

Redbridge South Group 2 Children's Centre Group

136–138 Ilford Lane, Ilford, IG1 2LG

Inspection dates

24–25 February 2015

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 children's centre group is good.

- The vast majority of young children living in the area served by the group are registered and access services. This has been achieved through excellent links with partners such as health services and the library and through staff being proactive in the community.
- Priority families have been accurately identified through an in-depth understanding of the local community's specific needs. Most of the priority groups, such as Pakistani families who have English as an additional language, are registered and access services.
- The group has excellent systems to monitor the support it provides for adults. This shows that over the last year a significant number has been supported back to work or training. The group also has a very effective volunteer programme.
- There is a strong focus on children's early development and health. This starts with Baby and Me groups and continues on through structured programmes to develop communication skills and strong links with early years settings and schools. Outcomes at the end of the early years are improving, especially for children who have accessed centre services.
- Management by the local authority provides very good levels of support and monitoring for the inspirational group manager. Staff are highly committed and enthusiastic; they provide very effective levels of care, guidance and support to families. Self-evaluation is accurate and targets are challenging. Consequently, the group has a good capacity to continue to improve.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The group has only recently analysed the frequency of priority families' engagement with services. This information has shown that, although most of the Black African children in the Loxford ward have been registered and have accessed services, the percentage sustaining their engagement is lower than for other priority families.
- Services are not yet tailored well enough to meet the needs of Black African families and to ensure they use the centres regularly.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more Black African families in the Loxford ward use centre services regularly after they have registered, by:
 - refining information to assess accurately the numbers who are regularly using services
 - identifying the particular needs of Black African families and analysing why more are not using services after they register
 - adapting services to meet their particular needs
 - ensure they use the centres regularly and sustain more engagement.

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 centres that form part of this children's centre group are Loxford and St Luke's Children's Centre and Chadwell Children's Centre.

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the group manager and the deputy, representatives from the local authority and several staff members. They spoke to a wide range of partners including several from health services, adult education, local schools and voluntary organisations such as Homestart. They also had discussions with groups of parents and volunteers.

The inspectors were based at the Loxford centre and visited the Chadwell and St Luke's sites. They observed several sessions taking place, such as Chatter Matters at the Chadwell centre, a baby music session at the Loxford centre and a creative play group at the St Luke's site. One observation was undertaken jointly with the group's deputy manager.

The inspectors looked at a range of relevant documentation including the group's self-evaluation and action plan, safeguarding policies and procedures and a sample of case studies. The group manager and deputy and a local authority representative attended all the inspection team meetings.

Inspection team

Joan Lindsay, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Michael Blakey	Additional inspector
Anthony Mundy	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

Redbridge South Group 2 consists of two centres, Loxford and St Luke's Children's Centre (which resulted from a merger in 2011) and Chadwell Children's Centre, a part-time centre open on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. This centre is based in the Keith Axon Centre, which is also a library. The group has been in its current form since August 2011; it provides family support, adult learning and health services.

The group is managed directly by the local authority. There is an advisory panel in place that covers all the children's centres in the borough. There are independently managed nurseries on the St Luke's and Chadwell sites that are subject to separate inspections. Their reports can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

There are 2,695 children aged under five in the area served by the group. A high number of families move in and out of the area, which is relatively disadvantaged with over 60% of children living in poverty in some parts of the Loxford ward. The percentage of children under five living in workless households is approximately 25% overall, which is above national averages. Approximately 10% of families in the Loxford ward claim Working Tax Credit and almost 20% in Chadwell compared to a national figure of 17%. The main ethnic groups in the Loxford ward are British Asian Pakistani and Indian and Bangladeshi. In the Chadwell ward they are Black African, White British and Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi families. Children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at levels well below those typical for their age.

The group has identified priority families needing most support as: young children living in the two least advantaged areas situated on the Buttsbury Estate and adjacent to the Chadwell Children's Centre; Pakistani children who have English as an additional language across the group's area; Black African children who have English as an additional language in the Loxford ward and Bangladeshi children who have English as an additional language in the Chadwell ward.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Registrations have increased at a rapid rate over the last two years, so that now almost all young children are registered and most access services. This has been achieved through very effective systems to register new births, practical links with health and library partners, and staff attending local antenatal and baby clinics. For example, in the last quarter of 2014, health visitors registered 233 families and staff registered 255 through clinics.
- All of the group's priority families have very high levels of registration and access, despite significant movement in and out of the area. This is supported by services that are in convenient locations. For example, the Loxford centre is very centrally placed and the Chadwell centre is located in one of the two least advantaged areas. This ensures that priority families on the Buttsbury Estate and adjacent to the Chadwell centre can access services easily. Although space is relatively limited at the Loxford centre, the use of the St Luke's site and the Chadwell centre provides easy access for much larger groups.
- Services such as English language courses have increased the sustained engagement particularly from Pakistani and Bangladeshi families over the last 12 months, so that the large majority of young children in this priority group now use services regularly. However, relatively lower numbers of Black African families sustain their engagement.
- The group monitors priority families' use of particular services, for example how many from different ethnic groups attend the Baby Feeding Cafe. However, it has only recently looked at their sustained engagement across all group services. As a result, although there has been some analysis of which services best meet specific needs, this has not been refined enough to analyse the requirements of

Black African families. Consequently, their engagement levels are lower than for other priority families.

- The group has been proactive in supporting eligible families to access free early education for two-year-olds. Although the large majority now do so, staff are working hard to increase this figure through a sensitive understanding of some of the cultural barriers. Staff work well with local early years settings to ensure children receive good quality provision.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The group provides a well-balanced range of services, some targeted with specific objectives such as supporting adults back into employment and training, and activities that are open to all. Staff are good role models and effective in encouraging families to participate and interact with their children. However, services have not been finely tuned enough to ensure Black African families use them as regularly as other priority groups.
- The outcomes for adults, especially those from priority families including Black African families who do use the services, are excellent. The group's meticulous and innovative tracking systems show that very effective links with partners such as Redbridge Institute of Adult Education, Faith Action and benefits' advisers have had highly positive outcomes. For example, of 117 adults supported in the last year, over 90 returned to full or part time work, extended their skills or improved their economic well-being. £167,000 in benefits was gained for local families in this period.
- The centres' focus on developing children's early communication skills, through Chatter Matters and other structured programmes, has been effective. Parents say outcomes for their children have been positive.
- Early years results show an improving picture across Chadwell and Loxford schools. Information for 2014 shows an increase, with a large majority of children now reaching levels which are typical for their age. A significantly higher percentage of children who had accessed a children's centre achieved this outcome, compared to those who did not use centre services.
- There are good systems to track children through the centre using learning journeys and on through to school via the local authority's progress tracker. However, these systems are still relatively new and only used for a fairly small number of children at present.
- A large majority of babies are still being breastfed at around two months, and this is well above the national average. This has resulted from a very 'joined-up' approach from various partners and excellent relationships with the centres' staff. Feeding and weaning support and highly effective exchange of information and a consistent message to families have led to this positive outcome.
- A relatively high number of young children are very overweight in the borough as a whole. However, more localised information is not available at present. Healthy living is a strong focus for the group with exercise classes, such as antenatal yoga, and healthy eating advice, such as Rethink Your Drink, available to families. Parents say they feel very well informed about how to lead healthy lives.
- The group's volunteer programme has been very effective. This has been recognised through the award of the Volunteer Kite Mark. Many volunteers have progressed on to employment and the group benefits from having regular support, such as the parent-led Creative Play session at the St Luke's site.
- Priority groups, including Black African families, are supported very effectively by the team of Family Support Workers. Close links with social care and regular case supervision by the deputy manager ensure outcomes are frequently excellent for families with often complex needs.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Leadership, governance and management at all levels are good. The local authority provides effective levels of support and rigorous monitoring through annual reviews and regular visits. Much has been achieved in a relatively short period of time since the group was formed. Everyone has a very accurate understanding of the group's strengths and areas for development. This provides a

strong platform for the group to continue to improve.

- There is one advisory board covering all of the local authority's 17 children's centres. This body has a wide representation of partners and some parent representation. Each locality has a critical friend with a remit to challenge and support their groups. Anecdotally, this is effective, although this is not always reflected in advisory board minutes.
- Leaders and managers generally make good use of information to measure the group's impact on local families. Figures showing the sustained engagement of some of the priority families, particularly the Black African families, have only recently been analysed. Therefore, this information is not yet being used as accurately or effectively as other information.
- The group manager provides inspirational and supportive leadership. Effective staff training and performance management mean that staff are well trained and experienced. They are committed to reducing inequalities in the local area. They are highly regarded by families, who typically state, 'They have changed lives beyond belief.'
- The group is well resourced at all three sites; for example, there is an attractive library and sensory room at the Loxford centre. Staff are also used very effectively across the group to meet most priority families' needs. They are aware that more needs to be done to identify the specific needs of Black African families.
- Safeguarding procedures are embedded well in all the group's work. Close working relationships with social care and health partners mean that all young children who are subject to child protection plans or are considered to be children in need are known to the children's centre staff. Staff are well-versed in the use of the Common Assessment Framework to engage other services to support families effectively.
- Parents have very positive views of the centres, describing them as 'providing a brilliant service'. They have regular opportunities to air their views at parents' forum meetings, held in Loxford and Chadwell; their views are acted on, where appropriate, such as requesting more open access to the sensory room.

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 group details

Unique reference number	80213
Local authority	London Borough of Redbridge
Inspection number	454071
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2,695
Centre leader	Steve Wilson
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	02085 143128
Email address	loxfordcc@redbridge.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- Loxford and St. Luke's Children's Centre
- Chadwell Children's Centre

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