



Three - Year Report (2001 – 2004)

on the

**Evaluation of the Sure Start
Programme of
South Greenwich**

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1. Introduction

The aim of Sure Start:

To work with parents-to-be, parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children – particularly those who are disadvantaged – so that they can flourish at home and when they get to school, and thereby break the cycle of disadvantage for the current generation of young people and future generations.

Through this assessment of the last three evaluation reports of the programme seeks to answer the following questions:

- Is the programme working?
- How well is it working?
- What is helping or hindering its effectiveness?

This report provides a synopsis of the last three evaluation reports of Sure Start South Greenwich undertaken between 2001 and 2004. The reports are entitled:

- Building firm foundations: the evaluation of the first phase of Sure Start South Greenwich
- Greenwich school community playroom project
- Family matters – Evaluation of the community race equality project

2. Demographic context

Sure Start South Greenwich is a ‘trailblazer’ programme and as such Greenwich was one of the first boroughs to benefit from this initiative. Child poverty indicators including child health and development and educational achievement show Greenwich to be amongst the 20% most disadvantaged areas in the country (DETR Index of Local Deprivation 1988).

The services of SSSG are concentrated on children, families and carers in and around the Page, Brook and Ferrier estates of Eltham and Kidbrooke in the south of the borough. In 1999 the Delivery Plan commissioned by Greenwich Council noted that these estates operated separately from each other. For instance, the Ferrier Estate was built in the 1970s and consists of a mixture of dense low and high-rise buildings built around squares. It has a high level of -social and economic deprivation:

- Unemployment is 28%
- Approximately 40.8% of children live in households with one adult (the borough average is 22.3%)
- Nearly 52% of all households earn less than £10,000 (Ferrier Residents Survey).
- 18.7% of the population come from minority ethnic groups – more than twice that of the rest of the area.

Levels of social deprivation on the Brook (built after the Second World War) and Page (built after the First World War) estates are high yet lower than the Ferrier. Both estates consist mostly of 2, 3, and 4 - bedroom houses with gardens. Levels of deprivation:

- Unemployment rates are 17% and 18% respectively
- 44% of households are dependent on Income Support – the borough average is 35% and attainment levels in schools are very low.

The ethnic profile is:

On the Brook estate 94% of the population are listed as white British and Irish while the Ferrier lists 54% of the population from this group – with the largest minority group being African (22%). Other groups included African-Caribbean, black British, Asian, Chinese and Vietnamese. There is very little provision specifically meeting the needs of black and minority ethnic groups. There are also concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and racial harassment on the Ferrier estate with 43% of residents saying that they did not feel secure in their homes and 67% reporting that they did not feel safe in their surrounding area.

Very few suitable community facilities exist within these local areas. Some available resources appear dilapidated or limited in use. This situation will be partly rectified by the new purpose-built Storkway Family Centre.

3. Reach

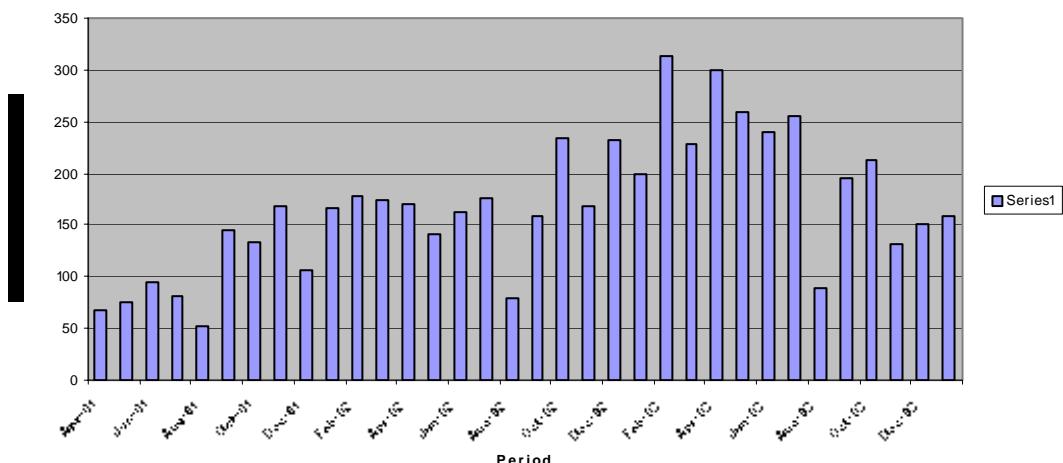
The most fundamental objective of all Sure Start programmes is to seek to reach as many local children and families as possible. This objective includes those who have not previously used services before.

4. Progress

The following three graphs illustrate the level of reach achieved by Sure Start South Greenwich in the first three years of its existence.

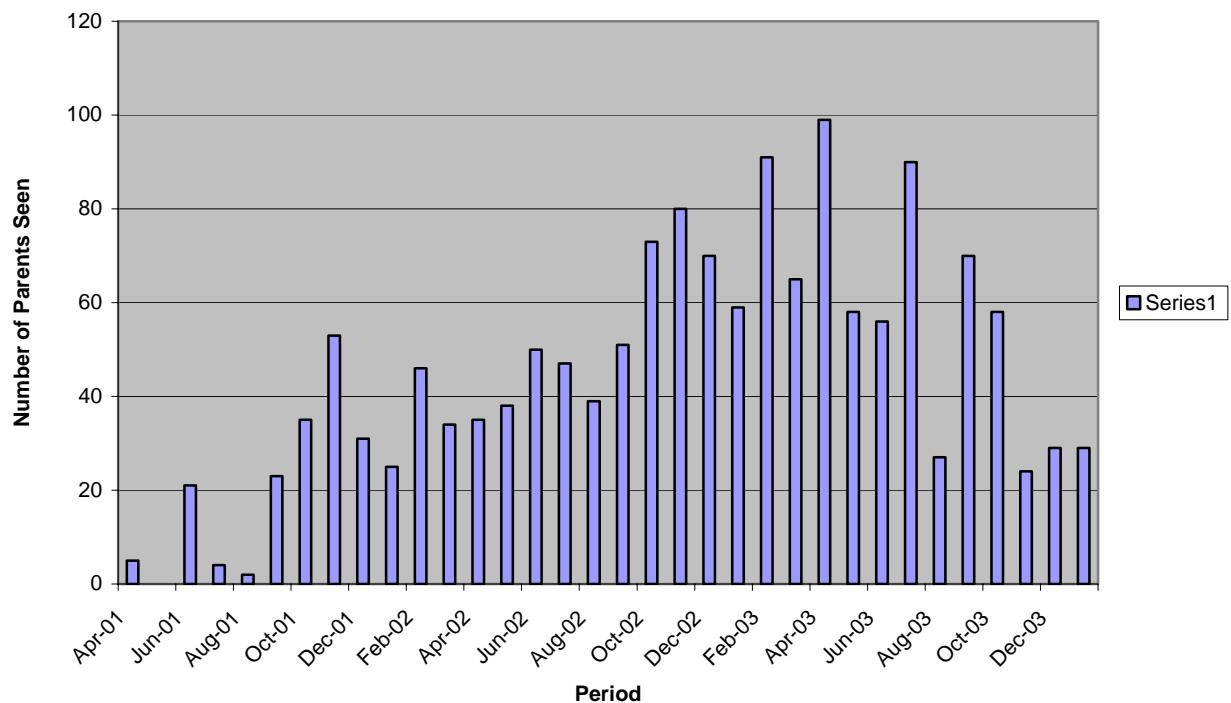
Reach – families seen – April 2001 to Jan 2004

Reach - Families seen April 2001 to Jan 2004

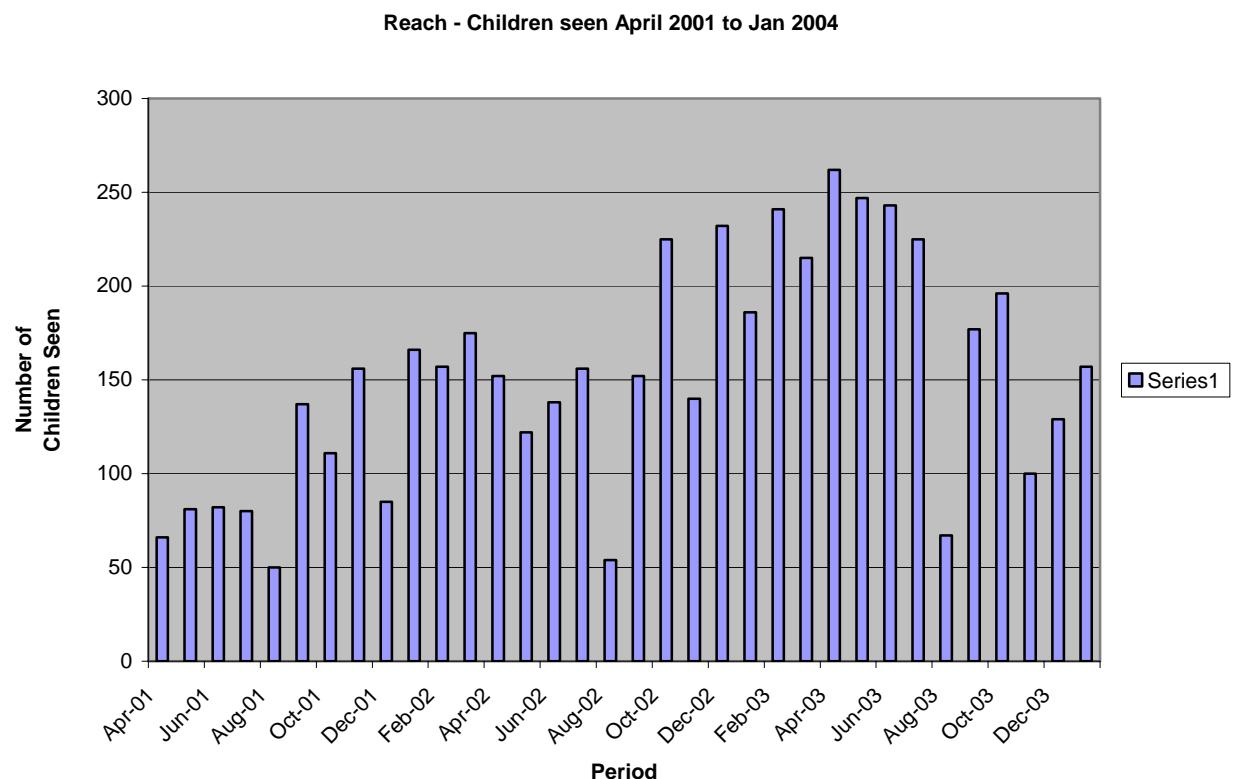


Reach - Number of parents seen – April 2001 to Jan 2004

Reach - Parents seen April 2001 to Jan 2004



Reach - Number of children seen – April 2001 to Jan 2004



The graphs show data collected monthly and the numbers processed by the programme. Data are presented in terms of financial years (running from April to March).

5. Families, parents/carers and children

The three graphs indicate the number of families, parents and children seen during the past three years of the programme.

The data clearly illustrates that the number of families, parents and children identified and seen has been variable over those three years. For instance, between April and December 2001 not all services were operational. Additionally, there were vacant positions and absent staff. Since then, trends indicate that there has been an upward trend since September 2002, which coincides with the appointment of our Programme Co-ordinator and more commissioned services.

The total number of families, parents and children seen by Sure Start South Greenwich has grown over the past three years. For families there is always a large rise during summer activities, falling off into autumn.

The new centre is expected to contribute to a further increase in the number of families and children.

6. Activities

To facilitate and serve this increase in the numbers of people seen by this programme an extensive range of activities has been initiated, supported and maintained over the past three years.

The following list indicates the range of activities set up to engage parents and meet Sure Start objectives.

List of Activities - Sure Start South Greenwich	
Activity	Provider
Outreach & Home Visits	
Home Visits Before Birth	Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Home Visits to Children under 4	Eltham Health Visitors-GPCT
Antenatal Support Group	Eltham Health Visitors-GPCT
Post Natal Support Group	Eltham Health Visitors-GPCT
Culturally Appropriate Support Group	Eltham Health Visitors-GPCT
Resourceful Friends	Homestart Greenwich
Specialist Support EBD	CAMHS-Oxleas NHS
Targeted Work Black & Ethnic Minorities	South London Turkish Society
Targeted Work Black & Ethnic Minorities	Somali Parents Network
Drop In Service	SSSG
Safety @ Home & on the Road	LBG-Public Services
Parenting Programmes	SSSG Family Support Worker
Improved Access to High Quality Information.	SSSG -Quality Information
Improving Health	
Fast Track	Various
Smoke Free Mums to Be	GPCT-Health Promotion
Improving Child's Ability to Learn	
Positive Communication	GPCT- Speech Therapy
Book Start Project	Book Start Project/Library
Toy Library	Greenwich Toy Library
Drop In crèche	GPLA Ferrier Footsteps
Drop In crèche	GPLA Flintmill Pre- School
Drop In crèche	Henwick School
Drop In crèche	Holy Family School

Family Literacy	Greenwich Community College
In House Events	SSSG
<u>Strengthening Families & Communities</u>	
Financial Benefits Advice	Eltham CAB
Advocacy Service for Parents	Camden Society
Race Equality Project	CARE Partnership
Community Group Fund	SSSG
Workless Households	Nubian Project

7. Evaluation Report 1: Building firm foundations: the evaluation of the first phase of Sure Start South Greenwich

7.1 Introduction

SSSG began preparing to deliver services in October 1999. Services were to commence in January 2000. However, due to strategic and operational barriers that will be explored in this report, the first services did not come on-line until September/November 2000.

This report documents the progress of SSSG in developing relevant and accessible services to the target families within the SSSG area.

7.2 Aims of evaluation

The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness in:

- delivering relevant, accessible services through its current Service Delivery Agreements (SDA)
- meeting its targets as specified in its SDA
- reaching out to its target group (families with children under four years old) by delivering accessible and relevant services
- improving the health, well-being, development and pre-school education of families and their children
- partnership working.
- Its accessibility to all families
- linking with other children's services
- involving parents in the project design
- providing value for money.

7.3 Methodology

A variety of methods were used during this evaluation. These included:

- background review to collect information from local and national sources on local socio-demographic factors.
- a service mapping exercise with SSSG staff and parent representatives on the Board to map current relevant service provision.
- individually interviewing a small sample of 20 families
- interviewing these twice during the evaluation
- series of ten focus groups to interview a range of parents (including 2 fathers)
- developing topic guides to ensure that each group was asked relevant questions.
- a small number of individual interviews with key stakeholders
- two half-day *best practice in evaluation training seminars*, were delivered by PiE to SSSG delivery partners
- Following these seminars, a limited amount of technical assistance to delivery partners to help them implement the most effective self-evaluation processes
- Analysing the qualitative data collected thematically and comparing quantitative data against national Sure Start and local targets.

7.4 Programme performance

Progress towards implementing local plans

- By June 2001, SSSG had managed to initiate or commission work on 80% of the service areas in its initial plan. 28 applications were funded through the Community Group Fund.
- SSSG has developed good systems to record the monitoring data that it collects. SSSG also succeeded in getting partners committed to involvement in activity performance reviews in early 2002.
- SSSG produced four issues of the SSSG newsletter, *Flying Start*
- The crèche facilities, advocacy project, and race equality work are all performing well, delivering all or nearly all their service delivery targets.

Meanwhile three key areas have not begun to deliver at all: Social Services targeted outreach to high need families; drop-in facilities (as there is currently no suitable venue); and parenting programmes.

Progress towards delivery of national Sure Start targets

Progress of SSSG towards delivery towards the NASS targets

This failure to check monitoring data against targets makes it impossible to assess programme coverage and programme access at the family level. SSSG claim to have worked with 400 families – but this is an estimate rather than an accurate figure.

Although monitoring data are collected regularly, they are not systematically checked against the service delivery targets. SSSG should consider the development of peer educators.

8. Service Provider Or Commissioner?

One final issue for concern merits further exploration: whether SSSG is a service provider or commissioner. Partly due to its trailblazer status, the staff at SSSG initially believed that they were coming to work for a service provider agency. There may be some areas of operation in which SSSG acts as a service provider as well, but experience to date suggests that SSSG can be more effective as a commissioner. As previously stated, SSSG has successfully achieved a rigorous approach to collecting output monitoring data from the agencies it funds though it has not consistently matched these data against targets.

National Context

SSSG was a trailblazer in Sure Start. As Sure Start was a new concept, the staff were not sure of their role and approach as commissioning agency rather than service provider.

Through making statutory services work in a more joined-up, different way, the client should become the focus and not the service boundary.

The local context

Because the Board have not developed a clear strategic vision for SSSG they have not been able to convey what is needed to key strategic partners. Some key strategic partners see initiatives like SSSG as a “nuisance” rather than a resource. Furthermore, the more successful SSSG is in making its brand logo recognisable to local people, the greater sense of loss the community will feel when SSSG reaches the end of its life.

There is a chronic shortage of quality community space and facilities within the SSSG area. If SSSG were to campaign for new community centre facilities rather than for a SSSG Centre they would be more likely to succeed.

9. Communication and capacity at the strategic management level

This means that SSSG has to develop simple and effective communication strategy to - focus this campaign whilst taking into account the different levels of need for information.

Network and partnership meetings this should be used as forums.

10. Leading by example on joined-up services

There is already a firm foundation of success that SSSG can build on at the strategic level. There are more facilities and services for local families.

There is good evidence of more joined-up service delivery.

Despite initial cautious relationships, SSSG is beginning to have more productive relationships with its key strategic partners. SSSG staffs are seen as being accessible to front-line staff and operational managers.

11. Developing a strategic vision for SSSG

SSSG is a time-limited public sector initiative. it brings a considerable sum of money into the target estates, and is therefore important locally. Having control of the money will enable SSSG to ensure that the money is spent on the target groups as desired and planned. SSSG is responsible for developing social capital within a small locality – the three estates. An officer with the local authority may understand *local* to be “in Greenwich” rather than only in the estates. SSSG is the guardian of that focus.

The involvement of local families in SSSG will stimulate involvement in local democracy.

If SSSG fails to grasp its wider strategic vision and transmit it to key strategic partners, it is unlikely to live up to its potential. SSSG needs also to find more effective ways of engaging and communicating with strategic managers from its health and local authority partners. Both health and local authority partners must be effectively re engaged at senior level.

12. Is SSSG Delivering On Its Targets As Specified In Its SDA?

SSSG has made considerable progress towards delivering on its targets. SSSG has built firm foundations for future progress.

13. Is SSSG Reaching Out To Its Target Group And Delivering Accessible And Relevant Services?

Some services have not been accessible. SSSG have involved many families in the area in the delivery of services. However, it is impossible to assess accurately the coverage of SSSG's services, as the contact database was still not operational by March 2002.

14. Are SSSG Services Helping To Improve The Health, Well-being, Development And Pre-school Education Of Families And Their Children?

The evaluation seminars run by PiE highlighted the need for each service to self-evaluate and some technical assistance was provided to help delivery partners to structure useful self-evaluations. It is a recommendation that the next phase of the evaluation should place a greater emphasis on bringing together self-evaluation data from delivery partners that focuses on health outcomes for families across the service.

15. How is the SSSG partnership working?

There are mixed findings to report about the effectiveness of partnership working in SSSG. Partnership working in SSSG has been successful at an operational level due to the commitment of front-line staff through relationships that have been strengthened through SSSG forums. Wide recommendations are made about the need for SSSG to improve community involvement in SSSG.

16. Are SSSG's monitoring and evaluation systems effective?

SSSG has developed good systems to record the monitoring data that it collects on service delivery. However, although monitoring data is collected regularly, it is not systematically checked against the service delivery targets. This makes it impossible to assess programme coverage and programme access at the family level.

17. How effective has SSSG been in following the NASS principles?

As an urgent priority SSSG must focus on a sustained effort to develop parental involvement.

Accessibility to all families:

SSSG appears to be making good progress in making services accessible, but this is impossible to assess effectively due to the lack of an operating family records database.

Equalities policies are in place and the staff team at SSSG reflect the diversity in the community.

Linking with other children's services

SSSG has good, close working relationships with Greenwich Early Years Development Partnership, who are an active member of the partnership.

Involvement of parents in the design

SSSG has achieved reasonable success in commissioning activities and delivering on its operational aims. The failure to secure additional family-and-child-friendly community facilities has hampered their progress.

One final point that has not been mentioned to date that may affect immediate progress is the impact of staff changes within SSSG. The programme manager went on maternity leave between May and November 2002; one of the programme co-ordinators left at the end of March. Furthermore, the chair needed to stand down in the summer due to other new commitments. These changes will undoubtedly cause a temporary brake to SSSG's progress.

The next phase of the evaluation should encompass three key strands as well as focusing on the performance of SSSG in meeting its targets:

- There should be more emphasis on summing up the self-evaluations of service delivery partners.

This report offers seven recommendations. In addition, it provides a series of suggestions for how the evaluation of Phase 2 might proceed differently from the evaluation of Phase 1.

18. Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusion from this report is that the results achieved by SSSG have been significant, given that it was a trailblazer programme and the local external contextual factors have been challenging. SSSG has achieved reasonable success in commissioning activities and delivering on its operational aims. The failure to secure additional family-and-child-friendly community facilities has hampered their progress. Many of the barriers that now stand in the way of SSSG reaching its potential could be effectively addressed through a deeper understanding of strategic vision.

19. Recommendations:

1. Development of a strategic vision
2. Development of a community involvement strategy
3. Additional community facilities
4. Development of joint commissioning with other local Sure Start programmes
5. Further development of crèche and play facilities
6. Development of family contacts database and management of data
7. Monitoring and evaluations systems

20. Further suggestions from this report:

- Parents and carers should be recruited and trained to be community evaluators to involve many more families in the evaluation
- There should be more emphasis on summing up the self-evaluations of service delivery partners. It may be necessary to make more training and technical assistance available to the service delivery partners.
- Another mapping exercise should take place to indicate the spread of services over a wider geographical area

21. Evaluation Report 2: Henwich School Community Playroom Project (HSCP)

21.1 Introduction

Following a full programme evaluation last year, SSSG Partnership commissioned a small-scale evaluation of one of its services. HSCP was chosen.

Henwich Primary School is located on what is known as the New Page Estate, north of Rochester Way in Eltham.

The project has been opened two years and current user list of is around 80 families and rising. Parents and carers can bring children to the playroom from up to nursery entry age (3 – 3 ½ years).

A limit of 15 children can attend each session. Staff taking into account space, health and safety issues and available resources to maximise children's learning and full participation has set this limit. This also ensures parents can interact with other parents, children and staff as well as bond with their own children while gaining parental skills.

21.2 Structure

Officially, users are offered one or two sessions per week. However, if there are less than fifteen children present, other users are welcome to attend extra sessions on a drop-in basis.

Sessions are 15 minutes shorter than stated to allow setting-up time.

There is no waiting list for sessions. On paper, the project is fully subscribed, but, as in the nature of family life, not every one turns up for every session. If someone does not turn up for 3 or 4 booked sessions, they are contacted to see if they still wish to attend.

If a new user is considered to be in urgent need of sessions, some of the regular users are prepared to juggle or even give up a session temporarily to allow the newcomer to come and gain immediate benefit.

Healthy eating is encouraged during sessions and users are asked to bring two pieces of fruit a week for snack time. Each term there is a theme topic, which changes weekly. This term, it's colour. This is incorporated as far as possible into the different activities, e.g. bringing in fruit of that weeks colour, as far as possible.

Users pay 50p per session unless there is a severe hardship issue for the family. This money goes towards refreshments for parents/carers.

Occasional outings are offered to complement the programme. A good example would be last year's trip to London Zoo, which formed part of the projects' work that term on animals.

Sometimes Sure Start themed open days are attended by the project as an outing, or the project joins with the Nursery outings if age appropriate. A pre-school open day was visited and a live production of "Mr Gumpy's Day Out" proved very popular, as the story had previously been enjoyed in the playroom. The continuity

aspect proved to be educationally beneficial.

Other services such as dental teams and speech therapists visit the playroom fairly regularly and a behavioural support worker has visited the project in the past.

21.3 Layout

The playroom consists of one large room with book corner, computer corner, floor play and carpet area for singing. There is a sink area that can be sectioned off for health and safety purposes. This room has direct access to children's toilets. The room has double doors opening onto a small outside play area, fenced off from the main playground.

The entrance to the building is in a smaller, adjoining room, which also gives access to the adult's toilets. This room is used for snack time and messy play, i.e. painting, water and sand play.

Off this room, there is another meeting room, which is used for courses and advice sessions for parents. Children are looked after in a crèche during this time by the staff and outside tutors run the courses. Evening discussion groups on behaviour and parenting take place as and when possible. If a larger room is required the project can use a conference room in the main school and the meeting room can be used for a crèche. This room is used daily as an after-school play club and therefore cannot be used for storage.

21.4 Methodology

The evaluation was carried out in stages to achieve the final result.

- meetings with Sure Start
- meeting with the foundation coordinator at the nursery
- letter sent to all
- questionnaire
- interviews held between 31st March and 13th May 2003

The above mentioned dates also included school holidays when interviews were not possible.

21.5 Summary of the findings

Overall, everybody concerned, staff and users, were very happy with the concept and day-to-day running of the HSCP project and they were able to say why.

Everybody was aware of issues and limitations regarding funding, this project being

only one of the projects funded by Sure Start in the South Greenwich area. This was evident as people were realistic in expressing what they would like to see added to the resources in the future.

Users and staff were aware of the Sure Start boundary. They were also aware that it differs from the school catchment area, which covers a much wider area.

There is a good mix of age ranges amongst the parents and carers and a wide variety of ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds are represented. This is expanding all the time as the membership increases.

Parents and carers seem to personally gain from attending the playroom, in many aspects as much as the children.

The HSCP project is becoming better known outside of the primary school. This naturally leads to an increase in the number of people wanting sessions.

The HSCP project has a very flexible approach in its day-to-day running, i.e. staff and users are happy to juggle sessions to accommodate each other if need be.

All describes the staffs as approachable and friendly.

The environment within the HSCP project is very warm and conducive to good parenting and parent/child bonding.

21.6 Recommendations

1. Of the few concerns expressed by playroom users, the one needing to be addressed with the most urgency would seem to be the lack of an independent, public, external telephone line.
2. The playroom has been staffed up to now by one 'full time' Sure Start funded paid worker. Further funding must be identified to employ one more full-time member of staff.
3. The policy of offering places to anyone who ask – in line with Sure Start catchment area should be reviewed.
4. With regard to future funding for resources, consultation with users at every stage is recommended and majority requests such as soft play, more outings if at all possible and increased parent- craft lessons and courses should be noted and acted upon.
5. Consultation should also take place on every change or addition to the service offered. Discussion over simple things like toilet door design and other concerns regarding venue and layout should automatically be included in the long-term plans.

21.7 Conclusions

The Henwick School Community Playroom is a unique facility in this area and a very successful one. This is shown in the findings of the questionnaire and quickly became apparent to me as an independent evaluator. Not only the parents and children who attend the project benefiting from its services - clearly their families do so too.

In the past there was very little in the way of play provision of any kind for young children and their families and the success and growth of this project clearly demonstrates the need it has filled and the need for more projects like it to be seriously considered.

Therefore it is important to maintain this project even if other Sure Start services are introduced into the area. I felt a slight sense of anxiety among some of the project users that the new Sure Start building being built at the moment may in some way affect the HSCP dynamic as it stands at present. If this is not the case, then I feel Sure Start should consider offering some concrete reassurance.

It is very important to be aware of the need to move with the times, i.e. adjust to the growing numbers of people wishing to access the project and seek and use funding accordingly. However, the beauty of the project lies in its 'cosy', friendly atmosphere and the key to its continuing success will lie in maintaining this delicate balance.

22. Evaluation Report 3:Community Based equality project – CARE

22.1 INTRODUCTION

The evaluation was commissioned in October 2003 with the primary aim to review the Family Matters Project (CARE) for its success in promoting race equality and positive race relations in the community. The Project was developed within the framework of the Sure Start initiative, which has well-established objectives. The Family Matters Project states that the service will "strengthen families and communities, with the related local objective to strengthen the multicultural nature of the community and promote positive racial relations" as well as "the improvement of the ability to learn".

The defined task was to evaluate the following aspects:

- a) the impact of the Family Matters Project on individual and group attitudes towards race
- b) the impact of the Project on trainers and to prepare, plan and carry out the evaluation with the CARE Partnership Team in a collaborative working relationship
- c) prepare a final report and presentation including findings and recommendations to the SSSG Management Group

The specific objectives of the evaluation were:

- a) to establish whether there is a difference in the dynamics between families in the Brook, Ferrier and Page estates with specific reference to the Ferrier Group and the Henwick Group
- b) change attitudes among parents towards race and racial diversity
- c) to change attitude in individual views on black people, asylum seekers and refugees
- d) to improve understanding of culture, racism and its impact
- e) to consider parents' views on similarities and differences between themselves
- f) to consider if parents have changed how the way they communicate with their children on race and racial diversity
- g) to establish changes in parent behaviours when in the presence of racist behaviour
- h) to establish whether parents feel increased confidence and sense of belonging as an outcome of participation in the Project
- i) to consider the impact of the above objectives on the work of the Project trainers.

22.2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology involved a combination of:

- a) desktop reviews of :
 - documentation describing the Family Matters Project
 - documentation on weekly and termly evaluations of the Family Matters Project
 - reports relating to the development of Family Matters Project, for example, *Changing Times Parents and Carers' Consultation Report (CARE October-December 2002)*
- b) semi-structured interviews with:
 - LEA officers in Education, Social Services and Health (Early Years, Ethnic Minorities Achievement Inspector, Manager Speech and Language, Headteacher Henwick Primary School, Principal Advisor Partnership and Project Development, Greenwich Council Principal Support Officer)
 - Manager Sure Start South Greenwich

- Art/Education Coordinator CARE
 - Arts Manager CARE
 - Crèche Worker, Henwick Primary School
 - Arts trainers
 - Teacher at Middle Park Primary School
- c) Semi- structured group discussions with:
- Children at Middle Park Primary School Ferrier
 - The Henwick Group

22.3 Development of the Family Matters Project

The Family Matters Project was an outcome of the CARE Parent Needs Assessment Questionnaire that referred to the aim of creating programmes/activities for parents from 2001. Parents showed most interest in building self-confidence and exploring creative arts. Their other interests included making the community safe and building community relationship.

Groups were set up to explore the use of the creative arts to develop community relationships and consider racial issues. The Ferrier Group, the Henwick Group and the Page Group were established as a part of the Project. Crèche arrangements were organised for each of the groups.

Each group developed separately although groups were aware each other. Groups developed in response to the local community and its needs and the interests of those attending

From documentation available, both the Ferrier Group and the Henwick Group have been running throughout. The Page Group is no longer running as of summer 2003. Evidence why the Page Group has stopped is not clear.

A review of material available suggests that flyers/leaflets were an effective method used to attract and encourage parents and carers to attend. CARE staff visiting schools, nurseries, and playgroups also recruited parents. "Word of mouth" has also been an effective way of letting others know about the Project. Numbers in the groups have been somewhat variable. However the Ferrier and Henwick Groups are strongly established with their own identity.

22.4 OUTCOMES OF THE FAMILY MATTERS PROJECT

Take - up of the Family Matters Project

At the time of the evaluation, the Family Matters Project was running two groups, the Henwick Group and the Ferrier Group with variability in numbers attending. A third group referred to earlier, the Page Group no longer in operation. One of the participants of this group now attends the Henwick Group.

There is not as yet a database for participants and thus it is difficult to review patterns of attendance and trends. A database would allow the Family Matters Project to target families more effectively and follow up on those members who no longer attend. Because of the nature of the Sure Start objectives in offering services to families with children from birth until under age 4 years, there will be a natural attrition and exit of families and children as children reach the age of 4. Both parents and carers have expressed concerns about leaving the Family Matters Project, the way it is done and the timing.

The Family Matters Project does not have baseline data as yet on the number of families that are eligible to benefit from Sure Start in the three estates. This seems critical information when assessing Family Matters objectives and its impact on the community. When this information is available, the Project could consider setting objectives on reaching specific types of families, for example, by age of children, location or housing.

Creative Arts Education and the Family Matters Project

Several activities have been developed and completed over the duration of the Family Matters Project. These have included production of a dramatic play, song writing, poem writing, writing personal journals, film production and a banner. All the projects have been approached with enthusiasm and well received by their audiences. For some of the activities guest artist have been contracted in to either support or lead on activities.

The activities have usually run over 1-2 terms. This has implications for new members joining. As suggested by an internal evaluation consideration could be given to projects running over a shorter period, for example 6 weeks.

22.5 Recommendations:

1. Strategic planning
2. Establish baseline data
3. Establish baseline information - on families
4. Continue to develop management systems
5. Develop project planning with trainers and freelance artists.
6. Continue to focus on and at times, higher profile give higher profile to the aims of the Project. Review the balance between the activity and the aims of the Family Matters Project.
7. Develop a more structured approach for links between the Ferrier and Henwick Groups with identified outcomes/milestones. Increase outreach work with the aim to (a) encourage new members and (b) relate more directly to the communities targeted.
8. Language is a key factor in culture. This includes organisational culture. Make sure

that written material is available in the languages of the groups who attend project activities.

8. Develop or strengthen links between agencies.

23. Progress against recommendations from evaluation reports

23.1 Evaluation Report 1: Building firm foundations: the evaluation of the first phase of Sure Start South Greenwich

Recommendations	Progress
1. development of a strategic vision	SSSG is moving towards becoming a Children's Centre. This requires a strategic overview of the entire programme. It will include close working partnership with early years provision within the borough and employment agencies. A service has been commissioned to provide education, support and training to reduce the number of children being brought up in workless households.
2. Community involvement strategy (CIS)	The programme has recently completed under the leadership of the Programme Co-ordinator a first comprehensive (CIS). The draft will be discussed at management group meeting 15/09/04.
3. Additional community facilities	New Storkway Family Centre
4. development of joint commissioning with other local Sure Start programmes	Plans are in place to centralise local Sure Start programmes within the London Borough of Greenwich. This will include joint commissioning and delivery of services.
5. further development of crèche and play facilities	The new Storkway Family Centre has provided opportunities for further development within this area.
6. development of family contact database and management of data	The programme has in existence a comprehensive database of families and commissioned services database. This was developed and is maintained by the Finance and management Information co-ordinator.
7. Monitoring and evaluation system	Commissioned services submit monthly and quarterly reports, which inform the annual review. The information assesses best value and further funding of the service.

23.2 Evaluation Report 2: Henwich School Community Playroom Project (HSCP)

Recommendations	Progress
1. independent , public external telephone line	This has been installed.
2. additional full time staff	1 full time post in place.
3. review policy offering place to anyone	Sure Start families are given priority.
4. consultation with parents re future spending on resources	This recommendation has been taken on board.
5. discussion on toilet door design, venue and lay out to be included in long tern plans.	This recommendation has been taken on board.

23.3 Evaluation Report 3:Community Based equality project – CARE

Recommendations	Progress
1. strategic planning	
2. establish baseline data	
3. establish baseline information on families	
4. continuing development of management systems	
5. develop project planning with trainers and freelance artist	
6. higher profile given to aims of project	
7. develop structured approach for links between Ferrier and Henwick with identified outcomes. More outreach.	
8. develop and strengthen links between agencies	
	Nb. This organisation has been given 6 months to demonstrate that most of these recommendations are in place. Further funding for this project will be assessed against achievements.

24. Discussion and conclusion

24.1 Rationale for the direction that the programme development is to take

Everyone concerned understands that the next stage of development for Sure Start South Greenwich is progress towards becoming a children's Centre. The children's centre will provide the best possible example of joined-up early years' services. It will provide a single home for five key services – early education, childcare, health, family support and help into employment. The rationale for this is embedded within the report entitled 'Every Child Matters' and is important to the programme's sustainability.

24.2 Assess progress and type of improvement that may be needed

Progress to date is restricted by the fact that SSSG has recently relocated to its new purpose-built family centre. However, plans are in place to ensure that key partners such as Job Centre Plus and Pre-school Learning Alliance (nursery providers) are operating by January 2005.

24.3. Which service is it important to evaluate and why?

The Health Visiting Service has been identified as one that is important one to evaluate.

In terms of the importance of evaluating the service, three issues need to be raised. Firstly, the national Sure Start Unit (SSU) requires that all local Sure Start programme have a local evaluation. The SSU also suggest that various individual elements of local programmes should also be evaluated. The home visiting service is central to Sure Start itself; it is an obvious area for evaluation. Secondly, given the importance of the Home Visiting Service there is a great deal of benefit to be derived from evaluation. Thirdly, SSSG believe that this service is important in establishing early initial contact, by introducing families with new babies to Sure Start Services within the first two months of their life. Getting this service right is vital to the programme's development and sustainability.

It is clear from this report that SSSG has made significant progress towards achieving its objectives over the past three years. Many projects have been developed and in an effort to achieve this, the programme has worked in partnership with parents and organisations (voluntary and statutory). Since commissioning the first evaluation 'Building firm foundation' the programme has been successful in engaging more parents. A recent analysis of the M3 monitoring report has shown that the programme is achieving above-average reach. For instance, 858 out of 900 children have been seen from the area. The overall reach therefore looks positive.

Parental involvement at different levels of the programme has also improved significantly. Parents are engaged in a number of activities as volunteers and on the management group. A draft community involvement strategy is in place and will be adopted by the management group meeting in October 2004.

Many examples of good practice are noted within this report. As stated earlier, parents are involved at most levels of the programme. Systems are being developed to further monitor the views of parents.

Despite its achievements, one real challenge for SSSG is to target and successfully reach groups commonly referred to as ‘hard to reach’. The programme has recently developed ‘hard to reach’ strategy document. This is intended to provide the focus and coordinated approach required to achieve this objective.