

# Inspection report for EPP4 Sunrise Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	383437
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	N/A
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	New Beginnings Day Nursery EY366582

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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**361**

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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 one additional inspector and one early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the centre's leadership team, members of the Local Partnership Group which acts as an advisory board, staff and a representative from the local authority. They also spoke with partner organisations, including those from the health service and from education, and met with parents.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Sunrise centre is a phase two centre that was designated in 2008 and operates from purpose-built accommodation. It is managed on behalf of the local authority by East Potential, a charitable subsidiary of East Thames Housing Association. Services offered at the centre include health, family learning, early years provision, parenting support and outreach provision. A privately-run nursery, New Beginnings Day Nurseries, also shares accommodation with the centre.

The centre covers three wards; Buckhurst Hill East, Loughton Alderton and Loughton Roding. It is located on the outskirts of the Oakwood Hill estate, which is in an area of significant deprivation. Housing in the area is a mix of affluent, privately-owned accommodation and social housing.

The most recent data shows that about 17% of the children live in workless households which is just below the average for Essex County Council. Most families are from White British backgrounds but there is a growing community of families from Eastern Europe. The Local Partnership Group acts as an advisory board for the centre and for two other centres. The local authority and the advisory board monitor the work of the centre. Children enter early education with skills below what is 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

Sunrise centre offers satisfactory provision to meet the needs of a community that is socially very diverse. Outcomes for families are improving as a result of the hard work of staff to break down barriers within the community. Some of those barriers have included open hostility to the centre having a presence in the community. However, staff have made good progress in positioning the centre at the heart of the community and in promoting community cohesion.

Data to enable the centre to assess local needs accurately, particularly in relation to health characteristics have not been readily available. Some data about the numbers of users attending the centre are available but not enough to enable the centre to measure participation rates across all aspects of provision. However, the quality of data is improving and the local authority recognises that it does not provide the centre with reliable and accurate data. Systems to monitor impact across all aspects of the centre's provision are also not yet fully established.

'It is the first playgroup we've been to where I did not feel as though I needed to explain why my child was different' was the comment from one parent who has a child with additional needs. The centre's promotion of equality and inclusion is a real strength of its work. This is evident from the good engagement of fathers in centre activities and also of families who have children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The centre has also been successful in engaging disabled parents in activities. Although the reach area is not ethnically diverse, the centre recognises that the profile of the community is changing and it has invested in a range of resources to meet the needs of potential users who speak a range of languages.

The centre offers a safe environment for families and safeguarding arrangements are appropriate. Staff understand what actions need to be taken to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. Multi-agency work is also effective in ensuring risks to the safety of families are minimised. Families feel well supported by the centre and the quality of care and support provided by the centre is a strength.

Leaders and managers ensure that centre staff are held accountable for their work. Performance management arrangements are satisfactory overall but at some levels there is insufficient challenge for the centre to improve. Nevertheless, the centre's overall evaluation of its performance is reasonably accurate and outcomes are satisfactory. Leaders and managers know what actions are to be taken to improve outcomes and the quality of provision. Therefore, the centre's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Work with the local authority to increase the frequency and availability of reliable, up-to-date data, particularly in relation to health data.
- Introduce reliable systems to monitor the impact of the centre's provision.
- Ensure that the performance management of all staff includes sufficient challenge to improve outcomes for users.

## How good are outcomes for families?

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Outcomes for families are satisfactory. The centre works effectively with health professionals to provide health support and advice for families. Although the centre's ability to access and use up-to-date and reliable data is limited due to the lack of data received from the local authority, staff use their links with health professionals to assess users' needs. For example, they work with a range of agencies to provide effective support for mothers who have been diagnosed with postnatal depression. Obesity rates are low in the reach area, but the centre has responded to the individual needs of parents and helped them learn how to cook nutritious meals. Healthy eating is also promoted through parenting programmes. Parents benefit from breastfeeding support and guidance provided through a weekly 'Bosom Bodies' drop-in session.

Parents, carers, and children say they feel safe at the centre. Safeguarding is actively promoted through posters in the centre and also in the 'Welcome booklet' for families. The centre does not receive child protection data but, through effective links with social care teams, staff are able to offer support to families with children on child protection plans. Staff also use the Common Assessment Framework where appropriate to assess children's needs. Case study examples show that engagement with the centre has led to improved outcomes for families whose children have been removed from child protection plans. Testimonies from parents also confirm that parenting support from the centre and skills learnt from the parenting programmes, have led to improvements in their ability to manage their children's behaviour.

Children and their parents enjoy attending activities at the centre. Sessions, such as 'Stay and Play' are well attended. 'The nature trails have given me ideas of what I can talk to the children about when we're out and about' was the comment from one

parent, which reflects the impact of the centre's work. The centre's qualified teachers work effectively with other staff in the centre to plan activities to promote Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes, particularly in relation to communication, literacy and language and personal and social development. However, data for the reach area show that children's attainment on entry is below the national average and also below the average for the rest of the county.

Parents make satisfactory progress with their learning and are developing skills to support their children's development. 'I can now control my children's behaviour without screaming and shouting' was the comment from one parent which illustrates the impact of the centre in helping parents to improve their parenting skills. As a result of their engagement with the centre, children are acquiring skills for the future particularly in relation to social skills. Unemployment rates are low in the reach area but the centre has been responsive to need by helping some parents change careers, progress to further education, to volunteering and to self-employment. Links with Jobcentre Plus are satisfactory, as are support and guidance about childcare, employment and benefits.

Families are actively involved in the operation of the centre. For example, they contributed to key decisions about the decoration of the centre. This has given families a sense of ownership in relation to the centre. Through their representation on both the Local Partnership Group and through the 'Friends of Little Oaks and Sunrise' group which acts as a parents' forum, parents also contribute well to the governance of the centre. Staff have worked hard to counteract the negative attitudes towards the centre openly expressed by some parts of the community. However, as a direct result of the hard work of the staff to change attitudes and promote the positive benefits of the centre, the centre's role in the life of the community is good; it is improving steadily.

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>2</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?

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Provision for users is satisfactory. Centre staff and their professional partners understand the challenges they face in meeting the needs of a socially diverse community. However, in the absence of reliable and up-to-date data, they use what data they can obtain and also local knowledge to assess the needs of the community. Outreach work is effective in providing one-to-one support for the most vulnerable families within the area. Centre staff are also beginning to penetrate the hard-to-reach areas of the community and slowly beginning to engage families from these groups. Data show that registration rates have increased significantly during the last two years from 24% to 73%. Participation rates have also improved. The centre has already started to develop provision to meet the needs of key target groups, such as fathers, families with children who have additional needs and the most vulnerable groups within the community.

Purposeful learning is satisfactorily promoted and responsive to users' needs. For example, the centre facilitates and hosts a 'Nannies Network'. Many nannies in the area lack formal early years training but the network is used to help them learn how they can incorporate Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes into their work with children. The qualified teachers at the centre have worked with other partners to implement a 'transition passport' system that enables information and data about the skills and development of individual children to be tracked from early years settings through to school. The centre offers some formal adult learning courses but is consulting with parents to determine what kind of courses would best match their interests and needs.

'I don't know what I'd do without this group' was the view of one parent which reflects the views of others. Case study evidence and personal testimonies from families demonstrate the centre's ability to respond well to the needs of families during times of crisis. Centre staff, notably the support workers, do not stereotype families because of their circumstances, but are skilled at identifying and responding to their individual needs. They also work well with a range of agencies to provide an integrated package of support and care for families.

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
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Governance and accountability arrangements are clear and satisfactorily understood. The respective responsibilities of the centre and Local Partnership Group which acts as an advisory board, are also clearly communicated. Strategic direction from the local authority is clearly communicated to the centre and linked to its planning. Supervision arrangements are well established and staff work towards clear personalised objectives. As a result of the evaluation process, leaders and managers know the centre's strengths and also understand what actions they will take to improve the performance of the centre, particularly where data are concerned. However, the process of development planning is not sufficiently linked to self-evaluation and few measureable targets are set to improve outcomes. Performance management is satisfactory overall but some aspects, such as the annual conversation process, lack rigour and challenge.

The centre's professional partners are well represented on the Local Partnership Group. Partnership arrangements with local organisations from the statutory and private sectors are satisfactory and used suitably to augment the centre's provision. Accommodation and staffing resources are used appropriately, and outcomes for users are satisfactory. As a result, value for money is satisfactory.

The centre has obtained data and information about the number of disabled adults and children with additional needs in the area. It has engaged well with both of these groups and its promotion of inclusion is strong. Data show that the centre has also been successful in attracting fathers to the centre, and attendance at weekend events targeted at fathers are well attended. Data also shows that the gap between the children in the lowest 20% who achieve 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest is slowly narrowing. The 'Senses' group was set up to meet the needs of children with additional needs. Some parents who attend 'Senses' activities commented, 'It makes you feel like you're not alone' and, 'It has helped my child's development more than any other group.' The centre's staffing structure ensures that inclusion and equality are key priorities because a named coordinator has the lead responsibility to promote equality.

The current statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding are met. Checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children and all adults have clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau. Staff are trained in a range of safeguarding topics, such as substance misuse and integrated working. They also use the Common Assessment Framework effectively to identify safeguarding needs. Staff work productively with social care teams and other agencies to provide early intervention to prevent problems from escalating. Staff also work well with organisations, such as a local refuge, to provide support to families affected by domestic violence. User engagement is satisfactory. The centre values the views of parents and they are involved in the 'Friends of Little Oaks and Sunrise group' which acts as a parents' forum. Consultations and surveys are also used by the centre to capture the views from parents. Outreach work is beginning to have an impact in some of the harder to



reach parts of the community.

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>2</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**

The inspection report for New Beginnings Day Nursery was considered during this inspection. The overall effectiveness of this nursery was judged to be outstanding. The full report can be found on the Ofsted website.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the EPP4 Sunrise Children's Centre on 26–27 January 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Like you, we found the centre to be a very welcoming place. We also found that the centre is good at ensuring families from all sorts of backgrounds can benefit from

services. The good promotion of inclusion and equality is a real strength of the centre's work. We recognise that the centre is still building its links with the community but staff have worked hard to make sure that families in the community understand the role of the centre. The success of the staff in tackling barriers to establish the centre as a positive part of the community is a real strength.

During our visit we were able to observe some of the activities at the centre. We could see that parents and children have a good time at the centre. We also know from talking to staff that activities are planned to help children develop their learning and their skills. Some of you have also benefited from attending parenting sessions and other activities that are targeted at adults. In addition, the work of the staff out in the community is effective, particularly to provide support to help families overcome problems. The quality of care and support at the centre is good.

We have looked at various statistics and we can see that the centre is doing well in increasing the number of families who now use the centre. We think that with better quality statistics, the centre could help even more families. That is why we have asked the local authority to help staff at the centre obtain and use data more effectively to check on how well the services offered are appropriate for the needs of the community. We have also asked the centre to become more effective in measuring its activities and monitoring the impact of what it does to help families. This is to make sure the centre is offering what is really needed by the community.

Once again, we want to thank you for all your help during the inspection and we wish you and your families all the best for the future.

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