

Kingston upon Thames - South of the Borough Children's Centre Group

Buckland Road, Chessington, KT9 1JE

Inspection dates

Previous inspection date

16–17 September 2014

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 group of centres is good.

- Most families, including those from priority groups, are registered with the group and have access to good quality services, support and information.
- The local authority provides good quality information to the group. Staff use this to plan good quality services and activities that meet families' needs.
- Staff thoroughly assess the needs of families and match them to the most appropriate service. As a result, families become better equipped to overcome personal and social barriers and improve their life chances.
- Sessions for children are well planned to reflect Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes. The effective planning of these sessions is complemented by the good role modelling of staff during sessions.
- Most of the children who are eligible to do so, access good quality free early education places.
- Leaders and managers from the group, the local authority and the advisory board are highly competent and effective in their roles. As a result, the group continually improves both the quality and impact of its work.

It is not outstanding because:

- Too few parents participate in adult learning courses or training and the centre does not do enough to monitor the impact of these courses on the lives of parents.
- Partnership arrangements with Jobcentre Plus or other employment support organisations require improvement to ensure better planning of activities for parents who could most benefit from the support they offer.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Increase take-up rates on adult learning courses and monitor their effectiveness by:
 - ensuring courses are well matched to parents' needs and interests
 - working collaboratively with adult learning providers to evaluate the impact of courses
- Strengthen partnership arrangements with Jobcentre Plus or other employment support organisations to ensure families have good access to services and activities that increase their chances of employment and of economic stability.

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 hub manager and other staff, local authority managers, representatives from health, adult learning, schools and early years providers. They also met parents and representatives of the advisory board.

The inspectors observed activities taking place during the inspection such as 'Just Play' and 'Stay and Play' at Chessington Centre.

The inspection covered the following centres: Chessington and West Chessington.

Inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the self-evaluation document, minutes of meetings, data, case files and evaluations from parents.

Inspection team

Priscilla McGuire, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christina Christou	Additional Inspector
Alan Comerford-Dunbar	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the group

In September 2013, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames realigned its children's centres into four locality areas and the governance and management transferred to the local authority. Prior to this, centres were managed by the headteachers of the co-located schools. The local authority works in partnership with the London Borough of Richmond to offer services, including children's centres, via a Social Enterprise Organisation called Achieving for Children (AfC).

The South of the Borough group is comprised of two centres: Chessington Children's Centre and West Chessington Children's Centre. Chessington Children's Centre is the hub for the group. It was inspected as a stand alone centre in 2012 and judged to be good. The centre shares its site with Castlehill Primary School (URN:102563) and Piglets Pre-School (URN: EY315757). Reports for these can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

West Chessington is the 'spoke' site and shares its site with Lovelace Primary School. Both centres are located in areas of deprivation although there are patches of affluence within each. Most families are of White British heritage but an increasing number of Eastern European families reside in the area. Around 22% of children live in households dependent on workless benefits.

The children's centre hub manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the two centres and is based at Chessington. The hub manager is line managed by the Children's Centre Services Manager for Kingston & Richmond.

A Children's Centre Partnership Board works at a strategic level across Richmond and Kingston Upon Thames. At a local level, an advisory board oversees the group and holds it to account. Services offered by the group include family support, adult learning, early years learning and health services. There are a total of 1,485 children under five living in the reach area. Children's skills and understanding on entry to early years provision are, on average, below typical levels for their age.

The group's key priority groups are: Lone parents, young parents and children under one.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families Good

- Information is shared well between the group and its partners. These include those representing health organisations, schools and early years. As a result, families with the most needs are identified early and their needs are well met.
- Most families from the area are registered and have good access to the good quality services and activities the group provides. Families and those expecting children also have good access to a wide range of informative leaflets and booklets provided by the group. These cover topics on health, early years learning, adult learning and safeguarding.
- Staff and the partner organisations they work with use signposting, referrals and consultations very effectively. As a result, families from priority groups such as those with children under one and lone parents, are well matched to the most appropriate service.
- The local authority provides good quality information to the group. This enables staff to plan good quality services and activities to meet the needs of families. Some of these are offered to all families and others are targeted at families with specific needs.
- Take-up rates of free early years education places for two-, three- and four- year-olds are excellent. In addition, most two-year-olds access good and outstanding early years provision and data show that their attendance rates at sessions are excellent.
- Overall use of services is good and participation rates of families with children under one are also good. Use of services by families from other priority groups and young and lone parents show evidence of strong improvement. The group is increasing activities such as outreach work to ensure families who are less likely to do so, make good use of services.

The quality of practice and services Good

- Staff have made significant progress since the last inspection of Chessington children's centre to respond to the recommendation to increase breastfeeding rates. As a result of strong promotion of breastfeeding and good support for breastfeeding mothers, breastfeeding rates at six-to-eight weeks are now well above national levels.
- Through careful tracking, the centre is able to demonstrate the success of its work with children. Those who attend well planned activities such as 'Just Play' or 'Stay and Play' make good progress from their starting points and develop good social skills, improve their language and other skills and are well prepared for school.
- Sessions for children are well planned and staff are good at role modelling support of children's learning and development during sessions. As a result, parents develop a good understanding of what they can do to support their child's transition to school and are confident to use tools such as 'learning journals' to monitor their children's progress.
- Case files reflect the conscientious efforts of staff to carefully and thoroughly assess families' needs and match these to the most appropriate service. Files are well maintained and identify 'desired outcomes' for families. They also reflect the good planning of staff to ensure these outcomes are achieved and the good support families receive from the group and its partner organisations.
- Parents actively contribute to the development of the wide range of good quality services and activities offered by the group. For example, in response to a suggestion from a parent, a successful group for Polish parents was set up and is now run by a parent volunteer.
- A significant number of parents have made good progress into employment as a direct result of volunteering with the group. However, opportunities to accredit the work of volunteers are not yet available.

- Although adult learning is actively promoted, overall take up rates on formal adult learning to courses is too low. In addition, the group is not doing enough to monitor outcomes for parents who participate in adult learning courses.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Leaders and managers from the local authority and the advisory board are highly competent and work well together to provide good leadership and management to the group. As a result, the quality and impact of the group's work is continually improving and the proportion of families who regularly participate in activities is on an upward trend.
- Governance arrangements are effective and contribute well to the group's success in meeting the needs of priority groups. As a result, inequalities, particularly those that affect the education of children, are reduced for families within these groups.
- Within the last year, the group has been through a series of significant changes in staffing and services. This is because of borough-wide changes that affect all children's centres. However, these changes have been managed well by the local authority and staff morale has remained high and disruptions to families kept to a minimum.
- Local authority managers routinely use data to monitor the performance and impact of the centre's work. They set measurable and ambitious performance targets for the group and frequently monitor its performance against these targets. Through processes such as the 'annual conversation' and regular staff supervision, managers from the local authority keep a close eye on what changes need to be made to help the centre to improve.
- Partnership arrangements with most external organisations, such as those representing health, schools, early years providers, charities and social care teams, are exceptionally strong. However, links with Jobcentre Plus or other employment support organisations are not good enough. As a result, support for parents who require help to gain employment or increase their economic stability is limited.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and are well understood by parents, partner organisations and staff. As a result of good links staff have with social care professionals and because they routinely share information, families of children subject to child protection plans, children in need and others identified as vulnerable receive early help and good support. Staff and other professionals also use the Common Assessment Framework appropriately to assess the needs of families and provide effective early help.
- Resources are well managed by the local authority and the group. Through well-established links with partners and effective sharing of resources with other centres within the borough, the group offers a wide range of services and activities for families.

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 well-being 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.

Children's Centre Group details

Unique reference number	80649
Local authority	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	451339
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,485
Centre leader	Brenda Wood
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8397 2006
Email address	Brenda.wood@castlehill.rbksch.org

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- Chessington Children's Centre URN: 20675
- West Chessington Centre URN: 23497

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