

North Kingston and Kingston Town Children's Centre Group

Norbiton Children's Centre, Dickering Lane, New Malden, KT3 3RZ

Inspection date 4–6 March 2014

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 children's centre group is good.

- Enthusiastic and committed leaders, at all levels of management and governance, have effectively led the restructure of the four centres into the locality group. Strong partnership working, particularly with the four adjacent schools, resulted in a seamless transfer of services for children and families.
- At 91%, most families who live locally have registered with the group and have access to good quality support and advice.
- North Kingston Children's Centre has worked successfully with the armed forces families. As a result, the number of families attending the centre is increasing and helping to prepare children for a smooth transition to nursery and school.
- Families highly value the individual support they receive, which helps to build their confidence and motivates them to improve their lives and to keep their children safe. One parent told inspectors, 'I could not have got here if I had not got the help from the centre.'
- Safeguarding is seen as a high priority. Centre staff work closely with key partners to keep children and families safe. Timely and robust assessment ensures families, including those at risk of domestic violence, receive the help and support they need.
- The group works extremely well to promote the take up of funding for two year places. For example, prompt referrals from social care result in almost all looked after children and children subject to a child protection plan taking up their entitlement.

It is not outstanding because:

- Some key partners are not providing information to enable the centre to find and engage families who would benefit from what the centre has to offer. This includes live birth data and information about domestic abuse.
- Systems to track, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the centre's work are not fully established. As a result, leaders and managers find it difficult to measure the full extent to which the centre's work is making a difference to children and families' lives.

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. The centres that form part of this children's centre group are North Kingston, Kingston Town, Kingston Hill and Norbiton.

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with local authority managers, representatives from the advisory board, parents, centre staff, health visitors, midwives, early years providers offering funded places for two-year-olds, headteachers from the co-located schools and representatives from a range of partner agencies.

The inspectors visited a range of activities and sessions held at the four centres and Piper Hall. Visits to activity sessions were undertaken with the hub manager, who, with the children's centre services manager, attended team meetings. Inspectors looked at the group's self-evaluation documents, activity plans, case files, safeguarding procedures and a range of other relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Wendy Ratcliff, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Harmesh Manghra	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graham Saltmarsh	Additional inspector
Robert Miller	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

In September 2013, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames realigned its children's centres into four locality areas and the governance and management transferred to the local authority. Previous to this, the centres were managed by the headteachers of the co-located schools. The local authority works in partnership with the London Borough of Richmond to offer services, including children's centres.

North Kingston and Kingston Town is a group of four centres. Norbiton Children's Centre is the hub centre for the group. The local authority is also responsible for the running of the onsite day nursery. The centre is on the site of Kings Oak Primary School and is in an area of higher deprivation. Kingston Hill Children's Centre is on the site of Alexandra Infant School, Kingston Town Children's Centre is on the site of King Athelstan Primary School and North Kingston Children's Centre is on the site of Latchmere School. Schools and registered early years provision are subject to separate inspection arrangements and their reports can be found at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>.

The children's centre hub manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the four centres in the group and is based at Norbiton, the hub centre. The deputy manager is also based at the hub centre. There is a spoke manager at each of the other centres, who oversees the running of services from each of their centres. The group has a new advisory board that oversees the centres. The group delivers services for children and families from the four centres and from community venues, including Piper Hall. Services include family support, play and learning and opportunities for adult learning. A range of health services are offered from each of the centres in the group. The centres are open five days a week as well as some Saturdays.

There are a total of 4187 children under five years living in the area. The area is ethnically, socially and economically diverse. There are mixed levels of deprivation, with the Cambridge Road and Kingsnympton Park estates the most deprived. Around 15% of children are considered to be living in poverty. There is a large housing provision for armed forces families in North Kingston. The majority of the population are White British and around 36% of families are from minority ethnic groups and 34% of families speak English as an additional language. An increasing number of families from Eastern European heritage are using the centres. Overall, children in the area start early years provision with skills broadly in line with those typical for their age, with communication and language being the weakest area. Key target groups include children from workless households, lone parents, young families, armed forces families and families from minority ethnic groups.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Leaders, managers and those in governance should ensure that systems to track, monitor and evaluate the work of the centre are fully embedded and show more precisely the full impact of the centres' work by:
 - checking all targets are precise and include specific measurable success criteria
 - making the best use of data, including information held by key partners, such as Jobcentre Plus.
- The local authority should work at a strategic level to develop systems for sharing information with key partners, so the centres receive the information they need to reach more families from their identified target groups, including:
 - live birth data
 - information on families moving into social housing with children under five years
 - information on the prevalence of domestic violence.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- Leaders and managers know the main trends of the area, and have used information about levels of deprivation and local knowledge to deliver a range of good quality services. As a result, the number of children and families accessing services from target groups is increasing, including families from workless households, lone parents and young parents. Each centre is taking positive action to increase the number of families from minority ethnic groups who access services.
- Staff promote the work of the group well. Close working with a range of partners, such as schools, health and children's social care, is successfully helping to identify specific families who would benefit from services, including those expecting children. However, the group does not receive live birth data and information about families with children under the age of five moving into social housing in the area. This hinders staff's ability to identify quickly more families who would benefit from the group's work.
- Almost all three- and four-year-olds are accessing their entitlement to early education. At 65%, a large majority of eligible two-year-olds are accessing good or better early years provision. The centres work extremely well to promote the take-up of funding for those in most need of support.
- The centres in the group are easily accessible for families. Centres are safe, welcoming and, in the words of a parent, have 'a creative feel of home from home'. The group is well aware of the needs of children and families in the community, including families living on the Cambridge Estate, armed forces families and families who speak English as an additional language. They provide services that make it easy for families to attend. For example, a weekly stay and play session at Piper Hall is highly valued, enabling families to make new friendships and reducing the risk of isolation.
- The group effectively plan and review the range of services on offer to meet the needs of children and families in the area. Sessions are timed and organised so families gain the maximum benefit from one visit to a children's centre. For example, at Kingston Town 'Bumps and Babies', a stay and play session for pregnant women and children under two years is run alongside the breastfeeding support group.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Staff give families very good individual help and use successful strategies to assist parents to build their confidence and motivation to improve their lives. Families in crisis know where they can get the help and support they need. Families highly value the good care, guidance and support they receive. One parent told inspectors, 'I owe so much to this centre, I had so many issues with my son. They found help for me so that his autism was correctly diagnosed.'
- The group provide a range of opportunities for adults to improve their personal and parenting skills. Parenting courses give families an insight into the benefits of reinforcing children's positive behaviour, routine and the importance of adults' behaviour in providing consistent boundaries.
- Some adults benefit from courses that lead to a qualification, such as a Level 2 in childcare, which leads to volunteering and further training. The lone parent advisor from Jobcentre Plus makes regular visits to the centre to provide guidance on benefits and gaining employment. However, information about how this service is helping families is not shared which, hinders the centres' ability to demonstrate the impact of this work. The group is improving what it provides to help parents develop skills that prepare them for employment, including opportunities for volunteering.
- Effective partnership working with health partners results in good health outcomes. At 77%, the continuance of breastfeeding at six to eight weeks is increasing due to the effective support mothers receive from support clinics.
- Courses such as 'Cooking on a budget' are helping families to develop healthy lifestyles. Parents learn how to make healthy meals for their families at a low cost and teenage parents learn how to cook the right foods for their babies.
- Children who access services are prepared well for school. 'Stay and Play' sessions are popular and of high quality. Sessions are well planned and led by experienced staff. Children blossom during

these sessions and take part in a broad range of activities which heighten their curiosity and sense of exploration, particularly in the well-resourced outside areas.

- Tracking the progress of children who have accessed the children's centre is underway because each of the four schools shares information with the group. For example, information about children attending the nursery at Kings Oak Primary School shows that a large majority of the class attended the children's centre and most of these children are working at age-related expectations.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Senior leaders and managers are well supported by a qualified and loyal staff team and a range of dedicated partners. All have worked closely together during the restructure of centres to a group, ensuring a seamless transition of services for children and families. The revised structure is embedding at a fast pace.
- The local authority checks the effectiveness of the group's work through an annual review and support visits, where priorities and areas for improvement are identified. With leaders, they have developed improved systems to plan, evaluate and monitor the impact of the centres' work. A training programme is underway to support staff to ensure these systems are embedded and effective.
- The group's initial locality action plan accurately focuses on key areas for improvement but lacks precise and measurable targets to help leaders, staff and the advisory board to fully understand what needs to be achieved, evaluated and measured to show the full impact of its work.
- Arrangements in place to safeguard children and their families, including those with social care involvement, are effective. Necessary checks are undertaken to ensure those who work directly with families are suitable. All staff and the two volunteers have received appropriate levels of training and understand their roles and responsibilities well, with good awareness of safeguarding issues including child protection and mental health. Staff confidently assess the needs of children and families using the Common Assessment Framework and promptly take effective action.
- The local authority provides a range of information to help the group understand the needs of the area and their priority groups. However, arrangements for sharing information are not in place with some key partners and, as a result, the group does not receive the full range of information to help them identify all families in most need. This includes live birth data, information about families with children under the age of five who move into social housing and knowledge about the prevalence of domestic violence.
- There is now one advisory board for the locality and its effectiveness is developing well. Parents are engaged in shaping services through regular consultations, which show high levels of satisfaction with services. The group is undertaking a review of the success of parent forums as this varies across the four centres.
- Resources, including staff, are deployed and used well to meet the needs of children and families. Experienced staff work in close partnership with key agencies and maximise the use of centre facilities, including community venues, to ensure services are accessible and of high quality. A crèche is provided for parenting courses to ensure families who need the most help can access the services they need.

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 Group details

Unique reference number	80648
Local authority	Kingston-upon-Thames
Inspection number	442718
Managed by	The local authority
Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	4187
Centre leader	Angie Maxey
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8949 6065
Email address	norbitoncc@kop.rbksch.org

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- URN 21693 - Kingston Hill Children's Centre
- URN 21694 - Kingston Town Children's centre
- URN 22155 - Norbiton Children's Centre
- URN 22180 - North Kingston Children's Centre

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