

South Grove Children's Centre

South Grove, Tottenham, London, N15 5QE

Inspection dates	26–27 March 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.

- Good leadership and management ensure that the centre plays a pivotal role in the community and places strong emphasis on improving lives and reducing inequalities.
- Staff are highly knowledgeable about the area. Together with their partners in health they ensure that most families are registered. Those most in need of support are contacted and engage regularly with the services offered. All eligible two-year-olds take up their entitlement to free early education.
- Parents receive high quality care, guidance, and support. Staff are excellent role models and have high expectations and aspirations for the families. The support they provide to improve children's safety and early learning and development, parents' mental health, and relationships with their children is particularly strong.
- The centre is innovative in the ways in which it attracts additional funds to support families and young children, especially in helping those new to the country to speak English.
- The strong partnership with the school has brought about good improvements, especially in the quality of provision in 'Stay and Play' and the crèche. Children's progress is tracked well, so that they are well prepared for school.
- Governance is well established. The local authority provides good levels of support and information. The centre's performance is checked rigorously. As a result there is good capacity to sustain improvements.

It is not outstanding because:

- Membership of the Cluster Advisory Board does not include parents. This hinders opportunities for them to contribute to strategic decisions made about the centre. Some partners do not attend meetings of the board regularly which reduces their level of support and challenge in decision-making.
- Not all partners systematically provide the centre with the information it requires to show how families have been helped to improve their lives in the short term and over time.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that membership of the Cluster Advisory Board includes parents, and that partner members attend regularly. This is to enable them to contribute to decisions about the centre, offer good levels of support and challenge and influence its overall development.
- Improve systems for sharing information about the ways in which all commissioned and other services are helping families to change their lives in the short and longer term.

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 two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with representatives from the governing body of Seven Sisters Primary School, members of the Cluster Advisory Board, and the local authority. They also met with staff working at the centre, representatives from the centre's key partners, parents and carers. The centre manager accompanied inspectors during their observations of 'Stay and Play' and a 'Parents in Partnership' session.

The inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation. This included the centre's self-evaluation, plans for improvement, arrangements to safeguard children and their families, and the results of the annual satisfaction survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Talbot-Strettle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

South Grove is a single centre open Monday to Friday during term time, and situated on the same site as Seven Sisters Primary School (URN132253) and South Grove Children's Centre Nursery (EY416636). The school and nursery are inspected separately. Their reports can be found on the website <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

The leadership and management of the centre have been delegated by the local authority to the governing body of the school. South Grove is part of the South Tottenham Cluster of children's centres; Earlsmead, Welbourne and Triangle Children and Young People's Community Centre. The Cluster Advisory Board has oversight of all four centres. The Chair of the Cluster Advisory Board is also Chair of the Governing Body of Seven Sisters Primary School.

The centre provides early childhood services, health services including mental health, parenting courses, adult education, and assistance in returning to work, in conjunction with its key partners. It works with Christian Action and Response in Society (CARIS) to support families in most need, and is involved in the Parents in Partnership Project funded by the European Union.

The centre covers the wards of St Ann's and Tottenham Green. Families come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Many are new to speaking English and experience considerable hardship. One third is without work and receives benefits. Levels of mobility are very high.

There are 849 children under five years of age living within the area served by the centre. Children enter early years provision with skills and knowledge that are well below those that are typical for their age.

The target groups identified by the centre as needing particular support are: children living with parents or carers who speak English as an additional language; children and parents with mental ill-health; children and families experiencing domestic abuse; children who are known to social care; and families on low incomes.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Staff work in close cooperation with health and other partners to identify and register target families with the centre. A substantial number of families frequently move into and out of the area. For this reason staff use their in-depth local knowledge to identify new vulnerable groups who are in significant need. As a result of their effective work, registrations have increased rapidly. The large majority of families, including those who may not otherwise use the centre, benefit by engaging well with early childhood services.
- The centre establishes good relationships with expectant parents who visit the ante-natal sessions and with new parents at the post-natal sessions held by the midwife. This enables staff to identify needs and provide support at a very early stage.
- Many parents who speak English as an additional language, who are known to social care, are subject to domestic abuse, have mental ill-health or have low incomes sustain their contact with the centre and various specialist services until their needs are met. The impact of this contact is notable in the changes families say it makes to their lives, and the way in which children are kept safe.
- Systems to check the number of families and different groups attending are good. Services are taken into the community, to temporary housing for the homeless or for teenage parents, to enhance access. Most activities held at the centre are popular and oversubscribed. Staff ensure that those most in need attend regularly.
- The centre has been particularly successful in ensuring all eligible two-year-olds have access to free

early education. Provision for these children in the co-located nursery and school is good, but more variable across other early years settings. Staff at the centre are working in conjunction with the local authority to enable all childminders and private nurseries to provide good or better quality education.

- Volunteers at the centre provide valuable support to parents attending the Parents in Partnership course. They help them to enhance their skills in spoken English, and understand the way in which their children are taught in school. In the past, volunteers have gained confidence and returned to work or gained the skills to set up their own business.
- Close liaison with other centres in the cluster ensures there is a good balance of services for all parents and those who need specific support. Parents are kept well informed about the different options, holiday events and different sources of support. This is important to ensure continuity of access and care when the centre is closed during the school holidays.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The centre enjoys an extensive range of partnerships including with adult training, a charity for the homeless, and Jobcentre Plus to meet the needs of families. The quality of services is good but the centre has to rely on anecdotal evidence about the impact they have. This is because partners do not routinely inform the centre about the number of parents who gain qualifications, return to work, reduce their reliance on benefits, acquire a permanent home or improve their life chances.
- The mental health service works closely with the centre staff to ensure that support is well coordinated for children and families where mental health problems are impacting negatively on family life. Informal feedback indicates this approach is very successful and parents learn to understand their child's emotional needs and are more confident in helping meet them.
- Good quality and popular services such as 'Communication Corner' and 'Stay and Play' help parents to support their children's speech and language in the early stages of their development. This, together with the good provision for two-year-olds, and highly effective transition arrangements, ensures that children are prepared well for the transfer into the school nursery.
- Children make good progress from their individual starting points, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, and their speaking skills. Staff track children's progress carefully. Information from the school shows that children who engage well with the centre outperform those who do not as they progress through the school.
- Parents speak highly of the courses such as 'Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities', and the way in which staff have helped them individually to develop and extend their parenting skills. They have gained confidence in managing their child's behaviour, feeding them healthy food and playing with them. Parents attend courses regularly because they know their children are cared for well in the crèche.
- The parents of children who are living with domestic abuse are supported very well. They receive individualised support and guidance that empowers them to resolve the situation.
- Family support work makes an important contribution to helping parents understand their responsibilities for their children's safety and well-being in their own home. Case files where families have received intensive support from a range of professionals in the community and in the centre indicate that they make good progress over time.
- Language courses run by adult education are extremely popular and enable parents to improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills. The Parents in Partnership Project which has been externally evaluated is proving highly beneficial in helping the families involved to support their children's learning at home.
- Staff at the centre provide high quality care, guidance and support, including for those experiencing domestic abuse. Parents hold staff in high regard and trust their advice. Staff are good role models showing parents how to build positive relationships with their children.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The manager, together with the staff in the centre and in the school, governors, and the astute chair of the advisory board are successful in tackling discrimination and reducing inequalities. They ensure that through the efficient use of all available resources and provision of a wide range of services, the centre plays a crucial role in meeting the diverse needs of local children and families.
- The centre uses innovative methods to attract additional funds to increase the number of families benefiting from the centre's services. For example, funded by the European Union the Parents in Partnership Project is enabling many families to learn English and improve their children's opportunities in life by supporting their education.
- The local authority provides useful information and sets challenging measurable improvement targets. It offers good levels of support resulting in the centre's improved performance in working with most parents, and tracking the progress of young children attending the centre.
- Governance is well established. However, few of the services commissioned by the local authority take up their places on the Cluster Advisory Board or share enough information with the centre about the impact of their work with families over time. This limits their contribution to decision making, and the full support and challenge role of the board to improve outcomes for families.
- Rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring systems provide reliable information about the centre's performance, and identify clear priorities for development. These are included in the robust systems for supervision and in setting targets for staff.
- The effective partnership with the school and advice from the local authority result in staff being well trained in providing good quality sessions for young children. They are very effective in their roles especially in identifying and supporting families with mental health difficulties.
- Safeguarding children and the promotion of their well-being is central to the centre's work. Policies, practices and procedures are very effective. Representatives from the key partners meet regularly to share information. This ensures that children subject to child protection plans, assessed under the Common Assessment Framework, looked after children and those identified as being in need receive support designed to meet their precise needs.
- Staff are checked for their suitability to work with children and vulnerable young people. The centre manager is working with the school to make parents aware of the need to keep their children safe when using the internet.
- Parents are very proud of the centre and the way in which staff have helped them to have high expectations and aspirations for themselves and their families. They influence the programme of activities during informal consultations and their conversations with staff who act on their suggestions. For example 'Communication Corner' sessions to enhance children's language development have been introduced recently. However, parents are not represented on the Cluster Advisory Board which makes it difficult for them to influence the overall development of the centre.

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

Unique reference number	22764
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	454053
Managed by	The governing body of Seven Sisters Primary School

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	849
Centre leader	Dee Coppen
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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