

# Redbridge South – Group 1

Albert Road Children's Centre, 53 Albert Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 1HL

**Inspection date** 19–20 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of practice and services		<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This children's centre group is good.

- Most children under five in the area are known to the centres as a result of good partnership work with midwives and health visitors. Outreach is effectively focused so that 94% of children in the most deprived ward are reregistered to the centres and the large majority of their families take up children's centre and health services.
- Working with other agencies, the centres provide a seamless service for vulnerable families in need of support. Work to help families to protect themselves is strong. One parent's comment that, 'I have my confidence back,' is typical of many.
- Families take the first steps towards formal learning in English conversation classes, with the support of a crèche. Volunteers make a great contribution to running family play sessions while they gain valuable experience in a working environment.
- The very large majority of children eligible for free early education take up their entitlement. Places for two-year-olds are targeted well to those most in need, for example in workless households.
- The centre evaluates all sessions and demonstrates the positive impact on children's communication and language development through evidence-based programmes such as 'Top Talker'.
- The group has met most of its priorities well and understands where there is more to do. It is highly successful in engaging families from the Roma Gypsy community and enables many of them to access health and education services.

### It is not outstanding because:

- The centres provide too little targeted information, advice and guidance for adults to support them in finding courses and training or better employment. The centre signposts relatively few adults in identified target groups to partner organisations so that they can gain better access to training and qualifications.
- The centres limit their tracking of how well children are doing to some targeted children. This is not yet making an impact on helping the children who are not doing as well as others, particularly in the areas where the gaps in achievement by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are widest, to catch up and close the gap.
- Although the centres carry out effective work to overcome the effects of domestic violence, this work is not supported by focused plans and monitoring arrangements to ensure it is sustained.

### 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 this children’s centre group are Albert Road and Thackeray Drive and All Saints.

This inspection was carried out by an inspection team consisting of two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with managers and staff, and with the head of Early Years and the Strategic Lead for the local authority. Inspectors met with partners from health, adult education, early intervention teams and children's social care. They observed the work of the centres and talked with family support workers and other children's centres staff and parents.

The inspectors were based at Albert Road Children’s Centre and visited Thackeray Drive Children’s Centre and All Saints church hall. Inspectors looked at a range of relevant documentation.

### Inspection team

Christine Davies	Her Majesty’s Inspector, Lead Inspector
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Wendy Ratcliff	Her Majesty’s Inspector
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Robert Miller	Additional Inspector
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## Full report

### Information about the group

Albert Road and Thackeray Drive and All Saints children's centres are managed as a group in the South Locality of the London Borough of Redbridge. The group covers three wards in an area to the South of Ilford town centre and in Seven King. Both centres are run by the local authority. The centres were set up in the second phase of implementation of Sure Start children's centres in 2006. Under restructuring of children's centre and children's early intervention services in Redbridge from 2011 to 2013, the group was formed under one manager. Albert Road centre took over the management of Mildmay Children's Centre and All Saints merged with Thackeray Drive. A borough-wide advisory board with representation from parents from each centre oversees both centres. There are three other centres in the South Locality which are subject to separate inspections. Reports can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The group works in partnership with a wide range of organisations and with other centres in the locality to meet the core purposes for children's centres. The services offered include family support, family play and learning sessions, access to childcare and early education, ante- and post-natal midwife support, children's health services and support to adults to find jobs and training. Services run in the two main buildings and at All Saints church hall, in health clinics and at community venues. The Albert Road centre works closely with Cleveland Infants School, and the Thackeray Drive and All Saints centre works closely with Barley Lane Primary School.

There are around 3,410 children under five years of age living in the area served by the group, although families move in and out of the area continually and the number is not fixed. The area is among the 30% most deprived in the country, with some parts among the 10% most deprived. Up to 45% of households with dependent children are in receipt of workless or low income benefits. A high proportion of the families using the centre lives in temporary housing, including a short-stay hostel, or are in housing that is insufficient for the household's needs. Around 85% of families living in the locality are from Black and minority ethnic communities, the groups being families of Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi origin. Over 55% of children in the Clementswood ward were born outside the United Kingdom and most children in the area speak English as an additional language. The priorities for the group are tackling poverty, worklessness, obesity and unhealthy eating and helping families who speak English as an additional language to gain access to services. The group focuses particularly on Bangladeshi speaking and Roma Gypsy families and lone parents in the Thackeray Drive area. Children enter early years provision with level of skills, knowledge and ability typically below that for their age.

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

- Work with partner organisations to provide more information, advice and guidance for adults and to refer and support them into a suitable range of training and courses that may lead to better employment. The centres should continue to use their knowledge of groups in the community to target these services to families who are under-represented in accessing training and employment when they wish to.
- Work with the local authority and partners in order to close the achievement gap more rapidly for all children in the early years in the group's reach area by:
  - improving the tracking of children's achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage across the area
  - using the information to plan and target services.
- Work with partner organisations to draw up an action plan, with monitoring arrangements, to ensure that help for families to overcome the effects of domestic violence is sustained.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

**Good**

- Development workers working in child health clinics, schools and libraries are highly effective at publicising the centres' services, so that registrations have increased year-on-year and have reached almost 80% of children over the whole area. The increase has been rapid and sustained in the most deprived parts of Ilford and steady in areas of less deprivation in Seven Kings. Additionally, the centres serve some 100 unregistered vulnerable children a year when they are placed in a temporary housing hostel.
- Take up of health services by families involved with the centres is good. The proportion of families coming forward for immunisation, baby weighing and child development checks at age one or two is high. This includes Roma and Bangladeshi families who formerly did not take up services. Health practitioners and the children's centres collaborate to encourage attendance at sessions in both services and follow up promptly to safeguard children and vulnerable adults when families who are expected do not attend.
- Information sharing with the involvement and consent of parents, through the Common Assessment Framework, provides good initial and continuing assessment of families' needs. Agencies working together ensure that vulnerable families get the specialist services they need.
- The number of families receiving intensive family support is growing rapidly, being currently about 5% of families in the area. The centres adjust the programme of activities, in partnership with other organisations, so that they offer prompt services to help the most vulnerable families, such as those overcoming the effects of domestic abuse. Specific support groups, like the Breastfeeding Cafe and fathers' groups, offer support as long as a family needs it.
- The local authority has set up effective systems to ensure families can access free entitlement to early education. For 2013–14, all of three-year-olds and most four-year-olds are taking up their entitlement to funded early education. In this year, a large majority (73%) of disadvantaged two-year-olds in the group's reach area are accessing places and all two-year-olds access good or better early years provision.

### The quality of practice and services

**Good**

- The programme of activities across the locality offers an appropriate balance of universal and targeted services. It is attractive to different groups in the community, including speakers of English as an additional language, and the large majority attend well enough to make a difference to their learning and development. Parents we met on the inspection talked about their increased patience and understanding of their children's needs. Parents show in their evaluations that they appreciate the practical learning and the opportunity to build communication skills alongside their children in 'Brilliant Boys', 'Messy Play' and 'Chattermatter' groups.
- Resources are used effectively across all the venues, so that families are familiar with the staff and routines, and the centres become an essential part of many families' lives. Volunteers speaking community languages as well as English make a significant contribution to welcoming and encouraging the participation of the families who are new to attending centres or speak little English.
- Tracking individual children's progress is limited to a few targeted children. The strongest evidence is found in 'Top Talkers' groups where most children make good progress. However, the centres have strong evaluative evidence that demonstrates that, with the support of well-qualified early years practitioners, the large majority of target children make good progress from their individual starting points. There is a vast difference in children's skills and knowledge by the time the children start school. Although children in the most deprived area make progress in the early years, most are still well behind age-related expectations when starting school because of their very low starting points.

- Skilled centre workers continually reinforce healthy eating messages from breast- and infant feeding through to making healthy snacks. Breastfeeding targets are met and the take-up is above the national average. The levels of obesity are falling across most of the area, although the centre is working with health professionals to target the small number of families most at risk of continued high levels of obesity.
- Care, guidance and support for young parents, fathers and lone parents and for those with disabilities are tailored so that completion rates for parenting and health courses are close to 100%. Parents improve their confidence in managing their children's behaviour because of the consistent good role models offered by staff.
- Staff signpost adults to high quality job and training advice and to courses to progress in English, mathematics, information technology and vocational skills. The centres' evaluations show that adults make good progress in English when attending stay-and-play sessions that are open to all and targeted English conversation classes. However, too few from the groups with the lowest qualifications and employment prospects are referred on to local good colleges and the Redbridge Institute for adult education; currently, fewer than 10% of the adults registered in the area are referred on, when the level of need is around 35% of adults.

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

**Good**

- Strategic leaders and managers of children's centres across the local authority and locality have led change with great energy since 2011, to drive through an ambitious programme that is shared by all partners. A comprehensive set of practice guidelines, in place from 2013, and systematic monitoring, evaluation and challenge processes are securing consistently good standards of delivery across the group.
- The composition and strength of partnerships on the advisory board are good. Children's social services and early intervention teams, health visiting and midwifery services, adult learning providers, JobCentre Plus, housing agencies and schools in the area add vital local intelligence to the local authority data set to ensure that each centre has relevant and timely information.
- The group uses data provided by partner organisations well to target where its main effort will be, for example to tackle obesity and successfully reach out to Roma Gypsies. However, the group does not make full use of its own data and that of partners in setting targets in the early years and not all children are progressing as well as they could. The group demonstrably delivers work to help families overcome the effects of domestic violence, although there is no action plan or performance monitoring in place to ensure the work is sustainably resourced.
- Teams of staff have embraced new ways of working and feel well supported to take on the high volume of family support work. Managers supervise staff well and quality assure their work, which has good impact on improving the performance of staff. Staff working with the most vulnerable families, including children in need and children on child protection plans, are routinely supervised and have opportunities to discuss safeguarding concerns to make sure that plans formed with the families are carried out well.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are all in place. A named social worker is allocated to the group. The single central record shows that all workers have up-to-date checks in order to safeguard children. Managers liaise with the partner organisations that provide services to children's centre families to verify that staff are suitably vetted. Volunteers are adequately supervised and are asked to complete disqualification and barring checks if necessary. Premises are safe and secure; staff carry out regular risk assessments at all venues and model good practice to keep families safe.
- Partnerships are well established in multi-agency working groups to sustain a good balance of universal, specialist and targeted services. Although only a very few families responded to the group's formal survey, most parents who replied are satisfied with the locality-wide timetable choices, although some parents would like further flexibility to choose across the borough. Priority is given to delivering services to those most in need, which is an appropriate use of resources.

**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.

**Children’s centre group details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	80010
<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Redbridge
<b>Inspection number</b>	430120
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	3,410
<b>Centre leader</b>	Joanne Taylor
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8708 9501
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:joanne.taylor@redbridge.gov.uk">joanne.taylor@redbridge.gov.uk</a>

**This group consists of the following children’s centres:**

- Albert Road Sure Start Children’s Centre
- Thackeray Drive and All Saints Sure Start Children’s Centre

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