

Inspection report for Tweeddale Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Sutton
Inspection number	383736
Inspection dates	20 – 21 November 2012
Reporting inspector	Denise Blackwell HMI

Centre leader	Emma Sayer
Date of previous inspection	This is the centre's first inspection
Centre address	Tweeddale Campus Tweeddale Road Carshalton Surrey SM5 1SW
Telephone number	020 8404 1640
Fax number	
Email address	esayer2@suttonlea.org

Linked school if applicable	Tweeddale Primary School (134165)
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Tweeddale Children's Centre Nursery (EY307844) Tweeddale Play Centre (EY307844)

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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at 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
W: 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 centre users, leaders and managers, health and local authority representatives, front line workers and co-located partners.

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

Information about the centre

Tweeddale Children's Centre, along with Muschamp Children's Centre and Spencer Children's Centre form the Sutton blue locality. The majority of families in the reach area live in one of the 30% most deprived wards in England with over half the areas in blue locality being within the top 20% most deprived areas in England. Because of the high levels of deprivation in the area Tweeddale Children's Centre was designated in 2006 as a phase one children's centre. Unemployment rates for the reach area are similar to those for the rest of Sutton though the number of people of working age claiming a key benefit is higher than the rest of Sutton at 18%. The percentage of lone parent households claiming benefits is also above that of the rest of Sutton and nationally at 17%.

The centre is situated on the site of Tweeddale Primary School with Tweeddale Children's Centre Nursery providing the childcare provision, which is also on the school site. The centre was closed for a year between 2010 and 2011 for refurbishment and building work. During this time centre services were provided in the school and local venues. The centre was reopened in November 2011 as a Sutton flagship centre that includes the co-located services including Tweeddale play centre and local authority support services. Support services include the Early Intervention and Prevention Service (EIPS), which provides family support, and the Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Service of which Portage is part of. The majority of families living in the centre's catchment area are from a White British background. There is a growing black and minority ethnic population with around 20% of families

in the reach area coming from these specific backgrounds. The centre is governed by the school governing body, on behalf of the local authority, with an advisory board that was launched just over a year ago.

Data indicate children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a narrower range of skills and abilities than those typically expected for their age. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children in Sutton Local Authority area reach or exceed expected levels of development across the six areas of learning, including communication, language and literacy. However, levels of development in the reach area are below the Sutton and national averages with 76% of children achieving 78 or more points across all the scales. They are significantly below Sutton and national averages for children achieving six or more points in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy in 2012 at 38%. The majority of housing in the reach area is made up of social housing or multiple occupation housing. The locality also has the highest number of children known to be eligible for free school meals.

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

1

Main findings

'I felt welcome at Tweeddales from the moment I walked in the door' stated one parent and this reflects the ethos of the whole of Tweeddales Campus. The needs of the families in the reach area are at the heart of what this good centre does. Although the centre continued to provide some services and activities on site and in local venues during its closure participation rates declined. Since the centre re-opened just over a year ago it has worked hard to increase participation rates and ensure it is reaching the most vulnerable. The centre knows its community well and understands the barriers that prevent families from accessing centre services. However, this work is hampered because the centre is not provided with information from health about live births or families moving to the area. This makes it difficult for the centre to identify all families in its reach area and it is not able to investigate who is not using centre services and why. Nevertheless, the centre has not sat back on its laurels. It has actively gone out into community venues in the reach area to improve participation rates and to ensure services are targeted at those most in need.

The exemplary safeguarding practices in the centre ensure children are kept safe and families supported. Parenting programmes along with expertly individualised packages of support show how the centre is having an impact on reducing the number of children on child protection plans.

The centre nursery provides funded sessions during school hours for two- to four-year-olds. It also provides interesting and exciting opportunities for children to play and learn during centre activities such as messy play. The centre does not yet track children or plan activities for them across centre services and activities, such as stay and play and crèche, to ensure they build on children's interests and what children already know and can do.

The inspirational pursuit of excellence, from all centre staff but especially from centre leaders, shows the centre has outstanding capacity to improve. The exceptionally strong leadership at the centre is helping the centre to move forward speedily as the rigorous self-evaluation is based on searching and robust analysis of data and feedback that has resulted in notable improvements to provision and strongly improving outcomes for families. For example, the manager's significant expertise in mental health services is ensuring those who need additional and targeted support urgently receive the help they need.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- The local authority and health services should work at a strategic level to reach an agreement that will enable the centre to be provided with information about new births and families moving to the area so that the centre can:
 - gain a greater understanding of the community within the reach area
 - identify which families in the reach area are not using centre services and investigate why
 - ensure it is targeting and meeting the needs of those who are most at risk and hardest to reach.

- Develop systems to track and monitor the progress of children who attend centre activities to:
 - enable staff to develop planning and assessment that takes account of all the activities children attend and builds on what they already know and can do
 - ensure early interventions are identified and appropriate
 - clearly show the progress children make over their time at the centre and the impact of the centre services on children's school readiness.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Health outcomes are steadily improving with just over 65% of families engaging well with health services. Breastfeeding rates have increased by over 8% in the last two years. The centre is having a strong impact on improving immunisation rates. The

centre records immunisations on admission and registration forms, encouraging parents to take up immunisations where they have not done so. Smoking cessation rates are low but improving with the centre providing a venue for research into the effect of mild exercise on giving up smoking. The centre has recently begun to accommodate a baby weighing drop-in session on Friday mornings. Take-up rates are good as the centre's analysis showed there were no health drop-in sessions elsewhere in the borough on Fridays. However, this is not yet run alongside other centre activities such as 'stay and play' to encourage participation in centre activities while waiting for an appointment. Ante-natal classes are held in the centre and from January the centre will provide the location for the two-year-old check.

Children's behaviour in the centre is good and both they and their parents are increasing in confidence and developing skills to help them deal with the difficulties of everyday life. The centre's involvement with children who have a child protection plan or one for specific needs, in conjunction with their use of the Common Assessment Framework, ensures that these families who are at risk are listened to and any concerns are acted upon with coordinated provision being put into place. Users who have experienced domestic violence are very ably supported to move out of abusive relationships. 'Because of this centre I have changed my life around' said one mum and this is also seen in case studies that show parents making changes to their lives to benefit both themselves and their children. Although the majority of parents behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others this is, as yet, not consistent across centre activities.

Children are making good progress from low starting points. Although still well below national and Sutton averages children's profile scores are improving at 50.7%. There are many interesting opportunities for parents to play and learn with their children through courses that promote family learning. 'They give you really simple but effective ideas of what you can do with your children' said one mum. Educational attainment is not a high priority for some families and expectations of success are low. However, innovative adult learning programmes, such as 'Gardening with numeracy' are helping parents to improve their skills. This gives them confidence and encouragement to support and value their children's learning at home. Teachers in the school say that they can tell which children have attended centre services and activities because they are much better prepared for starting school.

Although the centre has some innovative ideas to involve families in the work of the advisory board, parents are wary of authority and are not yet involved. Parents contribute to governance of the centre through an informal parents' forum that is held as a coffee, chill and chat morning. This has provided a strong platform for the centre to gain their views and evidence clearly shows where parents' views have been acted on.

Unemployment in the area is about average. However, work is often of a short-term nature and parents regularly have to continually apply for vacancies which knocks their confidence. The centre supports parents through courses to build up their employability and confidence. A number of families have been involved in

volunteering in the centre and within the local community. This has resulted in some of the volunteers gaining employment. Staff who live in the reach area have gained employment in the centre and school and act as excellent role models to children and families to show others what can be achieved.

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	2

How good is the provision?

2

Participation in centre activities is improving, including the participation of hard-to-reach groups. Nevertheless, the centre still has work to do to engage some target groups, for example disabled children. Although participation in some centre activities is very high, such as for 'messy play', the centre is still building up participation rates and realises it has to gain parents' trust again in order to do so. Staff from the centre go out into the community to advertise their services and attend sessions at the local library where they introduce themselves to parents during the 'story and rhyme time'. Once families are known to the centre their needs are very carefully considered and this ensures that services are tailored and effective in getting to the heart of any issues.

Although some parents' own poor experience of education has influenced their views and approach to their children's learning, the centre is enabling individuals to improve and value their own and their children's learning through courses and workshops as well as literacy and numeracy courses. All achievements at the centre are celebrated and there are many pictures around the centre of smiling parents and children receiving certificates and awards for their accomplishments.

Families are provided with excellent care and support. The centre is full of literature and guidance about universal and targeted services available to families, from breastfeeding support to help if suffering from domestic abuse. The very effective partnership with EIPS ensures vulnerable families and target groups are identified and very ably supported at times of crisis. The centre is forward thinking and has

already put plans in place to help families whose benefits will change next year. This will help to ensure families think about the impact of changes and do not build up even bigger debts than they may already have.

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	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Data provided by the local authority is used exceptionally well by the centre as a starting point for considering need and planning future services. Leaders carry out searching and rigorous analyses which provide the basis of their improvement plan and clearly identify priorities for the reach area. Plans are used as living documents with annotated plans which show where actions have been completed, their impact and whether any further action is needed. Planning clearly shows where parents have influenced decisions about services and activities and, as a result, participation and outcomes are improving.

Professional supervision arrangements are exemplary with incisive checking of practice by centre leaders. While working at the centre, a number of staff have developed their own knowledge and skills and this has resulted in promotions to roles of greater responsibility. Although the advisory board now has representation from governors and partners and is developing parent representation; that said, members of the advisory board are improving their understanding of the purpose of the centre and are holding the centre to account for their performance.

The exceptional safeguarding arrangements result in the centre having very well thought out strategies for enabling parents who are in abusive relationships to seek advice and support from the centre without putting them at risk when they return home. Parents told inspectors about how the centre had helped them to move out of abusive relationships and continued to support them when they found themselves on their own. The highly adaptable and flexible provision for families is based on robust assessment of individual needs. However, although the centre provides exceptional support once it is involved with families, leaders are frustrated by the lack of information provided about how many children are on child protection plans in the centre's reach area.

Value for money is good as centre budgets are closely monitored resulting in well-managed resources that support the engagement of children and families. The

beautiful, bright and interesting play centre, nursery and activity rooms show that the centre values the families in the reach area and wants the best for them. Links with the other two centres in the locality ensure that centre users from the locality are able to access the services and activities that are most suited to their needs.

The centre is very successful at promoting equality and diversity, making good use of events such as faith week to help families to learn about each other's beliefs. 'It was a brilliant week' said all parents who took part, 'we learned so much about different faiths of the families in our area'. The centre has recently introduced a sensory room and soft play area for families to book, particularly targeting disabled children and those with special educational needs, to develop and improve their participation in centre activities. Parents who attend the 'stay and play' for disabled children say that it has been extremely helpful in supporting their child's particular needs and has enabled them to talk to each other about their specific issues and concerns.

The co-location project got off to a sound start as centre leaders insisted all partners moved into the refurbished building together. The centre manager meets regularly with co-located agencies to share information to better support families. Childminders are invited to training provided to centre staff, for example the 'Spud and Yam' training. Partners are members of the advisory board though attendance has been a bit ad hoc initially. Partnerships work well as centre leaders take the initiative and push for regular meetings and information sharing. This results in partnerships with health practitioners that work very well on the ground.

The centre recognises involvement at advisory board level is difficult for families in the area. Consequently, they have adapted sessions such as the parents' forum to ensure parents have their say. Satisfaction surveys show that parents who use the centre are very satisfied with the services they receive. Evaluations of services show that the centre values parents' views and listens to what they have to say. When changes are made that parents are not happy with, the centre makes every attempt to explain why changes are needed. However, it is hampered from engaging with some target groups due to data protection issues that are preventing services from sharing information with the centre.

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	1
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 agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
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 Tweeddale Children’s Centre on 20 and 21 November 2012. We judged the centre as good overall. During our visit we spoke to a number of you, observed activities and met with staff and professionals who work with the centre.

Many of you went out of your way to tell us how much you enjoy the activities, and have benefited from the services provided through the centre. Those of you who spoke to us said that your children’s centre is a friendly and welcoming place. You also told us how much you had benefited from attending activities at the centre and valued the individual support you had received. We were impressed by how well you are supporting your children’s learning at home by attending training and workshops and trying out activities you have been involved with in the centre.

The number of parents registering with the centre is gradually increasing. However, the centre still has more to do to increase the number of families who attend centre services, especially families in need of additional support. The centre currently does not receive information from health services about new births or families new to the area. However, centre staff go out into community and local venues to try and increase the participation of families. As a result we have asked the local authority and health services to work together to resolve the information sharing issues so that the centre can better identify the families in the area and find out why they do not use centre services. We hope you will support the centre to improve participation by letting family and friends know about the centre and by encouraging them to use the services and activities on offer.

The centre has developed strong partnerships with the other centres in blue locality to make a wider range of services and activities available to you than could be provided by the centre alone. Many of you told us about how much you enjoy attending courses and activities at the centre and we can see that many of you have attended family learning sessions in order to support your children's learning at home. You are rightly proud of your successes which can be seen in the many photographs displayed around the centre.

Children have enjoyable activities to do which help them learn. They do well because centre staff are skilled in providing interesting activities to help them develop. Staff continually strive to improve the quality of care and education that is on offer. As a result, children in the local area are now doing better. However, we have asked the centre to improve the tracking and monitoring of children's learning across all activities they attend so that all staff are aware of what children can do and can build on their achievements and interests. It will also help the centre to show the impact they are having on helping your children to learn.

We were very impressed with the centre's dedication to keeping children and families safe. Safeguarding is given the highest priority in the centre and staff have excellent relationships with other agencies that ensure you get the help and support you need when you need it. Those of you we spoke to said how much they appreciated that there is always someone to help when you need advice. Many of you who have felt isolated and alone with your problems say you have made friends as a result of the centre's work.

Thank you to everybody who took the time to come and speak with us and to let us know what you thought about the centre. We are very 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.