

Streatham Hub Children's Centre

388 Streatham High Road, Streatham, SW16 6HX

Inspection dates

16–17 June 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 is a good centre.

- All of the children aged under five in the centre's area are registered. The large majority of those identified as needing most support use the centre regularly. This reflects the very high regard parents have for the centre and its staff.
- Families who have English as a second language are supported effectively. There is a good range of services available to them, such as English language classes and a Polish grandparents group, which are well attended.
- Parents are guided effectively in how to play with their children, to encourage their development because of a strong emphasis on children's early learning, in sessions such as Brunch Club.
- Children receive good support to get them ready for school. As a result, the proportion of young children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the early years is improving rapidly.
- Those who need one-to-one support for often complex needs receive high levels of care, guidance and support to get their lives back on track. This is supplemented very effectively through the wide ranging and well established partnerships with health and the voluntary sector. Case files are kept to a high standard and reflect the families' journey well.
- The centre manager provides effective leadership to the dedicated and enthusiastic staff team. The local authority provides good levels of support through regular information about the centre's local area. The joint advisory board is knowledgeable and increasingly challenging. Parents play a key role in decision making. All of this increases the centre's capacity to continue to improve.

It is not outstanding because:

- Just over half of two-year-olds who are eligible for free early education take up the offer. This is considerably lower than the national average.
- There are few opportunities for adults who are out of work or on low incomes to be supported to improve their lives. Volunteer numbers are low. Although there is a comprehensive system to track adults who attend courses, this is not analysed in depth to plan for future services.
- Targets set by the local authority reviews, in the development plan and other centre documents are not always linked, or easy to measure. They do not always relate closely enough to improving the lives of families identified as needing most support.
- Some safeguarding policies and procedures have not been monitored closely enough by the Board of Trustees.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Increase the take up of free early education by two-year-olds so that most, if not all, get off to the best start.
- Build stronger links with Jobcentre Plus and other partners to extend the opportunities to support parents back to work or to better paid employment. Make better use of the tracking system to identify which services the centre can offer to support those families. Increase the number of volunteers in the centre to enable them to use this as a stepping stone to employment.
- Ensure there is a closer link between targets set by the local authority annual review and those in other documents such as the development plan. Sharpen the targets so that they are easier to measure to show the impact of the centre's work, especially on those who need it most.
- The Board of Trustees should ensure that all safeguarding policies and procedures reflect the latest guidance and are as rigorous as those in place at Woodmansterne Children's Centre.

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. It was carried out at the same time as another children's centre, which was Woodmansterne Children's Centre (URN 23663).

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, representatives from the local authority and members of the advisory board and the Board of Trustees from 388 Streatham Hub Ltd. They met with a wide range of partners, including those from health and charities such as Homestart. They took into account the views of parents through face-to-face discussions and also thorough surveys and evaluations.

The inspectors visited a number of activities taking place at the centre including the Brunch Club and Baby and You sessions.

A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including the centre's development plan and local authority reviews. Safeguarding policies, procedures and practice, as well as examples of case files for families receiving individual support, were examined in depth.

The centre manager, representatives from the local authority and the headteacher of Woodmansterne Primary School attended all inspection team meetings, which were held jointly for both centres.

Inspection team

Joan Lindsay, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Saltmarsh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Streatham Hub is a stand-alone centre. It works collaboratively with Woodmansterne Children's Centre and shares a strategic manager. There is a day care nursery on site, managed by the commissioned provider, the Trustees of 388 Streatham Hub Ltd. The day care has been inspected separately; its report can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

The centre's services are delivered from community rooms in the Grade II listed Streatham United Reform Church building. It provides early years experiences, family support, adult learning and health services through partnership work. The centre is managed on behalf of the local authority by the Board of Trustees of 388 Streatham Hub Ltd, a registered charity working in partnership with Streatham United Reform Church. There is an advisory board in place to assist governance covering both Woodmansterne and Streatham Hub Children's Centres.

There are 987 children aged under five living in the area served by the centre. The centre is located in the south-west locality of Lambeth and spreads over the entire St Leonard's ward and parts of Streatham South and Streatham Wells wards. The whole of the centre's area is amongst the least advantaged nationally, although there are some pockets of relative affluence. The locality has the highest number of homeless families in Lambeth. Almost one in three young children in the area surrounding the centre live in households where no one is working, which is well above the national average. Approximately 15% of children are from White British backgrounds. The largest group, at 22%, is from Other White backgrounds, with an increasing number from the Polish community. A high proportion of adults has English as an additional language. Children generally enter early education at levels below those typical for their age.

The centre has identified the following priority groups as needing most support: parents/carers who are reliant on benefits or who are out of work; adults who speak English as an additional language; young children of Other White origin, especially those from the Polish community; children from minority ethnic groups; and, children who are being supervised by social care.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- All of the young children in the local area are registered with the centre. This has been achieved through ensuring families know about the centre from when they are expecting children or shortly after babies are born. The very central location of the centre in the heart of Streatham has also helped to raise registration numbers.
- Weekly health visitor drop-in sessions and specific support, such as sleep clinics, ensure families have good access to early health services.
- The centre has identified the groups needing most support through a good knowledge of the local area. The outcomes for children at the end of the early years have also led to some groups being deemed to need more support, such as Polish-speaking families and adults who have English as an additional language. Services have then been adapted to meet the needs of most of priority groups, for example the Somali Women's Sewing and English language course. As a result, at least the large majority of all those priority groups keep up their engagement with the centre.
- Although adults identified as on benefits or unemployed make good use of the sessions that are open to everyone at the centre, there are fewer specific services to meet their needs at present.
- There are effective systems in place to share information about young children and families who are supervised by social care. Centre staff play a full role in meetings with other agencies. Consequently, the large majority of those families engage well with the centre until their needs are met.
- Children from minority ethnic groups have excellent levels of engagement, with almost all of them

using the centre or partner services five times or more in the last 12 months. This reflects the inclusive nature of the centre and the quality of the services on offer.

- Currently, just over half of eligible two-year-olds are taking up the offer of free early education. The centre is aware that more work needs to be done to identify why families are not taking up the place.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The quality, range and relevance of services are good for almost all of the local children and families. Centre activities focus well on children's prime areas of learning and preparing the children to move on to school. Strong partnerships, such as with the National Literacy Trust and the work of the centre's teacher, ensure that children's early learning and development feed through all the centre's work.
- Although the outcomes for children at the end of the early years are slightly below national levels, they have improved at a faster rate. Children who are eligible for free school meals now have outcomes similar to national figures, so that the gap is closing between those less likely to achieve and their peers. Play and Learn and regular story and rhyme time sessions all help towards this outcome.
- Well-planned sessions, such as the Brunch Club, combine to help develop children's social skills in an inclusive environment. They also give the children the opportunity to experiment with different healthy foods. Children are encouraged to cut up fruit for smoothies, which improves the way they focus on activities as well as their fine motor skills; parents are given good guidance in how to continue helping their children at home. This is helping to improve the percentage of young children who are very overweight so that it is closer to the national average.
- The centre is proactive in helping mothers to breastfeed. Support is available through Baby and You sessions, and also at the weekly Milk Spots sessions at Woodmansterne Children's Centre. As a result, the proportion of mothers who are still breastfeeding their babies at around two months old is very high. At 81%, this is substantially above the national average.
- One-to-one support for children and families in their home is highly effective. A large array of partners, such as Victim Support, Homestart and domestic abuse charities, is brought together through the centre initiating or attending multi-agency meetings. This has had a very positive impact on the lives of families who often have multiple needs that are hard to resolve. It was summed up in comments such as, 'You don't feel afraid when you are here; you always feel at home.'
- Information from the centre's comprehensive system to track courses and outcomes for adults, including a range of parenting programmes such as Parent Gym, is not yet being used well enough. This is especially in relation to priority families who are on benefits or not in employment. At the moment, the range of services provided by the centre and its partners is too limited. There is only one volunteer working in the centre at the moment. However, previous volunteers have used this as a successful move to employment in the past.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre is well led by the centre manager, who has established strong partnership in the local community. Staff have regular and supportive performance management meetings, with clear targets set and reviewed. Supervision of case files and the opportunity to talk through any 'sticking points' with families who receive one-to-one support are well established.
- The small staff team is enthusiastic and rises to the challenge of the shared church premises with admirable enthusiasm, to ensure children receive good quality sessions. In general, resources including staff are used well, although the small outdoor area is difficult to access and not yet fully developed.
- The local authority keeps a close eye on the centre's performance through regular monitoring visits.

However, targets set in the annual review are not always aligned directly to those in the development plan and other documents. Sometimes the targets are not specific enough, for example in setting a target for the take up of two-year-olds' free early education.

- Joint advisory board meetings are well attended by a core group of partners and parent representatives. However, the Board of Trustees is not as deeply involved or as well informed. Although the centre has very recently adopted the robust policies and procedures in place at Woodmansterne Children's Centre, prior to this some policies had gone past their review date. Some issues raised by the centre manager in relation to the difficulties encountered in using the church building had not been resolved quickly enough. This has now improved substantially.
- Partnerships with health professionals, social care and multi-agency meetings assist the well-trained staff to reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable children. This includes those in the priority group where there is social care supervision, such as those subject to child protection plans or are considered to be children in need or are looked after.
- Those who use the centre have high levels of satisfaction in the quality of services and the support they receive, saying typically, 'I don't know where I would be without them.' Monthly Parents' Voice sessions are always well attended, giving parents good opportunities to shape services and make suggestions such as for trips to Battersea Zoo. Everyone receives a very warm welcome. This inclusivity has played a large part in the high levels of children and families who use the services regularly and in the centre's impact in reducing inequalities locally.

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 details

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Unique reference number | 22959 |
| Local authority | The London Borough of Lambeth |
| Inspection number | 453961 |
| Managed by | The Trustees of 388 Streatham Hub Ltd on behalf of the local authority |

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Approximate number of children under five in the reach area | 987 |
| Centre manager | Pamela Holmes |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 0203 515 7088 |
| Email address | cc.admin@388streathamhub.co.uk |

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