

# St Quintin's Children's Centre

90, Highlever Road, London, W10 6PN

**Inspection date** 26–28 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
	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.

- Leadership, management and governance are ineffective. The local authority has not provided sufficient support or challenge to the centre in a time of significant change. Self-evaluation is inaccurate and the plan to drive development lacks rigour in addressing key weaknesses. There has not been an advisory board for some time and there is no parent 'voice' in strategic decision-making. These features impede the centre's capacity to improve.
- The local authority and the centre have only partial knowledge about the number and needs of target groups living in the reach area. This means that services are planned and commissioned with only limited regard to ensuring they are appropriately located or whether they will be beneficial to those who need them most. Only a minority of target group families are currently registered with the centre.
- The impact of services, including those delivered by partners, is not evaluated well enough. Leaders cannot demonstrate accurately whether services make a positive difference to the lives of families from target groups.
- Leaders do not have an accurate overview of how well children are prepared for school. Too many eligible two-year-old children (40%) do not access their free entitlement to early education. Work with early years partners to close the gap in achievement for the most vulnerable children, and increase the percentage reaching a good level of development by the time they are five, is under-developed.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- The manager and staff at St Quintin's provide a warm and friendly welcome to everyone. Cultural diversity and equalities are promoted positively and parents build trusting relationships with staff.
- Good practice in the attached childcare provision ensures that the vulnerable children who attend learn successfully, particularly when receiving specialist help, for example, with their speech and language development.
- Good care, guidance and support coupled with rigorous safeguarding procedures ensure that children, including those subject to child protection plans or in need, are well protected.
- There is a wide range of services available and families who access them hold them in high regard.

## 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 inspections of two other children's centres: Clare Gardens and Holmfield House.

The inspections were carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional inspector.

The inspectors held joint meetings with the centre managers, officers from the local authority, commissioned service providers, health, social care, early years, adult learning and skills partners, volunteers and parents.

The inspectors visited all three centres working in partnership and held team meetings twice daily, attended by the centre managers and local authority senior leaders and managers. One commissioned 'Stay and Play' session was observed jointly with the manager of St Quintin's children's centre.

Inspectors looked at the centres' self-evaluation, improvement plans, locality improvement plan, Early Help review, a sample of case studies, safeguarding policies and procedures and a very wide range of other documentation.

## Inspection team

Christine Field, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

The centre is one of five stand-alone children's centres managed by the local authority and situated in the north locality of the borough. The centres are working collaboratively to offer childcare, adult education and health services. New governance arrangements are being established with an advisory board induction programme recently launched. This centre, Clare Gardens and Holmfield House children's centres are being inspected simultaneously. The two other children's centres in the locality, Maxilla and Golborne, have already been inspected. The local authority is working towards all five children's centres becoming a 'group' in 2014.

The area is ethnically and culturally mixed with high levels of transience. The borough has a smaller proportion of residents from White British, Black and Asian ethnic groups in comparison to the rest of London, but there are more of Other/Mixed heritage and three times more from Other White backgrounds. This group is made up of people from Europe, Ireland, the Americas and Australasia. Data suggest that three quarters of children are from families other than White British. Common minority languages spoken are Arabic, French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. English is spoken as an additional language by 54% of the borough's state school children. St Quintin's Children's Centre also serves an Irish Traveller community.

There are 1,162 children under the age of five years living in St Quintin's reach area which is considered to be one of the most densely populated in England. It contains some of the most affluent areas in London alongside significant pockets of poverty and deprivation. A high proportion of families live in private rented accommodation. About a fifth of children in the north locality live in income-deprived households and unemployment is 7.3%. When they start in early years provision, children's skills and knowledge vary but are typically at the levels expected for their age.

Target groups are identified by the centre as: children and parents with disabilities, lone parents, fathers, teenage, workless, and Traveller and ethnic minority families, including those who speak Arabic and Somali.

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

- Establish more effective leadership, management and governance by:
  - ensuring that the local authority and centre leaders have a clear, accurate and shared understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the centre
  - improving leaders' understanding of information and data about the area served by the centre
  - devising an improvement plan that focuses on a manageable number of priorities, and has clear timelines, precise actions and measurable targets
  - establishing effective governance arrangements that provide both support and challenge to the centre
  - ensuring that parents play an active role in strategic decision-making
  - strengthening supervision and appraisal arrangements so that performance targets link to the centre's priorities, are reviewed regularly and tie into professional development
  - making sure that the robust approach to assessing risks seen in the centre is central to all commissioned services.
- Increase the number of target groups using services and activities so that these form at least the large majority by:
  - ensuring that data are sufficiently reliable and accurate to identify the number of children and families in target groups in the reach area
  - identifying the most appropriate target groups for the centre and focusing activities and services to attract families from these groups.
- Establish a rigorous system for tracking the quality and impact of services, including those that are commissioned, by:
  - carrying out an accurate assessment of the centre's families' needs, especially those from target groups
  - making sure all services have clearly defined objectives that will make a positive difference to the lives of target groups and vulnerable families
  - measuring the impact of services and activities to ensure these meet priority group and families' needs and lead to improvement in clearly defined outcomes
  - taking appropriate and swift action if services are not effective.
- Work effectively with early years partners to close the gap in achievement for the most vulnerable children, and increase the percentage reaching a good level of development by the time they are five years old, by:
  - significantly increasing the proportion of eligible two-year-old children who take up their free early education places
  - setting out clear objectives for how commissioned services, such as 'Stay and Play', are to improve children's early learning and development, and monitoring these services rigorously
  - embedding the school readiness programme, and measuring how well this improves outcomes for children, especially those from priority families
  - establishing a system for tracking the longer-term impact that the centre's services have on children's achievement during their school years.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Inadequate

- Access to services by young children and families is inadequate because only a minority of target groups, including those most in need of support, are accessing services either at the centre or

across the locality.

- Live birth data are usefully provided to the centre on a regular basis and registration appears to be high. However, the lack of focus on ensuring that the registration information provided is accurate means that the centre is unclear about the number or needs of target groups living in the area, or how many access services regularly.
- Most eligible three and four-year-olds in the locality take up their free entitlement to early education. In contrast, under two thirds of eligible two-year olds receive their full entitlement. Although planned, effective follow-up to find out why this is has not yet taken place.
- There is a good range of services provided across the locality to widen access for families, including a specific 'Enjoy and Achieve' programme for parents. The take-up of some services, such as the Saturday group provided for fathers, specific support for Traveller families and the new job shop to help parents get back to work, is relatively low.
- The effective partnership with health services, as reflected in high immunisation levels and well above average sustained breastfeeding rates, shows that most local families are accessing early childhood services. Ante-natal clinics held at the centre provide access for those expecting children. A wide range of sessions such as 'Baby Massage' and 'Weaning' have a positive impact on the new parents and babies who attend.
- Families using the centre say the welcome they receive from staff is 'warm and friendly' and they greatly appreciate the new networks they make and 'fantastic support' they receive.

### The quality of practice and services

Inadequate

- Despite the wide range of services available leaders are unclear about whether they are of good enough quality. Additionally, there is not enough attention given to checking which target groups attend each service, including the ones that are commissioned by service level agreements, and what impact they have.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is below the national average and the gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest is wider than seen nationally. 'Play Plans', which include progress checks and well-focused next step targets, are a positive feature of the new system set up to track the achievement of vulnerable two-year-olds. Some good work is taking place in the centre in partnership with speech and language therapists to promote these vulnerable children's communication, language and literacy skills.
- Children's school readiness is being supported through a variety of initiatives that include academies and summer university sessions; however the lack of monitoring of take-up and checks on impact restrict the work taking place to reduce inequalities. The role of commissioned services such as 'Stay and Play' is not being given sufficient emphasis in supporting children's learning and development. As yet there is no system in place for tracking the longer-term impact that services have on the children who have accessed them, once they are in school.
- Courses such as English, mathematics and first aid help extend adults' learning. 'Break 4 U' for young parents and 'Destiny's Salon' manicure service have resulted in several adults setting up a new business, taking additional qualifications at college or gaining jobs. Where qualifications are offered, most achieve them; but leaders do not gather or analyse this information to assess the effectiveness of the courses offered.
- The particularly strong 'Volunteering Programme' provides parents with good training that helps them carry out valuable work in the children's centre and assist their future employability.
- The 'Nurturing Programme' successfully helps parents build their confidence and develop skills which they use to help their children with homework, deal more confidently with behaviour and recognise potential hazards in the home. Parents identify that their confidence and self-esteem flourish and comments such as, 'I no longer feel that I am a bad parent and now respond appropriately when my child's behaviour is challenging' are typical.
- The centre provides good care, guidance and support for some families in very difficult circumstances. One-to-one support is effective in helping families to strengthen their relationships, overcome personal crises, including domestic abuse, and improve their well-being.

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

Inadequate

- Leadership, management and governance are inadequate. Significant staffing changes in leadership, the move by all children's centres to a new directorate within the local authority, and on-going organisational and staffing reviews are hampering developments, impeding effective resource allocation and limiting the centre's capacity to build for better effectiveness.
- The data captured on children and families living in the centre's reach area are incomplete and this makes it difficult for leaders to gain an accurate picture of the needs of all target groups. Locality services are planned centrally and some are held in the centre; however, the centre manager does not have direct responsibility for checking their quality. End-of-session evaluations completed by service providers are not effective in identifying what outcomes have been achieved. There is no system in place to follow up what impact services are having on target groups.
- Self-review processes rely too heavily on anecdotal information and the recently devised centre improvement plan is not well enough focused on eradicating weaknesses and moving things forward at a good pace. There has been no advisory board in place for some time and no substantive review of the centre's effectiveness by the local authority since 2011. There has been little or no challenge to the centre since then, and as such accountability is weak.
- The performance management and professional supervision of staff are well established in the centre. However, the arrangements in place for the centre manager are not as effective. Currently, targets do not take enough account of centre priorities or professional development requirements.
- Parents make their views known through informal channels and through the survey and questionnaires they complete following the completion of activities, courses or programmes. There is no specific 'Forum' by which their voice can be heard and parents are not currently playing an active role in strategic decision-making.
- The culture of safeguarding is well embedded. Partnerships with a range of agencies such as health, social care and early help professionals are strong and effective. The rigorous use of the Common Assessment Framework procedures ensures joined-up working and well-coordinated approaches that reduce the risk of harm to those who are most vulnerable, including children subject to a child protection plan and those who are looked after. Close scrutiny is given to all visitors and the risk assessments carried out by the centre ensure a safe environment. Each commissioned provider completes a risk assessment for their specific activities and services, but few are checked to see what actions are being taken to minimise risks.
- The centre nurtures harmonious relationships with parents from many different cultural backgrounds and promotes fully inclusive practices. Displays welcome visitors in different community languages, and events such as Diwali and Christmas are celebrated and enjoyed.

**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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	22883
<b>Local authority</b>	Kensington and Chelsea
<b>Inspection number</b>	427551
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,162
<b>Centre leader</b>	Busola Kenhinde
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8968 2580
<b>Email address</b>	Busola.kehinde@rbkc.gov.uk



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