

# Eastwood Centre for Children and Families

166/8 Roehampton Lane, London, SW15 4HR

<b>Inspection dates</b>		30 June–1 July 2015	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
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 centre requires improvement. It is not good because:

- The proportion of two-year-olds who take up their entitlement to free early education is low compared to the national picture.
- Opportunities for parents and carers to improve their learning, skills and employability, especially those from priority groups, are limited. 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 the economic well-being of parents.
- The information kept on case files for families receiving individual support is incomplete. Additionally, not all include a closing summary to show what value has been added as a result of staff interventions.
- The local authority's monitoring is not focused rigorously enough on measuring the centre's impact on improving the lives of children and families who need support the most. Data and other information have not been used effectively enough by leaders and managers to set measurable, specific targets. This limits the centre's capacity to move forward at a good pace.
- 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 its performance effectively. Not all partners are represented and some members' attendance is sporadic.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- The centre has registered most young children living in the local area and most priority groups make regular use of centre or partner services.
- Partnerships with health services, some of which are located in the same building as the centre, are strong. This gives children and families, including those expecting babies, good access to early health services.
- Children are prepared well for school. There are highly effective links with the nursery school as well as with specialist services such as the speech and language therapist.
- Parents have very positive views of the centre. They are highly enthusiastic and play a major role in developing services with good representation on the advisory board and at parents' voice meetings.
- The centre manager is held in high regard by staff, parents and partners. He has been instrumental in encouraging an increasing number of families to have access to services, for example by establishing sessions in various community venues.

## 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 for their children.
- 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 those who attend centre-based courses or who are signposted elsewhere.
- Ensure that case files are of a consistently high standard and that auditing and supervision are rigorous. Sharpen up recording of outcomes for parents when they are referred on to commissioned services or where staff in the nursery school take over monitoring of the families.
- The local authority should ensure that its monitoring processes are more rigorously focused on the centre's impact on improving the outcomes for children and families who need support the most. Data and other information regarding priority families' regular engagement with services should be used more effectively to inform the setting of measurable and specific targets by leaders and managers at all levels.
- Widen membership of the advisory board so that more key partners, especially those involved in providing services for parents, are included. Ensure that members and those who sit on the governing body are equipped with the knowledge and enough information to enable them to provide challenge when checking the centre's performance and 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 another children's centre which was Granard Children's Centre, URN 21280.

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 activities taking place at the centre such as the Urdu Speakers' Group and a play session held at the Putney Vale community venue. A joint observation of a toddlers' session was undertaken 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 and a representative from the local authority attended all inspection team meetings which were held jointly for both centres.

## Inspection team

Joan Lindsay, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Saltmarsh

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Eastwood Centre for Children and Families is a stand-alone centre located in the Putney and Roehampton locality of the London Borough of Wandsworth. It works collaboratively with Granard, Southmead and West Hill children's centres, all of which are managed by separate centre managers. The centre manager of Eastwood Centre for Children and Families is also the headteacher of Eastwood Nursery School that also has a day-care facility, neither of which were part of this inspection. Granard Children's Centre was inspected at the same time as this centre; all the other children's centres, school and day-care reports can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>. The governing body of Eastwood Nursery School manages the 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 site and also in community venues in Putney Vale and Lennox. 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 1,105 children aged under five living in the area served by the centre. All of the under fives live in areas that are considered to be among the 30% least advantaged in the country. The centre is located on the Alton Estate which is among the 10% least advantaged. Almost 40% of young children live in low income families with about one in three in households claiming out of work benefits. The population is very ethnically diverse with almost half local children speaking English as an additional language. Predominant first languages are Urdu, Somali and Polish. Approximately 20% of children are from White British 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: Pakistani Urdu/speaking families; children living on the Alton Estate, the least advantaged area; babies and toddlers up to the age of two; and children who are supervised by social care.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

**Good**

- The centre has registered most of the young children living locally. The large majority also access centre and partner services, such as early health clinics, and continue to use them regularly.
- The centre has recently identified the children and families in most need of support. Information is now available which shows that the large majority of each group, such as Pakistani/Urdu speaking families and children subject to social care supervision, are registered and use services regularly. However, the information about the proportion of priority families who have used services three times or more in the last year has only recently been considered. Consequently, findings have not been used as an effective tool to set centre targets by leaders and managers.
- Most young children living in the least advantaged area of the Alton Estate are registered. A large majority of families make regular use of the conveniently located centre with high numbers attending the popular 'Toy Library Play sessions'.
- Health visitors and midwives share the centre building and run frequent well-baby and antenatal clinics from there. These provide families who have young children and those expecting babies with good opportunities to access health services at an early stage. Health partners are proactive in signing families up to use the children's centre. Courses such as 'Baby and Me' and the breastfeeding cafe run by health services also help increase the number of families who come into the building and are introduced to centre services.
- Services taken out into the community, such as the popular 'Babies and Toddlers' drop-in at Putney Vale, ensure that families who live further away from the centre can also benefit from the well-run sessions. This has improved access figures for some priority groups such as children under two

years of age.

- Nearly all three- and four-year-olds take up their early education place. However, at just over 55%, the proportion of two-year-olds who take up their free early education place is well below the national picture of 80%.
- The centre has recently identified babies and toddlers up to the age of two as a priority group. While this group as a whole engage well with centre and partner services, there are no specific sessions for families who decide not to take up the offer for their two-year-old that would ensure these children get off to the best start in their education.

### The quality of practice and services

### Requires improvement

- The quality of practice and services requires improvement because the opportunities for parents to improve their learning and skills, and to support their return to employment are too narrow. Of those who have attended courses, including parenting programmes, just over half are from priority groups. When courses are run, such as English language or Health and Social Care Level 1, almost all participants who start on them finish the course.
- Partners who work with the centre to provide employment advice or to run courses are not routinely sharing information about outcomes or the progress families make. The centre has not established an effective method to track the longer-term benefits of the support it provides to enable it to show the impact of its work. However, there are some individual notable successes of families improving their lives through contact with the centre.
- The quality of case file recording requires improvement. This is because where families receive support directly from outreach workers the records do not always collate information held elsewhere, such as if the child is now attending the nursery and family support is being provided there. Families who require more intensive support are referred on to commissioned services, such as 4Children, but case files do not always record this with a detailed closing summary. Although the files are regularly audited, the process is not thorough enough to pick up these issues or promote consistent best practice.
- There is a good focus on children's early development, supported by close links with the nursery school and specialist services such as speech and language therapy. The centre's toy library, where most of the play sessions take place, is well resourced; families are given good support and guidance to help their children when they move on to school. Staff are good role models throughout the popular sessions. For example, by singing a nursery rhyme in Polish, they ensure everyone is included so that parents talk about the centre as being 'one big family'.
- Outcomes for local children at the end of Reception Year are improving strongly, although at 56%, the proportion reaching a good level of development is lower than the borough and national average. However, 60% of children who are eligible for free school meals achieved this level, which is considerably better than the national figure. The gap between the lowest 20% of children and their peers is also narrowing.
- Some priority children's progress is being tracked when they access the centre regularly and this shows that they achieve well. The centre is aware that it now needs to extend the number of children who have Learning Journeys, recently introduced for families attending sessions at Putney Vale; and to have a means of following up the progress of children who move onto schools other than the linked nursery.
- Health outcomes are variable. The proportion of babies being breastfed at around two months is positive and much higher than the national level. Mothers feel well supported through the breastfeeding cafe and having plenty of opportunities to speak to health visitors. In contrast, and although rates are improving, the number of young children who are very overweight is above the national figure. Sessions on weaning and providing guidance on healthy eating as well as encouraging physical activity are focusing on reducing this but have yet to show good impact.
- Parents make a positive and much valued contribution to the centre. Although there are no active volunteers at present, a recent accredited volunteer course attended by 18 participants has just finished. Those who completed it are full of enthusiasm for what they achieved and eager to put their experiences into practice. Parents are proactive in organising some of the centre's groups. For

example, the well-attended Urdu speakers' group agree their own interesting topics that have led to increasing numbers participating.

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

### **Requires improvement**

- The local authority conducts regular reviews including an annual 'health check'. These are not rigorous enough however 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 improving the impact of the centre's work on 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 and this impedes the centre's capacity to make rapid positive change.
- Membership of the advisory board is relatively narrow; some members fail to attend regularly. There are noticeable gaps in representation from key partners, especially from adult learning and employment services. Members of the advisory board, and also of the governing body, are supportive. However they are not yet well-enough equipped with information about the numbers of priority families using the centre regularly to enable them to be effectively challenging when they hold the centre to account. At present, there is no independent link governor who sits on the advisory board.
- Parents are well represented on the advisory board. They play a full role in ensuring that the views from the weekly well-attended 'Parents' Voice' meetings are passed on to other members.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures meet current requirements. Staff are well trained in all aspects of ensuring children are protected from harm. They will act swiftly to ensure the safety of children if there are any concerns and work well with other services to support children. 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 children in need or looked after, albeit on a quarterly rather than monthly basis.
- Staff are aware that not all parents have been clear about the policy for the use of mobile phones in sessions. As a result, the policy has been reviewed and strengthened and there are plans to provide e-safety training for parents in line with that already provided for staff.
- The centre manager is held in high regard by parents, staff and partners. He has been instrumental in ensuring increasingly large numbers of children and families register, use the centre and benefit from the good resources available. Staff are dedicated and have dealt admirably with some long-term absences to ensure services for families have not been affected.
- Parents have many opportunities to air their views and they are active participants in weekly meetings to consider what services they would like. They are very appreciative of what the centre has done for them, summed up by statements such as, 'My life has totally changed; now I have big goals' and 'I really, really appreciate this children's centre; I don't feel scared any more.' Parents are now eager to 'put something back', as shown by the excellent response to undertaking the volunteers programme.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	21046
<b>Local authority</b>	The London Borough of Wandsworth
<b>Inspection number</b>	455107
<b>Managed by</b>	The governing body of Eastwood Nursery School on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,105
<b>Centre manager</b>	Rob Nicholson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8876 3976
<b>Email address</b>	head@eastwood.wandsworth.sch.uk

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