

Inspection report for Ivydale Children's Centre

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Local authority | London Borough of Southwark |
| Inspection number | 410956 |
| Inspection dates | 6–7 March 2013 |
| Reporting inspector | Joan Lindsay |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Centre leader | Miles Smith |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Centre address | Ivydale Road Nunhead London SW15 3BU |
| Telephone number | 020 7639 2702 |
| Fax number | 020 7635 8218 |
| Email address | office@ivydale.southwark.sch.uk |

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Linked school if applicable | Ivydale Primary School URN 100796 |
| 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.

Report published: March 2013



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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the, centre leader and staff, the headteacher of Ivydale Primary school, representatives from the local authority, and the advisory board. They also spoke to partner representatives from health and family support agencies, parents and other users of the centre.

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

Information about the centre

This phase two centre was designated in September 2009 and meets the full core purpose. It is located in the grounds of Ivydale Primary School. The centre leader is the assistant headteacher of the school. The governing body manages the centre on behalf of the local authority. An advisory board was established in 2010. Services are available from 9am until 6pm Monday to Friday and on alternate Saturdays, all year apart from Christmas and bank holidays. Services are also delivered from four other venues in the local area, including Peckham Rye Children's Playrooms and the library.

The centre serves an area of mixed economic and social backgrounds with 32% of children living in households dependent on workless benefits, which is above the national average, and 23.5% are considered to be living in poverty. Of the six Lower Super Output Areas in the reach area, three are ranked in the top 30% most deprived in England. The area is ethnically diverse with 58% of families from Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, the largest of which are Black or Black British families. English as a first language is spoken by 89% of children in the reach area. White or White British heritage families account for approximately 42% of the population.

There are 1,020 children aged under five years living in the reach area, an increase of 20% since 2007; 65% are registered at, and have contact with, the centre. Children’s skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to early years provision are typically in line with the level 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

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding children’s centre that provides an excellent service to the large majority of families in the local area. The commitment and passion of all those connected with the centre to improve the lives of local families has resulted in outstanding outcomes across all aspects. Families feel exceptionally well cared for, safeguarded and supported. They have very high levels of trust in staff. As a consequence of their appreciation of the centre’s work, they are fully involved in their centre, through the very proactive parents’ forum, serving on the advisory board and supporting and respecting each other. Many said they felt privileged to be part of the centre and indebted to staff. The achievement of adults has been a notable success, with many going on to gain qualifications, skills and employment. Consequently, for many, there have been significant improvements in their economic and social well-being.

Families have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives and this is reflected in outcomes that are amongst the best in the borough. In addition, the progress that children make from their starting points is outstanding, with the centre’s innovative tracking showing that those who accessed the centre do particularly well in their later education. Parents recognise this and have very high levels of satisfaction with the services. This is reflected in the popularity of the groups and the unanimously positive comments made during the inspection such as ‘I can’t ask for more, they are doing so much.’ A wealth of courses and guidance to support parenting skills gives families an excellent understanding of how to keep their children safe and encourage their development.

Excellent partnerships are also key to the centre's positive impact on families' lives. Through the sharing of information and expertise, especially with the link school, the most effective tailored support can be galvanised rapidly to meet specific, often complex family needs. The centre is very proactive in responding to the needs of the most vulnerable and outreach work has been a crucial element of this. Services are provided throughout the reach area to ensure families can access the centre's support. For example, the new venue at Peckham Rye is already providing a range of services, including for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs, with parents talking about the 'buzz' that is there already.

The centre is very proactive in moving things forward and seeing any problems as 'challenges to be met'. For example, staff developed their own tracking and data systems to help assess local needs. However the action plan, while having appropriate key priorities, does not use this data consistently or always set defined timescales by which targets should be met. Nevertheless, there is a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development, no sense of complacency, and excellent leadership and management at all levels. Consequently, the centre has an outstanding capacity to sustain improvements because the pursuit of excellence is palpable in all it does and this has already had a significant impact on outcomes across all aspects.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Enable the centre's impact to be measured more accurately by ensuring the action plan includes targets that are measurable by using available data and laying down a time frame by which they should be met.

How good are outcomes for families?

| |
|----------|
| 1 |
|----------|

Key indicators for childhood obesity, which at 5% is the lowest in the borough and well below national levels, sustained breastfeeding rates at an excellent 85% and immunisation rates of 87% reflect the centre's strong focus on improving families' health. The very large majority of families engage with health services, helped by drop-ins from specialists such as health visitors, speech and language therapists, and dieticians. Swimming lessons, dance and 'Ready, Steady Cook' sessions all successfully encourage active, healthy lives and parents are unanimous that the centre's work has had a tremendous impact on how they lead their lives. Bonding with new babies and emotional health are improved significantly through baby massage and specialist support, with many parents stating that centre staff had very quickly spotted when this help was required.

The most vulnerable children and adults are exceptionally well safeguarded. Highly effective support packages ensure that outcomes for most children subject to child protection plans, or looked after children, are excellent. Staff are very experienced in the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), using it to galvanise speedy and well-integrated support. There are very low numbers of emergency hospital

admissions in the area. Parents have many opportunities to extend their knowledge to keep their children safe through first-aid courses, help with managing behaviour and events such as 'Crossing the Road Safely'. The many parents spoken to during the inspection stated that they had complete confidence in the 'brilliant and helpful' staff and felt able to discuss any concerns, however sensitive. Their confidence in protecting their children has been greatly enhanced through contact with the centre.

Children make excellent progress as a result of well-planned sessions that focus strongly on their early development. Highly enjoyable and popular Stay and Play, Music and Movement and Book Start groups are used to develop all the skills needed to support the move to school. Children's independence and confidence are enhanced as they can choose to play outside, create colourful artwork, or sit quietly with books, during which time staff and parents engage with them very well. Activities develop their speaking and listening skills extremely well. Children's behaviour is exceptional as a result of the high expectations modelled so positively by staff. The centre leader is also the link school's early years manager and his expertise has been vital in ensuring children make excellent progress. Tracking of children reinforces this, as do the Early Years Foundation Stage results. These show that 81% in the reach area and 97.5% of those in the link school, where the majority of children who have accessed the centre attend, attained a good level of development. Although the achievement gap between the lowest 20% and the rest widened marginally in 2012, the centre was quick to analyse this information and to conclude that very few children did not reach the expected level for their age.

An exceptional number have engaged in adult learning with 339 individuals (over half of registered adults) attending courses in the last six months alone. A high proportion of those are fully committed to long NVQ courses such as childcare levels 2 and 3, run at the centre. The results are outstanding for parents, with many going on to employment. The centre tracks their achievements in the longer term, encouraging further education and building confidence, language and practical skills. Consequently, many parents also make a very positive contribution to the centre, with high numbers attending the parents' forum, very good representation from different target groups on the advisory board and an exceptional number of volunteers. Their views are listened to and acted on, resulting in, for example, setting up a Muslim women's group. The centre never loses sight of its role to support the most vulnerable, and ensures their needs are met through targeted services and advice from partners such as the charity Cambridge House, which provides benefits and legal advice. It also works very closely with childminders to enhance their skills and provide childcare options for parents. Hence, the extent to which families' economic and social well-being is enhanced is outstanding.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| <p>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</p> | <p>1</p> |
|---|-----------------|

| | |
|--|----------|
| 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

How good is the provision?

| |
|----------|
| 1 |
|----------|

The range of services meets families' needs extremely well because staff have an excellent understanding of the community. The location of the main centre building makes it hard for some families to reach so activities also take place in the local library, another school and on two of the largest estates, with one of those groups restricted to local residents. The new accommodation at Peckham Rye, acquired in November 2012, is already attracting large numbers to 'Stay and Play', the special educational needs play session and childminders' drop-in. One parent summed up parental satisfaction by saying, 'It has already had the Ivydale magic wand waved over it!' The numbers accessing the centre are growing swiftly with 17,000 contacts last year, but there are safeguards put in place to ensure that those who need the services most always have a place. Consequently, all target groups are fully engaged, with parents stating, 'Since I started to come here, I don't want to go anywhere else.'

The outstanding successes of many parents in securing jobs, additional education and in their general confidence levels is testament to the way the centre celebrates achievement and raises aspirations. Awards evenings for adults, children's learning journeys and the 'Discoverers, Explorers and Investigators' books, recording achievements in groups, all ensure families can take pride in what they and their children achieve. Excellent planning for sessions and highly skilled staff ensure that outcomes are excellent for adults and children.

Parents rightly describe the levels of care, guidance and support as excellent and say that the outreach worker 'must be one of triplets, because he is everywhere!' Excellent partnerships with health, the new early help teams in the local authority which disseminate cases where specific support is required, and a very wide variety of charities and other agencies ensure that families receive very specific and effective support. This is especially appreciated by parents in times of crisis such as when they have no funds or they are suffering mental health problems. They are fully confident they can turn to the centre for support and, as a result, see the outstanding benefits to their families across all outcome areas.

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 | 1 |
| The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups | 1 |
| The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups | 1 |

How effective are the leadership and management?

| |
|----------|
| 1 |
|----------|

Very high aspirations, an extremely proactive approach to challenges and excellent teamwork from totally committed staff explain why the outcomes for families are outstanding. Leaders and managers at all levels strive to achieve the best for families, especially for the most vulnerable. The advisory board is fully involved, not only in supporting the centre, but also in challenging and reviewing its work. Self-evaluation is rigorous because there is very extensive monitoring and tracking. However, a commendable lack of complacency leads to some over-modest judgements in relation to the centre's impact on its community. Staff are very clear about the key priorities for the centre, although the action plan is not consistent in using data to measure how successful the centre is or to set timeframes for all targets to be achieved.

Value for money is outstanding because the centre meets the needs of families, especially those deemed most in need of support, to an exceptional degree. This is achieved thanks to very creative deployment of the small staff team, using community venues and excellent partnerships. Consequently, although the centre is small, it is engaging the large majority of families in its area as well as a significant number who travel some distance to benefit from its services.

Many families spoke about how inclusive, friendly and welcoming the centre is, comparing it to a 'big family'. Families from different social, ethnic and economic backgrounds feel very comfortable there and appreciate how other cultures are celebrated very meaningfully, such as through Black History Month and Eid. Children and adults with disabilities are included exceptionally well, with special provision made at groups open to all, and also specific sessions such as the 'SEN group'. A workshop for parents to learn Makaton was hugely popular. 'I belong...it's like my team here' sums up how fathers feel very much a part of the centre. A good number access weekday events and the very popular fortnightly 'Saturday Stay and Play' for fathers and male carers. The generous provision of crèches at many of the courses and workshops ensure that parents are supported in being able to access them and children benefit from high-quality provision from crèche workers, many of whom are parents who were trained and subsequently employed by the centre.

Safeguarding arrangements, including policies, training and staff expertise are outstanding and filter through all the centre's work. Excellent channels of

communication, especially with the link school, ensure any possible concerns can be addressed quickly. Vulnerable children’s interests are met fully because of the way staff are skilled in using CAFs and enlisting the support of the excellent partnerships that are in place, including those with health professionals and groups such as ‘KIDS’ for children with specific needs. Everyone working with the centre, including other agencies, have appropriate Criminal Records Bureau checks carried out. Robust risk assessments and high levels of security to access the centre provide excellent physical safety so that all of those spoken to or surveyed by the centre feel completely safe and cared for there.

Relationships between all key partners, including parents who use the centre, are very well established and highly productive. Parents’ views and those of other users of the centre, such as childminders, are entirely positive, as are those of partners spoken to during the inspection. This is reiterated in the local authority’s annual ‘Snap Shot’ survey, completed by a large proportion of families representing all target groups. Children’s views are also taken into account very effectively through observing what they enjoy and getting feedback from parents. For example, a great interest in hedgehogs meant this theme continued for as long as the children were keen to learn! Being so involved in shaping the services and having such successfully integrated partnerships has had an exceptional impact on outcomes for families.

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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

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

The findings of the last inspection of Ivydale Primary School conducted in October 2012 were taken into account in relation to the safeguarding, leadership and management judgments and attainment on entry information.

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 Ivydale Children's Centre on 6–7 March 2013. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

We thoroughly enjoyed our time at your centre. Thank you for being involved in the inspection and for taking the time to tell us about the centre's work and how very positive you are about how staff have helped you and your children. It was very enjoyable and useful to visit the activities taking place, such as the various 'Stay and Play' groups and the Muslim women's group. Thank you for welcoming us so warmly into your sessions.

Excellent leadership and management of the centre are at the core of why the centre is so successful, leading to an outstanding service being provided for the large majority of families in the local community. The very strong partnerships that have been forged, especially with Ivydale Primary School, your excellent support and participation, and a very clear and accurate understanding of the community's needs all help the centre to achieve outstanding outcomes, especially for those of you who most need it. Many of you told us that you feel privileged to be part of this children's centre and indebted to the staff. 'I'm really surprised they care so much,' summed up the views of many of you.

The way you are helped to understand how to lead healthy lives and to keep your children safe is clearly reflected in things like very low levels of childhood obesity, and very high levels of breastfeeding and immunisation rates. Lots of parenting courses or opportunities to improve your skills, such as in first aid, all add to how well you are able to keep your children safe. You all have extremely high levels of trust and confidence in the staff, with many of you sharing experiences of how they had noticed when you needed help or were able to respond quickly to specific problems. You really appreciate how hard the staff work on your behalf, with some wondering if the outreach worker is 'one of triplets because he is everywhere!' Many of you play a valuable role in the centre through the very active parents' forum, sitting on the advisory board or taking on volunteering roles. For many, linking this

to the excellent range of courses, such as NVQs in childcare, has led to employment and dramatic changes to you and your families' lives.

Children who come to the centre make excellent progress because there is such a strong focus on their early development through highly skilled staff and very productive links with Ivydale Primary School. Plus, they enjoy all the activities on offer indoors and out! Tracking information shows that their skills across all areas are much improved and they settle very quickly because they are familiar with the school. Adults also make excellent progress, with many of you to be congratulated on developing language, computer and work skills. Many of you say you 'would not have dreamed' you could achieve so much. Your lives are also enhanced very well through being able to access specialist help, such as with benefits, or children's specific speech and language or behaviour needs. Children who have more complex needs are now being supported extremely well through the special educational needs 'Stay and Play' group.

The centre is very warm, welcoming and you all show each other very high levels of respect. You describe it like being part of a team or 'one big family'. Because outcomes across the board are outstanding, it gives excellent value for money. The centre has been very successful but staff are still committed to improving even more. To help them do this, we have given them one area for development, which is to ensure that the centre's action plan, where priorities for the future are set out, uses as much information as possible to measure their success.

Thank you again for sharing your views, which we entirely agree with. Please continue to support your centre as well as you do. We wish you all the best for the future.

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