

# Downderry Children's Centre

Shroffold Road, Downham, BR1 5PD

**Inspection date** 5–6 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Outstanding	1
The quality of practice and services		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is an outstanding centre.

- Most families with young children are registered at the centre. This is because of the excellent outreach work and extremely strong partnerships that are in place especially with health services and those that give support and advice to adults. Partners hold the centre in extremely high regard calling it their 'right arm'.
- The centre has very accurately identified the groups that need support most in the local area, namely those who do not speak English, lone parents or carers with vulnerabilities and workless households with young children. It has ensured that at least the large majority of those key groups engage with the centre regularly and benefit greatly from the support.
- Excellent systems are in place to track children's progress when they are at the centre and when they move on to school and also that of the adults who have made use of the services. This shows the highly positive impact of contact with the centre, ensuring that children are very confident and ready for school and that adults extend their skills and employability with some outstanding results.
- Case studies show the extremely effective one-to-one support the most vulnerable families receive. They also reflect the families' full involvement in assessing their own needs and the extent to which the centre has helped them with often multiple and complex issues. A widely held view by parents and carers was summed up by the comment, 'I have 100% confidence in this centre. They have helped me in so many ways; it's difficult to know where to start.'
- Leaders, managers and all staff have worked very effectively since the school's governing body took over the management of the centre to ensure an excellent range of services meets the needs of the most vulnerable groups in the area. A very clear understanding of the centre's strengths, challenging targets set by the highly supportive local authority, and a shared vision among highly trained staff and partners means there is an excellent capacity to keep improving.
- Evaluations of sessions and programmes are carried out regularly but are not always dated and clear about whether comments and suggestions are followed up. Variations in the methods of recording the information mean it is not always consolidated in one central point and as readily accessible as it could be.

### 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 the head of centre, who is also the assistant headteacher of Donderry Primary School, officers from the local authority, representatives from several branches of the health services and other key partners including those from adult education, Jobcentre Plus and voluntary groups such as the Parents' Support Group. They held discussions with parents and carers, members of the area advisory board and the governing body.

Several activities were observed by the inspectors including one jointly with the head of centre who, along with the headteacher, also attended all team meetings. An inspector also accompanied family support workers on home visits. Inspectors looked at the centre’s self-evaluation, development plan, a sample of case studies, safeguarding policies and procedures and a range of other documentation.

### Inspection team

Joan Lindsay, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Graham Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector
Lesley Talbot-Strettle	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

The centre was designated in 2008 as a phase two stand-alone centre. It delivers or supports access to a range of services to meet its core purpose. The building is open 50 weeks of the year Monday to Friday from 8.00am until 6.00pm. The centre is located adjacent to Donderry Primary School (URN 100679) which is subject to a separate inspection. The governing body of the school took over the management of the centre on behalf of the local authority in February 2012. The headteacher line manages the head of centre who is also the school's assistant headteacher. The head of centre has been in post since September 2013.

There are 1,230 children under five years of age living in the centre's reach area. Children enter early year's provision at levels expected for their age in personal, social, emotional and physical development but well below in communication and language skills. The Donderry ward where the centre is located is among the most deprived 10% in the borough. The centre serves 10 super output areas (SOAs) with nine ranked in the 20% most deprived nationally. Approximately 37% of children from birth to four years of age are living in out of work benefit claimant households. White British heritage families account for 72% of the population. There is a wide range of other ethnic groups with an increasing number who do not speak English as their first language.

The centre has identified its priority groups as lone parents with vulnerabilities, families who do not have English as their first language and those from workless households who have young children.

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

- Ensure there is a consistent method to evaluate sessions and programmes so that the information gathered is easily accessible, dated and used to fine-tune programmes to meet needs even more precisely.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Outstanding

- Information sharing is extremely well established, especially with health services and children's social care. Consequently the centre has registered 92% of all reach area children, the highest figure in the borough. Doctors, midwives and health visitors all hold the centre in very high regard and are proactive in referring vulnerable families there, describing the centre as a one-stop-shop that 'puts the whole jigsaw together'.
- The local authority and the centre set highly challenging targets to increase the numbers accessing services resulting in a very significant rise in the past 12 months, particularly from the most vulnerable groups. The centre regularly exceeds those targets.
- With an excellent understanding of local needs, the centre has identified its key target groups and has tailored services and activities very effectively to meet those needs. For example, there are several classes each week for those who do not speak English; as result most of those families who are registered are engaging with the centre. Innovative work such as the free construction training course has been very beneficial in helping those in workless households, as have the bi-weekly sessions with Jobcentre Plus and monthly money advice drop-ins.
- Outreach work has been highly effective in relaunching the centre since the change of management in February 2012. Staff attend baby clinics, the leisure centre and library and have very close links with other schools and early years settings ensuring that those who could benefit from the centre are made aware of it.
- Excellent levels of advice and support for families where two-year olds are eligible for free early education mean that the large majority take up their places. All children aged three and four,

including those from target groups, take up their free entitlement to early education.

### The quality of practice and services

Outstanding

- The quality, range and relevance of services are all outstanding as is the balance that are open to all and those specific to the needs of the centre's key focus groups. Three English for Speakers of Other Languages courses as well as a basic skills English course are held each week with different timings and crèches, enabling parents and carers from target groups to take part. This has had a significant impact on adults, many of whom go on to accredited courses or employment.
- Excellent partnership work means that families are offered an exceptionally wide range of support through voluntary organisations such as the Parents' Support Group, Working With Men and the Money Advice Service. Parenting skills are developed very effectively through structured parenting courses as well as one-to-one support from family support workers and the Targeted Family Support service. Parents and carers say that the centre has made a huge difference to their lives, summed up by a one who commented, 'I could not have done this without the family support worker. If she had not helped me, I would not be in my house.'
- Health outcomes such as rapidly increasing breastfeeding rates and high immunisation levels reflect the excellent links with health services as well as the impact of the centre's own work such as the weekly Baby Cafe. There is a very strong emphasis on reducing childhood obesity levels with a wide range of activities such as baby and toddler gym classes, swimming sessions using the school pool and healthy lifestyle programmes for families.
- Tracking of children when they are at the centre, including through the excellent Learning Journeys and when they move on to school, is very detailed. It shows that children, including those from the most vulnerable groups, make excellent progress and are ready for school especially in their levels of confidence. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results are consistently well above the borough and national levels; the gap between the lowest 20% and the rest is also very significantly narrower than borough and national figures.
- Sessions such as Messy Play are of a very high standard and support families in helping their children learn and develop because staff are excellent role models and have a very clear understanding of early learning. Any developmental delays are picked up early, which is key to successful outcomes for many children.
- The care, guidance and support provided for the most vulnerable families are exemplary because staff are highly skilled, build very trusting relationships and work at an outstanding level with a wealth of other partners including the educational psychologist and housing and employment agencies. The one-to-one support for families is highly effective and prevents escalation to higher levels of supervision. This is reflected in the very low number of young children subject to child protection plans in the reach area as a result of the centre instigating multi-agency support at an early stage through excellent use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).
- Case studies are completed to a high standard but this is not always so with evaluations of courses and sessions. Occasionally these are not dated and it is not always clear how the comments have been used to fine-tune services even more finely to meet specific needs. Some of this information is not consolidated into one central point.

### The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Outstanding

- The local authority provides excellent levels of support for the centre, providing data to monitor access to services by key target groups and to measure outcomes. There are regular monitoring visits to ensure the centre is on track to meet the challenging targets set, including those aligned to the Payment By Results funding formula. This is having a significant impact on the centre's improved performance.
- The area advisory board and the governing body are very clear about their different roles and responsibilities. Governors are knowledgeable and challenging and hold the centre to account well.
- The highly effective links with Donderry Primary School, including the sharing of staff and

resources, and the line-management role of the headteacher, have been very significant factors in the rapid improvement seen in the last 12 months. Self-evaluation is highly accurate and staff supervision and professional development are excellent. The vision and zest for improvement are shared among all the centre's partners.

- Safeguarding is given a very high priority in the centre not only because policies and procedures are robust but because staff are highly trained to spot and act on any possible concerns such as domestic violence issues. Excellent information exchange with key partners including children's social care mean that the most vulnerable families are safeguarded extremely well.
- Resources are of an extremely high quality and are enhanced by sharing staff with the school as well as enabling families to benefit from the school's swimming pool and spacious hall.
- The centre is extremely welcoming and very much a hub of the community. Parents say, 'They treat me like a member of their family.' Consequently those who attend fully reflect the community it serves. The exceptional progress young children from all groups make is an indication of the centre's outstanding effectiveness in promoting equality for all.
- Parents and carers, including those from focus groups, feel fully involved in shaping services via the Parents' Forum with two parents or carers also recently appointed to the children's centre sub-committee of the governing body. Five parent volunteers make an excellent contribution to the centre. There are very high levels of satisfaction among families.

**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.

**Centre details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	20976
<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Lewisham
<b>Inspection number</b>	428578
<b>Managed by</b>	The governing body of Dowlerry Primary School on behalf of the local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,230
<b>Head of centre</b>	Mark Gale
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8695 5915
<b>Email address</b>	ddcc.209@dowlerry.lewisham.sch.uk

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