

Shanklin Community Children's Centre

Shanklin Community Hall, 25 Rookley Close, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 6TT

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

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Good	2
		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

- This welcoming and friendly centre has registered most of the families with children under five years of age living in the community. They benefit from good quality services and advice which make a positive difference to their lives.
- The centre is well led and managed. Staff are passionate about improving the life chances for all the families the centre serves, particularly those in greatest need. They have an in depth knowledge of the community the centre serves.
- Leaders have been very successful at increasing the number of families who register, access and sustain their engagement with the centre.
- The local authority and the Pre-school Learning Alliance provide good support and challenge, through regular monitoring visits and the annual review. Leaders and those responsible for governance are working effectively to make the centre the best it can be.
- Strong partnerships help to remove barriers and ensure equality for everyone. Effective procedures ensure children in most need are helped to keep safe and secure.

It is not outstanding because:

- Leaders and managers do not have access to health information to help assess local needs, plan suitable services and be up to date about local health priorities.
- Only a minority of parents who live in workless households attend services regularly.
- The take up of free education places by eligible two-year-olds, although increasing, is not high enough.
- Systems for checking information on the progress made by adults and children who attend activities at the centre or elsewhere are not sufficiently developed.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure health and social care information is regularly obtained from partners and is used effectively to identify local needs and shape future services.
- Ensure that at least the large majority of parents who live in workless households regularly engage in services to help them gain employment.
- Build on the effective work taking place to ensure that most eligible two-year-olds take up their free education place.
- Strengthen the systems for tracking:
 - the progress of adults, particularly when they are referred to partner further learning or employment services
 - children's learning and development when the children access the centre's services.

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.

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre leader, representatives from the local authority and Pre-School Learning Alliance, partners from health, education, and members of the local community. They also met parents, representatives from the advisory board and parents' forum. The centre leader, representatives from the local authority and the Pre-school Learning Alliance attended all meetings of the inspection team.

Visits to activities, such as Chatter Matters, Music and Rhyme and Play and Stay, were undertaken. The inspectors looked at the centre's self-evaluation, action planning, a sample of case files, safeguarding practice, policy and procedures and a range of other relevant documentation.

Inspection team

David Scott, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marinette Bazin	Additional Inspector
Jameel Hassan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Shanklin Community Children's Centre was designated in September 2008 as a stand-alone centre and delivers a range of services including health, parenting classes, stay and play sessions, adult learning and family support. The centre is located in a community hall which it shares with other community groups. The centre is managed by the Pre-School Learning Alliance, on behalf of the local authority, to provide strategic leadership. There is also an advisory board and parents' forum, comprising of key partners and parents.

In April 2014, the local authority changed the boundaries of the community the centre serves. As a result of reorganisation, the number of children under five years of age increased from 1,138 to 1,408. Also, the centre now works in partnership with Green Oak Children's Centre (URN 80334), and is beginning to offer some shared services. The centre shares the community hall with the Shanklin Pre-School (EY 139558). The inspection reports for both can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The centre serves a community that is socially and culturally diverse. The surrounding area is relatively affluent. However, around one in 10 children live in an area ranked as being one of the poorest in the country. Information shows that one in four children live in households where no one is working, with the large majority living in social housing.

Just under a half of families are from minority ethnic groups, which is above average. The largest groups are from Eastern European and Asian heritages. Children's skills and abilities on entry to early education are below the levels expected for their age.

The centre has identified lone parents, children from families where no one is working, families from different ethnic backgrounds, those who speak English as a second language, and parents with mental health problems, as its main priority groups.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families **Good**

- The centre has been successful in promoting its activities and services to families in the area, including those parents expecting children. All families from priority groups receive a warm and friendly welcome at the activities the centre runs. As a result, registrations and engagement levels are rising.
- Currently, 95% of children and families are registered with the centre, with the large majority regularly accessing the centre's services. The large majority of families in most need, including those from priority groups, access the centre's services regularly. However, at 42%, only a minority of children from workless households attend the centre regularly.
- All three- and four-year-olds, and 51% of eligible two-year-old children, are accessing their funded early education place and are helped to get ready for school. The centre leader has been pro-active in helping more families with eligible two-year-olds, to access their entitlement. For example, she has contacted families by phone, text, email and, when appropriate, has made home visits. She also encourages families not accessing their funded place to attend the Stay and Play sessions. As a result, information provided by the local authority confirms that just under two thirds of eligible two-year-old children

have been allocated a place for September.

- Staff have a good understanding of the often very difficult issues facing many families, including those experiencing mental health problems or domestic violence. Services held in the community ensure a wide range of activities is available for families and their children. As one parent commented, 'It's been like a second home, I would not be here now if it wasn't for the support of centre staff.'

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Families benefit from a good balance of services open to everyone and those aimed at specific groups. Centre sessions, such as Chatter Matters and Music and Rhyme, are designed to develop children's language skills, identified as a particular weakness within the area, and are popular with parents. As one parent described a recent session, 'I wouldn't miss it for the world.' However, training to improve the quality of sessions has only recently taken place, and it is too early to see the full impact of improvements made.
- In 2013, a minority of children achieved a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is a much lower proportion of children than seen locally and nationally. However, information verified by the local authority shows that the majority of children who access early years education are on target, and likely to achieve a good level of development in 2014. This reflects positively on the centre's work to reduce inequalities.
- Systems to record what children do in their time during the centre's activities, for example through 'learning journeys', have recently been strengthened. As a result, the centre is now able to evaluate more accurately how well they prepare children for school.
- Dedicated staff provide good support, care and guidance in the home to assist families and their children who are most in need and who find accessing the centre difficult. This includes lone parents, those parents who speak English as an additional language and those from low income households. As a result, families from Eastern European and Asian communities are able to communicate more confidently and help their children's speech development at home.
- Through courses such as preparing healthy packed lunches and Feeding Young Imaginations, parents and children have a better understanding of how to live a more healthy lifestyle. Also, as a result of the Ditch the Dummy session, half of those parents who attended have now registered their child with a dentist. However, the lack of timely and up-to-date information from health colleagues means that leaders cannot be sure they are targeting services in response to local health needs. For example, centre leaders cannot identify if obesity levels in children are a local priority, or whether there is a need for increased breastfeeding support.
- Numbers from priority groups taking part in volunteering programmes have risen steadily over the past three years. The programme has been particularly beneficial to those adults with mental health problems and those from different ethnic backgrounds. However, referrals to Jobcentre Plus and other agencies, for employment and training advice, are at an early stage of development. For example, the benefits adviser has provided timely advice to families, which has brought about greater financial stability.
- The centre holds some case study information about the short-term achievements of adults. However, systems to track the longer term impact of these adult learning and employment opportunities are not yet fully in place. This restricts the centre's ability to help adults to progress more quickly in developing their skills or to gain access to employment.
- The centre provides high levels of care, guidance and support, particularly at times of crisis. Domestic violence is a particular issue in the area and, as a result of staff expertise,

women experiencing domestic violence receive timely and effective support, in a safe environment.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre leader is passionate about making the centre the best it can be. She is supported extremely well by a committed staff in helping the families and children the centre serves, particularly those most in need.
- She is well supported and challenged to continually improve the centre's effectiveness by the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance, who work closely together, to set ambitious targets. Both check the centre's performance through regular monitoring visits and at the annual review.
- The data team provides helpful information that it has access to, broken down by main and priority groups. However, the sharing of health and social care information with the centre has been an issue, with some being either late or missing. Senior officers from the local authority recognise the impact of not receiving this information regularly, and are currently involved in ongoing discussions with health and social care partners to resolve the situation.
- In April 2014, the Pre-School Learning Alliance re-organised its leadership of its children's centres in order to ensure greater consistency of practice across all its 23 centres. As a result, improvements are already evident in the delivery and monitoring of sessions.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements to promote the welfare of young children. Partnership working with outside agencies helps to reduce the risk of harm to children who are looked after, subject to child protection plans, and those deemed to be children in need.
- Governance arrangements are understood well. The advisory board receives a good range of information about the centre's work and, as a result, it knows the main priorities. Members are well informed about how the centre is run, and how it is reducing inequalities. They are becoming increasingly confident and effective in holding the centre to account. Parents' views are regularly sought through the work of the advisory board and the parent forum.
- Centre staff use the accommodation and resources extremely efficiently and flexibly, so that the needs of families, particularly those in most need, are met well.
- Professional supervision and the setting of targets for improvement ensure staff are motivated and focused on moving things forward. The many training opportunities available to staff enable them to develop and keep abreast of new developments, and to expand their knowledge, expertise and qualifications.

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	22674
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	445921
Managed by	The Pre-School Learning Alliance on behalf of the local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,408
Centre leader	Tracey Dawson
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0208 406 1354
Email address	shanklincc@suttonlea.org

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