

Granard Children's Centre

c/o Granard Primary School, Cortis Road, London SW15 6XA

Inspection dates

30 June–1 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:		
Access to services by young children and families		Good	2
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 two-year-old children who are eligible for free education take up their entitlement.
- Although the centre tracks the progress of some children from priority groups it does not analyse this information well enough to show how well the centre contributes to their readiness for school. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development across the area served by the centre is lower than the local and national levels and decreased between 2013 and 2014.
- Opportunities for parents to improve their education, skills and economic well-being are underdeveloped. Information-sharing between some partners is not well enough established to support the centre in tracking the long-term impact of its work on improving parents' life chances.
- The local authority's annual 'health check' and quarterly monitoring are not focused rigorously enough on measuring the impact of the centre's actions on improving the well-being of children and families who need support the most. Data and other information have not been used effectively enough by leaders and managers at all levels to set measurable, specific targets. This limits the centre's capacity to move forward.
- Membership of the advisory board is too narrow and some partners do not attend regularly enough. The advisory board and the governing body, while supportive, are not yet well enough equipped with information about the centre's impact on priority families to challenge effectively.

This centre has the following strengths:

- Access to services for priority children living in the most deprived areas is good. The large majority of children and families living on the Ashburton estate – in the core area – sustain their involvement with the centre and enjoy a wide range of good quality activities. This is not the case in the 'non-core' area.
- The centre actively promotes healthy living through a wide range of very popular activities which are open to all families including 'Toddler Gym' and weekly swimming sessions. The proportion of reception-age children who are obese is decreasing over time.
- Staff are rightly proud of the centre and receive regular supervision to support them in their work.
- Parents are very well involved in the work of the centre through the active parents' forum and volunteering. They are overwhelmingly positive about the centre's activities.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Work with the local authority, schools and early years settings to ensure that most of the two-year-olds who are eligible take up their free early education place. Look to provide more support and appropriate services for those families who decide not to take up the offer.
- Analyse the assessments of priority children to clearly demonstrate the progress that they make and their achievement at the end of Reception. Use this information to further target provision so that less advantaged children and their peers achieve in line with children across the borough.
- Build stronger links with partners such as Jobcentre Plus and adult education providers to increase the opportunities for parents, especially those from priority groups, to extend their learning and skills. Develop an effective method to systematically track the longer-term impact of the work of the centre and its partners on improving the economic well-being of parents who attend centre-based courses or who are signposted elsewhere.
- The local authority should:
 - ensure that its monitoring processes are more rigorously focused on checking the impact of the centre's support for children and families who need the most help.
 - make sure that data and other information regarding priority families' regular engagement with services are used more effectively to set measurable, specific targets by leaders and managers at all levels
 - clarify how it intends to ensure that priority children and families living in the 'non-core' areas served by the centre have good access to universal and targeted services.
- Widen membership of the advisory board so that more key partners, especially those involved in providing services for parents, are represented. Ensure that members are appropriately trained and equipped with the knowledge and reliable information to enable them to provide challenge to the centre to help drive improvement.

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 the inspection of Eastwood Centre for Children and Families, URN 21046

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 governing body and advisory board. They met with a wide range of partners, including those from health, and commissioned services such as 4Children. They took into account the views of parents through face-to-face discussions and also through surveys and evaluations.

The inspectors visited 'Babies and Crawlers' and 'Toddler Gym', and jointly observed 'Fun Time Drop In' with the centre manager.

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

The centre manager, headteacher, deputy headteacher, and a representative from the local authority attended all inspection team meetings which were held jointly for both centres.

Inspection team

Michael Blakey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Saltmarsh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Granard Children's Centre is a stand-alone centre in the London Borough of Wandsworth. It works collaboratively with Eastwood, Southmead and West Hill children's centres, all of which are managed by separate centre managers. The centre is co-located with Granard Primary School, which is subject to separate inspection arrangements. Eastwood Centre for Children and Families was inspected at the same time as this centre; all the other children's centre, school and day-care reports can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>. The governing body of Granard Primary School manages the children's centre on behalf of the local authority. There is an advisory board in place to assist governance.

The centre's services are delivered from the main children's centre site. The centre provides early years experiences, family support, adult learning and health services through partnership work and in collaboration with other children's centres in the locality.

There are 976 children aged under five living in the core area served by the centre and approximately 1,000 children living in the wider 'non-core' area. The under fives in the core area live in areas that are considered to be amongst the 30% least advantaged in the country. The centre is located on the Ashburton estate which is among the 10% least advantaged. In these areas the majority of children live in low income families or workless households. The population is very ethnically diverse with almost half local children speaking English as an additional language, including Polish, Spanish, Urdu, Somali and Arabic. Approximately half the children living in the area are from minority ethnic backgrounds. 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: children living in the least advantaged core areas; babies and toddlers up to the age of three in the core area; children who are supervised by social care; and children requiring one-to-one support.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The centre has effectively prioritised its work with children and families living in the core area, where a far greater proportion of children live in poverty or workless households. In the most deprived areas, including the Ashburton estate, almost all children up to the age of three years are registered and the large majority have accessed centre services at least three times in the last year.
- Children who are known to children's social care and those receiving family support engage very well with the centre and partner services.
- Health visitor-led 'Baby Clinics', which are delivered at the centre, help to engage parents with new babies. Health visitors regularly encourage parents to access the centre or refer families for one-to-one early help or family support. However, partnership working with midwives in the local area is not as well developed as with health visitors, and local families have to travel to other clinics, including the Eastwood centre, to access ante-natal services.
- Activities such as 'Fun Time Drop In', 'Make and Play' and swimming, are very well attended by families, particularly those from priority groups. The centre works hard to ensure that there are always places for priority families to attend these very popular activities.
- In the 'non-core' area, the centre is not providing specific services because the local authority has not clarified how this area should be managed. As a result, the proportion of priority families registered and accessing services in this area is not as positive as elsewhere despite some using Granard and Eastwood Children's Centre independently.
- Most three- and four-year-olds access free early education. However, the proportion of two-year-olds taking up their free entitlement is too low. As a result, these children are not being given the best possible opportunities to be ready for school.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- There is a wide range of good quality universal sessions delivered from the centre and families living in the core reach area have good access to more targeted services when they need them. However, as a result of the way in which the local authority manages the reach of the centre, families living in the 'non-core' area are not well served and this requires improvement.
- The centre has recently introduced new 'learning journeys' which have been professionally designed with input from parents and children who attend the centre. These records complement the tracking of some priority children who attend the crèche for example. However, children's progress is not captured or analysed sufficiently well to enable leaders to demonstrate the effect of the centre's work on narrowing inequalities and helping children to prepare for school.
- The proportion of children living in the reach area who achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception is well below the local and national levels. However, the achievement gap between children who are eligible for free school meals and their peers is narrowing, and at 9% in 2014 was much more positive than seen nationally. Information from the co-located school, where many of the least advantaged children attend, shows that the majority achieve a good level of development.
- The centre delivers parenting courses, including 'About Boys', which helps parents to understand about the development of boys. These courses are generally well attended and most parents remain engaged. However, despite a few parents being helped into work, wider opportunities for parents to develop their skills and knowledge are limited and the centre has not yet developed a process to show the progress made.
- Case files are well maintained and clearly show a strong focus on early help for families who need additional support. Families who have experienced domestic abuse are very well supported.
- Health outcomes are improving. Breastfeeding rates at six-to-eight weeks are well above levels seen nationally and although obesity rates for young children are above national levels, they are showing clear signs of improvement.
- The centre celebrates a wide range of cultures, reflective of the diverse community which it serves. The South American carnival, which took place in February, was attended by 40 children and helped to promote healthy living. As one parent said, 'Thank you for the delicious and healthy food and the dance class. My baby loved the music.'

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The local authority's strategic commissioning of children's centres redefined the reach areas for children's centres in the borough in 2013. As a result, Granard Children's Centre serves a 'core area' where about half of the children live and a wider 'non-core' area. The children's centre's service level agreement does not make it clear how children living outside the least advantaged areas should be served. This aspect requires urgent review by the local authority to ensure that children living in the 'non-core' area have equal access to children's centre services and the targeted support they may need.
- The local authority conducts regular reviews, including an annual 'health check'. These are not rigorous enough to ensure emphasis is placed on improving the lives of priority children and families. For example, the level of regular contact by these families has not been used as a measure of the centre's effectiveness. As a result, there are few targets set in the local authority's reviews or in the centre development plan that are directly linked to increasing the sustained engagement of priority groups. Overall, targets are not specific or measurable enough to act as an effective method to drive improvement and reduce inequalities in the local area.
- The representation of key partners on the advisory board, especially from adult learning and employment services, is too narrow. In contrast, parents are well represented on the advisory board. Members are supportive but not yet well-enough equipped with key data or information about the numbers of priority families using the centre regularly. This impedes their ability to be effectively challenging when checking the centre's performance.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures meet current requirements. Staff are well trained in all aspects

of ensuring children are protected from harm. Staff are appropriately vetted and trained in child protection matters. The children's centre social worker provides a good link with social care. The centre is made aware of children who are subject to child protection plans or are in need or looked after, on a quarterly basis.

- Parents have many opportunities to air their views and they are active participants in weekly meetings, on the advisory board and in giving views about the services they would like. Volunteers play a very active role in supporting the centre to deliver services for all families.
- The centre manager and school leaders are clear about what the centre needs to do to improve and are committed to extending provision for two-year-olds on site so that less advantaged children have access to good quality early learning opportunities. Resources, such as the swimming pool at the co-located school, are used effectively to ensure that families are in regular contact with 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 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.

Children's centre details

Unique reference number	21280
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	455108
Managed by	The Governing Body of Granard Primary School

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2,008 (976 in the core area)
Centre manager	Hannah Marquand
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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