

Redbridge West 1 Children's Centre Group

c/o Redbridge School Children's Centre, College Gardens, Ilford, Essex, IG4 5HW

Inspection dates	27–28 January 2015
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

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.

- All three of the children's centres in the group are highly popular with local families and a large majority are registered and make good use of the services. A majority of families identified as belonging to priority target groups are known to the group and benefit from the high quality courses, activities and support.
- Staff work very effectively with health partners and infant feeding team to ensure that breastfeeding rates remain very high and that obesity rates remain low. Families benefit from very good advice and guidance about weaning, diet and exercise.
- Activities, such as Busy Toddlers, reduce inequalities by helping parents to understand the many different ways they are able to support their children's development. Almost all children have a good start to school life and where extra support is required the group works very effectively with schools and families to provide it.
- Support to help parents improve their understanding and use of English language is very effective. Staff and volunteers are very well qualified and use their good experience very effectively to help parents gain greater self-confidence as they improve their communication skills.
- Leaders, managers and the advisory board set high standards and monitor the group's performance effectively. This ensures that the whole staff team is ambitious for the success of everyone and takes clear action to make improvements. As a result, the group continually raises the quality of its work and the positive impact it has on improving the lives of children and families.

It is not outstanding because:

- The progress made by target children and planning their next learning steps is not fully effective.
- The progress made by parents from priority groups when they attend adult learning sessions is not being checked closely enough.
- Too few of the parents from priority target groups are actively involved in having their say about how the centre group is run.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Build on the effective assessment of children's starting points by developing a system to check the progress that target children make when they attend universal sessions and use this to plan activities that maximise their learning and development.
- Fully implement an effective tracking and monitoring system so that accurate information about the progress of parents from priority groups who attend adult learning sessions is clearly recorded. Ensure this information is used effectively so that staff can set new targets to extend their progress even further.
- Increase the number of parents involved in helping to make decisions about how the group is run, particularly those identified as belonging to priority target groups.

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.

This inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with parents and children, the group leaders, outreach and support workers, and representatives from the local authority. They also met health, education and early years partners, adult education coordinators, volunteers, the group's critical friend and representatives of the advisory board.

The inspection covered the following children's centres which form the group: Redbridge School Children's Centre; Aldersbrook Children's Centre; and Wanstead Children's Centre.

The inspectors observed the centres' work, conducted a joint observation of a family session with the operational service manager, took children's views into account, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including parents' evaluation and satisfaction surveys.

Inspection team

Dan Grant, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Patricia Collis	Additional inspector
Jamie Hassan	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

Redbridge West 1 Children's Centre Group was formed in February 2014. It consists of three previously stand-alone children's centres that have merged and share services, staff and an overall manager. The group aims to meet its core purpose by offering a range of services including family play sessions, parenting advice, adult learning and family support. These services are delivered to families from the children's centre buildings, community venues in the area and through outreach home visits. Redbridge West 1 Children's Centre Group forms part of Redbridge local authority which has a total of 17 children's centres.

Two of the centres in this group are located with linked schools. Aldersbrook Children's Centre is based on the same site as Aldersbrook Primary School (URN 102823). Redbridge School Children's Centre is based on the same site as Redbridge Primary School (URN 127046). These schools are subject to separate inspection arrangements. The reports from these inspections are available on the Ofsted website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The group is managed directly by Redbridge local authority. There is an advisory board to assist governance made up of representatives of local organisations, members of the local community and parents.

There are approximately 2,120 children under the age of five years in the area served by the centre group. The area covered by the group is in the district of Ilford in the London Borough of Redbridge in Greater London. The area is mainly affluent, with pockets of disadvantage. Most families own their homes, with a minority living in private rented accommodation, and there are small pockets of social housing. Levels of unemployment are low, and only a few children live in households dependent upon workless benefits. The majority of families within the area served by the group are White British. The two largest minority ethnic groups include families of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin. A small minority of parents do not speak English. Most children enter early years provision with knowledge and skills expected for their age.

The target groups identified by the children's centre group include: homeless families with young children; families living in poverty, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas; and those from minority ethnic heritages who live in the Snaresbrook area.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families	Good
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- Staff work very effectively with key partners to ensure that the group is aware of a very large majority of families with a child under five years of age living in the area. Most of these families make good use of the services the group has to offer and the numbers involved continue to increase. Outreach visits that take place in families' homes are used very effectively to engage those who may be reluctant to access the group's services, and to explain what services are available and how the staff and partners can help them.
- The group has established a positive reputation for providing highly effective support for all families within the area, including parents expecting a baby. Staff clearly prioritise families who are most in need of services and make sure they receive well planned support. Children assessed as living in poverty and families living in the relatively disadvantaged areas engage well in almost all activities.
- Staff ensure that families referred for specific help, such as those experiencing domestic violence, have good access and take up of services which are well matched to their needs.
- Staff are particularly effective at encouraging isolated and homeless parents to get involved in the life of the centre. Families from different minority ethnic heritages who live in the Snaresbrook area receive effective support to help them improve their spoken English. This has resulted in increasing

numbers of them being able to help their children to make more progress with their reading.

- The centre works exceptionally well with key partners to ensure the vast majority of eligible two-year-olds take up their early years funded place at provision which has been graded by Ofsted to be good or better. A high proportion of the three- and four-year old children eligible for funded places take up the offer.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Families identified as belonging to priority target groups benefit from the high quality courses, activities and support provided by the centre group. Staff respond quickly to requests to provide family support and the impact of their work on improving the outcomes for families is recorded appropriately in case files.
- Very well qualified and experienced staff work successfully with health and other key partners to provide highly effective support for breastfeeding mothers. The very popular Baby Feeding Cafes and the good range of information posters and leaflets have contributed well to the very high proportion of mothers who continue breastfeeding at six to eight weeks and to the low rate of obesity.
- A wide range of relevant activities supports children's learning and development well. The group contributes significantly to children's good progress through activities such as the Book Share Project and Brilliant Boys. However, the planning of activities and systems in place to track target children's progress over time are currently incomplete.
- The group has established close and highly successful partnership work with schools to support children's learning and development. For example, the well attended Transitions Programme helps children in the area, particularly those most in need, to be well prepared for school and helps to reduce inequalities. The programme involves families visiting schools to meet the teachers before term begins. They also receive useful information leaflets to help them understand what to expect when their children start school. A higher proportion of children in the area than seen nationally achieve a good level of development by the end of their Reception year.
- The group provides a good range of adult learning, including parenting classes, through their effective partnerships with Redbridge Institute. These groups are very well attended and ever popular with large numbers of parents. Basic courses on language, literacy and numeracy have helped many parents move on to higher level courses, secure voluntary work and, subsequently, find paid employment.
- The group has established a useful tracking system to help monitor the progress of parents who attend further learning sessions. However, although staff are well informed about how well some parents are doing, they do not always clearly identify which of them are from priority groups. As a result, plans for activities do not always reflect the individual needs, so progress is not always as rapid as it could be.
- Fathers, including those identified as in greatest need and those living in the least advantaged areas of the community, receive good support and guidance from the staff. The Dads Group provides activities which help fathers to focus on how their children learn and develop and strengthen family relationships.
- A good range of effective specialist services, such as counselling support and welfare benefits advice, is available to parents to help them overcome specific issues that staff cannot resolve. Particularly effective work takes place with those suffering from domestic abuse. As a result, parents develop resilience, increase their self-confidence and improve their ability to cope with problems.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The arrangements for leadership, governance and management of the group are good. The group manager and the advisory board have an accurate understanding of the needs of local families. They are aware of the group's strengths and know what is required to ensure that the group continues to provide good services to local families. Effective plans, informed by accurate self-evaluation, are in place to sustain on-going improvements.

- Thorough and methodical leadership support by the local authority helps promote the highly effective teamwork. Resources are of a high standard, deployed very efficiently and used to full capacity to meet local needs.
- The performance of the group and the quality of services are monitored closely by senior leaders, an independent 'critical friend', the advisory group and the local authority. Close analysis of data and trends in performance are used effectively by leaders to ensure all families receive a good range of relevant services. As a consequence, the group's work continues to have positive impact on reducing inequalities for children and families.
- Parents are fully involved in many aspects of running the centre, including as members of the advisory board. The parents' forum group is very active and meets regularly to review services, provide frequent and thorough evaluation of services and contribute new ideas. However, too few of these parents are from the priority target groups with the greatest needs. This means that leaders cannot be confident that these families' views are being heard and used to shape future services.
- The group manager has high expectations of her staff and supports the staff team very well. She makes sure that staff are well trained and that their performance is managed thoroughly. A very useful good practice guide has been written by a senior manager to help staff develop their practice and improve their work. Policies and procedures are effective and are understood by all. The group has a good range of stimulating resources which ensures families benefit from their time spent in activities.
- Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures and use them effectively to help children and families remain safe. Staff vetting checks meet current requirements. Close supervision is given to children identified as in need, those subject to child protection plans and looked after children. The group makes very good use of the Common Assessment Framework to ensure families receive well planned, timely support.

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.

Group details

Unique reference number	80007
Local authority	London Borough of Redbridge
Inspection number	455175
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2,120
Group manager	Emma Fitzsimmons
Telephone number	02065 517491
Email address	Emma.fitzsimmons@redbridge.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 22482 Redbridge School Children's Centre
- 20055 Aldersbrook Children's Centre
- 23444 Wanstead Children's Centre

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