

Eliot Bank and Kelvin Grove Children's Centre

Kirkdale, Sydenham, London, SE26 6BB

Inspection date		18–19 November 2014	
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
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 is a good centre

- This welcoming, warm and friendly centre enables families to feel safe and secure, particularly at times of crisis. Staff have been very successful in increasing the number of parents from priority families registered at the centre.
- The positive atmosphere and commitment from staff have ensured that an increasing proportion of priority families attend centre activities.
- The centre is well led and highly effective support is received from the strategic leads at the primary schools. Leaders know the community well and this is the driving force behind the centre's good capacity to make further improvements.
- Governance arrangements are clear and well embedded. Members use their considerable expertise and experience to support and challenge leaders in driving the centre forward.
- Partnerships with health, education and social care professionals are a strength. They are particularly effective with the local authority's housing department.
- In 2014, more Reception age children than seen nationally achieved a good level of development. This demonstrates that leaders are reducing inequalities for these children, so that they are well prepared for school and learning.
- The compilation of case files is exemplary. They demonstrate highly successful actions centre staff have taken in supporting families with highly complex needs and achieving positive outcomes.

It is not outstanding because:

- Just under a half of eligible two-year-olds do not take up their funded education place.
- Not enough families from priority groups are attending the centre's activities regularly until their needs are met.
- Procedures for tracking and measuring participation and progress rates of adults moving into training or employment are under developed.
- Centre leaders do not always have sufficient information on priority groups, to judge the full impact of services on families most in need.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that most eligible two-year-old children take up their free funded place.
- Increase the regular engagement levels of priority groups so that the large majority benefits from the centre's activities.
- Develop procedures to track and measure adult participation rates and how well adults make progress into training or employment.
- Work closely with the local authority to ensure that there is sufficient information on priority groups for leaders to know the impact of services on families.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre group was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre leader, senior leaders from Eliot Bank and Kelvin Grove primary schools, and representatives from the local authority. They also met partners from health, education, parents, and representatives from the advisory board and parents' forum. The centre leader and the strategic leads attended all meetings of the inspection team.

Visits to activities, such as Latino Bambino, baby clinics, and Giant Messy Play, were undertaken. The inspectors looked at the centre's self-evaluation, action planning, a sample of case files, safeguarding practice, policy and procedures and a range of documentation.

Inspection team

David Scott, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Marinette Bazin	Additional Inspector
Graham Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Eliot Bank and Kelvin Grove Children's Centre was designated in March 2008 as a stand-alone centre. It delivers a range of services including health, parenting classes, stay and play sessions, adult learning and family support. The centre is located on the site of the primary schools of the same names – Eliot Bank (URN 100711) and Kelvin Grove (URN 100690). The inspection reports for both can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. The centre is managed by the governing bodies of Eliot Bank and Kelvin Grove schools, on behalf of the local authority. There is also an advisory board which comprises of parents and key partners. The parents' forum is run by the local authority and comprises of parents and partners from children's centres across the local authority.

The centre leader has been in post since September 2012. Strategic leadership of the centre is provided by two senior leaders, from Eliot Bank and Kelvin Grove primary schools. The headteachers of both schools are responsible for the overall leadership of the centre.

During the early part of 2012, the local authority re-organised the management structure of all its children's centres. The new structure became fully operational from September 2012. The number of children under five years of age is 2,507. The centre also delivers services in the community at The New Generation (TNG), a youth centre located in Sydenham.

The centre serves a community that is socially and culturally diverse. The surrounding area has both pockets of high deprivation and relative affluence. However, just over one in six children lives in an area ranked as being one of the poorest in the country. Information shows that almost one in four children live in households where no one is working.

Just over a half of families are of White British heritage. A third of families are from minority ethnic groups, which is above average. The largest groups are from Black British and Asian heritages. Children's skills and abilities on entry to early education are below the levels expected for their age.

The centre has identified lone parents, children living in poverty, families where no one is working, and children with disabilities as its main priority groups.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Parents from priority groups receive a warm and friendly welcome at the centre and, as a result, registrations and engagement levels are improving.
- Centre staff have worked very effectively to increase overall registrations, which currently stand at 82%. They have ensured that most parents from priority groups are registered with the centre. Children with disabilities have 100% attendance. However, not enough families from priority groups, including lone parents, those from workless families or those children living in poverty, attend the centre regularly enough until their needs are met.
- All three- and four-year-olds and just over a half of eligible two-year-olds take up their funded early years place. However, information from the local authority does not show what proportion is from priority groups. As a result, leaders do not know to what extent they are having a positive impact on families who are most in need.
- Highly effective partnerships with key professionals have ensured that centre staff are able to provide an excellent range of support carried out in the local community. Centre staff are particularly good at providing practical help and support when families are in crisis. As a result of this excellent work, the centre is successfully improving services for those most in need, and especially for expectant parents. For example, the centre has a very strong partnership with the local authority's homeless families department, which has been highly successful in re-housing

priority families into more suitable and stable housing.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- There is a good balance of activities designed for everyone and those aimed at priority groups. The highly committed staff provide excellent care, guidance and support to families in the home who may find accessing the centre's services difficult.
- Centre staff respond swiftly and effectively to the needs of families, particularly in helping parents to promote their child's learning and health. For example, in a well-attended high energy Latino Bambino session, children thoroughly enjoyed dancing and singing with staff and parents. Here, dancing games, colourful props, and the playing of musical instruments enabled children to bond with their families and have lots of fun learning.
- The centre has established positive partnership with Jobcentre Plus and, as a result, parents are able to access work-related courses. For example, parents are able to improve their curriculum vitae, undertake job placements and complete accredited courses in health and social care and in childcare. The centre also offers non-examination courses for parents whose first language is not English. However, parents do not attend regularly enough, and too many drop out early or do not complete their courses. This is because centre staff have not developed sufficiently robust procedures to track and measure participation rates to see how well adults make progress into training or employment.
- In September 2014, centre staff introduced their own positive parenting programme. This consists of sessions over four-week blocks, which have so far attracted 14 parents from priority families. Centre staff acknowledge that more needs to be done to enrol more parents on this programme. Over the last year the centre has supported 18 volunteers, 10 of whom have gained jobs in areas such as construction, education and office administration.
- Over time, health outcomes are generally very positive as a result of strong partnerships with health professionals. As one colleague commented, 'There is fantastic work going on here, where they manage to reach the unreachable.' For example, breastfeeding at six to eight weeks and immunisation rates are both well above national averages. Although falling, the healthy weight of Reception age children is slightly above national figures. Centre staff are addressing this by providing courses such as 'Cooking on a budget' to promote healthy eating. Also, the popular drop-in session 'Grow and explore' is designed to promote exercise through climbing and improving hand/eye coordination.
- The local authority's own data show that, in 2014, a higher proportion than that found nationally of Reception age children achieved a good level of development. This demonstrates that leaders are reducing equalities for these children, so that they are well prepared for school and learning.
- The compilation of case files is exemplary. They demonstrate clearly the highly successful actions centre staff have taken in supporting families with highly complex needs and achieving positive outcomes.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre leader is well qualified, has an excellent understanding of the community the centre serves and is highly regarded. She is well supported by the strategic leads who, together, are passionate and committed to making a difference to the lives of families who are most in need.
- Arrangements for governance and accountability are clearly understood. Leaders have developed a multi-layered approach to governance whereby the work of the governing body, the advisory board and parents' forum are carefully dove-tailed and interlinked. These groups, made up of key professionals, partners and parents, bring a range of expertise and experience. This they use well to support and challenge leaders and hold them to account in driving the centre forward.
- The local authority data team was able to provide helpful information on the performance of priority groups during the inspection. However, centre leaders do not always receive sufficient information to enable them to judge the full impact of the centre's work on priority families.

- The sharing of resources across the three sites ensures value for money for the available funds, so that young children and their families receive the help they need. The centre runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and is able to draw on the expertise of staff, from the primary schools. However, at times, staffing is stretched so that the speed in which administrative tasks, such as the inputting of data, is reduced.
- Safeguarding has a high priority. The centre leader has developed an effective system for early assessment of families in need. This ensures that children who are looked after, subject to child protection plans, and those deemed to be children in need, are well supported. The centre meets current safeguarding requirements and follows safer recruitment procedures for the appointment of staff.
- Centre staff receive regular professional supervision from the strategic leads, and are provided with effective training and development. However, the monitoring of activities delivered by external providers is not as robust. Procedures for setting targets for staff mirror those deployed in the host primary schools and are fully embedded.
- Relationships across the three sites are warm and friendly. This, together with the positive leadership by centre staff, forms the key reasons why registrations and participation rates are rising. Parents' views are regularly gained and, as a result, there is a high degree of satisfaction among families. As one parent commented, 'This centre has been a life saver, it has been fantastic in giving my child more confidence and skills.'

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.

Unique reference number	80177
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	447600
Managed by	The governing bodies of Eliot Bank and Kelvin Grove schools, on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2,507
Centre leader	Jessica Towlson
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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