

Inspection report for Pilgrims' Way Children's Centre

Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	404527
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2013
Reporting inspector	Priscilla McGuire

Centre leader	Victoria Horner
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Pilgrims' Way Primary School Manor Grove Tustin Estate London SE15 1EF
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Linked school if applicable	Pilgrims' Way Primary School URN100818
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.

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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with centre users, centre staff, school staff and representatives from the local authority. They also held meetings with the centre's partner organisations including representatives from health, Jobcentre Plus and voluntary organisations.

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

Information about the centre

Pilgrims Way Children's Centre is a phase two centre which was designated in 2007. The centre meets its core purposes and services offered include crèche provision, clinics and other health provision, early years learning activities, adult learning courses, employment support and family support. It is located on the Tustin Estate in the London Borough of Southwark and is part of the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe locality. The centre shares its site with Pilgrims' Way Primary School which provides the governance of the centre on behalf of the local authority. Governance is through the school governing body, which is supported by an advisory board. The headteacher of the school has overall responsibility for the centre which is managed by a centre manager who was appointed in September 2011. The centre is on the borders of Peckham and New Cross and also located adjacent to one of London's main arterial roads, the Old Kent Road. As a result, a significant number of users live outside the reach area, including a number of families from the London Borough of Lewisham. The area is characterised by social housing, tower block housing and also temporary hostel accommodation.

There are 560 children living in the reach area. Most families in the area are from minority ethnic groups who speak a wide range of languages. The reach area is characterised by significant need. The number of children eligible for free school

meals within the school is 50%. All four Super Output Areas in the area fall into the 10 to 15% most deprived in England. Around 44% of children under five years old live in poverty. The most recent local authority data suggest that 33% of children from the reach area live in households reliant on workless benefits. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to early years provision are below the levels typically seen 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

Pilgrims' Way Children's Centre is a thriving centre that serves its community well. It is successfully fulfilling its mission to improve the lives of families. The centre is inclusive and welcoming. It promotes equality well and seeks out opportunities to remove any barriers that could inhibit access to services such as for those families at an early stage of learning to speak English. Staff are fully committed to raising aspirations and to helping families see a future beyond their immediate circumstances.

Families feel safe at the centre and also feel valued. Through volunteering on the advisory board and the parents' forum, parents make a positive contribution to the work of the centre and local community. Safeguarding practice is effective and is an integral part of the centre's work. Staff and parents have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures.

Outcomes for families are good in all aspects. This is evident from data about breastfeeding and obesity which clearly show that health outcomes for both parents and children are good. Through effective partnership work, the centre offers good quality health services including clinics, healthy eating support and exercise sessions such as 'Family Zumba'. However, the local authority is not yet able to supply the centre with new birth data. This restricts the speed with which families with new

babies register with the centre, as centre staff do not always know where families are to enable them to make contact.

Evaluations of activities by parents and partners also confirm the positive impact of the centre's work. Monitoring and tracking of the educational achievement of children who attend the centre show they make good progress. However, children from the reach area attend over 30 schools within the borough and elsewhere. The centre has not yet developed methods to track the progress of children who attend all schools beyond the reach area.

Other aspects of the centre's work, such as activities to promote economic well-being, are successful and enable parents to progress into volunteering, employment or in many cases to become work ready. Parents also receive good quality advice and guidance about welfare benefits.

The quality and range of services offered at the centre are good. Activities to promote learning are a key aspect of the centre's work. These include sessions such as 'Let's Get Messy' and targeted programmes that promote enjoyment and achievement for children. In addition, parents benefit from accredited adult learning courses that offer them good opportunities to gain work-related qualifications or qualifications that offer progression routes on to further learning.

Families were very keen to share their experiences of being supported by the centre with inspectors. Their personal testimonies and case studies confirm that the centre offers good quality support and care. The quality of information and advice to parents is also good. However, the centre's promotion of two-year-old funding to support childcare needs is not sufficiently developed.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Performance management is effective and incorporates key objectives for staff which are used to drive improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels have a clear vision for the centre and this is reflected well in the centre's development strategy. Data show that over time, and particularly since the arrival of the new manager, the centre has made significant progress in improving outcomes for families. This progress is clearly linked to the centre's effective self-evaluation process which leads to improvement. The centre's capacity to sustain improvement is good.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Work with the local authority and health services to ensure that new birth data are made available quickly.
- With the local authority, seek to promote the two-year-old funding that is available to local families.
- Develop and implement systematic ways to track and monitor the progress and achievement of children when they move on to other education settings.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

The centre's work to promote good health is effective and, as a result, most families participate in some form of health-related activity. Families develop a good understanding of how healthy eating, exercise and other activities can promote their emotional and physical health. Health services are responsive to families' needs. Breastfeeding rates at six to eight weeks are 86% and significantly higher than the national average. Data also show that obesity rates, at 7.1%, are well below the national average.

The centre and its partner organisations have a good understanding of how to keep families safe, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. They routinely and effectively use the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to identify needs. Through effective partnership work with social care teams, the centre contributes to the positive outcomes experienced by families whose children are on child protection plans or identified as children in need. Case study evidence shows that parents' attendance on parenting courses improves their parenting skills and their understanding of how to keep their children safe. Parents' competence to deal with safety issues is also enhanced by their good attendance on courses such as Save a Baby's Life Paediatric First Aid Training.

Children who attend the centre make a good transition to school and develop good skills for the future. In the reach area, the percentage of children who achieve 78+ points across the Early Years Foundation Stage profile has increased significantly. For example, in 2011/12 it was 66% which is higher than the national average. Courses such as Early Years Foundation Stage for Parents are instrumental in helping parents become better equipped to support their children's learning and development. Although the most recent data show the achievement gap has widened, detailed scrutiny of data and monitoring of the performance of individual children by both centre and school staff have identified what actions need to be taken to narrow the gap. However, they have yet to develop methods to track the progress and achievement of children when they move on to other early years' settings.

Parents from key target groups, such as lone parents and those from workless households, make good progress with their learning. Many parents have achieved qualifications from courses such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Best Start for Babies. Their personal development is also good and in some cases excellent. Through the qualifications they gain, parents improve their employability. Through their strong links with Jobcentre Plus, the centre offers good support and advice to help parents become work ready. This is particularly beneficial to parents from key target groups such as those from workless households. In addition, as a result of the skills they acquire from courses such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), parents become better equipped for the workplace.

Children behave well in the centre and together with their parents contribute in a

positive way to the work of the centre. Parents are well represented on the advisory board and, through their participation on the parents' forum, are actively involved in decision making. For example, they routinely contribute suggestions for adult learning courses. Other parents have made significant progress and trained as volunteers to support family learning within prisons.

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

Centre staff have a good understanding of their local community and its needs. As a result of this good assessment, there is an appropriate balance between universal and targeted services. Provision is very responsive to the needs of key target groups, such as those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. For example, in response to the emotional needs of these parents and in conjunction with the school, the centre now offers a targeted counselling service. Data show that overall participation rates are high and since the arrival of a new manager have more than doubled. Contact rates with children and adults have also increased significantly, including the participation of key target groups such as lone parents and those from workless households. The centre's outreach strategy is effective in attracting new families to the centre. However, the lack of new birth data restricts the centre's ability to make timely contact with families with a new baby.

The promotion of learning underpins the centre's work. The range of accredited courses offered to parents is particularly good and is highly valued by those parents who have never received any formal recognition for their learning. Their educational achievements are celebrated well through events such as an awards ceremony which included presentations from the local mayor. On courses, data show that take-up rates from target groups such as lone parents and those from minority ethnic groups are good. Through the centre's partnership links with adult learning providers, parents benefit from a wide range of courses that promote personal development

and offer progression routes on to further learning. These courses are well planned and take account of parents' individual learning needs and goals. Provision for children is equally well planned to promote enjoyment and achievement and appropriately linked to Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes.

'I would pull my hair out if the centre was not here' and 'The centre is a back-up system for me when I'm feeling depressed' are just two of the numerous comments which exemplify the good quality of care offered to parents. Overall support for parents is good and in some cases outstanding. For families whose particular circumstances make them vulnerable, such as those with no recourse to public funds or those living in temporary hostel accommodation, centre staff and their partners are particularly skilful in identifying the most appropriate resources to help them. As a result of the good support and care they receive, parents develop effective coping skills and look to the future with confidence. The overall quality of information and advice available to families is good. However, the centre's promotion of two-year-old funding to support childcare needs is not sufficiently developed.

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

The energetic and persistent efforts of leadership and management have been instrumental in transforming the centre from one with low participation rates to a very busy and effective centre. Leaders are exceptionally skilled at relationship building and have invested well in developing productive partnerships with representatives from a range of voluntary and statutory organisations. These partners contribute well to providing services for families. As a result of good management of resources, positive outcomes and effective partnership work, value for money is good.

Governance and accountability through the advisory board and the local authority are effective and offer both support and challenge to the centre. The improvement strategy is effective and this is evident from the improving outcomes and participation rates. Self-evaluation is a rigorous process that generates an effective development plan which successfully identifies key priorities for the centre. The centre manager has set ambitious targets and identified what action needs to be taken to help the centre progress further.

Inclusion and equality underpin the work of the centre. Centre staff have a good understanding of the barriers within the community that create inequalities and take appropriate action to reduce those barriers. Diversity is actively celebrated and activities such as 'Whippersnappers', which incorporates African music, reflect the cultural interests of many families within the community. Support for disabled children and also for their parents is good.

Centre staff view safeguarding as a high priority and statutory requirements are well met. Recruitment checks and vetting are appropriately carried out and safeguarding practice is continually being reviewed and refined. For example, the centre was specially selected by the local authority to participate in a social care pilot project. This has led to improvements in the way social care teams work in partnership with children's centres across the borough. Signposting, referrals and multi-agency work are effectively used to ensure families are protected. Early intervention is a priority and activated through the centre's use of the authority's 'Early Help' service and 'Early Help' panels. Families affected by domestic violence also benefit from targeted support. In addition, a 'domestic survivors' group supports the recovery process for these families.

Parents are highly valued as key partners in the centre's work and user engagement is good. They contribute well to decision making, surveys and evaluation of the centre's work. Parents also contribute in other ways to the wider agenda for children's centres by, for example, participating in work to develop the local authority's Children and Young People's plan. Satisfaction rates from families are high and outreach work is effective in encouraging families to attend. Parents also contribute in a meaningful way to the centre's work through their commitment and ongoing review of their Parents' and Carers' Charter which reflects their strong commitment to the values and goals of 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	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 agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the	2

integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	
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

Findings from the inspection of Pilgrims' Way Primary School.

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 Pilgrims Way Children's Centre on 23–24 January 2013. We judged the centre as good overall.

Many thanks to all of you who contributed to the inspection. We were pleased to meet so many of you during our visit. We are particularly grateful to those of you who made a special effort to meet us.

You told us how much the centre has helped you, particularly when life has been difficult for you and your families. We found that your centre offers good, and in some cases excellent, support and care to families when these situations arise. Centre staff also do their best to ensure your centre is a welcoming place that offers opportunities for families from all backgrounds to succeed.

The quality of advice and information, offered not just by staff but also the partner organisations they work with, is generally good. However, we have asked centre staff to work with the local authority to provide more information about special funding that can help those of you who have two-year-old children.

We were impressed with the range of opportunities you and your children have to learn. Your attendance on courses such as ICT and Best Start for Babies is good and we have to congratulate those of you who have already received certificates for your learning. Many of these courses are also helping you to become better prepared for employment.

Your children are also making good progress with their learning and are well prepared for school because of your centre's work. However, we have asked the centre to do more to monitor the progress of children when they transfer to other schools.

Many of you contribute in a positive way to the work of the centre through your roles on the advisory board and parents' forum. Your ideas and suggestions contribute well to the continuous improvements that are made in your centre's work. We were impressed by the 'Parents' and Carers' charter' that you have produced.

Your centre's work to promote health and safety is also one of its key strengths. Safeguarding is very much a top priority for all staff and also for the partner organisations that work with them. Many of you enjoy activities like 'Family Zumba' but have also benefited from the wide range of healthy eating activities that are available. Statistics show that the health of the community is improving and your centre is making a significant contribution to this improvement. We believe that health outcomes can be even better if your centre is given more statistics about new births in the area. This is why we have asked managers within the local authority and your centre to work with health services to obtain these statistics.

Once again, many thanks for taking the time to speak to us during the inspection. We wish you and your families the very best for the future.

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