

St Quintin's Children's Centre

90, Highlever Road, London, W10 6PN

Inspection dates

9–11 November 2013

Previous inspection date

26–28 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
		Inadequate	4
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:

- More work is needed to ensure that parent advisory board members are well supported in their role.
- Systems to check children's and families' progress when children and families attend the centre regularly are in place. However, they are too new to show the difference the centre is making in the longer term.
- The take up of funded nursery education by eligible two-year-olds is low and the gap in achievement for the most vulnerable children is not closing significantly.
- Partnerships with local schools are under developed.
- Planning for sessions does not always show how children's interests, needs and next steps in learning are routinely considered.
- Parents get good individual support to help them into employment, but the number of families benefiting is very small.

This centre has the following strengths:

- Leaders and managers have driven for improvement by focusing on sharing information with partners and improving the quality of data used by the centre. As a result, managers, staff and partner organisations have a clearer idea of the priority needs and have made some improvements to target services in the area.
- The centre has recruited staff with great care. Since October 2014, it has been fully staffed and the team is successfully involving more families among those they know who are in need of support.
- The centre acts as a gateway to a good range of local maternity, health and family support services that families value greatly. Children and families access help early when health and development needs are identified and those subject to child protection plans, or in need, are well protected.
- Children and families thoroughly enjoy trying out new experiences in stay and play sessions. Parents' understanding of their children's learning grows rapidly with the skilled guidance of staff.

What does the centre/group need to do to improve further?

- Close achievement gaps for children from poorer backgrounds by:
 - enhancing the quality of stay and play sessions, so that children's individual learning needs are consistently identified and planned for
 - developing partnerships with all local schools to promote the centre's work and help children to be better prepared for starting school
 - increasing the number of children who are eligible for funded nursery education, particularly two-year-olds, taking up their entitlement.
- Further improve information sharing arrangements with partners, such as health colleagues and schools, to:
 - ensure local priority needs are identified and consistently understood
 - enable local targets to be adjusted and monitored.
- Ensure that systems are well established and consistently implemented to accurately measure the impact of the centre's work with families, including adult learners.
- Continue to strengthen governance arrangements by ensuring that parents on the early help advisory board are well supported to fulfil their role.

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. It was carried out at the same time as other children's centres, which were Clare Gardens and Holmfield House.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector

The inspectors held meetings with parents, volunteers and members of the advisory board. They also talked with senior managers within the local authority, the centre manager and staff. Meetings with partners including those from education, health, social care, early help teams and the voluntary sector were also held.

The inspectors visited the centre, Kensington Town Hall and Family Services offices.

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

Inspection team

Christine Davies, Lead Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Graham Saltmarsh

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

The centre is one of four stand-alone children's centres managed by the local authority and situated in the North Locality of the borough. It works collaboratively with other centres to offer childcare, family learning and health services. Governance arrangements, revised since the previous inspection, consist of a borough-wide early help advisory board on which parents from the St Quintin's area are represented. A parents' forum is in place. This centre, Clare Gardens and Holmfield House children's centres are being inspected simultaneously. The centre manager also manages the St Quintin's Family Centre, a registered 60 place early years day nursery that is located on the same site. The nursery was inspected in 2012, and was judged to be good. Inspection reports for the two other centres inspected and for the nursery can be found at www.gov.uk/ofsted. The children's centre and nursery share some room facilities with the adjacent St Quintin's Centre for Disabled Children and Young People. The manager is supported by five full- and part-time children's centre staff.

The area is ethnically and culturally mixed with a high proportion of families moving in and out of the area. The borough has a smaller proportion of residents from White British, Black and Asian ethnic groups in comparison to the rest of London. However, there are more of Other/Mixed heritage and three times the London average of families of other White backgrounds speaking a wide variety of European languages. This group is made up of people from Europe, Ireland, the Americas and Australasia. St Quintin's Children's Centre also serves an Irish Traveller community.

The boundary of the area served by the centre has changed since the last inspection and the number of children served is reduced to 559. The area retained is among the most densely populated in England and contains significant pockets of poverty and deprivation in an area that is one of the most deprived in the country. A high proportion of families live in private rented accommodation. When they start in early years provision, children's skills and knowledge vary but are typically those expected for their age.

Target groups are identified by the centre as families eligible for the two-year-old funding, children receiving Early Help support and families subject to child protection plans referred to the centre and children with disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The quality of the information regarding those families that are using the centres has improved following a data cleansing exercise. Systems are now being used more effectively by staff so that the centre has up-to-date and accurate information regarding the registration and engagement of families. Centre leaders and managers are realistic in their assessment that the information the centre holds about families registered needs further improvement.
- New ways of working and better information about births, families moving into the area and from children's services mean that the centre is confident in the accuracy of its new registration figures since July 2014. The centre's work in the community to help priority families has rapidly become established since the centre has been fully staffed in October 2014. Staff have successfully ensured that the very large majority of families in priority groups have been registered since then. However, there is too little information yet collated about the routine attendance of all target groups.
- The centre has registered and is engaging with all identified priority families receiving early help services. The access to a range of courses and services for these families is good. Attendance at stay and play sessions for these families is monitored closely and is high.
- Midwife and health visitor clinics held at the centre are attended well and give families easy access to specialist health and child development services. Health information sessions are less well attended and the timing of sessions is under review. The support of centre staff during clinic times gives families access to a wide range of information. This includes advice and guidance about

courses, debt advice, employment, schools, childcare and family welfare matters. Parents comment very favourably about the range of expertise available, but the centre does not keep track of uptake or the success from taking up other services.

- Centre staff have successfully increased the proportion of families with eligible two-year-olds taking up their entitlement to free early education places. However, it is lower than elsewhere in the borough at 53%. These children are all placed in good or better settings, including some in the day care nursery on the same site. The proportion of three- and four-year-olds taking up their entitlement to free early education is below the borough and national averages at 85%. This is thought to be due to the high proportion of affluent families using private independent nurseries within the reach area.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- A wide range of good quality resources is available to the children attending group play sessions and used skilfully by play staff. Staff planning follows the prime areas of learning and reflects the age range and abilities of children who may attend. However, learning intentions are not clearly outlined or used systematically as a basis of evaluation. Some observations have been carried out, but there is limited evidence of next steps in learning being identified or observations being used to inform future planning.
- Families using the centre regularly show in case studies and their evaluations that they have the highest regard for centre staff and the expertise that is available to them. Parents speak warmly about 'sense of community' and 'feeling better in themselves'. The numbers of parents taking up formal parenting courses is small. However, parents attend workshops enthusiastically and make good use of discussion sessions within stay and play sessions to support their learning on individual topics such as managing children's sleep and behaviour.
- The tracking of adults' progress is an acknowledged area for development within the centre. Some parents have benefited from family and adult learning opportunities that increase their confidence and skills. Courses, such as first aid, have been provided within the centre following requests from parents. Take-up rates for adult and family learning services courses are not rigorously tracked or evaluated to inform planning of future courses. The centre is not able to demonstrate the number of adults taking up and completing courses, progressing on to other courses, achieving qualifications or moving into work.
- Overall, children's achievements by the end of the Reception Year are below average in the local area and the achievement gap for some children from less affluent backgrounds is not closing. Children eligible for free school meals in the area the centre serves achieve significantly less well in comparison to their peers across the local authority as a whole. Work to establish links with the two other primary schools in the reach area, to improve targeting of support to children in readiness for school, is at an early stage of development.
- Children with disabilities attending the day care provision on site are supported very well. Families of those children use a good range of other children's centre services and see the services as seamless. Evaluations show they feel very well supported as their children move on to school or other nurseries.
- Information and advice for families seeking work and volunteering are effective, although few families have been identified for intensive support into employment. Parents that have benefited from children's centre services in the past are keen to 'give something back'. The volunteer programme is successful in helping a small, but growing, number of parents develop their skills and prepare to return to employment.
- Effective direct family support is delivered by the Early Help team. Cases seen were of good quality and well supervised. The work is leading to positive improvements in outcomes for most families. Cases are being referred to children's social care appropriately when needed. However, social workers and early help workers acknowledge they are still learning about the new children's centre delivery model and ways of working.
- There are good links in place with midwives and health visitors who provide services at the centre. Parents' evaluations show that the parents appreciate and benefit from the links between services

before their children are born and after. However, information regarding health outcomes is not available to leaders for the area the centre serves. This means that there are no shared health targets and the centre is unable to show how work within the centre is contributing to better family health in the area.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The quality of information made available to the centre by the local authority and partners has improved since the last inspection. For example, the centre has access to data regarding new births, eligible two-year-olds and information from children's social care teams. This means that resources can be targeted more effectively at those families most in need of help and support. But, further work is needed to ensure that managers, staff, and partners are able to easily access this and use it effectively.
- The early help advisory board, led by parent representatives and the voluntary sector, held its first meeting in July this year and is developing its role. Terms of reference are in place and information regarding services has been shared. Parents have received some training on their role and responsibilities, but need further support, especially in regard to the data provided by the local authority. Parents' views have already led to some changes within the centres.
- The local authority has driven improvement in the centre at a good pace since the last inspection. The overarching improvement plan that was drawn up following the last inspection has now been replaced by an Interim Strategy for Children's Centres and an individual centre development plan. Although this has generated improvement so far, precise targets need to be added to the plan to ensure the pace of improvement is maintained and progress is measurable.
- Significant work has been carried out to review and improve services over the last year and borough leaders and centre staff should be commended for the commitment they have shown to introduce new ways of working. The staff structure in the centre has been strengthened to improve family and community engagement. The team is becoming effective in building partnerships and is well regarded by families in the area. The team's impact can already be seen in the very recent increase in the centre's work in the community, building numbers of registered families and increased attendance at centre activities.
- Leaders and managers, and those responsible for governance, have an accurate view of the centre's performance. Governance arrangements are generally secure and the increased range of information now provided ensures senior leaders are better placed for challenging performance and accelerating continued improvement.
- The priority families for services from the centre have been identified since the last inspection and the local authority has made accurate information available. Information about priority families is shared and agreed with partners at regular Team around the Children's Centre meetings. However, senior leaders acknowledge that further work is needed to ensure all information relating to families, especially those known to be victims of domestic abuse, is shared appropriately.
- Safeguarding children underpins the work of the centre and the environment is safe and secure. All necessary policies are in place and meet requirements. Staff and partners are thoroughly checked. This is also the case for agency staff, students and volunteers. Staff attends appropriate safeguarding training and are aware of how to report concerns.
- Effective family support is delivered by the Early Help team. The work is leading to positive improvements in outcomes for most families. Cases are referred to children's social care and to the Targeted Placements Panel appropriately when needed. However, social workers and early help workers acknowledge they are still learning about the new children's centre delivery model and the revised ways of working.
- The children's centre is managed on a daily basis by a highly dedicated centre manager. She leads and inspires the team and, drawing on skills of new staff, all of whom show high aspirations and a commitment to including the most vulnerable families. Staff are highly qualified and benefit from regular supervision and training and development opportunities.

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.

Children's centre details

Unique reference number	22883
Local authority	Royal Borough of Kensington And Chelsea
Inspection number	447547
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	559
Centre leader	Busola Kehinde
Date of previous inspection	26–28 November 2013
Telephone number	020 8968 2580
Email address	busola.kehinde@rbkc.gov.uk

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