

Loughborough Primary School and Children's Centre

Minet Road, London, SW9 7UA

Inspection date 9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Good	2
The quality of practice and services		Good	2
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a good centre.

- The centre manager and headteacher have a clear focus on continuous improvement. They are challenged and supported effectively by the advisory board. As a result, the centre's reach into its community and the engagement of local families has improved significantly over the last three years.
- Staff know the local area well. This, coupled with the effective use of information which the centre has about its users, ensures that the quality and range of services meets families' needs well. As a result, the centre is working successfully with its main target groups of lone parents, families who are at the early stages of learning English, teenage parents and boys of Black Caribbean heritage.
- Leaders have successfully established a climate of trust with the local community. Consequently, families feel very welcome and most are strongly motivated to use the centre regularly.
- The local authority sets challenging targets and has good systems in place to ensure the centre works consistently towards them. Effective supervision and a carefully considered development plan ensure that the work of the centre improves rapidly and consistently, and that targets for improvement are met.
- Safeguarding arrangements and partnerships are strong aspects of the centre's work. Both have been effective in ensuring that families are well protected and provided with the right help to improve their lives.

It is not outstanding because:

- Not enough fathers and workless adults are in regular contact with the centre. Leaders recognise that the centre's key priority is to meet the needs of these groups more effectively.
- Leaders acknowledge more work is necessary to increase the number of parents more closely involved in setting the centre's future priorities.
- Stronger links are required with training providers to enhance parents' opportunities in securing employment.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. It was carried out at the same time as the inspection of Stockwell Primary School and Children's Centre.

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, the headteacher of the primary school, outreach workers, senior officers from the local authority, and partners from health, education, social services and early years. They also met parents and representatives of the advisory board. The inspectors involved the centre leader and the local authority's strategic lead officer for children's centres in all team meetings.

Inspectors observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation, for example self-evaluation and development planning, a sample of case studies and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt

Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector

Sarah McDermott

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

The centre is managed by Loughborough Primary School on behalf of the local authority. Day-to-day management is the responsibility of the centre manager, who reports directly to the headteacher of the co-located school. The centre is supported by an advisory board, which is a committee of the school's governing body. A range of services are delivered by the centre including health, parent and toddler groups, family support and adult learning.

Loughborough Children's Centre is a phase one centre and part of a cluster of four centres in Lambeth, each with its own separate governance arrangements. The centre shares some services with the other centres, including the Stockwell Children's Centre, which was inspected at the same time under the simultaneous inspection model. The centre's reach area is ethnically diverse. A very large majority of children are of minority ethnic backgrounds and the largest minorities are of Black African and Black Caribbean heritage. The centre's reach area is within the top 20% of the most deprived areas in England. Around 44% of children live in households dependent on unemployment benefits.

Most families live in social housing. The population is transient and many families move out of the area after only a relatively short time. Adult literacy and numeracy skills are low amongst the local population. Most children in the area enter early years provision with skills below that which is typical for their age, with communication, language and literacy being the weakest areas.

The main target groups assessed in need of centre services are lone parents, families living in workless homes, adults who have low levels of literacy, teenage and young parents, fathers, and boys of Black Caribbean heritage.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the engagement of fathers and workless adults by finding out why more of these groups are not accessing services. Use this information to refine services so they meet the needs of these priority groups.
- Further develop the good work already in place to involve a greater number of parents in making decisions about the most important priorities for the centre's improvement.
- Strengthen the links with training providers and provide more opportunities for adults, in particular those from workless homes, to improve their learning and skills and increase their chances of progressing to employment or further education.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The large majority of families in the reach area now regularly attend the centre and the proportion from priority groups, for example lone parents and those who speak English as an additional language, have increased significantly in recent years. This is because leaders use the information which the centre has about its users well to pinpoint where the gaps are and to provide a good range of services to meet the needs of children and families.
- Activities and courses provided by the centre are generally well attended and most adults who join a particular course stay on until the end. For example, 68% of adults from workless homes have had sustained engagement with the centre. This has included participating in activities and benefiting from courses.
- Levels of motivation and achievement are all good. In addition, the centre checks how often families come to each session. This is one indication amongst many of the centre's successful promotion of equality of opportunity.
- Many Black Caribbean families have benefited from attending the Brixton Roots course, where the

focus is on how parents can forge stronger bonds with their children, particularly boys; so that, as one parent put it, 'They remain closer to us than closer to gangs.'

- Apart from the standard ways of reaching out to families, such as posting leaflets, marketing services at school events, visits to pre-schools and local organisations, staff devise creative strategies to draw in more families. 'The purple bus', for example, has been hired by the local authority to promote free early education for disadvantaged two-year-old children, drawing families in through the attraction of a vehicle in which face painting and play activities are offered to young children.
- Although well-regarded programmes, such as a photography course, have been offered in the past to fathers with evidence of good take up rates, engagement of fathers remains below the centre's target for this group.
- Most adults from workless homes have benefited from their participation in parenting programmes and the high quality English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses provided by the centre. However, stronger links are required with training providers to ensure all training opportunities consistently prepare the vast majority of parents for employment. Most three- and four-year-old children entitled to free places attend pre-schools or nurseries because of effective information supplied by the centre. This year, 30 two-year-old children have benefited from good-quality early education provided by the centre. One parent commented how pleased she was in the marked improvements she saw in her two-year-olds social, emotional and communication skills.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- A wide range of high quality and well-matched services are provided to improve families' health and well-being. As a result of effective work with health partners, breastfeeding and immunisation rates are increasing, and childhood obesity levels are decreasing. The good partnership work with linked social workers ensures that vulnerable children are well protected.
- The centre welcomes users from all backgrounds and parents say that staff always make time to discuss their concerns. As a result, a culture of trust has been established and parents are motivated to come back. One parent remarked, 'I dream of coming to the centre every day!'
- The soft play sessions for the under-ones and 'Stay and Play' sessions for older children have a good impact on children's physical development and social skills. In these sessions, staff successfully show adults how to play with children and improve children's well-being. Activities are planned which challenge and interest children appropriately for their stage of development.
- Children achieve well by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, in relation to starting points that are well below those expected for their age. However, those children who have had sustained contact with the centre achieve especially well, having had a strong boost to their learning and development during their time at the centre.
- The achievement of Black Caribbean boys is improving strongly as a result of the centre's focused work; as a result, the gap between this group's attainment and the rest closed in 2012.
- The small number of families who have children with complex additional needs, as well as those who have children with disabilities, are given useful advice and guidance about the multi-agency support available and how to complete a disability living allowance application.
- The centre provides good quality advice on benefits and housing, helping families, particularly lone parents and those from workless homes, to manage a small budget and make ends meet. As a result, these families stay in control of their finances, do not build up debt and benefit from improved well-being.
- Parents from priority groups access a range of well-delivered parenting programmes and other courses provided by commissioned partner organisations across the cluster. The Job Club provides the large majority of adults from workless homes with experiences that build skills, such as writing a curriculum vitae and preparing for a job interview. However, links with local training providers are not fully exploited and the centre has yet to extend further education and employability opportunities to enough adults from this priority group.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The partnership with the primary school is very strong and is underpinned by an effective professional working relationship between the headteacher and centre manager, with a clear joint focus on continuous improvement. The leadership team has an accurate view of where the centre's strengths lie and the areas it needs to develop. This is because the team makes effective use of the information it gathers to show the successful impact of its work, particularly with the families and children in most need, lone parents and boys of Black Caribbean heritage.
- The local authority monitors the performance of the centre effectively to ensure that it meets the locally agreed priorities. These include reducing inequalities by increasing the proportion of families from the agreed priority groups who regularly use the centre.
- The advisory board has a secure understanding of its role and successfully supports and challenges the centre's leaders. As a result, the centre has made good progress in meeting the local authority's key local priorities and the needs of local families. Leaders recognise that further work is needed to increase the reach and deepen the engagement of fathers and adults from workless households. This commitment is embedded in the centre's development plan and the annual targets for staff.
- Resources are used well to meet agreed local priorities and the needs of targeted children through, for example, the use of creative partnership arrangements with clearly defined expectations monitored closely throughout the year.
- Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and well organised. Children subject to child protection arrangements are well supported. The Common Assessment Framework is used well to check the individual needs of vulnerable children and families. A large majority of families identified as being most in need of intervention and support show clear improvement in their parenting skills. This has a very positive impact on reducing the numbers of children identified as being at most risk.
- Most adults help to shape the centre's services through evaluations completed at the end of sessions. Some parents actively contribute to evaluating the centre's progress as members of the advisory board. However, as yet, a greater number of parents do not consistently contribute formally to the centre's decision making about its future development.
- The centre has established a strong track record of continuous improvement, as reflected in the good access and high quality services, underpinned by effective monitoring and self-evaluation. This demonstrates the centre's strong focus on addressing priority areas and supporting on-going improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for children and their families and as a result inequalities are reducing rapidly and gaps are closing.
Grade 2	Good	Practice enables most children and their families to access good quality services that improve children's wellbeing and achieve the stated outcomes for families.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	Performance is not as good as it might reasonably be expected to be in one or more key areas.
Grade 4	Inadequate	The needs of children and families in its area are not being met and/or the leaders and managers are not providing sufficient challenge to bring about improvement to the quality of services.

Children's centre details

Unique reference number	21863
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	427425
Managed by	Loughborough Primary School

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	867
Centre leader	Marie Sinclair
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 7274 8374
Email address	Emauro.208@lgflmail.org

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