

Inspection report for North Ealing Primary School and Children's Centre

Local authority	Ealing
Inspection number	383530
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2012
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Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Children's House After School Club 152924

The inspection of this Sure Start children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Report published: December 2012



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Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the children's centre manager and staff, representatives from the local authority, and the advisory board. They also spoke to partner agencies, such as the school and health services, and to parents. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's action plan.

Information about the centre

North Ealing Primary School and Children's Centre is a small, new centre which opened in October 2011 as a phase two children's centre. It is based in a dedicated building on the school site and is an integral part of the school's offer to the community. It meets 70% of the full core purpose as it does not provide child care. The school has a 100-place Nursery where the centre manager is based for some of her time. The centre is open from 9am to 3pm on Mondays and Fridays and 10am to 3pm on Tuesdays, 48 weeks of the year. It offers free 'Stay and Play' drop-in sessions, a baby weighing clinic, breastfeeding support, an information, advice and guidance session, and 'Sticky Fingers', a healthy eating course. The centre is located in close proximity to the Copley Close, West Twyford and Jubilee Children's Centres, making it easy to signpost families to other activities in order to ensure a diversity of choice.

The headteacher of the school is overall head of the centre. A centre manager was appointed to manage the day-to-day operations of the centre in September 2012 and works for 20 hours over five days a week. The centre opened with the full time equivalent of an advisor one day a week. The school governing body manages the centre. There is an advisory board and a parents' forum that provide information and advice to the governing body. There are five parents on the advisory board.

The centre serves the Cleveland and Hangar Hill wards in North Ealing. There are eight lower Super Output Areas. It is an affluent area with pockets of deprivation. There are a range of ethnic groups within this area, including families from Other White backgrounds and of Asian heritage. The largest group (39%) is White British. Most of the housing is owner-occupied; however, there is some overcrowding where families, often new to the country, are in multi-occupied privately rented accommodation.

There are 415 families in the reach area, with 755 children aged under 4 years. Ten per cent of children are classified as living in poverty compared with 28.7% in the rest of the borough. Data shows that there are 50 lone parents and four teenage parents. There are 50 families dependent on workless benefits and 50 children in families who are in receipt of Child Tax Credit or income support and job seekers allowance. Children’s skills, abilities and knowledge on entry to early years education are typically below the level expected for their age.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children’s centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for families

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

The centre’s capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management

3

Main findings

In the short time that North Ealing Primary School and Children’s Centre has been open, it has managed to successfully establish itself within the community and provide a satisfactory service for its families. It works in close partnership with the school as the head of centre is the headteacher. The school provides a secure basis from which the centre has begun to build and expand its services. For example, the good safeguarding practice that the centre has adopted across all of its work stems from the school’s effective policy and practice.

Initially the centre’s progress was limited because the school was going through a period of rapid expansion. The governors quickly came to realise that having an advisor to manage the centre one day a week did not allow sufficient time for a successful strategic plan to be implemented. The extra time afforded by the recent appointment of a centre manager has ensured that the centre’s development has accelerated to meet local needs. The head of centre has motivated staff to tackle areas of weakness and significant improvements have already been made. The percentage of mothers breastfeeding has increased, as has the rate of immunisation.

Although numbers are still relatively small, there has also been a weekly increase in the numbers of families reached and engaged in services. Self-evaluation is accurate. The governing body, advisory board and parents' forum work well together to challenge and support the head of centre and centre manager in assessing need and putting appropriate plans into action. The local authority plays an effective role in supporting and challenging the centre and provides useful data to help the centre plan targets based on an accurate analysis of local needs. This means that although the areas of impact are as yet quite small, the centre has made improvements which have already reached, and in some cases surpassed, the targets set in its action plan. This demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Families who use the centre are happy with what it offers. However, although 42% of families have already been reached and participate in services, the centre is working effectively to further increase the number of target groups and vulnerable families. Outcomes are satisfactory; the full impact of provision is yet to be fully realised in sustained improvements for families. However, the centre's work to ensure that children stay safe, which is based on the work carried out in the school, is a good feature.

Senior leaders have worked hard to ensure that provision is satisfactory. They know that partnerships are the key to ensuring that families have a diversity of choice. The centre works closely with the school, neighbouring centres, the extended school's service, Supportive Action for Families in Ealing (SAFE) and Coram, a children's charity, to help deliver the core purpose. However, concerns relating to housing, one of the most pressing areas of need, and to adult learning and the improvement of skills that will help adults return to work, have yet to be addressed.

The centre has begun to collect its own evaluations and data in addition to that supplied by the local authority. However, it has yet to fully analyse it to assess need and the degree of impact of services delivered to help plan future service delivery.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase the number of families registered with the centre by reaching and engaging a higher proportion of families, specifically those whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable, by raising awareness of the centre's activities within the area.
- Strengthen partnerships in order to improve:
 - health outcomes relating to the reduction of obesity levels
 - economic and social well-being relating to housing concerns, employment opportunities and adult learning, particularly for those learning to speak English as a second language.
- Analyse data to assess need and the degree of impact of services delivered and to effectively plan future service delivery.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

Strong relationships within a small friendly environment at the centre's baby weighing clinic have encouraged families to return for other activities and recommend their friends to attend. This, together with breastfeeding support, has led to an increase in the percentage of mothers sustaining breastfeeding at six to eight weeks from 73.5% in 2011 to 87%, whilst the percentage of those not breastfeeding at all has gone down from 30% to just over 10%, well below the national average. Immunisation rates have also risen from a dip of 87% in 2011 to the current figure of 95.35%.

Families enjoy the practical side of 'Sticky Fingers' and exchanging recipes; they also learn key messages about healthy eating, how recipes can be adapted to include healthier ingredients and how portion size can be controlled. However, although obesity at 10.3% is below the Ealing average, it is above the national average of 9%. Consequently, the centre is looking to extend its programme to include exercise classes that will improve family fitness.

Good safeguarding procedures ensure that families and their children stay safe. First aid courses equip parents with the skills that help them to realise dangers, and to cope in an emergency or when their child is ill or has an accident. Children using the centre know how to use simple tools safely and parents are conscious of the need to keep hot drinks away from children. The school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) updates the centre of concerns she may have about a child. Only three families have been supported through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) procedures. However, early identification and appropriate interventions have meant that all three cases have already been quickly and successfully resolved. There are no looked after children or children subject to child protection procedures.

The accurate baseline assessments of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has revealed that the percentage gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and the rest is 29.2%, which is just below the national average of 31.4%. As the centre manager is now based in the school Nursery, it not only provides a unique link with families but it ensures consistent practice. Centre staff work closely with the Nursery staff who model and share good practice, helping to identify learning gaps at the earliest opportunity, particularly for the most vulnerable children. Staff then help the centre plan the appropriate measures to close the gaps at an early stage and prepare children for school.

Children enjoy opportunities to explore the properties of glitter, to learn about Diwali, the festival of lights, and share stories and nursery rhymes during 'Stay and Play.' One mother, reflecting the views of many, said, 'I am so glad that I bring my little boy, he learns so much.' The friendly, welcoming atmosphere of the centre ensures that children demonstrate positive behaviour. Parents begin to gain in self-confidence and often volunteer to tell the story and take responsibility. The parents' forum

provides a valuable sounding board and a mine of information for the centre. For example, parents have highlighted the need for help with housing problems to be a priority on the centre's action plan. Parents on the advisory group are beginning to play an important part in decision making and work hard to promote events to reach an increasing number of families.

Outcomes for economic well-being are satisfactory. Although 78 adults have been successfully signposted on to further education courses, parents say there is an increasing need for further provision for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and information and communication technology (ICT) courses and back to work skills. The local authority provides data which track parents who are signposted to such courses but the centre has yet to analyse this provision to ascertain its impact.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	3
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	3

How good is the provision?

3

The centre is working hard to understand the needs of all target groups across its reach area. It knows the families who use the centre well and is continually trying to improve the support it gives, particularly to those who have most needs. For many, especially those new to the country, a free 'Stay and Play' session helps stretch the family budget and often provides the only place for children to experience messy play. Staff are friendly and parents are quickly put at their ease. One father said, 'Being a man can be isolating. Here they are incredibly friendly so I don't stick out.'

Provision to help children learn and develop is satisfactory because the centre is new, the activities have not been running for long and the target groups reached, although small, are growing daily. Staff in the school train and help centre staff to meet children's needs, for example how to model language and how to interact successfully with children. The centre uses partnerships with other providers and its knowledge of those who are already using the centre well to shape its provision so

that outcomes for all groups are at least satisfactory. Staff are excited as they identify different ways for partners to deliver the provision that this expanding centre needs. Careful assessment of families, especially those in most need, on a one-to-one basis ensures personalised support and signposting to the most appropriate agencies.

Although there are no teenage parents, the centre is involved in a school project where teenagers from the local secondary school work with nursery-aged children to gain a better insight into responsible parenting. They learn how to encourage active listening skills and participation. Equality is at the heart of the work of the centre and it works hard to ensure that all are included. The 'Picnic in the Park' provided great enjoyment for all, including those who are disabled.

Courses to train parents in first aid and potty training have been well received. Parents enjoy the benefits that baby massage brings to them and their babies. It is an ideal opportunity for workers to give early messages about, for example, the approach to weaning, healthy eating, the importance of immunisation and safety in the home. Such sessions put parents at their ease and those with depression or any other deep-seated problems feel confident to unburden their problems and benefit from signposting to appropriate support. Even though there has not been enough time to fully measure the impact of what the centre is striving to do, examples like these show that the care, guidance and support that families receive makes a discernible difference, particularly to the families in most need.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	3

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

Following a short initial period when progress was slow, the centre is now moving forward with a manager in post and an increase in the time allotted to management duties. The new centre manager is upbeat about the challenges ahead. Staff morale is good and everyone shows strong commitment to realising the centre's well-articulated vision. Clear arrangements for supervision, governance and accountability stem from, and are modelled on, the good governance to be found in the school. Members of the governing body, advisory board and parents' forum hold the centre to account and know that, at present, outcomes are satisfactory. The head of centre understands the importance of the identification of problems at an early stage and the need to ensure that improvements help families take full benefit of what is on offer. The centre manager and senior leaders share his passion and delight in the news that another 52 families have registered with the centre in the last month.

The centre’s action plan not only focuses on tackling weaknesses identified from its data but also includes needs such as housing, identified by the parents’ forum. The use of resources is clearly having a satisfactory impact on the families reached by the centre and gives a satisfactory value for money. Outcomes are at least satisfactory, with ‘staying safe’ judged to be good. Outreach to target groups and vulnerable families is developing successfully as evidenced by the closure of all three CAFs. The centre works hard to ensure that effective partnerships help it to guarantee a positive impact on families’ lives. Although all partners are not yet fully engaged, the centre is keen to explore all that there is to offer.

Promoting equality and diversity is at the heart of the work of the school and has permeated into the work of the centre. Staff strive hard to channel their efforts on narrowing the achievement gap. The centre promotes inclusive practice for all its families, especially for children or adults with disabilities. Families of disabled children have benefitted from successful signposting to the right provisions, particularly at times of crisis.

Procedures, systems and record keeping for safeguarding are good. Well-trained staff not only ensure that the highest priority is given to safeguarding all children, but equip parents with the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep their families safe. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are extremely thorough and child protection arrangements fully meet requirements and are updated regularly.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	3
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
The effectiveness of the centre’s policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	3
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the	3

range of provision	
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Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

None

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Children's Centre at North Ealing Primary School on 14 and 15 November 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We talked with you, your children, staff, and a wide range of partners and members of the local authority linked to the centre. We observed the centre's work and looked at a range of documents.

We very much appreciated seeing the children enjoying making patterns in the glitter at the 'Stay and Play' and were pleased to see that some of you volunteer to tell a story. You told us that you enjoy the activities that the centre provides, particularly 'Sticky Fingers' and how you have learned to adapt recipes to improve the health of your families. We would like to see more children in the area eat healthily and take regular exercise as too many have unhealthy weights. The centre staff are keen to work with families to reduce obesity and we have asked the centre's leaders to look at further ways to address this.

We found that the centre currently makes satisfactory provision for the increasing number of young children and families who use its services. We know that some of you need help with accessing affordable housing and we have asked the centre's leaders to look at more ways in which they can support you in this. We would also like to see increased opportunities for adults to improve their basic skills, especially those of you who speak English as a second language. We have also asked the centre to find more ways in which they can help you to prepare for employment. Please let staff know what your needs are and what further learning courses you would find valuable to your future success so that they can help.

One of the strengths of the centre is the good safeguarding procedures which ensure that you and your children are safe. You told us how useful the first aid course has been in helping you keep your families safe at home and in giving you the skills to know what to do in an emergency.

You told us that staff are friendly and that the centre is accessible, inclusive, child-friendly and supportive. Staff make sure that you are well looked after when you visit

and we can see that the centre's work with families with young children in North Ealing makes a positive difference to your daily lives.

When we talked to some of you, it became clear how much the centre has helped new mothers to continue to breastfeed for longer than eight weeks. You also told us how the centre has encouraged so many of you to make sure your children are immunised.

The new manager is doing a good job in making sure that things move forward. The centre has a lot of information to help to plan carefully and set targets to bring improvements. However, this information has not always been analysed well enough to see what the needs of local families are, what services are required and what impact these have on you and your family. We have asked the centre to give close attention to these matters from now on.

The governing body and the advisory board work well with the staff and the local authority to keep a check on how well the centre is doing, and those of you who belong to the parents' forum make a vital contribution to the work of the centre. It is important that you continue to work together to support the centre in going forward. As the centre is very new, it is not reaching as many families as it could do and we have asked the centre's leaders to increase the number of families registered at the centre.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.