

# Inspection report for Hainault Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Redbridge Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	383948
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 January 2012
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Hainault Children's Centre Day Nursery

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.

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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 centre staff, the local authority, the children's centre manager and members of the advisory body. They met with a number of representatives of services who work through the children's centre, including health visitors and the outreach workers. Inspectors spoke to groups of parents and carers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's self-evaluation, improvement plan, user evaluations and case study information.

## Information about the centre

Hainault Children's Centre is a phase one children's centre that provides full core purpose provision. This includes: early education integrated with childcare, family support and outreach to parents, child and family health services and access to adult education support. It operates in the Hainault ward from one site.

The centre manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre. The local authority funds the centre. The advisory board consists of representatives from partner organisations and key stakeholders that work with the children's centres in the north locality, the local authority Lead Officer for Early Years and Children.

The majority of the families who use the centre are from White British origin. A growing number of families using the centre are Black or Black British and Asian origin. Data for the reach area place the user base in the bottom 40% nationally for deprivation. The children's centre has 930 children under five in its reach area. About seven per cent of children and adults who use the centre come from homes that are dependent on benefits and where no one is in work. When they start early years

provision, the majority of children have skills, knowledge and abilities that are below those typical for their age.

The range of activities offered by the centre includes support at the local community baby clinic, antenatal birth clinic, breastfeeding support and baby massage. The centre has links with health visitors, community midwives and speech therapists. It signposts families to a range of providers that offer adult education, volunteering opportunities, and activities designed to support parents and carers back into employment and training. The centre opens 50 weeks each year on weekdays from 9am until 5pm.

## 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

The newly-appointed centre manager conveys a strong sense of purpose and direction. She demonstrates appropriate organisational and communication skills, valuing the work of everyone. Consequently, on a day-to-day basis, activities run smoothly. Satisfactory outcomes for children and families are underpinned by the provision which is satisfactory overall. The centre is doing good work with individual families. It ensures that the various services operating from the centre are brought together to support families and their children in a timely manner. Parents and carers feel comfortable in the centre and know they will get a warm welcome from the staff. These are some examples of what families told inspectors: 'I have a wonderful time sharing experiences with other mothers' and 'This is a very friendly place to be.'

Suitable procedures are in place to safeguard families, who say they feel safe at the centre and that their children are well cared for. The centre offers appropriate services, activities and opportunities to meet the needs of the majority of users in the reach area. Overall, learning and development opportunities are satisfactory. Because assessment of children's starting points in their learning and development are insufficiently clear, it makes it hard to measure their progress and target resources to improve their skills.

Partnerships with the local community and other agencies are generally effective. Regular partnership meetings are arranged, which ensures services are integrated to deliver organised provision for users that impacts positively on their lives. While the centre is making progress in developing its systems to collect and use centre-specific data, families' evaluations of activities and other local information, are not yet used systematically. For example, there is currently partial monitoring of its engagement with some target groups in the centre's reach.

The recently reconstructed advisory board is already beginning to challenge and support leaders and managers to improve outcomes. Nevertheless, the centre needs to increase opportunities for parents and carers to inform the shaping of the centre's services. Accurate self-evaluation identifies the key priorities for improvement. The number of families accessing the centre's provision has increased during the last year. However, the centre needs to encourage more lone parents and the growing number of minority ethnic groups to use the centre's facilities.

Governance and leadership are satisfactory and improving. Managers and staff form a highly committed team that is determined to improve provision and extend services to the wider community. They are focused on improving areas of weakness and gaps in provision and outcomes. The local authority is supporting developments and monitoring the outcomes for families effectively and there is a trend of improvement in the centre's overall performance. This provides the centre with satisfactory capacity to further improve outcomes for families and children.

## What does the centre need to do to improve further?

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Ensure children's records of achievement measure progress for all groups, including those from different ethnic backgrounds and targeted groups.
- Collect and use centre data and other local information to
  - accurately assess the needs of those not yet engaged
  - develop the centre's provision to ensure it is well matched to the needs of all groups and the wider community.
- Engage more effectively with lone parents and minority ethnic groups to encourage them to use the centre's services.
- Develop the recently established parents' forum so that it increases opportunities to inform the shaping of the centre's services.

## How good are outcomes for families?

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Health outcomes for families are satisfactory and beginning to improve. Data supplied by the centre indicate that increasing numbers of mothers are continuing to breastfeed. This is having a positive impact and is giving babies an excellent start to life. However, obesity rates in the reach remain above average. Families benefit from services such as the antenatal clinic and parenting courses led by local health

professionals. These sessions help in reducing the number of babies born prematurely or being classed as low birth weight.

The weekly 'Toddler Music Group' for children and their parents encourages physical activity at the centre and home. A parent commented, 'He enjoys the dances he has learnt when we are at home.' Parents and carers are increasingly confident about managing 'fussy eating' and choosing the right food for their children. Families benefit from appropriately integrated services provided by social care services to promote their well-being, for example families referred for early intervention and those with child protection plans.

Staff supervise children well throughout the day. They ensure that parents develop appropriate observation skills in supervising their children. The centre's sessions on 'Safety in the Home' have increased parents' awareness of safety. One parent said: 'I am a lot more aware of security at home. I am more confident about keeping my children safe.' Children behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. For example, they help tidy away toys in the play areas. They develop a sound understanding of dangers and how to keep themselves safe. Regular meetings and effective communication between centre staff and partner agencies mean that some families who may be at risk of harm and children assessed under the Common Assessment Framework are closely monitored and kept safe. Case studies show positive impact and improved well-being and welfare for children on child protection plans and looked after children.

Early Years Foundation Stage data from local schools indicate that children make satisfactory progress from their starting points in developing the skills that will help them in the future. The centre has taken effective action to reduce the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest. Playroom facilities are varied and children enjoy their time using the many good resources available at the centre. Services offered by the centre are popular and groups are regularly attended. A parent attending the 'Rollers and Crawlers' sessions said, 'I enjoyed making the toys that I can continue to make at home.'

Parents going to the 'Story Explorers' activity for boys agree that it has had a positive impact on their child's language development and social skills. Users have been successful in completing appropriate courses to improve their confidence to enable them to access further training. For example, one parent who attended the English for speakers of other languages course (ESOL) said, 'The course gave me the confidence to continue my studies and I progressed on to a childcare qualification.'

Families make positive contributions to the community. They express verbally and through their written evaluations that they enjoy the activities offered. Children's behaviour is good and they form positive relationships within the centre. Some families using the centre are engaged in the newly established parents' forum. However, they have limited opportunities in shaping the services offered by the centre. Parents and carers participated in fundraising events at the Hainault Youth raising £300 for local charities.

An increasing number of families using the centre are improving their economic stability and well-being. A growing number of adults have progressed on to paid work.

They are very appreciative of the financial advice guidance provided by the centre, in particular, the advice given on managing family budgets. For example, the centre helped an unemployed parent negotiate a working tax credit that enabled them to undertake information technology training.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>

## How good is the provision?

**3**

The centre works appropriately with other agencies to ensure assessments, such as those carried out for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are robust and well informed. The use of the Common Assessment Framework is well established and effective in highlighting users that are at risk and in need of support. Families gain access to a range of focused support through these services. A parent who completed the parenting programme said, 'I gained more knowledge and confidence on how to encourage my child to develop positive attitudes to learning,' The centre does not have a current system to assess and measure children's progress against the developmental stages in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The centre offers a variety of services and activities that appropriately meets the needs of families. They include 'Walkers and Talkers' and 'Babble and Bounce' sessions that provide fun and learning opportunities. These groups, which are well attended, allow children to experience a range purposeful learning activities. One parent commented, 'It's a great activity; the children love it. My child is really benefiting from the social interaction with other children.' Outreach services are effective in targeting identified needs in the wider community. However, the centre's engagement of lone parents and increasing minority ethnic groups is not yet developed sufficiently to involve them in the centre's activities. The Work Redbridge outreach 'Next Step' sessions are encouraging increasing numbers of adults to

undertake basic literacy, numeracy and computing courses.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the centre appropriately meets their needs. Children behave well and follow staff instructions. They are provided with an appropriate range of activities and learning opportunities from birth that aptly supports their development. Good-quality resources that are age-appropriate and interesting encourage children's engagement and promote purposeful learning. For example, a parent said, 'Using dressing up, creative play is really good in engaging the children to talk.' The centre recognises users' personal development and achievements well through celebrations of work produced by children and families.

Care, guidance and support arrangements are effective. Well-tailored support effectively improves families' well-being. Families express high levels of satisfaction with the level of care, guidance and support offered by centre. They report that their lives are better for having had the help they needed, particularly at low points in their lives. A parent who was feeling down and depressed, and has benefited greatly from the support and social interaction at the centre, said, 'Staff are very supportive. Not only has my son been supported but I was also helped by caring staff.' The centre works productively with the specialist family support services for vulnerable children and their families to ensure their particular needs are met. Good-quality information, advice and guidance mean families are effectively signposted to the appropriate support services.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

**3**

Governance and accountability arrangements provide appropriate supervision of the centre's activities. Links between strategic planning and service provision are clear. Morale is high and belief in the centre's success is evident at all levels. The centre manager consistently communicates high expectations to staff about securing improvement. Self-evaluation accurately identifies the centre's strengths and weaknesses. It has an appropriate development plan with clear improvement plans identified. Evaluation has resulted in changes to the provision that meets the needs of most families.

The inclusion of all children and their families is central to the centre's vision. For example, the centre has produced a visual calendar display within the centre that



reflects the community. Its actions to promote greater equality for different groups are adequate in removing barriers, and effective for children and families with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Action is now being taken to gather the data required to develop provision and increase participation of all groups. However, these actions are too recent to have had significant impact on target groups that are hard to reach.

Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and there is a secure system to maintain and update them. The centre's staff are suitably trained in safeguarding, domestic violence and for those working with children or adults with disabilities. The centre is proactive and collaborates effectively with other key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children. Agencies working in the centre understand the implications of the wider safeguarding agenda. Appropriate vetting procedures safeguard children and adults. They ensure that only suitable people work with children and families. Criminal Records Bureau checks are accurately recorded and maintained. The premises and environment are safe and secure. The risk assessments of the environment are appropriate in minimising risks and are monitored to ensure that this remains the case. They are acted upon to make effective improvements to the safeguarding systems.

Services generally deliver coordinated provision for families, which has a positive impact on their lives. Staff work effectively in different aspects of the centre's provision, such as in reception and the playroom. Relationships between statutory partners are increasingly clear and understood, and are being more effectively managed. Staff regularly recycle materials and positively model to parents how 'everyday' items can be used to create a fun and stimulating toy for a child, for example making a visual shaker out of a water bottle. Satisfactory outcomes and provision that engages increasing numbers of families means that the centre's resources are adequately managed. This represents satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>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</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>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 range of provision</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection**

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Hainault Children's Centre on 19–20 January 2012. We judged your centre as satisfactory overall.

We are very grateful to all the parents, carers and representatives from the centre and the professional partners who took the trouble to come and tell us about the work they do. You gave us a positive picture of the centre, and what you said was very useful in making our final judgments.

Sound leadership provided by the centre's management, coordinated teamwork of the centre's staff and its professional relationship with partners is at the core of the centre's work. This means that the workers at the centre communicate well with each other and their feedback provides a suitable knowledge and understanding of the community's needs.

Those of you who use the centre are now better at staying safe and looking after your families. We know this because many of you told us of what you had learnt. We agree that the centre is very welcoming. The family support and parenting practitioners offer you good support and build positive relationships with you and your families. The centre works effectively with other agencies, such as the health service and social services in particular, to help vulnerable children and families.

Parents, carers and children benefit from the suitable provision provided by the centre. Some of you are keen to attend classes to improve your skills. These must be enjoyable because we noticed that there is regular attendance on these courses. Good-quality sessions are organised for you to improve your parenting skills and for your children to develop the basic skills they need for the next stage in their learning. This means that you gain more confidence and expertise, and your children are appropriately prepared to start nursery school.

We have found a few areas that require improvement and the centre's management are already aware of these. We are recommending that managers collect more data about its target groups and develop provision to meet their needs. We have recommended that the centre makes assessments of children's starting points to show and increase the progress they make in developing new skills. We have asked managers to increase the number of users using the centre's services from lone parents and ethnic minority groups. We are also asking managers to increase opportunities for you to contribute to the development of the centre's services.

We wish you every success for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).