

Epsom Sure Start Children's Centre

Pound Lane, Epsom, Surrey KT19 8SD

Inspection dates		7–8 January 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.

- This bright and friendly centre has been highly effective in promoting the benefits of its activities. As a result, the number of families known to the centre and using activities and services has risen markedly over the past year.
- Close partnership working, particularly with health visitors, has contributed strongly to improving access to services. Health outcomes for families are very positive.
- Almost all eligible two-, three- and four-year-olds take up their free early education place.
- The local authority supports the centre well and provides helpful information on its performance.
- The acting centre leader has quickly assessed the strengths and areas for improvement. Her meticulous attention to detail has ensured all staff are well trained to help families in most need.
- The headteacher of the primary school provides highly effective support and professional supervision. As a result, the centre runs smoothly.
- As a result of effective partnerships with local schools and early years settings, the large majority of Reception-aged children achieved a good level of development last year.

It is not outstanding because:

- Not enough families living in the least advantaged areas are registered or attend the centre regularly.
- Systems to track the success and progress of adults attending training courses are not robust.
- Not enough adults are volunteering or accessing training to improve their chances of employment.
- Although information is now more clearly presented, staff and governors need to check more thoroughly the impact of the centre's work on families in most need.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Improve access to services so that the large majority of priority families living in the least advantaged areas are registered and attend the centre until their needs are met.
- Strengthen processes to monitor the success and progress of adults attending training courses to help them gain employment and improve their family's well-being.
- Increase the number adults volunteering and accessing training in order to develop their skills so that they are ready for employment.
- Ensure that information is distributed to all staff and governors so that they can check more thoroughly the impact of services on 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.

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre leader, senior leaders from Epsom Primary and Nursery School, and representatives from the local authority. They also met partners from health, early years education, parents, and representatives from the local advisory board. The acting centre leader, the headteacher and the early years leader from the primary school, and a representative from the local authority attended all meetings of the inspection team.

Visits to activities such as 'Childminders Play and Learn', baby clinics and 'Stay and Play' were undertaken. The inspectors looked at the centre's self-evaluation, action planning, a sample of case files, safeguarding practice, policies and procedures, and a range of documentation.

Inspection team

David Scott, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Sarah McDermott	Additional inspector
Graham Saltmarsh	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Epsom Sure Start Children's Centre was designated in October 2009 as a stand-alone centre. It delivers a range of services, including health, parenting classes, 'Stay and Play' sessions, adult learning and family support.

The centre is located on the site of Epsom Primary and Nursery School (URN 124956), which is subject to a separate inspection. The inspection report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. The centre is managed by the governing body of the school, on behalf of the local authority. There is also a local advisory board which comprises parents and key partners. The centre also provides activities in the community and at King's Church and Wallace Fields Infant School (URN 125036).

Leadership of the centre is provided by the headteacher of Epsom Primary and Nursery School. The centre works in partnership with St Martin's Children's Centre (URN 22866), sharing services and data. The number of children under five years of age living in the area served by the centre is 1,553.

The centre serves a community that is socially and economically diverse. Just under one in four children live in the least advantaged areas. Information shows that about one in ten children live in households where no one is working. A third of parents have been educated to university level.

Two thirds of families are of White British heritage, with one third being from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Children's skills and abilities on entry to early education are below the levels expected for their age.

The centre has identified families living in the least advantaged areas, families in need of intensive support and children aged 0–2 as its main priority groups.

The substantive centre manager is currently on maternity leave and an acting centre manager has been covering the role since August 2014.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families **Good**

- This bright and friendly centre has been effective in promoting the benefits of its activities for families in most need, including those expecting children. During the last year, the number of families registered with the centre rose by 25 percentage points so that the large majority of families are now registered.
- Overall engagement rates have risen by 27 percentage points as a result of a rigorous process of contacting and communicating with priority families. As a result, referred families who are more vulnerable and a large majority of birth to two-year-old children attend regularly.
- Close partnership working, particularly with health visitors, has contributed strongly to increasing the number of families accessing services. Prompt sharing of information about births and on-site baby clinics, together with good-quality 'Stay and Play' sessions, encourage families to engage.
- Further plans are in place to encourage more families to attend regularly through 'Bookstart', an initiative to promote a love of reading.
- All three- and four-year-olds and most two-year-olds are taking up their free education place. As a result, centre staff are actively helping to reduce inequalities for families in most need. Special focused consultation events, designed to appeal to priority families, particularly those living in the least advantaged areas, have been successful. However, not enough families from the least advantaged areas are attending activities regularly enough until their needs are met. Nevertheless, this priority group improved their attendance by 30 percentage points in the last year, the highest increase of all groups.

The quality of practice and services**Good**

- The centre provides a good range of activities and services that are designed for everyone, and others that are specifically for priority groups, including expectant parents.
- Good-quality 'Stay and Play' activities ensure all areas of early learning are covered. Staff act as good role models and plan sessions carefully so that parents engage well in supporting their child's learning.
- Health outcomes are very positive. As a result of strong partnerships with health professionals, breastfeeding rates at six to eight weeks and the proportion of children who are of a healthy weight are above the national average.
- Staff have developed effective partnerships with local schools and early years settings and help to ensure that children get off to a good start in their learning. Last year the large majority of Reception-aged children achieved a good level of development, which was above the national level.
- Staff carefully track the progress of children, particularly those who transfer to the onsite primary and nursery school, so that they know how effective they have been. As a result, these children make faster progress than children from other settings and achieve well. This is partly because of the positive support they receive while attending the children's centre.
- The main parenting course is well attended and covers strategies for improving children's behaviour and promoting healthy lifestyles. However, opportunities for adults to become involved in volunteering programmes, both within the centre and the wider community, are not sufficiently well promoted.
- Centre staff have developed a strong partnership with a charity to provide a wide range adult learning opportunities. However, there are too few adults who take up these opportunities to help improve their employability skills. The centre's systems for tracking the progress and success of adults are currently underdeveloped.

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

- The acting centre leader has quickly assessed the centre's strengths and areas to be improved. She has streamlined procedures for monitoring the quality of work undertaken by staff and has recently provided well-received training on understanding data for members of the advisory board.
- Arrangements for governance have recently been redefined and as a result are very clearly understood. The local advisory board knows the centre's priorities and what needs to be improved. They understand how the centre is managed and challenge and hold leaders to account for performance.
- Safeguarding procedures, including the safe recruitment of staff, are rigorous and meet current requirements. The early assessment procedures are effective. Children who are looked after, subject to child protection plans and those deemed to be children in need are very well supported.
- The centre offers a welcoming environment for families to meet. Resources are of good quality and staff are well deployed so that the needs of families are met.
- The headteacher provides highly supportive supervision of the acting centre leader and has ensured the centre runs smoothly, despite a number of changes in staffing. Through effective training and development she has strengthened the process of setting targets for staff, which mirror those followed in the primary school.
- Parents are very positive about the centre's work and have many opportunities to have 'their say'. As a result, evaluations show a high degree of satisfaction among parents who attend the centre's services. A number of parents commented positively about the centre. As one said, 'We absolutely love it here – the centre staff have given us and our families, great confidence.'
- The local authority regularly monitors the work of the centre. The local authority's adviser for children's centres has been present on the interview panel for all new appointments. During the inspection she was able to provide very helpful information about the performance of the centre.

However, although this information is now more clearly presented, staff and governors need to check more thoroughly the impact of the centre's work on families in most 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

Unique reference number	21107
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	455653
Managed by	The governing body of Epsom Primary and Nursery School, on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,553
Centre leader	Diane Durber
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01372 749834
Email address	reception@epsom.surrey.sch.uk

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