

# Saxon Sure Start Children's Centre

Saxon Primary School, Briar Road, Shepperton, TW17 0JB

<b>Inspection dates</b>		10–11 September 2014	
Previous inspection date		Not previously inspected	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
Access to services by young children and families		Good	2
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:

- Although the very large majority of families from priority groups are registered with the centre and regularly participate in activities, not all families in the community are known to the centre.
- Too few parents, particularly those living in areas identified as deprived, participate in adult learning courses.
- Leaders and managers do not monitor the effectiveness of services and activities rigorously enough and do not take sufficient account of the views of partner organisations. As a result, the centre's plans to improve the quality and impact of its work are not sufficiently focused on what needs to be done to ensure the quality of services is at least good.
- Case files do not contain sufficient information to enable staff to systematically monitor and review the progress of families and to assess how practice could be improved.

### It has the following strengths:

- Families from priority groups receive good quality support from centre staff. Services and activities are well matched to their specific needs and outcomes for these families are good.
- The quality of information sharing and referrals between the centre and the partner organisations it works with, such as those representing health and education, is good. As a result, families with the greatest needs are accurately identified and supported by the centre.
- The centre's staff work effectively with families in their homes and in venues around the community. This helps to reduce barriers for those families who are less likely to participate in centre activities.

- As a result of the diligent efforts of leaders and managers to strengthen partnership arrangements, and with closer monitoring of the centre's work by the local authority, the centre is improving.

### **What does the centre need to do to improve further?**

- Strengthen arrangements with key partners such as health and early years providers to ensure all families are known to the centre.
- Increase the proportion of parents who participate in adult learning and training courses, particularly those who live in areas within the community identified as deprived, and those who are seeking employment.
- Strengthen the quality and impact of the self-evaluation process by ensuring:
  - partners systematically contribute to self-evaluation
  - the self-evaluation report is evaluative and reflects both strengths and areas for improvement
  - there is a clear link between the self-evaluation process and improvement plans.
- Improve the quality of case files by including and recording sufficient detail and action planning, to ensure reviews of progress made by families can be systematically monitored, reviewed and recorded.

### **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 centre staff, local authority managers, a governor and staff from Saxon Primary School and health and education professionals. They also met representatives from the advisory board and the parents' forum and held meetings with parents.

The inspectors visited Saxon Children's Centre and observed sessions such as 'PEEPING Babies'. They also visited a session at an external community venue.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including action plans, minutes of meetings and case files. Inspectors took the views of parents and children into account through discussions and analysis of their evaluations.

### **Inspection team**

Priscilla McGuire, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Anthony Mundy	Additional inspector
Helen Astley	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Saxon Children's Centre is a small stand-alone centre in Surrey that shares its site with Saxon Primary School. All members of staff work part-time and the centre operates on a part-time basis. Services offered include adult learning, early years activities, health clinics, family support and outreach activities.

Since 2013, Lumen Learning Trust, the academy operating Saxon Primary School, has managed the centre on behalf of the local authority. The school is subject to a separate inspection, the report for which can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). The centre is open 48 weeks of the year from 9am to 3pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and on Tuesdays and Fridays from 9am to 12 noon.

Saxon Children's Centre is located in Shepperton Green. The area is generally considered affluent but has pockets of economic deprivation. The proportion of workless households is below the national average. The majority of families are of White British heritage.

There are 1,075 children under five living in the area served by the centre. Priority groups are: families from the Traveller community; those whose circumstances make them vulnerable; and families whose two year old children are eligible for free early years education. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at varying levels, from below what is expected for their age, to above.

### Inspection judgements

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

- Centre staff have strengthened their links with partner organisations, particularly those from health, to identify which families have the most needs. As a result, the very large majority of the centre's priority groups of families are registered with the centre and benefit well from the services it provides.
- The centre has been exceptionally successful in reducing inequalities through its work with one of its priority groups, members of the Travelling community. All families with children under five from that community access and use the centre's services. Participation rates for other groups, such as families identified as vulnerable, are also good.
- The centre's outreach work and the persistent efforts of outreach workers have enabled families who face various challenges to access services. For example, to travel to the centre from some parts of the area, families have to take two buses. However, by putting on services in a range of venues around the community and by using the borough's mobile Children's Centre bus, the centre helps to reduce barriers to access.
- The quality of referrals, signposting and information sharing between the centre and its key partners from health and early years settings is good. In the last year, this close collaborative working has enabled the centre to significantly increase registration and participation rates.
- Overall take-up of free early years places is good. All eligible three- and four-year-old children take up places, as do most two-year-olds. The centre works collaboratively with the

local authority's Free Early Education Team (FEET) team to promote places for all eligible children.

### **The quality of practice and services**

Requires improvement

- The centre offers a wide range of universal and targeted services. Those observed during the inspection were of a good quality. However, services are not yet engaging enough of those families who do not belong to any of the centre's specified priority groups. As a result, not all families from the area are known to the centre, and the centre's impact is limited.
- Through the centre's active promotion of safeguarding and child protection, parents develop a good understanding of what actions they need to take to protect children and reduce the risk of harm. For example, parents comment positively about the significant benefits they have gained from attending First Aid training courses.
- Parents receive effective support and guidance from the centre. Their personal testimonies and case studies reflect how well the centre helps them cope with crises such as family bereavements, debt and life-threatening illnesses. The view of one parent was typical of many: 'This centre is like a tree – so many branches – they help you with everything. Without this place I wouldn't be in the good place I am now.'
- Although case files contain a detailed chronology of events, not enough information is recorded in files to reflect how families' needs are assessed. In addition, there are no records to indicate what interventions or support have been planned to enable a family to achieve positive outcomes and overcome barriers. As a consequence, the centre is unable to systematically review and record the progress of families. Its ability to fully demonstrate the impact of its work with families is therefore limited.
- The centre's work to help parents develop their employability skills and increase their chances of employment requires improvement. Take-up of adult learning and training courses is too low, especially for those families who live in areas identified as deprived.
- The proportion of children in the area who achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) is lower than both borough and national rates. However, the centre is working in close collaboration with schools to improve rates. In addition, tracking demonstrates that children who attend the centre, including those from priority groups, are well prepared for school.

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

Requires improvement

- The dedicated and hard-working manager, who is supported by an equally committed small team of staff, has effectively driven improvements in access to the centre for priority families. As a result, registrations and participation rates for these families have improved significantly over the last year. The work of staff is highly valued by partner organisations and by parents.
- Staff are well trained, routinely supervised and appropriately qualified for their roles. They achieve much with limited time resources. All staff are highly skilled at using their time productively to meet the needs of families from the priority groups.
- An advisory board that has good representation from partners and parents supports the centre. Although the quality of governance through the board is improving, it still has to develop its role to ensure that it provides appropriate challenge as well as support to the

centre.

- Through frequent reviews and reports of the centre's performance, the local authority carefully monitors the impact of the centre's work. It also sets performance targets for the centre which are used to track the centre's progress. As a result, the centre is improving the quality and impact of its work.
- The centre's own process of evaluating and monitoring the quality and impact of its work requires improvement. Evaluations of activities are often descriptive rather than evaluative, and partner organisations are not routinely involved in the self-evaluation process. These weaknesses in the self-evaluation process limit the effectiveness of the centre's improvement plans.
- Staff and their partner organisations actively promote safeguarding. Early help assessment tools are used to ensure families receive the support they need. In addition, the centre has good links with social care teams. As a result, families whose children are subject to child protection plans or who are identified as vulnerable receive good support from the centre.
- The quality of accommodation and resources is good. Families from the priority groups are served well by the centre. However, the use of resources is 'satisfactory' because the overall proportion of families from the area who use the centre's services is not high enough.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	22638
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	451682
<b>Managed by</b>	Lumen Learning Trust
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,075
<b>Centre leader</b>	Jo Scott
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	01932 569742
<b>Email address</b>	jo.scott@lumenlearningtrust.co.uk

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