

# Inspection report for Golden Lane Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	383441
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 January 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marion Wallace

<b>Centre leader</b>	Karen Lansdown
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Prior Weston Primary School
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Early Years provision at the Golden Lane Children's Centre

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.

An inspection of the co-located/partner primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, members of the advisory board, local authority, a range of providers, teachers and other staff, health practitioners and parents and carers.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's operation plans, evaluations, key policies and safeguarding procedures. They visited Weston Primary School and Richard Cloudesley Special School.

## Information about the centre

Golden Lane Children's Centre shares a modern purpose-built site with Prior Weston Primary School and Richard Cloudesley Special School for children with physical disabilities. The centre serves families in the Finsbury area of Islington. It is a designated integrated centre which combines full day care. There are purpose-built and accessible rooms and three outside play areas. There is a shared indoor space and a central reception area which contains a café open to parents at the beginning and the end of the day. The Nursery and Reception classes of Prior Weston Primary School are housed within the children's centre. The campus is shared with and used by the local community. The centre has been open for four years and is a phase two children's centre funded by the local authority. It is under the governance of Prior Weston Primary School. The head of the centre has been in post since April 2011. There are close operational links with Prior Weston Primary School, Richard Cloudesley Special School and Moreland Children's Centre. The advisory board is made up of representatives of the local council, parent governors, centre users and centre staff.

Childcare is provided through crèches and the centre’s full day care facility. There are a variety of courses for parents, carers and children. Many of the sessions are run on the site. The centre also signposts families to other specialist facilities. It works in partnership with a range of social, care and health agencies.

The centre opens from 8am to 6pm each week day for 49 weeks of the year and Saturdays from 9am to 1pm. A large majority of families in the area use the centre; the average number of parents and carers who use the centre each week is 123 and the average number of children seen is 148 per week. Many children’s levels on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are below those expected for their age. Three children currently have a protection plan.

A wide range of income groups use the centre’s services. There is a high level of unemployment and a high proportion of families move in and out of the area throughout the year. Levels of deprivation range from the bottom 20% nationally to families who are not deprived. Many of the users come from homes with some level of social disadvantage. There are a few teenage mothers and 31% of children live in households headed by a lone parent. The area is very diverse; families come from a wide range of ethnic groups. The largest group is White British. Many parents and carers using the centre come from households where no one is currently in work and the family is in receipt of benefits.

## 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**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**2**

## Main findings

The children’s centre provides good support to children and families in its reach area. Outcomes are good and improving rapidly because there are excellent partnership links with a range of professionals. Children make good progress over time and achieve well in all areas of learning because the provision is delivered in a safe, secure environment where caring and trusting relationships are nurtured extremely well. Care, guidance and support are excellent and, as a result, target groups and those children and parents and carers identified as in most need of support make good or better progress in overcoming barriers in their lives. All users comment positively on the warm and welcoming environment which helps to create a calm,

harmonious atmosphere that benefits all users.

Adult users grow in confidence as a result of attending the good range of activities at the centre. Parents and other users are positive about the benefits. As one said, 'The centre has changed my life completely, the staff are wonderful, we all learn to support and help each other.'

The head of the centre provides strong leadership underpinned by excellent relationships with all staff and users. Good leadership, strong drive and clear vision contribute to the rapid improvements within the centre. The head of the centre is well supported by the family support outreach workers, the local authority and senior leaders of local children's centres. The good self-evaluation ensures that the centre is continually improving.

The centre's good capacity to improve is evident in the way leadership and governance continually expands the centre's influence across its reach area, in tackling disadvantage and narrowing the achievement gap. The current Early Years Foundation Stage data show clearly that the equality gap between the groups is narrowing rapidly but the centre is keen to close this gap even more, especially for boys. Decisions are made effectively and are continually improving the provision because the centre demonstrates sustainability.

Parenting programmes are helping families to gain support in parenting skills, such as toilet training, sleeping routines, and speaking and listening skills. Communication with potentially vulnerable members of the community, such as teenage parents, lone parents and those who do not speak English as their first language, is good. As a result, these targeted groups attend regularly and benefit from the activities. There are good opportunities for parents to gain further skills which help them gain qualifications. One parent, representing the views of many, said, 'I have learnt how to be a better parent and feel confident and motivated to gain more qualifications myself.'

The centre has extremely strong partnership links with local schools, specialist services and health professionals. It works very successfully with its partners to offer dedicated care and support, tailored to the individual needs of these groups. The impact of this is that these families engage more frequently with the centre in higher numbers and there is clear evidence of greater community cohesion.

Growing numbers of parents are involved with the parents' forum. Several parents have now volunteered to work as 'parent ambassadors' to promote the centre in the community. Increasing numbers of parents from all ethnic groups represented in the reach area now sit on the advisory board because the centre has been innovative in finding ways to involve more parents and carers in the running and decision making of the centre.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Accelerate the current good progress made to narrow the achievement gap between different groups, especially boys.
- Devise ways to identify hard-to-reach and vulnerable families in the local community.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

<b>2</b>
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Families have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy because the centre successfully promotes healthy lifestyles. Data show good improvement in breastfeeding and oral health. Users have good access to a wide range of integrated services and most mothers successfully breastfeed their babies because health practitioners guide and support them well. The number of users who give up smoking during pregnancy is increasing.

The centre successfully involves parents and carers in activities, such as healthy cooking, Tai Chi, yoga, aerobics and baby massage. Staff make good use of the outdoor garden to develop children's physical skills. Activities such as 'Cook and Eat' and healthy snacks promote healthy eating well. Together, these make a positive impact on the physical, mental and emotional health of its families, including target groups and those identified as in most need of support.

High levels of security ensure a safe and secure environment for all users. Home visits and excellent relationships with staff ensure high-quality support for vulnerable families. Parents appreciate the dedicated staff who frequently go the extra mile to help families who experience challenging circumstances. Those who have a child protection plan are very effectively supported and consequently their outcomes are very good. The support for children subject to Common Assessment Framework processes is good. Lone parents feel very well supported with good advice on domestic issues, income support and in coping with their lives. Parenting courses are popular and well attended, and support parents' understanding well.

The development of all areas of children's learning is good. This equips them well for the future. Parents and carers appreciate how well their children learn to play with, and alongside, other children. Users enjoy the many activities provided by the centre and consequently outcomes for children are good. Primary school data show clearly that children who have attended the centre make good progress by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Data indicate the gap is narrowing between different groups but the gap for boys is not as good as for other groups.

Adults access a wide range of activities and opportunities for learning, gaining confidence and qualifications which support them to prepare for future employment. Over one third of families using the centre are engaged in training and adult learning. Data show good improvement over time for target groups and families most in need. Families have good opportunities to develop parenting, creative and academic skills through courses in the centre, such as the sewing and textile courses.

Parents talk enthusiastically of how they have learnt advanced skills of appliqué and pattern design. There are good opportunities for adults to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in the centre or in partner centres.

Centre activities provide families with good opportunities to play and learn together. In the 'Stay and Play' session, children had good opportunities to develop their coordination skills pushing and pulling the carts outside and pressing and spreading the paint and dough with their fingers. Adults encourage parents and carers to talk about the activities and to be aware of the needs of others. The Winter and Summer Festival, together with the Chinese New Year and Eid celebrations, provides a good opportunity for users and members of the local community to celebrate together.

An increasing number of parents attend the parents' forum and contribute to the advisory board. The centre has been proactive and sensitive to the times of the meetings and this is encouraging more parents to get involved in the decision making. A few parents progress to being 'ambassadors' for the centre, taking part in new initiatives and working with outreach staff in the community. Four parents have recently gone on to get paid jobs in the centre.

*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>2</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>2</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>2</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>2</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

**2**

The centre collects data about the attendance, progress made by children and adults, target groups, the take-up of services and the increasing reach area, and, as a result, the centre knows its users well. The needs are assessed and reviewed rigorously by health and education professionals who work extremely well together. There are excellent links with local schools, nurseries, children's centres in the area and other agencies that effectively inform assessments to meet learners' individual needs well. The provision to help children learn and achieve is good. The transition arrangements to help children prepare for school are superb because relationships between the school and the centre are excellent.

The 'Young Parents Group' successfully encourages involvement with the centre. Young parents regularly volunteer to help in the centre. Courses to help fathers become more involved and knowledgeable about their parenting roles are very popular. Fathers talk enthusiastically about learning to change nappies and look after young children.

The quality of care and support for vulnerable families is excellent, as is the care and guidance of children who attend the day-care crèche and the many other courses. All workers show a passion for their work and an awareness of management strategies needed to overcome day-to-day problems. Parents who have children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high levels of support in the respite crèche, the tailored educational therapies and play experiences and parenting courses. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well provided for, both in the physical accessibility of the building and through excellent access to appropriate professional support and links with the Richard Cloudesley Special School. Parents say how much their children benefit from using the sensory room or the hydro pool to help their emotional and physical development.

Support and courses for those who are subject to domestic violence are good and data indicate very good outcomes. The sessions to support parents and carers who are new to this country and who speak English as an additional language are popular and well attended.

*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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>

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

<b>2</b>
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Although the head of the centre has only been in post for nine months, she has already established excellent relationships with all centre staff and professional partners who speak highly of the impact she has made in a short time. High expectations, clear leadership and a determination to continually extend the centre's reach to the whole community by providing the best possible services are clearly evident.

The leadership has clearly identified the centre's strengths and areas to develop, and this clear vision is driving improvement further. The advisory board and staff share these goals and are strongly motivated to provide a wide range of good quality and effective services to the community, particularly those that are hard to reach and



vulnerable. The excellent relationships, the effective deployment of staff and resources ensure good value for money. Outcomes for the large majority of families, including target groups and those in most need of intervention and support, are good.

Recruitment checks within the campus and arrangements for professional supervision are excellent. The centre ensures all partners are fully trained and that safeguarding procedures are known to all and effectively carried out. The advisory board contributes effectively to ensuring the good-quality provision and safeguarding procedures. Policies are clear and implemented fully, and risk assessments are rigorous and regularly monitored.

The centre has good knowledge of its own reach area. Extremely wide and effective range of partnership links ensures the centre is successfully and continually engaging more users in the reach area. Early intervention to support those who are vulnerable is a priority. Partnership links with other professionals are extremely well organised and support systems ensure children and their parents and carers are given the help that they need.

The centre constantly seeks the views of parents and users and responds to suggestions. Users' evaluations of activities and courses, and their responses to questionnaires, are positive. Partners commented how much they enjoyed visiting the centre and how much their children benefited from engaging in the activities.

The centre celebrates diversity well and promotes the inclusion of all families within the reach area. Children and families with disabilities are fully included and well supported by the centre. The course for children with Down's Syndrome is very popular and benefits parents and children. Case study evidence indicates that the centre has been very effective in working with children and parents and carers who are experiencing difficulties at home and those from minority ethnic groups.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>2</b>

<p><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></p>	<p><b>1</b></p>
<p><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></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>

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

The inspection report for early years provision at the Golden Lane Children’s Centre was considered during this inspection.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Complaining about inspections*, which is available from our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Golden Lane Children’s Centre on 26 and 27 January 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank those of you we met and who spoke to us about the centre and its work. It was a great help to us. We agree with you that the centre is a good place for you and your children to attend and that all the staff involved in the centre’s work do an effective job to help you all. You told us how the centre supports you and your children extremely well, and how friendly everyone is, and how happy you and your children are when they are in the centre. We could see that those of you who use the centre regularly enjoy and benefit from all it has to offer, such as the ‘Stay and Play’, parenting courses, courses for families with children with Downs Syndrome, knitting and sewing sessions, and the toy library.

We think the wide range of things that the centre plans for you is good. We were particularly pleased to see how many of you attended the ‘Stay and Play’ sessions and are now involved as ‘ambassadors’ for other parents. Many of you talked enthusiastically about how you had been helped and supported to improve the learning opportunities for your children, such as the value of messy play and learning singing rhymes.

The centre helps you in many ways, for example, the support it provides for lone parents and those of you who are experiencing domestic difficulties. It provides valuable support and practical help to make your homes safer for your children and

useful guidance to help you with their learning. Many of you contribute to the parents' forum or sit on the advisory board. You clearly value opportunities to contribute to the decision making and are keen to contribute your ideas to improving the provision even more. The centre is aware of the need to constantly look for ways to involve more families who are especially vulnerable or may be hard to reach. It is good to know that many of you are helping the centre in this task.

Your children make good progress in their learning and behave well because they enjoy all the activities offered. The centre has made good progress narrowing the gap between different groups but is keen to narrow the gap even more, especially between boys. The smooth transition from the centre to Prior Weston Primary School is excellent. The 'Stay and Play' and other activities are well organised and popular. All of the people who work at the centre do an effective job and the head of the centre leads the centre well. There is an excellent sense of teamwork, especially among the leaders, advisory board and all those who use the centre. The work that they do to assess what is needed and to put plans in place to make things even better is effective. They are well supported by efficient systems and administration procedures.

The centre ensures that children and users are very safe and well protected. Staff are all very experienced, well trained and regularly update their training in safety aspects. Your children's security and safety are of the highest priority and excellent records are kept to ensure that all who work at the centre are properly qualified and meticulously checked.

It was a pleasure to meet you during the inspection and to hear your views. We hope that you and your children and many more families who live in and around the centre will continue to enjoy and benefit from the many activities and services the centre offers. Thank you again for contributing to the inspection by sharing your comments and thoughts so openly.

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