

# South Locality Hub

Churchill Gardens Children's Centre, Johnsons Place, London, SW1V 3EU.

**Inspection date** 23–24 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	3
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Not enough fathers and workless families are regularly accessing children's centre services. Leaders recognise that the centre does not fully meet the needs of these priority groups.
- Local obesity rates for children in the Reception Year are too high. Despite recent initiatives with health colleagues, levels remain higher than they should be. Leaders and health colleagues are tackling the issue although it is too early to judge the impact of actions taken to-date.
- Although a start has been made, leaders have not fully established a rigorous system to assess the impact of services on improving outcomes for priority families. Centre leaders do not always have a clear enough picture about the effectiveness of the support provided by the wide range of partner professionals who work with families.
- Local authority targets for involving more families and reducing childhood obesity levels, are not being achieved quickly enough. A few targets in the centre's development plan lack precision, which makes it difficult for leaders to track families' progress and measure the success of the actions they have taken.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- Parents' satisfaction levels are high and they are regularly involved in helping to shape services and influencing decisions taken.
- Centre staff are positive role models who provide good quality care, guidance and support, especially for families during times of crisis.
- Strong partnerships with other professional agencies help the centre to provide dovetailed services to support the families in most need, including highly effective work with families in their homes.
- Safeguarding is given high priority. Good working relationships with other professionals ensure that children are very well protected, including those on a child protection plan.

### 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.

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and managers in the local authority, health, education and social care partners, parents, representatives of partner organisations from the voluntary and community sector, outreach workers, early years practitioners, volunteers and representatives of the governing board.

The inspectors visited the centre, the linked school, Marsham Street satellite centre and Bessborough satellite centre.

They observed the centre's work 'Stay and Play' sessions and adults attending parenting classes. They also looked at a range of relevant documentation including safeguarding policies, child protection case studies and parent satisfaction surveys.

### Inspection team

Alan Comerford-Dunbar	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Gail Robertson	Additional Inspector
Christine Field	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

South Locality Hub in Westminster, known locally as Churchill Gardens Children's Centre, is a stand-alone centre that opened in 2008. It acts as the designated hub for the south locality of Westminster. Staff deliver services to families at the centre and also in the satellite sites of Marsham Street and West End.

The full core offer is provided through a range of supporting services including health support, adult courses and workshops. The centre is co-located with Churchill Gardens Community Primary School (URN:101109), which is subject to a separate inspection. The satellite sites are located within voluntary sector nurseries in the locality. The centre's governance is provided by a borough wide strategy group, supported by a locality delivery group with representatives from the community, professional agencies and parents.

The reach is an area of extremes, with areas of great wealth and others areas of significant social need. The majority of families are of White British heritage; the largest minority ethnic communities are those of Bengali and Arabic heritage. In some areas there are high levels of overcrowding, for example Churchill Ward is an area of high deprivation with 46% of its 0-5 year olds living in households dependent on workless benefits; approximately 75% of all children in the reach live in families claiming child benefit payments.

Currently, 3607 children under the age of five years live in the reach area. A majority of children enter early years provision with a range of skills and knowledge just above those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language, literacy and personal, social and emotional development.

### What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of fathers and workless families who attend centre activities, and use the range of data available to ensure these and other priority groups are followed up to find out why they are not fully accessing services.
- Establish a good system that helps leaders and governors to evaluate the benefits of the support for families provided by the centre's partners, both in the short and long term, and use the data gathered to plan effective future provision.
- Build upon the centre's work with health partners and educators to improve obesity rates, so that the centre's targets are met or bettered, by looking closely at existing services to see which are having the best impact on families' health and fitness levels.
- Establish clear and measurable targets by which leaders can check the progress being made by the centre towards achieving its targets and the impact of actions on improving services and outcomes for families, especially those from target groups.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The centre has appropriately established, as its first target group, those families in receipt of child benefit; a very large majority of these families are registered with the centre. Overall, a majority of families, including children living in the most deprived neighbourhoods, are regularly accessing services. However, the centre is not reaching enough families in some of its priority groups because it does not follow up the information it has about these families to find out why they are not fully involved with the centre.
- The centre and its satellite sites are ideally located in close proximity to the centre's priority areas; this ensures that centre staff who work with families in their own homes are highly effective in engaging lone parents, children subject to a child protection plan and children with disabilities.

However, despite recent increases, monthly-run activities fail to attract the majority of fathers to the centre and only a minority of workless families attend the centre regularly. A recently appointed 'fathers' outreach worker' is currently researching why fathers, as well as those from workless families, are not engaging with the centre.

- Services to meet the needs of the wider community are appropriately advertised, for example in local libraries and other public places, and families from all parts of the reach area attend a variety of activities, such as speech therapy classes, parenting classes and sewing classes. Ante-natal classes are well attended and popular with parents. Centre staff work well with health colleagues to ensure that babies have the best start in life. Breastfeeding is actively encouraged by staff and, as a result, breastfeeding rates are high.
- The centre works closely with an effective childminding network, which results in good quality childcare being offered, particularly for the funded two-year nursery places. A very large majority of two-year funded places are taken up.
- Parents benefit appropriately from attending activities that help them give their children the best start and from programmes that are specifically designed to improve their parenting skills. This is summed up well by one parent who said, 'I used to leave my children to play alone, I didn't realise how important it was for me to take part in their games and activities'.

### The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- Strategies are in place to support local health initiatives, such as reducing obesity, improving breastfeeding rates and providing both ante- and post-natal support for mothers. There is high uptake of immunisations and breastfeeding rates are above national and local averages. However, obesity rates are high and rising, despite recent initiatives to address the issue. The centre is not working closely enough with all appropriate health services and educators to develop successful strategies to improve families' understanding of how to keep their children fit and healthy.
- Effective systems are in place to monitor children and families who attend the centre. This includes learning journals for children attending 'Drop-ins' and crèches. Overall, children living in the centre's reach area attain slightly higher than national levels at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, although there is an inconsistent picture across local schools and the centre does not have a clear picture of why this is the case. Children are well prepared for school as a result of their attendance at the centre and involvement in good-quality activities. Parents report gains in their children's social skills. The gap between the lowest attaining children and their peers is narrowing year on year and is well below the national average at 23%.
- Adults receive good advice and guidance from a wide range of voluntary and commissioned services as well as centre staff. Calculations to assess how families can become better off are especially effective in helping them to maximise their earning potential. However, due to the wide variety of support provided by other agencies, centre leaders find it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of support provided. Adults are effectively signposted to Jobcentre Plus for specialist advice about employability skills. Adult education classes are well attended and popular with users.
- Parents and users of the centre are supportive and happy with the quality of provision. The most popular services talked about by parents are the 'drop-in' sessions, speech and language support and English for speakers of other languages courses. Parents spoke positively about how attendance on these courses helped them to increase their confidence and improve their ability to communicate with their children and others.
- Staff are confident when dealing with the complex needs of families and work well with a variety of partners, but especially social care workers, to support families in most need. A wide range of professional and voluntary organisations meet regularly to discuss families' needs.

**The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management**

Requires improvement

- Leaders' analysis of data and evaluation of the quality of the centre's own provision and that of others occasionally lacks rigour. Consequently, although there are improvements for young children and their families, these are not sufficiently rapid. As a result too few families from some priority groups are regularly accessing children's centre services. By contrast, effective planning has helped the centre to engage with many families from other target groups, such as lone parents and those in receipt of child benefit.
- The centre's systems for tracking and measuring the impact of its work on improving the lives of families and reducing inequalities are not robust enough to provide a clear picture of the benefits arising from families' involvement with the centre. Although leaders have identified the right priorities for improvement, some of the targets in the centre's development plan are not precise enough to measure the impact of actions taken.
- Governance arrangements, although appropriate, are in a transitional period due to direct governance having reverted very recently to the local authority. Suitable arrangements are in place to monitor the centre's work, evaluate its performance and ensure that it runs smoothly. Staff receive regular supervision and have appropriate access to training which enables them to respond professionally to the challenges that their work presents.
- Engagement with parents is highly effective. Parents are frequently asked to evaluate services and returns show that they have a very high regard for the centre and how it helps their families. An active parents' forum is instrumental in helping centre staff to make decisions about activities. Parents are well represented on the locality delivery group and governance board.
- Safeguarding arrangements are appropriately robust. Staff are vigilant and parents understand the importance of adopting safe practices. Staff's good knowledge and detailed record-keeping play an important role in meetings with other professionals about children who are subject to the common assessment framework arrangements or child protection plans. Case studies demonstrate that the centre's involvement has helped to reduce the level of support needed for some highly vulnerable families.
- Partnership working is strong, especially with the voluntary and community sector, social care and health professionals. Staff are confident when directing parents to a wide range of local agencies, knowing that their needs will be addressed.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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.

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<b>Inspection number</b>	427482
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	3607
<b>Centre leader</b>	Catherine Drake-Wilkes
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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