

Inspection report for Konstam Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Camden
Inspection number	404427
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2013
Reporting inspector	Marianick Ellender-Gelé HMI

Interim Centre leader	Paulette Dallas
Locality Manager	Liam Hall
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	75 Chester Road Camden N19 5DH
Telephone number	020 7272 3594
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	Paulette.dallas@camden.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Konstam Children's Centre Early Years provision EY100599, inspected 16 June 2009

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: February 2013



Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer communication

361

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 2013



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 interim leader of the children's centre, the Kentish Town East locality manager, the senior family support manager, employability and housing staff, health professionals, local authority representatives, parents and carers, the chair and members of the locality advisory board and front-line staff. They observed the centre's work, looked at a range of relevant documentation and talked with children in the early years provision.

Information about the centre

This is a phase one centre which was designated in 2004. Konstam Children's Centre is in the Kentish Town East locality made up of three wards, Highgate, Kentish Town and Cantelowes. About 2,005 children aged under five live in this locality and 565 children live in the reach area for Konstam Children's Centre. The centre is managed by Camden Local Authority. Leadership arrangements are jointly overseen by a children's centre leader, who manages the integrated care and early years education aspects, and a locality manager responsible for ensuring delivery of all other locality services, either directly or through partnership or commissioning arrangements. A senior family support manager oversees family support, home visiting, access to employment and information for parents and carers. Agar and Brecknock Children's Centres are the other two children's centres located in the Kentish Town East locality and they share many of the same staff including the locality manager and family support workers. Governance arrangements reflect this model, with one advisory board representing the Kentish Town East locality. The advisory board consists of key partners including agency representatives, parents and the local authority. The leader of centre is currently interim and also manages Harmood Children's Centre situated in the Kentish Town West locality.

Kentish Town East is an ethnically diverse locality. A similar proportion of families that live in the locality are from White European, Bangladeshi and Black African heritage. The centre serves an area where 30% of children live in poverty and 18% live in workless households claiming benefits. Three of Camden's large housing estates are in the locality and many low income families live in council tenancies. Families in the reach area face important issues, in particular overcrowding and lack of reasonably priced accommodation.

The centre has on-site early years provision which is registered for a maximum of 69 children aged from four months to five years. This was judged to be outstanding when last inspected in June 2009. Children in the centre's reach area enter early years education with skills, knowledge and abilities that are in line with those expected for their age.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for families

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

'This is an excellent place to come every week; the staff are so warm and they've got it just right.' 'I have had four children through the centre and the older ones love to come back to say hello.' 'The staff make me feel normal and do not judge me.' These comments sum up the views expressed by many parents and help to explain why Konstam Children's Centre is a good and improving centre. Several of its features are outstanding. The good quality of the provision is a result of the commitment of the staff and professional partners and the drive of the senior Kentish Town East locality team. Staff morale is high and there is a positive and lively atmosphere in the place. Good partnership work ensures that services are well integrated and cohesive. Relationships between agencies are highly professional with effective transfer of information to ensure the needs of families are met quickly, particularly at times of crisis.

Outcomes for children and families are good and improving. The centre is outstanding in keeping children safe and protected and in developing positive relationships with families most in need of help. The highest priority is given to safeguarding all children and their families and the quality of care, guidance and

support provided is excellent. As one parent reported, 'I had nothing when I arrived; the family support workers help me here with all the things I need for my child who is disabled.' The range of provision on offer meets the needs of families because parents have equal access to activities and excellent support anywhere in the Kentish Town East locality regardless of their background or where they live.

There are opportunities for parents to express their views and they are becoming more effectively involved in decision making through regular coffee mornings and parents' meetings. The advisory board is very open to parents' views and is chaired by a committed parent who has a deep knowledge of the community. There is scope, however, to increase the role of parents so that the views of more families, particularly those with high levels of needs, directly influence the development of services. Children are generally healthy and well prepared for school. Transition arrangements with local primary schools are excellent. Parents receive good advice to access training courses, secure benefits and embark on qualifications to return to work. At present, the centre has insufficient robust data to track the progress children make once they are in the primary schools and to evaluate the effectiveness of adult learning providers and Jobcentre Plus in ensuring that families sustain their economic well-being.

Considering that outcomes are good and improving, together with its other strengths, particularly the promotion of equal access for all and the very good partnership working to protect families and keep children safe, the centre has good capacity to improve further.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Make better use of data to assess the impact of the collaboration with adult learning providers and Jobcentre Plus and to track children's individual progress as they grow up so that parents' economic well-being and children's learning become outstanding.
- Increase the engagement of families in contributing to the governance of the centre to influence its work and improve provision further.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Many children start attending the centre with their parents or childminders from the time they are babies. The centre encourages families to use the drop-in sessions for ante-natal support and many new mothers attend the baby feeding groups run in partnership with the health team. There is good advice on speech and language development to help children develop their talking skills. Good health advice, in collaboration with family support workers, is given to mothers particularly those at risk of isolation. Healthy lifestyles and healthy eating are promoted well and early referral to health professionals ensures that families who may be more vulnerable

than others are appropriately supported. A specific effort is currently being made to improve dental health and reduce obesity. Young toddlers were observed learning to develop their coordination and physical skills; they did this very successfully at the 'Soft and Trikey' session. As a result of these initiatives, outcomes for promoting healthy lifestyles and well-being are good.

The extent to which children engage in safe behaviour and develop positive relationships is outstanding. Toddlers, for example, willingly share toys and older children are calm and well mannered. The centre is highly effective in ensuring that families and children keep themselves safe and free from harm. Children's safety in the home is promoted very effectively and a wide range of preventative measures and advice, such as free first-aid kits, ensure that families understand their responsibility for the ongoing safety of their children. The centre is a very safe and welcoming place to be due to the vigilance of all adults. Very effective use of the Common Assessment Framework process and 'team around the child' approach ensure that early help is provided to families before situations reach crisis point. Links with health visitors and housing officers are particularly strong. Several parents commented on the excellent coordination between professionals so that they did not have to repeat their life story numerous times.

The stimulating range of learning and playing activities ensures that enjoyment is high. Children demonstrate skills that broadly match the expectation for their age, and some have above average levels of understanding. There are good opportunities for parents, carers, childminders and children to play and learn together. Parents, including fathers at the 'Bring Dad to Nursery Day', enjoy opportunities to engage in their children's play and gain an understanding of how to support their learning. For example, parents said that they feel more willing now to allow 'Messy Play' at home. The professionals at the centre have an in-depth knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Activities are vibrant and planned with children's development and learning in mind. There is strong evidence that children are well prepared to settle and develop friendships when they start formal schooling. Equal access and opportunity for all are central to the centre's work. This is exemplified by the good work to engage families who have disabled children or those with special educational needs in specific events and drop-ins. One parent told inspectors that the centre had been a life-saver and that it had changed her life '100% for the better'.

Children and families show high levels of respect, care and concern for others. Parents, carers and childminders have opportunities to express their views, including parents from target groups. These include direct links with the advisory board and regular evaluations of activities. As a result, drop-ins or specific cultural and learning events are being adapted to ensure an even better match with the needs of families. This work, however, requires consolidation to increase the engagement of more families and make Konstam Children's Centre even better.

The centre helps to promote economic stability, for example by supporting mothers in attending training courses, securing benefits and managing tight budgets. Through a number of case studies, inspectors saw how specific families whose first language

is not English are helped to access services, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses. There is good access to crèches for mothers who wish to train or study. The local authority, through the work of the centre, ensures that there are sufficient childminders of high quality in the area for parents who wish to return to work.

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	1
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

The children's centre provides good quality services with outstanding care, guidance and support. The use of the Common Assessment Framework is well embedded and strong partnerships with a range of agencies ensure that welfare assessments of children are robust. There are clear programmes in place to promote the health and social well-being of children and a strong emphasis on addressing the emotional and mental health needs of families, particularly of expecting and new mothers. The centre works very well with family support workers, the housing service and a women's refuge to support families with high levels of needs, such as those who have children on a child protection plan or families having difficulties with their accommodation. Mothers receive very good advice and support to focus on the needs of their children when faced with highly challenging trauma, such as bereavement or domestic violence. Childcare providers are encouraged to share good practice so that all become good or outstanding.

There are many examples of good quality outreach and support work, including one-to-one care for mothers suffering post-natal depression, bespoke advice for single mothers as well as parenting classes where staff provide excellent role models for parents and carers. The centre is very aware of the difficulties and challenges faced by some families within its reach area, including the specific needs of families from minority ethnic groups. Sessions, such as 'Mabel's Minor Monster', 'Baby Boost' and the 'KIDS' drop-in for disabled children, offer some well-targeted support. Parents

told inspectors that there is always someone to talk to at the centre and that they feel valued and listened to by everyone they speak to. Personal development and achievement are celebrated through individual accreditations or specific events, such as the childminders' celebration evenings.

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

Leadership and management are consistently good and are outstanding in relation to safeguarding and equality of opportunity. The 'Welcome Calls' are particular successful at ensuring that families, regardless of their background or circumstances, are made aware of what Konstam Children's Centre has to offer. The inclusion of all children and families is threaded through the centre's work. Last summer a very successful event on Hampstead Heath brought a very large number of families together and 'the Inflatable Stonehenge' to celebrate the Olympics was extremely well attended; one parent told inspectors it was 'brilliant'.

Senior leaders of the Kentish Town East locality have a clear vision for the development of the centre and its purpose in improving the life chances of children and their families. Staff changes, particularly the interim arrangements for the leader of the centre, have been managed very sensitively and parents said that everything continued to run smoothly. Staff report that relationships between staff and key agencies are excellent and that everyone pulls together to improve outcomes for children. The centre focuses on activities that are sustainable and the fact that parents can access facilities across the locality is efficient, leading to good value for money. However, the centre is not tracking sufficiently the impact of its work on developing employability skills, training or further learning of the families in its reach area.

Staff have a good understanding of the strengths in provision and where further improvements can be made. For example, the locality manager and the leader of centre keep a close eye on take-up of drop-in sessions and they check the quality of commissioned services to remedy any gaps or weaknesses. Self-evaluation is robust and accurate although senior staff are not using some of the available information sufficiently well to assess children's progress towards outstanding learning and to evaluate the economic independence and well-being of families. Staff training and regular supervision enable high levels of professional expertise and the sharing of

good practice. There are excellent arrangements in place to safeguard children, families and staff. The procedures for vetting staff are robust and relevant training is up to date. All staff are highly vigilant in identifying and responding to any potential dangers that parents, carers and children may encounter. Robust protocols for sharing information with social services, together with strong partnership working, ensure that children and families with high levels of need are prioritised effectively.

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	1
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

Inspectors looked at the inspection outcomes for the early years provision inspected in 2009. It was judged to be outstanding. Inspectors also looked at the outcomes of the inspection of Harmood Children's Centre because the interim leader of Konstam Children's Centre also leads Harmood Children's Centre. The latter was inspected in September 2012 and judged to be good with some outstanding features.

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 Konstam Children's Centre on 30–31 January 2013. We judged the centre as good overall.

As part of the inspection we visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's documentation, and talked with a range of children and adults including parents and staff, community representatives, family support workers and health professionals. We were pleased to speak to so many of you about the centre's work and to listen to your views. We really enjoyed talking to you around the centre or in the locality and seeing the various activity sessions you were engaged in. You expressed your views very clearly and we appreciated your straight talking in telling us how things really are. This is what we found out.

First, and most importantly, we are pleased to tell you that the centre provides good support to you and your families. The centre does some things very well, such as the way everybody works together to support all families equally and the way you and your children are encouraged to keep safe. You told us that you and your children are very well cared for and that you are supported extremely well and we agree with you. We were pleased to hear that more of you are coming to the centre, making new friends and getting involved but we have asked the centre to improve this to make sure that more families really help to develop the services on offer. You told us that the staff are like friends to you and that you have complete and utter trust in them to look after your children.

The centre works hard with the pre-school and the local primary schools so that your children are ready to succeed in their educational achievements. Staff are helping to increase your knowledge about play and how children learn through the many stay and play activities and parenting sessions, which you told us are fun and worthwhile. We also know that many of you have learnt about breastfeeding, nutrition and cooking healthy meals through a range of activities and discussions.

We were delighted to see that the centre is making a real difference to improving your welfare and to hear how much more confident you feel as parents when you encounter challenges or difficulties in your lives. You told us about the families you had met through the centre's activities and the range of outings you can enjoy. It was very encouraging to see that so many of you feel less isolated in the community by either having one-to-one support or by coming into the centre and getting involved. We were also very pleased to hear that some of you have been helped to undertake training which may help you get back into employment.

You told us that the staff always go that extra mile for you and it was clear to us that they are working very hard to make the centre as good as it can be. To help them we have suggested that they look more closely at how your children make progress in their learning, particularly as the centre is really keen to become outstanding. We have also asked that the centre looks at its work with adult learning and Jobcentre Plus to check what happens to those of you who are on training schemes and

learning opportunities or want to gain the skills needed for employment. By doing this the centre will be in a stronger position to show how well it is doing and will be able to plan even better things for you.

Thank you once again for your welcome and your willingness to talk to us. We wish you every success in the future.

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