

The Spinney Sure Start Children's Centre

Guildford Grove Primary School, Southway, Guildford, GU2 8YD

Inspection dates	1–3 July 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
		Not applicable	
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

- Not enough families from workless households, particularly from the Guildford Park area, use the centre regularly.
- Parents have too few opportunities to develop skills, gain qualifications or receive help to improve their chances of employment. When staff signpost adults to external organisations they do not always record if this training or advice is taken up or leads to a job.
- The local authority and managers have insufficiently reliable data to demonstrate how well the centre engages with two of its priority groups. They set insufficiently precise targets to enable them or the advisory board to measure fully the impact of the centre's work.
- Most families with two-year-old children who are eligible for funded early education places have not yet taken this up.

This centre has the following strengths:

- Almost all the area's families most in need of support regularly use the centre and receive very good individual help and advice from staff. Many improve their family life and children's safety through attending parenting classes.
- Families attend a wide range of on-site health clinics and useful health and well-being activities. More children are now at a healthy weight and breastfeeding rates are increasing.
- The centre has good quality sessions, particularly for families with babies and toddlers.
- The parents' forum plays an active role in shaping activities, fundraising and representing the local community.
- Staff work productively with partners to put on activities that meet local families' needs well.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the engagement of workless families, particularly from the Guildford Park area, so, as a minimum, the large majority regularly access services.
- Extend opportunities for more adults, especially those seeking employment, to prepare for work by:
 - increasing participation rates in adult learning programmes and employability support to aid progression into further education and employment
 - developing systems for measuring the long term impact of the centre's work to demonstrate how well adults benefit from training courses in preparing them for work.
- Work with the local authority, to ensure that data on all priority groups is up to date, timely, easily accessible and analysed in sufficient detail, in order to give the centre manager and the advisory board a clear picture of the impact of services on families in most need. Ensure that all staff collect 'workless' and 'ethnic heritage' information from families to enable the manager to gain a complete picture of engagement by these priority groups.
- Ensure that most two-year-old children who are eligible for funded early education take up their place by:
 - working with partners and parents to promote this entitlement
 - assessing the capacity of good nurseries and childminders in the area to ensure they can cope with demand.

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 an Additional Inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager and staff, a governor, headteacher, deputy headteacher and bursar from Guildford Grove School, representatives from the local authority, advisory board and parents' forum, health visitors, parents, volunteers and partners from adult learning, Jobcentre Plus, the local community and the voluntary sector.

The inspectors visited The Spinney Sure Start Children's Centre (The Spinney). They observed a Rhyme Time activity and carried out a joint observation of Baby Massage with the centre manager. They looked in detail at a range of relevant documentation including a number of case files of children and families requiring additional support and those subject to Common Assessment Framework processes.

Inspection team

Janet Rodgers, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Graham Saltmarsh

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

The Spinney is managed school governing body of Guildford Grove Primary School on behalf of the local authority and works collaboratively with five centres in the Guildford area: Ash Grange; Boxgrove; Guildford; and St Paul's Church of England Infant School (St Paul's). Guildford centre was inspected in November 2010 and judged outstanding, St Paul's was inspected in February 2012 and requires improvement and Boxgrove was judged inadequate at inspection in July 2013. The Spinney has a centre manager, deputy manager, three outreach workers and one full-time and one part-time front desk staff. It has an advisory board which comprises community representatives, partners and parents.

The Spinney is located on the Guildford Grove Primary School site, which is north west of Guildford town centre, and has an on-site nursery. The centre offers health visitor and midwifery clinics, parenting courses, an adult literacy course, play and learn sessions and a range of activities including those that promote healthy eating, children's speech and language development, first aid and breastfeeding. The centre is open five days a week and, additionally, a fathers' club runs once each month on a Saturday.

There are 856 children under five years living in the centre's reach area. The local area has pockets of high levels of deprivation and social housing. The centre identifies families from Black and minority ethnic groups and workless households as significant priority groups. Approximately one third of families in the area are from Black and minority ethnic heritage groups. Although unemployment in Guildford is low, it is relatively high in Westborough and Guildford Park, which fall within the centre's reach area. The skills, knowledge and abilities of children in the centre's area on entry to school are lower than those expected for their age.

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Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Not enough families from workless households regularly access the centre. In particular, the number of families from the Guildford Park area requires improvement.
- Staff do not always collect information about the heritage group of each family when they register. As a result, managers cannot provide reliable data to demonstrate that the majority of families from this group engage with the centre.
- The manager and staff took very effective action which successfully increased registrations in the last year. As a result, the large majority of families are registered with the centre. The manager and staff know where families who are not accessing the centre live and are promoting services and activities within these areas.
- The manager and staff use data available to them and their partners' feedback well to prioritise local families who would benefit most from using the centre's services. Their particularly good relationships with health and social care partners result in almost all of the area's families in most need using the centre regularly. Outreach workers identify

these families' needs and plan support thoroughly using various techniques, including the centre devised 'Spinney Wheel'.

- The local authority and centre staff work actively with partners to increase the number of good quality nurseries and childminders. Most three-year-old children who are eligible have taken up their free places. However, too many two-year-olds entitled to funded early education have not yet taken this up as there are not enough good quality places currently; many are waiting for new provision to open.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The centre offers too few opportunities to help parents develop their English, mathematics, language and computer skills to help them gain employment.
- The centre's initiative to provide on-site Jobcentre Plus advice is at an early stage and has yet to start. Although staff signpost parents to external advice and guidance and adult learning provision, they have only recently started to track whether they take this up or successfully gain work or qualifications.
- A significant number of adults take parenting courses which help them manage their children's behaviour and sibling rivalry better. Parents attending the 'confidence' course feel more positive about their future and many gain the motivation to consider returning to employment or college. The centre's well-managed volunteer programme has resulted in a small number of adults gaining employment.
- In 2013, a slightly lower percentage of children achieved a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage than that found nationally and locally. However, the gap between the lowest achieving 20% and their peers is reducing.
- The centre offers a good range of health and well-being clinics on-site which contributes to the area's increased healthy weight and breastfeeding rates of children. Staff and partners check children's development at the age of two very effectively through fun and creative ways within group sessions. Through Grow, Cook and Eat activities, children learn how to grow fruit and vegetables in the centre's well-maintained garden.
- Outreach workers offer highly effective early identification and support for families most in need of help. They assess needs using the Common Assessment Framework and make good quality decisions that fully involve partners and family members. Outreach workers demonstrate very clearly where their interventions have helped improve the lives and safety of young children.
- Parents receive excellent personal support, advice and guidance from staff. They value how this has helped them face problems, including for debt and family relationships.
- The centre offers good quality activities and services for families with babies and toddlers. They recognise that many local children have speech and language delay and offer sessions, such as Rhyme Time, to help promote communication skills.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The centre does not have enough reliable data to demonstrate it is a good centre because this has not been collected fully from families or is not easily available from partners. This impedes the ability of the local authority, advisory board and governors to accurately evaluate and question the centre's effectiveness. At all levels, engagement is rarely discussed because a greater focus has been placed on increasing registration rates.

- Until very recently, the local authority has not set enough specific or measurable targets to assess the impact of the centre's services and activities. Their checks of the centre's performance have at times been too cursory and not driven improvement sufficiently quickly.
- Management capacity has been strengthened greatly through joint working between the five centres in Guildford. Managers have greater opportunities to share ideas and good practice. They offer a more coherent programme by sharing information about services and activities, thus preventing duplication.
- The centre manager oversees the centre's staff and resources very effectively. She sets targets which increase her team's effectiveness and monitors their performance thoroughly and accurately, including through observing them working with families. Staff receive good training and development which they use well when supporting families in most need and delivering activities.
- Parents take a very active role in many aspects of the centre's development. The parents' forum greatly influences new activities and initiatives for increasing registrations. They successfully raise funds which help to subsidise trips for families and have developed the centre's sensory garden.
- Partnership working, particularly those with health, counselling and local schools, is particularly good and helps shape the services offered at the centre. This productive working and sharing of information has led to very specific activities, such as those for deaf children and parents of children with challenging behaviour, being offered. The centre's Opportunities Day brought many partners together to meet families within a local community venue.
- The centre has well-managed safeguarding arrangements, supported by accurate and up-to-date records. Outreach workers have suitable supervision arrangements from a home school link worker which help secure the good quality support they give families in most need, such as those with child protection plans, children in need and looked after children.

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	23257
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	444505
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	856
Centre leader	Anne Woodward
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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