

Stockwell Primary School and Children's Centre

Burgoyne Road, Stockwell, London, SW9 9TS

Inspection date 9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Inadequate	4
The quality of practice and services		Inadequate	4
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a centre that is inadequate.

- Some young children and their families are not sufficiently safeguarded. Staff do not always assess and respond quickly enough when they are working with families where there are concerns about a child. They are too slow to provide relevant services for families who need the most help.
- Governance and accountability arrangements are not clear or understood by those who work at the centre. The advisory board does not include a representative of key partners, including health partners or parents. As a result, services are not well planned to meet the needs of the centre's priority groups.
- Senior leaders and managers do not monitor the centre's work with sufficient rigour enough. They are unable to measure whether or not the centre's services make a difference to the lives of children and families.
- The centre is not doing enough to ensure improvements in the quality of the linked early years provision.
- Too few families, including those who need the most help, teenage parents, those with social care involvement and fathers, access the centre. In the last three years access by these groups has steadily fallen and families in the area do not know what the centre has to offer.

This centre has the following strengths:

- The local authority has been working closely with the centre over the last few months to assess its performance and prioritise the key areas for improvement. Targets are now clear; they link to the needs of families based on available information; and contain measureable success criteria. With this support the centre is beginning to improve.
- Sessions such as 'Chattertime' are effective in helping parents to support their children's communication and language development because staff are good role models. The involvement of the speech and language therapist helps to identify children who may be at risk of speech delay.
- Parents have regular access to English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses, which is helping to improve their confidence and fluency in English.

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 Loughborough Primary School and Children's Centre.

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders in the local authority, the executive headteacher, headteacher, core services manager, governors, partner agencies, parents, outreach workers and childcare staff.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation; for example, the centre's self-evaluation, development plan, case files and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Wendy Ratcliff	Her Majesty's Inspector, Lead inspector
Mark Lindfield	Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Stockwell Park Primary School and Children's Centre is a phase one centre that was designated in 2006 and is a stand-alone centre. The governing body of Stockwell Primary School manages the centre on behalf of the local authority. Day-to-day management is the responsibility of the core services manager who reports directly to the head of school of the co-located school. The centre has an advisory board, which includes representation from the governing body. The centre has had significant changes to the leadership of the centre when the longstanding manager left in October 2012. A new manager took up post in January 2013, but left in April 2013. Currently, the core services manager position is filled by an agency member of staff who has been in post since the end of April 2013. During this period there has been a high turnover of staff.

Last year the local authority reviewed the organisation of its centres. The centre became part of a cluster of four centres in Lambeth. The centres share some services, which are commissioned by the local authority. One of the centres, Loughborough Children's Centre, was inspected at the same time under the simultaneous inspection model. Each centre has its own governance arrangements. The centre meets its core purpose by offering services which include health services, play sessions, adult learning and family support. Services are offered from the centre, the annexe building and a community venue at Slade Gardens.

The centre's reach area is ethnically diverse. A very large majority of families are from minority ethnic groups. Families speak a range of different languages and there is a Portuguese speaking population within the area. The area is within the top 20% of most deprived areas in the country, with approximately one in three children aged under five years living in poverty or households dependent on workless benefits. Children's skills vary when they start early years provision, but are typically below average with weaker aspects in communication, language and literacy.

The centre is open each week day from 8.00am to 6.00pm for 50 weeks of the year. It is on the same site as Stockwell Primary School. The governing body also runs a registered provision for children in the early years age group. Schools and registered early years providers are subject to separate inspection arrangements. Reports can be found at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Improve the centre's safeguarding procedures by ensuring:
 - staff respond quickly and appropriately to families where there are concerns in order to reduce the risk of harm to children
 - the new systematic approach to assessment, case files and record keeping are fully implemented and embedded.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring:
 - governance arrangements are clear and understood
 - systems to monitor the quality of the centre's work, including staff's performance management, are effective and link to the centre's targets for improvement
 - the advisory board is re-established and includes a representative participation of partners and parents
 - the promotion of improvement in the registered early years provision.
- Improve access to services for young children and their families by ensuring families in the reach area know what services are on offer, particularly those in greatest need, young parents, fathers and families with social care involvement.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Inadequate

- The centre is not reaching enough families from its identified target groups. For example, the number of teenage parents in the area is high, but data show the families from this group engaging with the centre have fallen considerably. Health partners feel that the closing of the specific group for young parents has contributed to this.
- Staff are not effective in ensuring that families in the area know what the centre has to offer. As a result, only a minority of children and families access services and information shows that this is not an improving picture. The centre has begun to increase its outreach work in order to be seen in the community and re-establish relationships with key partners.
- The response to some families where there is a concern has, on occasions, been too slow. However, staff are improving their use of assessment processes, including the Common Assessment Framework procedures, in order to help them identify how to better support the families who are known to them.
- The centre has recently made use of the 'big purple bus', which is on tour across Lambeth, so families on the Stockwell Park Estate can find out more about free childcare places for eligible two-year-olds and other children's centre services. The centre is unable to provide any further places for two-year-olds in the on-site nursery because new funding has been suspended following the inadequate outcome of their early years inspection in May 2013.
- Following a time of significant staff change, the centre is re-establishing its partnerships with the different range of professionals, including social care, health visitors and midwives, to help them identify local families in most need of support. The centre is also part of the local authority's innovative project with social workers to improve communication with centres. Linked social workers are meeting with cluster staff regularly to share information about families where there are concerns, such as children subject to a child protection plan.

The quality of practice and services

Inadequate

- There have been several changes in staff roles and responsibilities and help from the centre to promote improvement in the co-located nursery is too slow. Children, including nine funded two-year-olds, do not receive high quality experiences to develop the skills they need in preparation for the next stage in their learning.
- Checks on the quality and impact of what the centre offers families are weak. Although feedback is gathered from families and some information is available from different partners, the centre is not using this information well enough to track the progress families make and to measure whether or not activities or individual support are making a positive difference to their lives.
- Cook and eat sessions, provided by the community food worker, help families and childminders to produce healthy snacks on a budget. Sessions are planned carefully to take account of different cultures in order to include families from a range of minority ethnic groups. Adults enjoy short quizzes that help them identify 'good fats' and explore how to provide healthy lunchboxes.
- The number of families who are on workless benefits or unemployed and access services is increasing. Adults are directed to a range of parenting skills programmes and other courses, including ESOL, that are provided by different commissioned partner organisations across the cluster. These programmes and courses are well delivered and show good achievement for the few families from the Stockwell area that attend.
- The small number of families who have children with complex additional needs, as well as those who have disabilities, is provided with good advice and guidance about the multi-agency support available and information about accessing benefits and grants for equipment.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Inadequate

- Resources are not used effectively enough. The centre has experienced significant challenges in recruiting permanent staff and, as a result, staff are not always effectively deployed; the response to some families' needs is too slow. For example, in the last month, outreach workers have not made any home visits to the families who they have identified as most in need of support.
- Safeguarding procedures and practices are currently inadequate. The core services manager has recently established a more systematic approach to the assessment of need, organisation of case files and record keeping. While staff feel better supported in their work with individual families since the arrival of the core services manager, the staff have not responded quickly enough to supporting families in most need, and their work with families who have social care involvement has not been effective in reducing risk.
- The advisory board is not effective because its membership does not include key partners such as health representatives or parents. As a result, services are insufficiently planned to meet the needs of families in the area as leaders do not take into account the knowledge and experience of key professionals. For example, health partners who work with teenage parents have identified the need to re-establish a service to encourage their engagement at the centre, but there is no mechanism for this information to be shared.
- Senior leaders are aware that the systems to monitor the quality of the centre's work, including staff's performance management, are weak. The performance management of some staff is not happening often enough and individual targets do not link to the centre's key priorities.
- Following recent visits by the local authority to check the performance of the centre, the authority has set actions to improve. It is providing support to leaders and managers. The authority makes regular visits to check how well the centre is working towards locally agreed priorities. These include reducing inequalities by increasing the proportion of families from agreed key groups accessing what the centre has to offer, including fathers and families with social care involvement.
- The governing body, senior leaders and staff recognise they need to improve the performance of the centre, and are clear on the areas they need to improve. They show a commitment to work with the local authority to move the centre forward.

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	22937
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	424861
Managed by	The governing body of Stockwell Primary School on behalf of the local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1173
Centre leader	Paula Thomas
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 727 47687
Email address	clericalofficer2@stockwell-pri.lambeth.sch.uk

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