

Slade Children's Centre

Erindale, Plumstead, SE18 2QQ

Inspection dates	22–23 May 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
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.

- Effective partnerships with key agencies such as health, education and social care play a pivotal role in ensuring that families register, access and engage with the centre. This, coupled with a determined drive from all staff, has resulted in most children being registered and accessing services.
- An excellent knowledge of the local community and the differences to be found in the extensive reach area has led to clear identification of the priority groups that need most support. The large majority of those families, including those from the most disadvantaged areas, are engaging well with the centre.
- The centre has used information well to target services to meet specific needs, for example by providing 'Together For Twos' sessions every day at two venues for children eligible for funded early education and addressing the underachievement of White British boys with parenting courses.
- Staff take every opportunity to identify individual needs. Early help meetings that are attended by a very wide range of other agencies and highly effective information exchange with social care and health mean that families receive exceptionally high quality tailored support. Parents typically commented: 'The centre makes such a difference to our lives.'
- The relatively new senior leadership team has very quickly established roles, responsibilities and methods to monitor the centre's impact on families. The local authority, together with the joint advisory group, provide high levels of support and constructive challenge to the centre. As a result, the centre is well placed to continue to improve.

It is not outstanding because:

- The centre provides a range of services for adults but is not yet engaging with the large majority of families who are looking for work.
- Services are not finely tuned enough to fully meet adults' needs by ensuring most participants complete courses and more adults improve their education and secure employment.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more families who are seeking employment or to develop their skills to improve the well-being of their families engage well with the centre by:
 - working with partner agencies to identify the specific needs of adults wishing to return to work
 - monitoring the standard and appropriateness of the courses currently being delivered to ensure they are of high quality, meet families' needs and that most participants complete them
 - providing more one-to-one support for families to encourage more to progress on to higher levels of education and into employment.

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 senior leadership team and other staff, representatives from the local authority, and a wide range of partners including those from health and education services and members of the joint advisory group. They also met with parents, volunteers and representatives of Families and Carers Together (FACT), the parent forum.

The inspectors visited sessions and activities taking place at Slade and Plumstead Children's Centres and Glyndon Community Centre, such as Stay and Play and Together For Twos. Two joint observations were conducted with members of the senior leadership team.

The inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's self-evaluation, improvement plan, a sample of case studies and safeguarding policies and procedures. Members of the senior leadership team attended all meetings of the inspection team.

Inspection team

Joan Lindsay, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Georgina Beasley	Additional Inspector
Jameel Hassan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

The Slade Federation of Children's Centres started as a local Sure Start programme covering Woolwich Riverside and Glyndon areas. Slade Children's Centre was first designated in 2007 and the area it covers extended to include Plumstead, Slade and Plumstead Common. In May 2011, Slade Children's Centre became the federation lead delivering services in partnership with the library and Glyndon Community Group. In the summer of 2013, the head of the federation left and has been replaced with an interim head alongside a new leadership team. From September 2014, the service will be managed by Greenwich Homestart on behalf of the local authority.

Satellite sites now include Plumstead Children's Centre and Glyndon Community Centre, with services also delivered from several schools in the reach area. The centre manages the Glyndon After School Club (URN401789). Linked childcare is provided by the Pre-school Learning Alliance at Plumstead Manor Nursery (EY224240), 4Children at Plumstead Day Nursery (EY392715), and Quaggy Development Trust at Margaret Bondfield Nursery (EY350218). Childcare is subject to separate inspections and their latest inspection reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

There are 3205 children aged under five in the area covered by the centre. The area includes 24 separate defined areas with levels of deprivation ranging from the 10% most deprived in the country (Glyndon) to 50% (Slade). Overall, the large majority of families are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups, with the highest percentage, 83%, living in the Plumstead reach area. The percentage of children aged nought to four living in workless households locally averages 32%. Percentages of children under five living in poverty range from 14% to 51% across the area. Children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at levels below those expected for their age.

The centre has identified the priority groups needing most support as: children in BME groups; workless households with young children; children subject to child protection plans; White British boys; children in areas that are in the 10-20% most deprived, and families eligible for free early education for two-year-olds.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- A strong push by the new senior leadership team to improve registrations, access and engagement of priority groups has been very successful. Health professionals, early years settings, the library and schools are proactive in supporting the centre and encouraging families to attend so that most children are now registered.
- Running services in various venues in the large area served by the centre has also been very effective in ensuring that most children can access services easily. For example, the use of Glyndon Community Centre and holding activities at Foxfield and Bannockburn Schools have improved access figures considerably in some of the most disadvantaged parts of the reach area.
- At least the large majority of all the centre's identified priority groups (apart from children in workless households) engage well with the centre. Particular strengths are that all children subject to child protection plans and most of the vulnerable two-year-olds are known to the centre.
- The large majority of families from BME groups engage well with the centre because staff ensure that they have a clear understanding of what services are on offer and provide sessions such as language classes to meet their needs. Everyone receives a warm welcome at all the venues and this

is instrumental in ensuring families keep coming back.

- Although registration figures are very high for workless households, the number engaging well is not as good as for the other priority groups. This is partly because there are pockets of very high levels of entrenched unemployment. The centre does provide some services for those families and signposts to agencies such as Job Centre Plus. However, staff are aware that more needs to be done to identify specific needs and to encourage more to engage effectively with the centre.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- There is a good balance between services open to all and those run for specific targeted groups. The centre responds very effectively to needs, especially in relation to children and improving parenting skills. For example, to meet the growing needs for high quality provision for two-year-olds eligible for funded early education, daily 'Together For Twos' (TFT) sessions are held at Slade and Plumstead centres. Parents speak very highly of the impact this has had on their and their children's lives as they are also supported in helping their children learn and develop. 'It's like a partnership' was how one parent described the service.
- The work of the children's centre teacher and strong links with early years settings and schools has had a big impact on children's readiness for school and on the priority group of underachieving White British boys. Good systems to track children show that those who have engaged with the centre make better progress than those who have not. Overall, a higher percentage of children in the area served by the centre achieve a good level of development at the age of five than that seen nationally.
- Improving parenting skills is also a strength of the centre. The range of structured courses, for example 'Parents Involved in Their Children's Learning', one-to-one support and targeting aspects such as boys' underachievement has been very effective in this regard.
- Health outcomes are generally strong, with breastfeeding rates at six to eight weeks well above the national figures and good levels of children being immunised. There are pockets of high levels of childhood obesity locally which the centre is addressing through a strong focus on healthy eating and exercise, including gym sessions and Pilates for adults.
- The quality of care, guidance and support families receive is outstanding. Families' needs are picked up and acted on swiftly. Tailored support is provided through early help assessments. The centre's link social worker is key to this high standard of care, providing support and professional supervision to the well-trained and experienced family support workers.
- Detailed case files reflect the high quality work and how successful the family workers have been, particularly in supporting families with complex needs, described by one parent as 'a sudden light in a really dark time'.
- Parents play a pivotal role in the running of the centre, with a proactive FACT group meeting regularly and involved in shaping services. Volunteers also make a valuable contribution to services and some have gone on to use this as a springboard to employment.
- Courses such as the teacher assistant course and language classes are providing routes for some parents to extend their skills. However, the large majority of adults are not yet completing courses and using them as progression to further education or employment. The centre's tracking of adults is relatively new and therefore not showing the longer term impact of its work for the large majority of families from workless households.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Those who lead, govern and manage the centre have a very clear and accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for development. They have identified the groups most needing support, tackled discrimination well and can show that they are effectively closing the gap and reducing

inequalities for many of those children and families.

- The local authority monitors the work of the centre regularly and sets targets that are challenging. Most are met or exceeded. The joint advisory group is kept well informed and has recently become much more effective in using information to challenge as well as support the centre. Parent representation on this group is good, with a parent recently taking over the chair.
- Day-to-day leadership is highly effective, with a senior leadership team that is clear about its role. Staff throughout the centre are committed to improving the lives of local families; they have remained doggedly focused on this during an unsettled time of re-commissioning.
- Staff are well supervised, with good attention paid to their professional development and training. However, the monitoring of sessions led by outside providers is not equally robust.
- Resources are used very effectively to meet the needs of most priority groups in the large area served by the centre. The use of several community venues and schools to deliver services and the willingness of staff to take on various roles combined with the strong partnerships with other agencies are all key to the high quality service the centre provides. The centre is aware that resources and staff expertise now need to be channelled to meet the needs of families in workless households more effectively.
- Safeguarding children and families has a high priority in all the centre's work. Any concerns are acted on immediately by very responsive staff. The children's centre's work with vulnerable children such as those subject to child protection plans and early help assessments, looked after children, and those identified as in need has been instrumental in reducing the risk of harm for those families.
- All the necessary pre-employment checks are carried out and regularly updated.
- Parents and children show a high level of satisfaction with the centre, with many recommending it to others and keen to show their appreciation of the work done to improve their lives.

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.

Centre details

Unique reference number	22738
Local authority	Royal Borough of Greenwich
Inspection number	442854
Managed by	The joint advisory group on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	3205
Acting head of federation	Joan Edwards
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0208 854 7900
Email address	joan.edwards@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

This template is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130186.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 130186

© Crown copyright 2014

