

Buckland Sure Start Children's Centre

Berryscroft Road, Staines, TW18 1NB

Inspection dates	30 June–2 July 2014
Previous inspection date	26–27 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	3
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Managers do not ensure that enough workless families that the centre is targeting benefit from what the centre has to offer.
- The centre does not plan effective sessions for children to help improve their readiness for school.
- Partnerships with adult learning services are not effective and, as a result, there are too few opportunities for adults to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Targets and outcomes to improve the lives of children and families in the area are not clear.
- The advisory board does not yet provide effective scrutiny of the centre's work.

The centre has the following strengths:

- A high proportion of families in the area are now registered and more are using the centre.
- Families who need support highly value the help they receive through the centre.
- The centre is very effective in its work to improve the health of children and their families.
- Staff provide particularly good support for more vulnerable children, their families and families whose children who are entitled to free nursery education.
- The local authority and Buckland Primary School provide good support to the centre that has led to improvements since the last inspection.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of children and families from workless households who use the centre on a sustained basis by engaging them better in the groups that the centre runs.
- Better use data and information on the learning needs of children in the area to inform the planning of sessions so that children's learning needs are fully met.
- Improve partnership working to extend the range of learning opportunities for adults based on a thorough understanding of the needs of the community.
- Increase the effectiveness of the advisory board in scrutinising the centre's work through further training and regular meetings.
- Improve planning by using the available data and information more effectively to develop a single development plan for the centre that:
 - brings together all of the centre's targets
 - ensures that targets relate to the outcomes that the centre is seeking to achieve.

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, the headteacher of Buckland Primary School, officers from the local authority and centre staff. They also met health, voluntary sector partners, parents, early years practitioners and representatives from the advisory board.

The inspectors visited the main site and observed a session taking place in the school. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation. One observation was undertaken jointly with the centre manager. The inspectors looked at the centre's self-evaluation, action planning, a sample of case files, safeguarding policy and procedures.

Inspection team

Jon Bowman Lead Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Teresa Kiely

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Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Buckland Children's Centre is a small, stand-alone centre. The staffing establishment equates to 2.4 full-time members of staff. The centre shares a site with Buckland Primary School and Scallywags Pre-school Nursery. One additional venue is used to provide services to the community. On a day-to-day basis, the centre manager is managed by the school business manager and the headteacher. The centre's work is overseen by a local advisory board and the school's governing body on behalf of the local authority. There are 1,244 children resident in the area aged under five years of age.

The centre is located in the Staines South ward, in an area of mainly social housing, some of which is allocated on a temporary basis. The most deprived areas are those immediately around the centre, the Royal Estate, and parts of Laleham. The large majority of the population in the area are of White British heritage. Approximately 15% of children in the area live in households where out-of-work benefits are claimed. This rises to 30% in the areas where the centre is targeting its work. In the area overall, most children start Reception classes with a range of skills and knowledge at levels that are at those expected for their age.

Centre staff provide a range of services including Bumps to One, On the Move and Play and Learn. Since the last inspection the centre has redefined who it seeks to engage. The work of the centre is now targeted at workless families with children under five in the most deprived neighbourhoods, families whose children qualify for free early education places and those more vulnerable families referred from social care and health services.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families requires improvement

- The centre does not support enough workless families to take part in activities and groups over a sustained period of time. Planning to meet the needs of these families is not sufficiently developed. Too many sessions have only a few of these families in attendance.
- The centre's partnerships with other agencies are not fully effective. Plans to encourage disadvantaged adults to participate in learning are underdeveloped. As a consequence, too few from the most disadvantaged areas take part in adult learning. Antenatal and postnatal clinics are now run each week from the centre. Progress checks on the development of two-year-olds have begun recently to take place on site. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- The registration of families in the area is increasing and the large majority, including those from the centre's target groups, are registered with the centre. An increasing number of families are using the centre. The majority of families where children are eligible for free nursery education have sustained engagement with a good range of children's centre activities. Staff support them well to access free nursery education.
- Partnerships with St Mungos, midwifery services and Buckland Primary School help improve both the breadth of services delivered and the engagement of the centre's target groups. This includes families living in temporary accommodation who have traditionally not used the centre.

The quality of practice and services

requires improvement

- The quality and range of services require improvement. The centre does not know enough about the needs of families in the community and, as a result, the range of learning opportunities for adults is too narrow. There are no opportunities for adults to develop their basic skills in English and mathematics.
- The centre does not use data on children's skills and abilities sufficiently well to inform the planning of sessions. While sessions are planned using the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance, local data on school readiness are not used to help plan effective learning activities. As a result, sessions are not targeted sufficiently on the specific skills that children in the area need to be ready for school.
- Staff provide good support and guidance for all those who attend the centre. Staff work particularly well with vulnerable families to provide specialist support and advice to them. As a result, parents develop useful skills to manage their children's behaviour and to support their development.
- The centre directs families to relevant external agencies such as Relate when needed. There are some striking examples where, with the involvement of the centre, parents develop the confidence and skills to undergo training, volunteer and gain employment.
- Those adult learning sessions that are delivered by the centre are of good quality. Parents learn life-saving skills through attending first-aid sessions. Parenting courses, such as Parenting Puzzle, are run from time to time. Those parents who attend report happier home lives as a result.
- Centre staff provide good support to vulnerable families, particularly for children who are in need of protection and those who receive multi-agency support through a 'team around the family' approach. Staff help build the resilience of families very well and enable them to cope better with their children and in their daily lives.
- Services such as Play and Learn and On the Move are popular with parents who speak positively about how attending these sessions help them increase their confidence and enable them to support their children's development better. The Play and Learn sessions help children to develop useful skills. For example, they learn to take turns by sharing the attractive resources available. Children and their families make good use of the excellent outdoor facilities.
- Successful strategies are in place that support local health initiatives, such as those to reduce obesity and improve breastfeeding rates. The introduction of initiatives such as the hiring of breast pumps has increased the number of mothers who breastfeed their babies after six weeks. Families are effectively encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through the provision of fruit snacks, and activities such as the well-attended Active Tots.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

requires improvement

- Managers do not focus sufficiently on the outcomes that the centre is seeking to achieve with those groups whom the centre has prioritised. Some of these families are new to the centre and not enough is known about their needs to plan services and support for them. There are too many plans and documents that contain the goals and targets of the centre and, as a result, staff are not clear about the outcomes that the centre is seeking to achieve. This makes it difficult for the centre manager, the local authority and advisory board to keep track of the progress that the centre makes.
- Governance arrangements, although more robust now than at the time of the last inspection, are not fully effective. The different responsibilities of the school's governing body and the advisory board are now clear. The board is led well by the school's Chair of

the Governing Body, and the membership of the board reflects a good range of relevant agencies. The board has a good understanding of its role to scrutinise the centre's work and to challenge the centre to improve further. However, the board members are newly trained and the impact their work is limited to date.

- The local authority and the school provide good support and challenge to improve the centre. Most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed. However, some improvements are new and are not fully established.
- Managers use demographic data and information well to determine who the centre is best placed to help. Since the last inspection there is a much better focus on who the target groups of the centre are.
- The managers use resources well and allocate the available funds effectively to support the centre's goals. They ensure that the services the centre delivers do not duplicate or compete with other local providers and services. The priorities of the centre are now well defined. Fringe activities that do not meet the centre's priorities have rightly been discontinued.
- Safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and robust. Recruitment follows safe recruitment and selection practice. Staff are suitably trained and know what to do should they have concerns about a child. Staff work effectively with more vulnerable families and their children. This results in increased oversight of their welfare needs.

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.

Buckland Sure Start Children's Centre

Unique reference number	20489
Local authority	Surrey County Council
Inspection number	442807
Managed by	Buckland Primary School on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1244
Centre manager	Christine Lancaster
Date of previous inspection	26–27 June 2013
Telephone number	01784 227977
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