

Temple Mill Children's Centre

Cliffe Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3NL

Inspection dates	26–27 February, 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.

- As a result of good partnerships with health services, the centre knows most families with young children in the area and makes them aware of its activities. Together they provide good access to services for the centre's identified priority groups. For example, all the two-year-olds eligible for free early education have been placed with early years providers. Families in need of support for their under-one-year-olds receive help in a timely way.
- The centre has a 'joined up' approach to meeting the needs of young children and their families. There is a clear programme of services and support that starts before children are born, and continues to offer support until children start school.
- Many of the centre's activities form part of the good range of initiatives developed by the local authority to improve outcomes for families in most need. These are delivered well and make a difference to families' lives, particularly those from priority groups.
- Good quality activities, led with other agencies such as health, early years providers, local schools and adult education, are contributing to the success of the centre's work with families in most need.
- The centre is a hub in the local community. Parents encourage other parents to use the centre. The staff know their families very well. The good relationships that have been established mean that the staff are able to offer the right level of care, guidance and support when this is needed.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the centre's performance and has successfully developed the centre's services and leadership during a period of turbulence. The centre leader and manager constantly seek ways to meet the needs of families and aim to provide high quality services. As a result, the centre continues to improve.

It is not outstanding because:

- Families in the new rural reach area already benefit from activities delivered through partnerships with health and other centre activities. However, because the priority groups in this area have not been fully identified, the centre does not yet have a clear picture of how the activities are meeting the needs of families who experience, for example, rural isolation.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the centre's work in the Chattenden and Hoo areas by:
 - identifying all the priority groups that need support from the centre
 - shaping activities to meet the needs of those groups, particularly the children in most need
 - evaluating the quality of this work to improve outcomes for families further.

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 three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with representatives of the local authority, including the nominated head of the centre and the school's link governor. Discussions were also held with the centre manager, members of the advisory board, staff and volunteers. They held conversations with a number of parents and took account of their views. Inspectors also met with early years providers and representatives from schools, including local headteachers and representatives from health and adult education. The centre manager and representatives of the local authority, including the acting head of centre, attended all team meetings as observers.

The inspectors visited a baby group at Hoo Masonic Hall and made a joint observation with the centre manager. Little Butterflies at Cliffe Woods was also visited.

Inspectors observed the centre's work, including a postnatal group, stay and play, and a young parents' group. The inspectors looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Teresa Kiely, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Barbara Saltmarsh	Additional inspector
Carole Skinner	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Temple Mill Children's Centre was established in 2008. In June 2014, the area served was further extended to include Chattenden and Hoo. It is a standalone centre.

The centre is managed by an interim executive board (IEB), which also currently governs Temple Mill Primary School. The school is inspected separately and was placed in special measures in October 2014. The members of the IEB include a link governor for the centre, who also sits on the advisory board; this is a local authority representative. In September 2014, the local authority appointed one of its representatives as head of centre. A centre manager is also in post. The centre delivers or supports access to a range of services, including midwifery, health, adult education, and family learning.

Temple Mill Children's Centre includes urban, rural and semi-rural locations. The area is mainly affluent, with small pockets of deprivation in Cliffe, Wainscott East, Chattenden and Upnor. The percentage of children under five living in workless households is less than 10%. The majority of these families are scattered across the whole of the centre's reach area. The large majority of the families served by the centre are of White British heritage. Children's levels of entry to early years provision are generally in line with what is typical for their age.

Target priority groups identified by the centre are: two-year-old children in workless households; teenage parents; children aged under one; and children in most need. A new priority group includes families, and particularly children in most need, living in the newly acquired reach area who experience rural isolation.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families Good

- Information is shared effectively between the centre and its health partners. As a result, the centre knows all the families with young children in its reach area, has identified its main target groups and has tailored services carefully to meet their needs.
- As well as working closely with its partners, the centre uses its own assessments to identify families in most need and supports them to access services. As a result, a large majority of the families from priority groups access the services they need.
- Records show that the centre is successful in sustaining families' engagement with a variety of activities, and discussions with parents confirm this. The local authority holds the centre to account for targeted activities that show a drop in attendance. Stay and play activities in different venues across the wide reach area are well attended and provide a rich variety of activities that support children's learning and help parents to extend this at home.
- Families who attend antenatal services, and the services known as 'pathways' for under one-year-olds, receive high quality support when this is needed. A large majority of families who experience early difficulties are supported successfully.
- The centre supports teenage pregnancies well and almost all of these parents access the services. Midwives confirm that the centre offers these parents 'tremendous support'.
- The centre works well with social care to support vulnerable families. Families who are identified as needing help from the centre receive this support quickly.
- The centre works with health visitors to provide the two-year-old development checks. Children in need of early intervention have additional targeted support from the centre through bespoke activities to support their development.
- Children and families living within the new extended rural reach area are supported through activities with health partners as well as specific, carefully planned activities that support early learning. Within the second half of 2014, the centre doubled the number of families engaged in its activities in this area. However, the centre recognises more work now needs to be done, especially

in ensuring the engagement of priority families.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The centre offers good quality provision for very young children and their families. This includes two key 'pathways' for targeted families: one for under-one-year-olds; and the other for two-year-olds identified as needing additional support through the two-year-old development checks.
- The range of universal and targeted activities that are run from the centre provides an appropriate balance that enables families in most need to get the help they require. The centre staff provide good quality support and encourage families to attend, so that their needs continue to be met.
- The centre supports early years settings to continue to improve and this work is underpinned by good support from the local authority. Local schools value the support that they get from the centre, particularly over the summer holiday period before children start school.
- Local private and voluntary settings identify children who would benefit from additional support, particularly with communication and language development, and work closely with the centre to meet the children's needs.
- There is a sense of urgency in improving children's readiness for school. There is a wide range of exciting activities for young children which develop all areas of learning and are adapted and varied in the light of playworkers' observations and evaluations of need. The centre's own records show that these children make good progress and are at age-appropriate levels when they enter school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage profile results for the reach area show that children are generally working at or above levels seen nationally when they reach the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Activities to help with parenting skills are successful. A large majority of those who need this support get the help they need. Activities include structured parenting programmes and adult learning activities that tackle issues such as paediatric first aid and healthy eating.
- The centre has a strong working partnership with adult education. A large majority of targeted families who need this support access it. The centre monitors their progress beyond courses, and into employment. This enables them to provide courses that will be the most useful, such as when the adults need to develop further their basic skills in literacy and mathematics. A recent return to work course showed the success of this course. The parents who completed this course either continued with adult education or secured employment.
- Breastfeeding rates are below national and Medway figures. The centre is taking decisive action to tackle this, with a range of centre initiatives including trained peer supporters and the introduction of a breastfeeding lounge. The centre's data show that the rate of obesity of Reception aged children continues to drop and is below the national level.
- Parents support the work of the centre in a number of ways. They work as volunteers and attend both the parents' forum and the advisory board meetings. They also contribute their views to the centre's surveys of their needs. They help to improve activities by using the parent comment book that is regularly reviewed by staff and acted on.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre is well led and managed and all of those involved provide strong and effective support for its continuing development. This is particularly the case with the local authority, which has sustained and improved leadership and governance in a range of ways, particularly over the last year. This includes the decision to extend the centre's reach area, because it values highly the quality of the centre's work.
- A wide range of professionals and parents regularly attends the advisory board meetings and effectively supports and challenges the centre. The chair of the advisory board provides effective continuity of leadership between its previous governance and the new interim executive board arrangements. The chair is supported by a representative of the local authority who has taken on

the role of link governor and advisory board member. There is a clear flow of information here.

- The local authority and centre leaders make effective use of data to continue to improve services. The development plan has a number of challenging targets to improve practice further. The centre frequently reviews its own development plan and the local authority regularly checks the centre's work.
- The centre makes good use of its resources to provide a range of activities that support those who need these services. The activities are carefully thought out so that those who need the service will benefit the most.
- The centre's procedures to reduce the risk of harm to children are firmly embedded. Rigorous safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and available to parents. When the centre works with children and families, who have been referred by social care, it provides effective support, including a valuable counselling service.
- A practice manager regularly supports the supervision of the centre's work with looked after children, those subject to child protection plans and those in need. Case files are well maintained and record well the work of centre staff.
- Families most in need know that they will get the support they need. Some parents told inspectors of the many ways the centre had helped them, for example to develop closer relationships with their children and to cope with postnatal depression.
- Performance management arrangements are fully in place. The training plan is carefully focused on helping the staff to further develop their skills in order to improve outcomes for children and families. The centre manager is thorough in her observations of practice, and encourages staff to improve on, and develop, activities that promote good learning. The staff team works very well together.

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	23169
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	454045
Managed by	The interim executive board of Temple Mill Primary School

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,498
Centre leader	Andy Wilson
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01634 338205
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