

West Sussex Adur Locality group

Middle Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, BN43 6GA

Inspection date

12–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:		
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.

- Proactive, skilled and enthusiastic leaders, at all levels of management and governance, have effectively led the reorganisation of the individual centres into a coherent and successful locality group. They are well supported by the teams of staff and partner agencies who work productively and tirelessly to continue to improve the life chances and outcomes for children and families.
- The centres are a hive of activity with many families regularly and routinely accessing services. The centre's cafés are welcoming social spaces where families make friends and overcome feelings of isolation.
- There is a consistently good and exciting range of adult education opportunities, accessed by the large majority of parents and volunteers. This includes a wide range of good quality training and parenting programmes; and links with other professional organisations promote employment readiness.
- The good partnerships with health professionals result in high levels of engagement across the locality and particularly with target families. All health measures for the locality are considerably better than those seen nationally. There is clear and convincing evidence that health inequalities are continuing to reduce for most families.
- The large majority of children make good progress because they access good quality early childhood provision across the locality.

It is not outstanding because:

- The tracking of children after they leave the centre to measure the impact of centre services on their long-term achievement is not fully developed.
- Some locality data are not specific enough to show the engagement levels of the different age groups of children attending and adult participation rates.
- There is no consistent approach to the teaching of phonics across the locality to support children's smooth transitions into school.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre group was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. The centres that form part of this children's centre group are Kingston BUCI Children and Family Centre, Lancing Children and Family Centre and Stepping Stones Children and Family Centre.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with: the centre team manager, the centre coordinators; senior leaders from the local authority and health; family outreach workers; volunteers; health and social care practitioners, Jobcentre Plus, adult education and commissioned services; parents and centre users; and representatives of the centre partnership boards and parents' forums.

The inspectors visited a range of services offered at each of the centres, including adult learning courses, Play & Learn Together, Bumps to Babies group, the Young Parents group, Rhyme Time, Homestart session, and multi-agency meetings.

The inspectors visited each of the three centres and conducted joint observations of activities with centre leaders.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Deborah Udakis, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graham Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector
Jameel Hassan	Additional Inspector
Anthony Mundy	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the group

The Adur Locality Children's Centre group is one of 12 groups which cover the county of West Sussex. In addition, there are seven stand-alone centres. The group is led, on behalf of the local authority, by a centre team manager. They, with the centre coordinators, early years team manager and the early years associate advisor, hold responsibility for the daily management of each centre. The children's centre group works together, sharing many services and there is integrated leadership with the health partnership.

The Central Locality group consists of three children's centres: Kingston BUCI Children & Family Centre, Lancing Children & Family Centre, and Stepping Stones Children & Family Centre. Each centre delivers a range of services, including early childhood services, adult learning, parenting support, health services, speech and language therapy and family welfare. Governance arrangements for the locality are provided by the local authority and the two centre partnership groups. Registered early years provision is located at two of the children's centres. Neither of these settings was inspected at the same time as the centres. The most recent inspection reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Although West Sussex is a relatively affluent area, there are stark differences in levels of deprivation within it. Adur is ranked the most deprived area in West Sussex. There are five wards within its district which are ranked within the 10% most deprived areas in England in relation to education, skills and training, and barriers to housing and services. Churchill Ward in Lancing is recognised as the third most deprived area in the county.

All three centres serve urban communities on the coastal strip between Worthing and Brighton. The area served by the centres includes a significant proportion of children aged under five years from White British families. An increasing number of children live in workless households and this figure has risen since 2009 across the three centres. However, this figure remains well below the national average. The Adur Locality group of centres serves a small multicultural population, consisting predominantly of families from Eastern Europe. Very few families attending the centres speak English as an additional language. Services within the group are targeted specifically at teenage parents, lone parents, low income families, fathers, disabled children, families living in the most deprived areas and children being supported by children's social care services. Some 2,460 children under five years of age live in the group's reach area. Children's skills and understanding on entry to early years provision are at expected levels for their age.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Establish and embed systems to monitor the impact of the early childhood services provided at the centres on the children's progress and achievements, as they move on to their formal education and beyond.
- Support the development of the early years networks, including childminders, to promote a consistent approach to how children are taught the letters and the sounds that they make, across the locality.
- Review the presentation of locality data to ensure that it provides consistently clear evidence of the levels of engagement with children at different ages, for example health clinic data, and the numbers of individuals involved in adult education activities.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Almost all children and their families living in the locality are registered with the centres. Each of the centres and their partners successfully engage with the very large majority of these families. Most of those families in greatest need of support, including lone parents, disabled children and those with special educational needs, and teenage parents, regularly participate in a good range of activities, groups and clinics.
- All teenage parents living in the locality regularly attend their dedicated support groups. Those few families who are not routinely accessing services are identified and contacted to encourage their participation in relevant activities.
- All key staff have an impressive understanding of the locality and the needs of parents. Parents have easy access to high-quality support, advice and guidance.
- All registered early childhood day care provision in the locality was judged to be good or better at the time of its last Ofsted inspection, and most childminding provision is good. Families and expectant parents access good quality information about the availability of childcare across the area via the Family Information Service.
- Almost all three- and four-year-old children eligible to receive funded nursery education benefit from the offer and are attending good quality childcare settings. A very large majority of eligible two-year-old children also access early years provision. Staff actively pursue those few families whose children are not accessing the entitlement to encourage their take-up of early education.
- In partnership with a range of agencies such as Jobcentre Plus, Kingston BUCI centre hosted two job fairs which were so well supported and attended that they are now established as regular events. Many participants benefited from the take-up of employment and training opportunities promoted at the events and locally available.
- Innovative and positive interagency collaborations with key partners have helped to improve the range, availability and quality of services, including the delivery of health programmes and essential adult education opportunities. Decisive action has been taken to deliver appropriate services in target areas to overcome barriers to engagement.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make good progress in their learning and development. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage the gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and their peers in the locality is much narrower than seen nationally. However, the progress of children as they journey beyond the Early Years Foundation Stage is not tracked sufficiently and is therefore unknown. This reduces the impact of the centres work and ability to demonstrate children's progress over time.
- The centres are successfully reducing the levels of disadvantage experienced by the most vulnerable families through a range of good quality targeted and universal services, groups and activities in each area.
- The skilful family outreach workers provide personalised and intensive support to families at times of crisis. Case files provide convincing evidence that early help and support are improving the life chances of children and families and supporting good outcomes for most families.
- Positive joint initiatives and access to good quality integrated health and well-being services ensure that most children in the locality remain in good health.
- Parents who made their comments known said that the centres have been 'a lifeline'. They all spoke passionately about the good quality support they have received. Increasingly large numbers of parents and children are experiencing greater independence, confidence and success as learners.
- Volunteers working across the locality receive exceptional professional support and ongoing supervision. Significantly, there is a high number of volunteers from target groups, including fathers

and lone parents, who are fully engaged with and integrated into the work of each of the centres. Many of the volunteers go on to further education and subsequently secure employment.

- There is a consistent and coherent transition programme which is led by the early years and childcare team and early years networks. Early childhood providers work well together across the locality to support children and their families as they move into school. Most children are well prepared physically, personally, socially and emotionally for their next phase of education. However, there is no consistent approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) and this can affect the pace of children's learning as they move from one setting to another.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- There is good communication and support from leaders at all levels. All the centres are equally well led and managed; and each centre effectively addresses the needs of families.
- The strong and effective leadership and governance are reflected in the staff's commitment and drive to constantly review their performance. The centre leaders develop, empower and motivate their staff. Staff commented that their leaders are 'motivational and inspiring'.
- Parents play a vital role in the leadership and governance within the locality. As members of the centres' partnership groups, parents and key stakeholders actively engage in the robust and accurate evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of services and provision.
- Safeguarding and the good quality care of families are a high priority within the locality. Leaders, staff and health and social care partners demonstrate the high-quality safeguarding and child protection policies, practices and early help provided within the group. Assessment of need and risk and case management are strong aspects of the centres' work. Consequently, children in need, those on child protection plans and those at risk of harm are well supported and receive rapid and effective help.
- The good range of data and information available helps to target resources at the families in greatest need. However, some local breakdown and analysis of the data can lead to confusion about the percentages and ages of children attending some services; and aspects of adult education data are not easily accessible.
- Efficiency and value for money are key leadership considerations within the locality. Leaders, including the centre partnership groups, closely monitor the cost-effectiveness of each activity, resource allocation and the appropriate deployment of staff to ensure they continue to meet the evolving needs of children and families.
- Good quality services are delivered seamlessly in each of the centres and parents from across the locality regularly attend groups and services in all three centres.

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 well-being 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 group details

Unique reference number	80191
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	430347
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2,460
Centre leader	Emma Bruton
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	07720 848139
Email address	emma.bruton@westsussex.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- Kingston BUCI Children & Family Centre
- Lancing Children & Family Centre
- Stepping Stones Children & Family Centre

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