills through music and rhyme. However, the centre recognises there is a need to build on this good practice and provide more opportunities to help parents support children's language development and aid their readiness for school.

Parents report their engagement with the centre has improved their confidence and independence, which in turn has led to a better quality of life. The centre signposts families to Blackfrairs Advice for information on benefits and tax credits. Training courses, such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), are popular with parents and are successful in helping parents to participate in life in the community. There are a few examples of parents who as a result of accessing services, such as a basic information and communication technology (ICT) course, have returned to work. However, the centre is not routinely following up adults' longer-term achievements and partners are not consistently sharing data, as a result of the work it does to support skills' progression and employability.

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	2
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

The centre knows the families in the area well and, with partners, skilfully identifies the ones whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and who are in greater need of support. Outreach work is making a positive contribution to breaking down barriers, particularly for families at risk or isolated. Home visits are completed ensuring support work is carefully tailored to families' needs. The numbers engaged with centre services from all target groups are increasing. Currently, 535 children

under five years are registered with the centre, which includes Southwark families beyond the centre's reach area. Minority ethnic groups are very well represented in activities with 83% of families within the area accessing services.

The centre has been particularly successful in engaging families with children who have disabilities or an additional need. The centre recognised an increase in referrals from health and following consultation and pilot sessions has set up 'Sensory Time', an activity session providing children with additional needs the opportunity for sensory interaction in a relaxed and calm atmosphere. Children enjoy exploring in the dark den and listening to stories and parents value the opportunity to seek support from other parents.

The centre provides a good range of weekly activities, which promotes purposeful learning for children and adults and the majority are well attended. Childminders attend a weekly drop-in where they receive support in planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents who are participating in the new 'Parent Mentor Training' course are working towards a level two qualification to become mentors and volunteers. One parent commented, 'I'm proud of this place and now want to give something back.' Achievement is celebrated well with certificates awarded at the end of courses and celebration events. Parents are encouraged to bring food from their culture to share with each other, promoting community cohesion and building self-esteem.

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?

2

Governance and accountability arrangements are clear and understood. Good partnerships with other services and key partners are firmly established, ensuring services are integrated and making a difference for families. The centre is developing partnerships with other services, such as early years providers and the Southwark Day Centre, in order to continue to improve the range of services, guidance and support it offers to families.

The advisory board, which includes members of the governing body, supports the centre in its work. It has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. It regularly reviews the development plan and is becoming more effective in challenging centre leaders. Line management arrangements are clear and staff value professional development opportunities to support them in their roles.

Day-to-day management ensures that the premises are used effectively. Resources, including the deployment of the small staff team and use of a volunteer, are effectively managed. Outcomes are good, therefore providing good value for money.

The centre analyses available data from the local authority in order to identify needs within its target groups. There is a range of monitoring and evaluation systems in place, which ensures services are improving outcomes for families and help staff to identify where they need to develop services further. As a result self-evaluation is accurate and leads to well-considered targets for improvement. However, the centre does not have a system to follow up the centre's work in the longer term, such as when children move on to pre-school or school, or follow up adults who have attended training.

Good safeguarding arrangements are in place. Recruitment practices are effective and ensure all adults working with children are suitable. Staff carry out risk assessments to ensure the centre is a safe place. Protocols and practice for making referrals between relevant agencies are effective in reducing the risk of harm to children. The centre staff are proficient in instigating and managing CAFs, including 'team around the child' (TAC) meetings. The centre is not currently working with any families where children are subject to child protection plans and the number in the reach area is low.

The centre has a strong commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and to celebrating diversity, such as celebrating 'Black History Month'. All families are treated with respect and there is evidence that the achievement gap is closing. The centre provides crèche places so parents can access services, including training courses and keep-fit sessions.

The centre is effective in seeking the views of families in a variety of ways. This includes the annual snapshot survey. Response to the survey has significantly increased over time. Parents are actively involved in the governance of the centre and represent the views of families on the advisory board.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key	2

agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	
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	2

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

None

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 Victory Primary School and Children's Centre on 13 and 14 November 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

During the inspection, we held meetings with the centre's staff, some of the other people who work from the centre, members of the local authority and advisory board. We looked at evaluations of the centre's work and a range of other documentation. We were pleased to be able to talk to some of you about the centre and the activities. The children's centre is making a good contribution to improving outcomes for you and your families.

We agree with you that staff at the centre are welcoming and provide you with good levels of care, guidance and support, especially when you need it the most. You were keen to tell us how the centre had helped you make changes in your lives. This is confirmed by comments such as: 'It is a blessing to me. I was depressed and alone and now I am happier person' and 'I was longing for a hug. This centre is like a family to me'.

Safeguarding practices are given high priority. Staff have a clear understanding of the policies and procedures and ensure you and your children are safe. For example, they carry out regular risk assessments, checking the centre is a safe place. Staff are good at assessing the individual needs of families using the common assessment framework (CAF), in order to ensure you receive specific support, especially for the families who need the most help. Partnerships with key agencies are positive, for example children with disabilities are supported well and receive specialist support, such as 'KIDS' the portage home learning service. You told us how your children are

benefiting from the new session, 'Sensory Time', for a group for children with additional needs.

You told us how much you enjoy the different activities and how these are helping your children's learning and development and provide opportunities to interact with others. For example, the session 'Theatre Tots' helps your children to develop confidence and promotes language and communication skills. You told us how such activities help prepare your children for pre-school or nursery. However, very recent information shared with the centre shows the majority of the CAF referrals made during the last 12 months include a request for speech and language therapy, particularly for boys and children from families who speak English as an additional language. We have asked the centre to build on its current good practice and provide more opportunities to help you to support your children's language and communication skills.

We found out that the recently established leadership team provides a clear sense of direction and purpose, which is driving improvement. This means the centre has a good capacity to improve further. Leaders and managers are focused on securing improved outcomes for you and your families. They have introduced systems to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of services to ensure they are matched to the changing needs within the community. The centre uses available data and local knowledge to identify need, plan and review services. As a result, and despite a transient population, the numbers of families accessing services is growing significantly. The centre is reaching a large majority of families from minority ethnic groups and an increasing number of families from other target groups including lone parents, children with disabilities and fathers. Self-evaluation is accurate and supported by evidence of impact on outcomes. The development plan sets out clear targets for improvement aimed at priority areas. We have asked the centre to develop a system to show the longer-term impact of its work, for example by tracking the achievement for your children when they move on to school or pre-school and tracking if, after attending a course, you progress onto further training or gain employment.

You feel your views are important to the centre. Parents from different target groups, including those from minority ethnic groups and those identified as most in need of intervention and support, contribute well to the parent forum, known as 'Coffee Mornings'. We heard how you enthusiastically share your views which contribute to shaping services, such as the 'Splish splash' session, a mother's only swimming session to accommodate the needs of a variety of cultures including Muslim women.

You can support the centre by continuing to share your views and getting involved as a volunteer or joining the parent forum.

We would like to thank those of you who spoke to us during the inspection. We are grateful for your views and comments and wish you a successful future.

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