

Claygate & Oxshott & The Dittons Children's Centre Group

Claygate Community Centre, Elm Road, Claygate, Surrey, KT10 0EH

Inspection dates	14-15 April 2015
Previous inspection date	16-17 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
Access to services by young children and families		Inadequate	4
The quality of practice and services		Inadequate	4
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for children and families

This children's centre group is inadequate.

- Systems to ensure that children attending the centres are safe and secure are inadequate.
- Local authority monitoring arrangements have not brought about sufficient improvement following the last inspection. A period of turbulence has hampered development. Staffing issues, including recruitment and long-term sickness, have also continued to affect the delivery of services.
- Many of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection are carried through to this report. The advisory board, despite some development, is not providing sufficient challenge to the group. Parents' and carers' involvement in the development of services is limited.
- The group does not receive all the information it needs from partners to be able to reach all of the families in the area that may benefit from services. The group is not reaching enough priority families. Less than one third of children from the most deprived locality are regularly using the centres.
- The group has not introduced systems to effectively track the progress of children that attend children's centre services. Links with local pre-schools, nurseries and schools remain underdeveloped.

It has the following strengths:

- There has been an increase in the number of families registered with the centres. A proactive approach by staff means the majority of families are now known to the group.
- Managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses across the group.
- An increase in parenting programmes and parent and infant mental health baby massage courses is ensuring that more families that need additional help are using the centres.
- Parents and carers value the one-to-one support provided by outreach workers.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- The local authority must:
 - monitor the group's performance to ensure that services continue to improve during this period of uncertainty
 - work with strategic partners to ensure that information is shared that supports the centres in identifying expectant parents, new families and those known to children's social care
 - ensure that an effective advisory board plays an active role in challenging the centre group, driving improvement and ensuring that parents' and carers' views contribute to development.
- The children's centre group must:
 - ensure that children's safety and security in the centres are given the highest priority
 - introduce effective systems to demonstrate the contribution that the work of the centre group makes to children's development
 - continue to work with the communities that need services the most in order to increase the number of children and families from priority groups so that at least the large majority are regularly benefiting from the group's services.

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional inspectors.

The inspectors met with representatives from Surrey County Council, Elmbridge Borough Council and the advisory board. They spoke with the centre coordinators, staff, partners, parents and carers and volunteers.

The inspectors visited both of the children's centres and the play bus at Lower Green.

The inspection covered the following two centres: Claygate and Oxshott, and The Dittons.

Inspectors observed the centres' work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Penny Fisher, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Talbot-Strettle	Additional Inspector
Jameel Hassan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the group

The group consists of two children's centres. Both are based in community centres: The Thames Ditton Centre for the Community and Claygate Community Centre. Both are part-time children's centres. Claygate and Oxshott was designated in January 2008 and The Dittons in March 2010. Between them they serve 2,539 children under the age of five living in the area served by the centres.

The group is led and managed by Community Support Services, Elmbridge Borough Council on behalf of Surrey County Council. There are two centre coordinators who are line managed by the centre services manager. Services are delivered from both children's centres and a play bus that visits the Lower Green area and a Traveller site. The group offers universal play and learn sessions, family and adult learning, and health and family support services. There is no linked childcare or school provision.

Both centres are situated within Elmbridge in North East Surrey. The children's centre group area borders a number of other Surrey boroughs and districts as well as The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. Overall, there is a perceived high level of affluence in the area served by the group. Five per cent of children aged under five years are living in households claiming out of work benefits, which is below the Surrey average. Lower Green is the least advantaged area, being in the top 31% most disadvantaged localities in the country. There are several Traveller sites within the area. The large majority of the community are White British. Educational attainment in the area is high; children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at levels above those typical for their age.

The group identifies children living in the Lower Green area and individual referred families identified as most in need of intervention and support as its priority groups.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Inadequate

- Target groups are clearly identified based on local need. However, too few priority children and families are using services. Despite strenuous efforts to provide services in Lower Green and work with other community groups in this area, the centres are reaching too few of those that may need services most. Of the 163 children known to be living in the Lower Green area, only 45% have accessed a children's centre service and only 28% are using services regularly.
- Some management information is incomplete. There is a backlog of data to be entered onto systems due to staff shortages. This means that the group does not have a fully accurate picture of those families that have accessed services, including those from priority groups.
- Strategic partnerships do not ensure that information is shared effectively with the centres. For example, the centres are not provided with information regarding expectant parents, new parents and carers and all children known to children's social care. This limits their ability to register these families and provide services which may be of benefit to them.
- The centres' staff have been proactive in ensuring that those using services are now registered. This can be seen in the year-on-year improvement in the number of families that are registered with the centres. Currently 57% of children under the age of five are known to the centres.
- The centres' staff have established good links with one of the local Traveller sites and the play bus now regularly visits. However, families from the other Traveller sites in the area are not known to be accessing children's centre services.
- The group has registered all families that have been referred for additional support, including some families where they are working jointly with children's social care. The large majority of this priority group are engaging regularly with the centres' services, which is good.
- The very large majority of children aged three and four years take up their entitlement to funded early education. For this reason, the group has given appropriate priority to registering children aged two and under. Of this age group, 61% are registered with the centres.
- The large majority of eligible two-year-olds are taking up their entitlement to funded early education

in good quality provision. Outreach workers provide good support for individual families who wish to access this funding. The large majority of nurseries and pre-schools and the very large majority of childminders in the area are good or better.

The quality of practice and services

Inadequate

- The group has not established effective systems to measure and track children's progress. This means that the group cannot demonstrate how well services are contributing to children's learning and school readiness. A lack of support and monitoring by the local authority, alongside an acknowledged lack of expertise in this area within the children's centres' staff, has hindered progress.
- Children's achievement at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and above national averages. The gap between the lowest achieving children and their peers has narrowed and is below average, which is good. However, there are some groups of children, such as boys and children who speak English as an additional language, that do not achieve as well as others. This information is not currently informing the planning and delivery of universal play and learn sessions.
- The balance between universal and targeted services has improved, although the number of activities provided remains limited due to staff capacity and the availability of community centre space. The group has reviewed services following the last inspection to ensure that they are relevant to meet the needs of those families referred to the centres for additional support.
- The number of targeted parenting programmes and parent and infant mental health massage courses has expanded. Parents' and carers' evaluations of these, and other universal courses such as baby massage and first aid, show they have a positive impact on families' lives. However, the number of families attending is still relatively low.
- Outreach workers provide effective support to a small number of referred families on a one-to-one basis. Individual family files show that these families have benefited from advice, information and guidance on a wide range of issues, including housing, mental health and domestic abuse. Parents and carers told inspectors of the positive impact of their work on improving their families' lives.
- The quality of recording in family case files requires improvement. The outreach workers are currently changing the way that case files are kept, which it is anticipated will improve consistency over time. In some files, important information is missing or not easy to find and there is very little evidence of management oversight and decision-making. Systems to measure the impact of family support work are developing and can be seen on some family files.
- Since the last inspection there has been no development of links with adult education and employment services to meet the needs of workless and targeted families. There are no records of the impact of information, advice and guidance provided to any families that may have been signposted to these services over the past year.
- The small number of volunteers receive a thorough induction and provide a valuable resource for the centres. Individuals told inspectors of how volunteering has benefited many aspects of their lives. However, no regular or formal supervision is given to volunteers.
- Health outcomes for children, such as the proportion of children that are a healthy weight and the proportion of mothers that breastfeed, are positive. Although no shared targets are in place, health clinics and health talks run in the centres are well attended and contribute to families' understanding of healthy living. There is good communication between the centres' staff, health visitors and nursery nurses. This ensures families with children with additional needs receive support.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Inadequate

- All staff working in the centres, including volunteers, are safely recruited, suitably vetted and trained in how to protect children. However, children and adults are able to enter and exit the Dittons community centre freely and unobserved. Some parents and carers are not signing the attendance register in the foyer. This could put them at risk, for example, in the event of a fire. Also, during the inspection, a parent or carer left their child unsupervised when they exited the building to make a phone call. Procedures to ensure families using the centres are safe and secure are, therefore,

inadequate.

- Local authority support and monitoring of the development of the centres following the last inspection have been ineffective in bringing about the required improvement. The local authority has a process in place which outlines the support provided to inadequate centres, but this has not been shared with the children's centre group. There were delays in agreeing an appropriate action plan, which has not been regularly reviewed and updated. This, alongside the centres' staffing issues and stretched capacity within the local authority advisory team, has contributed to the lack of prompt improvement.
- The centres have continued to experience a period of extreme turbulence since the last inspection. This has had an impact on staff's well-being and the ability to recruit to vacant posts. Much resource and energy has, therefore, been diverted away from the improvements required in order to just maintain services.
- Little progress has been made in some areas of the action plan agreed between the local authority and the children's centre group. Although some targets have been met, for example, those relating to the improved registration figures, most require more work.
- The centre services manager has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the centres, and has worked well above allocated hours in order to maintain services. However, the centres have not had the capacity or resources to bring about the required changes. Staff interact well with families; they are friendly and welcoming and skilled in building trusting and respectful relationships with parents and carers.
- The advisory board has received training from the local authority regarding roles and responsibilities following the last inspection. A good range of partners, and one parent representative, are represented on the board. However, the board has not provided the support and challenge necessary to drive the required improvements. Opportunities for parents and carers to offer their views and help to shape the group's services are limited.
- Performance management of the centres' staff ensures that annual appraisals take place and that objectives are linked to borough council corporate plans. The centre coordinators value the clinical supervision from an external provider. However, one-to-one meetings with line managers are not taking place regularly, although staff have frequent opportunities to discuss matters informally and at team meetings.

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 well-being 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	80363
Local authority	Surrey County Council
Inspection number	455024
Managed by	Elmbridge Borough Council on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2,539
Centre Services Manager	Kim Chadwick
Date of previous inspection	16–17 July 2015
Telephone number	01372 471222
Email address	kchadwick@elmbridge.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 20749 Claygate and Oxshott Sure Start Children's Centre
- 23139 The Dittons Sure Start Children's Centre

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

This template is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130186.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 130186

© Crown copyright 2015

