

# Chrisp Street Children's Centre

23–27 Market Way, Poplar, London, E14 6AH

<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–25 June 2015
<b>Previous inspection date</b>	Not previously inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
		Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	3
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Too few children and families from target groups, including those from the most deprived areas, sustain their engagement and benefit from the centre's work.
- The centre is not using the full range of available information to identify and establish contact with the majority of families most in need of support, such as those expecting a baby.
- Too few families take up the offer of free early years education for two-year-olds.
- Not enough parents, especially from workless homes, enhance their education, engage in training, engage in volunteering or extend their workplace skills.
- The local authority does not monitor the performance of the centre effectively enough to ensure it can improve.
- The local authority does not provide the centre with accurate data to ensure managers identify the families most in need of support, such as those living in the most disadvantaged areas.

### It has the following strengths:

- The centre is well established in the heart of the community and has a strong reputation for its good quality activities, support and guidance for those who attend.
- Staff use their good skills and experience very effectively to ensure families are safe and a high proportion of families benefit from well-structured outreach support.
- Strong partnerships ensure services work together and help to build capacity for improvement. Good mental health is promoted very effectively.
- Support for families experiencing domestic violence is very effective.
- Strong involvement from the parents' forum helps to shape services and ensure the centre improves.
- The leadership team has correctly identified priorities for ensuring the centre continually improves so that more families benefit.

### What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the large majority of the families most in need of support, including those living in the areas of greatest disadvantage, sustain contact with the centre.
- Work with the local authority to ensure that the centre receives accurate information, such as live birth data and information on the number of children living in the area.
- Work with the local authority to improve the uptake of free early education by two-year-olds, so that most are engaged or accessing children's centre services.
- Work in partnership with the other centres across the collaboration to extend opportunities to help parents improve their education and skills.
- Strengthen monitoring processes and ensure they are sufficiently focused on using information to drive improvement. Make sure that improvement planning includes specific and measurable targets which the local authority, leaders and stakeholders' board can then use to monitor performance and drive improvements at a faster pace.

### 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 conducted at the same time as the inspections of the Isle of Dogs Children's Centre (URN 20329) and Around Poplar Children's Centre (URN 20114).

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, centre staff, the deputy headteacher of a local school, volunteers, senior managers from the local authority, members of the locality stakeholders' board, the Jobcentre Plus advisor and the centre's psychologist.

The inspectors visited activities taking place in the centre. No joint observations with staff were carried out. A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including the locality action plan and local authority reviews. Safeguarding policies, procedures and practices, as well as examples of case files for families receiving individual support, were also reviewed.

The centre manager and representatives from the local authority attended all inspection team meetings which were held jointly for all three centres.

### Inspection team

Daniel Grant, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Libby Dickson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Chrisp Street Children's Centre opened in 2007 as a standalone children's centre. It is currently one of 12 children's centres in Tower Hamlets which is divided into four localities, each with three children's centres. It works collaboratively with Around Poplar and Isle of Dogs Children's Centres, and all are managed by separate community leaders (centre managers) who are employed by the local authority. They are managed by a locality lead. Around Poplar and Isle of Dogs were inspected at the same time as Chrisp Street; their reports can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Chrisp Street Children's Centre is situated in the busy Chrisp Street Market. It is supported by the locality stakeholders' board, which covers all three centres, and the parent forum; parents attend both. Services provided include outreach family support, activities to promote early learning, child and family health, careers, adult learning and volunteering.

There are 1,525 children under the age of five years living in the area served by the centre. The area has high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Some 39% of local families are of Bangladeshi heritage and comprise the main ethnic group. Approximately 27% are from White British backgrounds with others from many other different ethnic groups or of unknown heritage. The large majority of families speak English as an additional language. Children enter early education provision at levels below those typical for their age.

Priority target groups identified by the centre are: two-year-old children eligible for free education, particularly those living in the most disadvantaged communities; children known to social care; children of young parents; and children with disabilities. In addition, the centre has identified mental health and domestic violence as key priorities for its work.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

### Requires improvement

- The number of families who receive support and attend activities regularly is not high enough and requires improvement. Not enough families, particularly those from priority groups, benefit from what the centre has to offer. The centre does not have a sufficient focus on supporting families who live in the areas of greatest disadvantage.
- The centre has identified children with young parents as a priority group and an increasing number are registering with the centre. However, the centre does not receive full information about the total number of young parents in the area. Staff cannot be certain that their services are reaching enough of the families most in need of support. Those who do attend services benefit from the good support they receive.
- The number of families with two-year-olds who use the centre is low and too few are taking up their free early years place. The centre recognises that there is much more they should be doing to successfully encourage more families to recognise the benefits of taking up the offer.
- The centre does not have effective protocols in place to ensure they receive information about live births or those expecting a baby. Consequently, staff are unable to ensure that everyone who needs help receives it. However, staff work effectively with health visitors and also with midwives, who run very well-attended clinics from the centre.
- A large number of families receive good support to help children prepare for school, such as toilet training and language development. The centre works effectively with local schools to provide structured introductory events where children become familiar with the school environment and separation from their parents.
- Home visits and work in the community are very effective. This ensures a large number of families who are unable or unwilling to attend the centre can benefit from the good services on offer. These include, for example, support for parents experiencing domestic violence and helping families to sort

out problems caused by disability, overcrowding and debt.

- The centre is very well situated and is easily accessible for local families. The staff provide a friendly welcome to all families. This makes sure they feel comfortable at the centre and want to return to try out new courses and activities. Such an approach has resulted in the registration of a very large majority of local families.

### **The quality of practice and services**

### **Requires improvement**

- The impact of the centre's services requires improvement because not enough families, particularly those from priority groups, benefit from what the centre has to offer.
- The centre does not do enough to help families improve their education, gain qualifications or train to increase their skills. Good opportunities to volunteer in the centre are used effectively for parents to gain useful experiences of working in children's settings. However, the number who have been able to be supported this way is relatively small. The partnership with Jobcentre Plus is effective and this ensures families receive good information, advice and support related to finding work.
- Staff work particularly effectively with partners and families to help improve parenting skills for those in contact with the centre. This is given high priority and parents value the very effective individual support they receive. Evaluations by those who have attended are very positive and it is clear that this work has been effective. The centre provides very effective support to help parents maintain good mental health.
- The rates of children's tooth decay and obesity are too high. Support aimed at promoting oral hygiene and helping parents to ensure their children maintain a healthy weight has been increased and is given high priority. The 'Brush for Life' project and the many play activities successfully engage families and promote positive changes in diet, lifestyle and dental care.
- Children receive good support to help them develop and learn successfully during activities at the centre. Although still below national levels, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is improving. Children who are eligible for free schools meals are achieving in line with their peers nationally. The centre's processes for tracking children are very new and so do not yet show the progress that children make.
- The centre provides good family support, including outreach visits, which helps many families overcome the personal challenges they face. Professional supervision of staff is good and good advice from the centre's psychologist, social worker and mental health worker is used effectively. As a result, families benefit because inequalities are reduced and personal circumstances are improved.
- Information about the services on offer is well presented within the centre and a few families make good use of social media to tell each other about what the centre has to offer.

### **The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management**

### **Requires improvement**

- Senior local authority officers hold an accurate view of the centre's current performance. However, regular monitoring of the centre's performance by children's centre improvement partners is not sufficiently focused on the effective use of data. As a result, leaders are not always clear how many families from key target groups live in the area, and targets are not always sufficiently clear to drive improvements in access to services for the most disadvantaged families. Despite this, data suggest that registrations rates are above 80%, based on the 2013 population estimate, and increasing.
- Governance arrangements are effective in ensuring that the needs and interests of local families are met. The locality stakeholders' board has a good understanding of the needs of local people and the effectiveness of the centre's staff. There is an adequate focus on support and challenge for the centre manager. This ensures that the centre becomes steadily more effective so that more families can benefit and inequalities are reduced. However, the rate of progress is too slow and more work is required to ensure the centre improves at a faster pace.
- The local authority's arrangements for monitoring the centre's performance require improvement. Adequate support has helped leaders and managers to identify and prioritise key areas for improvement. This includes the need to share live birth data and details to help staff identify the

families most in need of support, such as those living in the areas of greatest disadvantage. However, information is not used rigorously enough to track the centre's overall performance and this has limited the centre's effectiveness.

- The centre has sufficient resources to ensure local priorities and the needs of local families are effectively met. The accommodation is good, with very attractive and stimulating wall displays and equipment which are used effectively to support children's learning and development.
- Safeguarding policies are updated annually, so do not reflect important recent changes to statutory guidance. Leaders and staff have, however, received electronic copies of this new guidance. Staff are safely recruited and trained to undertake their roles.
- The centre maintains contact with families known to the local authority's children's social care services, such as those subject to child protection plans, looked after children, children in need, those receiving early help assessments and disabled children. These families are supported well. However, information about some of these children is not shared frequently enough with the centre.
- Arrangements to consult with families about the work of the centre and to involve them in evaluating the centre's effectiveness are particularly good. Staff seek the views of parents at the end of sessions and the centre has a very effective parents' forum. Partners and parents regularly attend the locality stakeholders' board set up to assist the governance of the three centres which work in partnership.
- Leaders and managers are enthusiastic and committed to doing their very best to meet the needs and interests of local families. The staff team is determined to do whatever it takes to improve 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.

**Centre details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	20721
<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	453974
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,525
<b>Centre leader</b>	Vicky Badger
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