

Chelsea Open Air Children's Centre

51, Glebe Place, Chelsea, London, SW3 5JE

Inspection dates	30 June–1 July 2015
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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:

- Not enough two-, three- and four-year-old children are accessing their free early years education place.
- Too few families are registered with the centre and regularly attend activities, particularly those with two-year-old children eligible for free education.
- There are not enough opportunities for parents to access courses and volunteering programmes, as a first step towards further training and employment.
- Currently, systems are not fully in place to track the progress children make, particularly those from priority families, while they are attending centre activities. As a result, summary evidence is not readily available to show children's outcomes.
- Not all staff, governors and advisory board members have the confidence to analyse data so they can judge the impact of the centre's work on improving the outcomes for priority groups. There is limited detail in the data provided and this impedes the centre's capacity to make rapid improvements.

This centre has the following strengths:

- The centre manager and lead practitioner have successfully improved the level of families' engagement during the last year.
- Centre staff, together with social care colleagues, provide effective support for children subject to child protection plans or early help for families most in need.
- Successful partnership work between centre staff and health professionals has resulted in positive and improving health outcomes for families.
- The local authority provides good support to the centre, through its rigorous programme of quality assurance and governance.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Make sure most eligible two-, three- and four-year-olds take up their free early education place.
- Ensure most families are registered and regularly attend centre activities, particularly two-year-old children eligible for free education.
- Increase the number of parents completing courses and volunteering programmes, as a first step towards further training and employment.
- Strengthen systems to track the progress children make, particularly those from priority groups, when they attend sessions at the centre. Make readily available the summary outcomes from this tracking so that staff can check children's progress and plan next steps.
- Ensure centre staff, governors and members of the advisory board are helped to gain the skills and confidence required to analyse data so that they can check the impact of the centre's work on reducing inequalities and improving the lives of families.

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 Violet Melchett Children's Centre (URN 23422) with which it works in collaboration.

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, staff, and representatives from the local authority. They also met partners from health and early years education, parents, representatives from the advisory board and members of the governing body of Chelsea Open Air Nursery School and Children's Centre. The manager and representatives from the local authority attended all meetings of the inspection team.

Inspectors visited the centre, and observed the 'Ready Steady School Session' and the Parents' Forum. The inspectors looked at the centre's self-evaluation and action planning, a sample of case files, safeguarding practice, policies and procedures, and a range of other documentation, including evaluations of parents' views.

Inspection team

David Scott, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Dickson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Chelsea Open Air Children's Centre opened in March 2006, as a stand-alone centre. It delivers a range of services, including health, parenting classes, stay and play sessions, adult learning and family support. It is one of four children's centres which form part of the Kensington and Chelsea South Locality. The centre works in collaboration with Violet Melchett (URN 23422), Cheyne (URN 105681) and St Cuthbert with St Mathias CE Primary School and Children's Centre (URN 244460), sharing services and data. Chelsea Open Air Children's Centre and Violet Melchett Children's Centre were inspected simultaneously.

The centre operates on the site of Chelsea Open Air Nursery School (URN 100474). This is subject to a separate inspection and the report can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

The centre is managed by the governing body of Chelsea Open Air Nursery School and Children's Centre on behalf of the local authority. There is also an advisory board, which comprises parents and key partners and a parents' forum.

The number of children under five years of age living in the area served by the centre is 970. The surrounding area is very affluent but has some pockets of deprivation. Approximately one in four children live in an area ranked as being one of the least advantaged in the country. Information shows that one in ten children live in households where no adult is working.

The centre serves a community that is culturally diverse, with high numbers of families moving in and out of the borough. Just over a third of families are of White British heritage, with the remainder being from a range of minority ethnic groups. The largest groups are from White Other and Black British African heritages. Just over half of all families speak English as an additional language. Children's skills and abilities on entry to early education are at levels expected for their age.

The centre has identified the following priority groups as needing most support: two-year-old children who are eligible for free education; families living in the least advantaged areas; and children who are receiving early help and/or being supervised by social care.

The local authority is making changes to the way in which it delivers children's centre services, in order to be cost effective and to reach more families who are in most need of support. From September 2015, Chelsea Open Air Children's Centre will no longer be a designated children's centre, but will instead offer activities on site as part of a wider locality offer.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- The level of registration requires improvement because currently, only half of all families living in the area served by the centre, including those who are expecting children, are registered with the centre.
- The majority of families from priority groups are now registered. However, only a minority of two-year-old children who are eligible for free early education are registered. Overall, just under half of those registered attend the centre regularly, and this requires improvement.
- Only a minority of eligible two-year-olds and under two thirds of three- and four-year-olds take up their free early years place in good or better quality settings. This is well below the level seen nationally.
- The majority of eligible two-year-olds, families living in the least advantaged areas, and children who are receiving early help and/or being supervised by social care regularly access the centre's services. Support for those children and parents who are known to social care or are receiving early

help is effective in providing support at times of challenge and crisis.

- Strong partnerships with health professionals and social services are used effectively by centre staff to get to know about all new births. This early contact is beginning to help them improve access rates and collect useful information concerning families who are most in need of help and support.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The range of activities, both those open to everyone and those designed specifically to support priority groups is appropriate to meet the needs of families. Increasing numbers of families, including those in need of early support, are benefitting from the services on offer. However, the number of children and families from priority groups attending activities is not high enough, and this requires improvement.
- Well-planned programmes such as the 'Ready Steady School Session' enable parents to bond with their child and support their development and learning. For example, during the inspection, children and parents thoroughly enjoyed doing the actions and singing the song, 'Five little speckled frogs'. In 2014, 61% of Reception-age children achieved a good level of development, which is similar to the national picture. However, systems for tracking children's progress that summarise their achievement while attending centre activities, is underdeveloped. As a result, this reduces the ability of staff to check the full impact of the centre's services on children's achievement over time.
- The quality of courses provided for parents, for example English for Speakers of Other Languages and paediatric first aid, is good. Some parents have benefited from family and adult learning opportunities that increase their confidence and skills. However, the low take-up by some priority groups limits the impact they have on fully meeting needs and reducing inequalities.
- Information and advice for families seeking work or wishing to volunteer are effective. In particular, those adults who opt to work with the Families and Communities Employment Services (FACES) receive good individual support. There are good outcomes for these individuals, with a third of them gaining employment. However, there are too few adults becoming volunteers or benefiting from services of FACES.
- The centre's close partnership work with health professionals supports the high-level breastfeeding rates at six to eight weeks which are well above the national average. The advice and support received from health visitors, midwives and the link dietician have ensured childhood obesity rates are in line with national averages. However, immunisation rates have fallen in recent years and are 12 percentage points below national figures. In March 2015, the centre was awarded the best promoter and distributor of Health Start Vitamins by the local Primary Care Trust.
- Case files provide a full account of contact with families. They are suitably maintained and include planned actions, where outcomes have led to significant improvements for children and their families. These files are regularly audited by the local authority to help promote best practice.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- The on-going re-organisation of children's centre provision in the borough has proved to be a challenge for centre staff. Nevertheless, they have shown great resilience in seeking to meet the needs of families the centre serves. The level of families' engagement is starting to rise as a result of the effective actions taken by the centre manager and lead practitioner. More regular use of services is beginning to have a positive impact on improving the lives of those families who are in most need. However, not enough children and families are registered or attend centre activities regularly enough, and this requires improvement.
- Governors are passionate about the work of the children's centre. They bring a wide range of experience and expertise from education, health, law and social care. However, the data provided is not sufficiently detailed to enable governors to drill down to check the impact of the centre's work on improving the outcomes for families who need most support.
- Membership of the advisory board is drawn from the voluntary and community sectors, and includes

parents and carers. Members receive helpful data from the local authority and are becoming increasingly confident, for example about asking questions about differences in performance between the north and south localities. The board has only been operational for a year and revised terms of reference have been recently agreed and shared. Members are prepared to invest considerable amounts of time to fulfil their duties. However, they acknowledge that they are still developing their role and procedures in order to effectively challenge leaders and hold the centre's performance fully to account.

- Through bi-monthly meetings and a thorough programme of quality assurance visits, the local authority provides effective support to the centre. During the inspection, the data team were able to provide very helpful information about the centre's performance, particularly about priority groups which the centre can use in going forward.
- The safeguarding policy meets statutory requirements and reflects the most recent guidance for keeping children safe in education. Checks on the suitability of adults, including governors and members of the advisory board, to work with children are robust. Staff attend regular updates about child protection matters and are trained at the correct level.
- Centre staff working in partnership with the social care team have ensured that effective systems are in place for the early assessment of families in need. Regular 'Team around the Children's Centre' meetings helps children who are looked after, subject to child protection plans and those deemed to be children in need, to be supported well.
- The centre is friendly and welcoming, and provides good quality resources that meet the needs of those who attend centre activities. For example, families can access a range of services across the four centres in the south locality. The garden provides an oasis of calm and tranquillity for children to play and learn in.
- Centre staff regularly consult parents about their views through using comment boxes, satisfaction cards, termly consultations and the monthly parents' forum. Through these, views are sought and used to monitor the quality of activities, and to make changes to the day, times and types of activity sessions. Typical comments from parents include: 'Staff have always been very helpful, professional and approachable', and 'the centre has transformed our parenting experience.'

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	20661
Local authority	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	447566
Managed by	The governing body of Chelsea Open Air Nursery and Children's Centre, on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	970
Centre manager	Julie Coackley
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 7352 8374
Email address	info@coans.rbkc.sch.uk

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.

(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.

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

© Crown copyright 2015

