

Chertsey Sure Start Children's Centre

Pyncroft Road, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 9ER

Inspection dates	15–16 October 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	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

- The number of families registered and using the centre's services regularly is not high enough. Some families who live in the area do not know about the centre and what it offers.
- Systems for checking children's learning are in their early stages and so do not show whether all children are making enough progress during their time at the centre.
- The centre's leadership does not plan clearly enough how the centre intends to make a difference to the lives of families who access groups and services.
- The advisory board does not always have sufficient information to ask the leadership and management probing questions about the centre's performance.

The centre has the following strengths:

- The number of families registered and regularly using services has increased significantly over the last two years and services and outcomes are improving.
- Young single mothers with newborn babies receive good support, which enables them to lead independent lives.
- Adults who have attended adult-learning courses and programmes have gone on to develop other skills including those required for work. Many have subsequently found employment.
- The small number of families receiving specific help from time to time value the care, guidance and support they are given.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Promote the work of the centre across the reach area in order to increase further the number of families registering and regularly attending groups and using centre services.
- Work with the nursery to develop joint systems that show what children are learning and use the information to plan and provide what is needed to help:
 - all children to make at least good progress in their learning and development
 - children who are behind to catch up with others by the time they start school.
- Work with the local authority and lead nursery school to strengthen the centre's improvement planning by:
 - setting targets that clearly show the difference being made to the lives of families who access groups and services
 - identify and take actions that enable the centre to meet the targets
 - include measures of success and timeframes within which actions should be completed.
- Strengthen the work of the advisory board by ensuring that members receive the information that they need to ask the centre probing questions about its performance and improvement.

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 by three Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with staff, health and adult education partners, advisory board members, a small number of parents, representatives of the local authority, and the two acting headteachers of the nursery school.

The inspectors visited activities held at the centre and nursery including Baby Massage, Messy Monkeys and a work skills workshop.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Georgina Beasley, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Peter Towner	Additional inspector
Jameel Hassan	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Chertsey Sure Start Children's Centre opened in April 2007. The centre offers a range of services and groups that includes family support, adult learning and health services. There are currently approximately 1,180 children under the age of five years living in the area that the centre serves. The large majority of families are from White British backgrounds, with about 30% from a number of different minority ethnic groups.

The centre is managed by the governing body of Chertsey Nursery School (URN: 124911) with which it shares a site. The nursery was not inspected at the same time, but a copy of its inspection report from when it was inspected can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. An advisory board made up of representatives from parents, community, health and education professionals, childminders and staff supports this management.

Approximately 15% of children live in workless households and around 15% are living in poverty. Many children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and abilities below children of the same age.

The centre has identified its target groups as workless families, lone parents, two-year-old children eligible for a funded pre-school place, families living in the three most deprived areas within the reach, and families living in a unit for young single mothers with newborn babies.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Access requires improvement as the number of families registered and regularly using what the centre offers is not high enough. Just over half of families who live in the area are registered and regularly come to the centre. This includes priority families identified by the centre including workless families, those living in the most deprived areas and lone parents.
- The centre uses the information it has about families who live in the area to identify those who require specific and targeted support from time to time. The majority of these families are registered and continue to use services until their needs are met.
- The number of families using the centre's services shows an upward trend of improvement over the last three years, despite reductions in funding and staff turnover. The partnership agreement with midwives and health visitors ensures all new mothers and those expecting babies now know what the centre offers.
- Health visitors share the information from health checks to enable the centre to identify early the needs of disabled children and those who have special educational needs. Currently, about half of parents with two-year-olds attend the checks.
- A large majority of eligible two-year-olds are taking up a free pre-school place this year, which is a significant increase on last year. Most three-year-olds take up their free pre-school place. All of these children are attending early years provision in the area that has been judged to be at least good.
- All of the families who live in the baby unit for young mothers regularly come to the centre to enjoy groups and to learn about their babies' development. This is enabling them to live independent lives within a secure and safe environment.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The proportion of children reaching the levels expected for their age at the end of Reception is

broadly average. However, the gap between the attainment of the lowest attaining children and the rest is not closing fast enough. The local authority and centre are not absolutely clear why or whether those not reaching expected levels at the end of Reception are from priority families.

- The tracking of children's progress, including two-year-olds who take up a funded place, started last year. The centre is extending its tracking for all children who live in the area this year. Staff recognise that they are not clear enough about the learning of all children living in the area, and in particular those from priority groups. Effective transition arrangements between local schools and pre-schools help ensure children are confident to start school.
- The centre offers a suitable range of universal and targeted activities at the centre and at community venues. Most children and adults who regularly come to the centre benefit from the services offered and make good improvement to their lives. Positive relationships between staff and families ensure parents are confident to ask for help and support if they need it.
- The quality of outreach work to support families is generally good. This leads to improved outcomes for most of the low number of families referred and receiving this support. Timely referrals are made to children's social care when concerns escalate.
- The centre gives families good advice about leading healthy lives through promoting healthy eating at groups and running healthy eating workshops and programmes. Health targets are met. The proportion of mothers who breastfeed their babies for at least six to eight weeks is above the national average. The number of children in the Reception year who are overweight or obese is below the national average.
- Adults who attend courses and adult learning and work skills workshops make good progress. Parents have shown good levels of motivation and have embraced the opportunity to improve their employability skills. Parenting programmes give parents advice, guidance and strategies that help them become more confident and that support the well-being and harmony of their families.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The work of the advisory board requires improvement. Members receive regular information about the numbers of families registering and regularly attending groups, and good information about health and adult education outcomes for families. However, they are not given sufficient information about children's progress. This limits the ability of board members to ask questions that challenge the centre about whether it is successfully improving children's learning and development.
- The centre's leaders and managers accurately evaluate the effectiveness of the centre. However, the lack of detail in the service delivery plan limits the centre's ability to evaluate whether the actions being taken are making the planned difference to families' lives. Some targets lack measures of success and often do not include a timeframe within which actions should be completed. This reduces a sense of urgency in the drive for improvement.
- The centre has reached out to parents who come to the centre and those whose children attend the onsite nursery to gather their views and ideas about services and groups. It has yet to consult all families who know about the centre, but who are not using services, to evaluate whether services and groups are meeting everyone's needs. Some families in the reach still do not know where the centre is and what it provides.
- The local authority has strengthened the cycle of performance management to ensure continued improvement. Termly reviews are rigorous and challenging. Areas for improvement are clear, accurate and measurable, and precise targets have been agreed between the local authority and the centre. Targets and areas for improvement are not yet transferred to the centre's service delivery plan.
- Regular supervision ensures staff are clear about what is expected from them. There are clear links between the centre's priorities and individual staff development appraisals and work plans. A training plan identifies courses all staff must complete and training relating to their jobs.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements. All staff, including volunteers, have received the required training and understand their responsibilities in regard to the protection of children. Risk assessments are completed and regularly updated.

- Children who are subject to child protection plans, those children deemed to be in need and looked after children are supported appropriately. Early help assessment processes are used well to provide effective early help for families.
- The current outreach worker, who has only been in post for a few weeks, has quickly gained a clear overview of the families receiving specific support. The manager has a suitable oversight of case files, which enabled her to support families in the absence of an outreach worker last term.

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	20672
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	447519
Managed by	Chertsey Nursery School on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1180
Centre leader	Vicky Wilson
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01932 568758
Email address	surestart.office@chertsey.surrey.sch.uk

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