

Inspection report for Everton Nursery School and Family Centre

Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	365672
Inspection dates	26 – 27 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Linda McLarty HMI

Centre governance	Local Authority
Centre leader	Jane Wafer
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	104505 Everton Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	501184 Everton Kids Club

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.

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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the management board, the children's centre co-ordinator and headteacher of the nursery school, staff, parents and users and representatives of partner organisations.

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

Information about the centre

Everton Nursery School and Family Centre is a Phase 1 children's centre delivering the full core offer under the governance of Everton Nursery School governing body, known as the management board, which is ultimately accountable to Liverpool City Council. It was Liverpool's first children's centre, designated in 2003. It has been on the same site since 2001, as Everton Road Nursery School, as an early childhood centre, a Sure Start Local Programme and as an Early Excellence Centre. The site now accommodates the Everton Nursery School and Family Centre, the Speech and Language Team, (SALT) funded by the Primary Care Trust and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health North Team (CAMHS.) The centre provides space for the local childminding network to meet for peer support and guidance on the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The centre is located within one of the 30% most deprived areas in the country and serves a community ranked in the top one per cent most deprived in relation to income, employment and health. The majority of families are of White British heritage, but approximately 5% of families represent a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds.

An above average proportion of families claim benefits as the incidence of worklessness, at around 42%, is higher than the national average. The reach area is

geographically large and of its 11 super output areas, six are improving in terms of relative deprivation while five are on a more negative trajectory. There are approximately 870 children in the reach area.

There is an integrated nursery school and day care provision on site which offers care and education for up to 214 children from birth to five years. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development well below those expected for their age nationally, especially in communication, language and literacy and in personal and social development.

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 users and the wider community

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

1

Main findings

Everton Nursery School and Family Centre is an outstanding centre which is improving all of the Every Child Matters outcomes for families and users in the reach area exceptionally well. Impressive provision and exemplary leadership and management are underpinned by a highly effective management board and extremely productive partnership arrangements. Governance is outstanding with secure lines of accountability from the local authority through the management board to centre level. Staff performance is monitored against how well individuals help the centre meet its challenging improvement targets. The management board skilfully supports and challenges the centre’s work, diligently holding it to account for how well it meets its ambitious targets. This, and the centre’s impressive track record of continuous improvement to date, demonstrates an outstanding capacity to improve.

Leadership and management have established a strong and committed staff team, and outstanding provision. The excellent practice at Everton is disseminated cross-sector and to other children’s centres in the locality. Accurate self-evaluation is used to analyse the centre’s effectiveness and measure progress against national and local targets. Improvement activity is sharply focussed where it will do most good and is most needed.

The local authority systems for gathering information about the reach area are

rapidly improving the level of detail the centre receives about its reach area but there are still significant gaps in the information exchange about the profile of residents. However, where information is available it is shared very well with the children's centre, who use this to target their improvement planning towards supporting the most vulnerable and narrowing the achievement gap for adults and children.

Where there is little data available from the local authority or partner agencies, for example, on the exact numbers of lone parents, fathers, children in minority ethnic families, or children or parents with disabilities, the centre successfully gathers information through outreach and professional and local contacts. This means that the centre is highly effective at identifying the most disadvantaged. Services are planned to ensure that the most disadvantaged have equal opportunities to lead safe, healthy and financially independent lives. This is building resilience and sustainability in the community. The extremely inclusive approach is also fostering community cohesion well and breaking down barriers between conflicting groups.

Service delivery is highly integrated and greatly facilitated by the co-location of partners on the site, such as CAMHS and the SALT services. Immunisations are delivered on site and staff have been known to transport residents to the centre to facilitate take-up.

Safeguarding arrangements are systematic and rigorous. All legal requirements are met and there are meticulous systems for checking visitors to the centre. Early intervention for vulnerable children and families and use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is reducing the need for higher-level interventions. One social worker told inspectors that the centre's support for children on child protection and 'children in need' plans is excellent and 'far exceeds' the anticipated level of support.

The centre uses its well-maintained premises and resources, including its committed team of staff and volunteers, to promote outstanding outcomes, demonstrating outstanding value for money. Users see the centre as a welcoming, safe and happy place with one parent reporting 'I want to shout from the rooftops – do you know about these courses – get on it!'

In 2009 – 2010 the centre staff increased registration rates by 13% and management effectively and constantly reshapes the outreach services to encourage higher participation, attendance and retention rates. The centre currently reaches 69.6% of one of the hardest-to-reach localities in the country. Parental comments such as 'Without the support I would not have my family anymore,' typify the centre's impact.

Parents are enthusiastic advocates for the service. Statements such as 'Before I move anywhere else I will be checking out children's centres, nurseries and schools because this is my benchmark', and 'However worked up you are, its instantly calming effect makes my children's life so much safer' are typical of parental comments to inspectors.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Improve the range of data from the local authority to the children's centre to further inform the centre's improvement planning.

How good are outcomes for users?

1

Where the centre has received data from the local authority and its partners, these indicate that health outcomes are measurably improving, for example, the centre is increasing the numbers of local mothers who breastfeed on delivery of their babies from 29.4% in 2007-08 to 36.7% in 2009 – 2010 and are on target to exceed this figure this year. There is a similarly improving trend for mothers sustaining breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks. Numbers of mothers smoking during pregnancy are exceptionally high in the Everton area; 36.7% compared to Liverpool's average of 18.4% and the national average of 14.1%. The centre has successfully reduced smoking during pregnancy to delivery by 15.2% from 2008-2009 levels.

Evaluations of activities in the centre and of the impact of outreach support give compelling evidence that users report increased emotional well-being, confidence, self-esteem and knowledge of how to keep themselves and their families healthy. The on-site cafe is a popular meeting place offering wholesome food at reasonable cost and free access to community computers. Centre users learn how to cook healthily at the 'Can't Cook, Will Cook' sessions, taking home free ingredients to try the dishes at home.

An impressive range of physical activities is well attended. Some of these have been suggested by parents, such as 'Jumping Jacks: exercise disguised as fun' which promotes enjoyable exercise in a social context. The on-site splash pool is enjoyed by users, including fathers with their children at the Saturday sessions. The centre helps families find more suitable accommodation, for example, families with children with physical disabilities, or who are experiencing racial or social harassment from neighbours. Users suffering from depression report increased mental and emotional resilience, reduced isolation and a faster return to mental health through access to the counselling services on site. The centre's holistic approach means that staff add great value to users' lives, supporting them towards achievements to be proud of and on which to build. The users' evaluations show that they are aware of the distance they have travelled towards emotional, physical and financial independence.

Safety and safeguarding are key priorities for the centre, with premises, activities, services and outings exceptionally well risk-assessed and monitored to ensure participants and staff are safe. The wider safety agenda informs improvement planning very well. Sensitive signposting enhances users' access to support to promote emotional and sexual health well. Early intervention is outstanding. The CAF process is used highly effectively by well-trained lead professionals, enabling swift access to support. Careful monitoring indicates that substantial numbers of centre users experiencing domestic abuse and violence have been supported by the

children's centre's outreach and family support worker (CCOFSW). In the reporting period the CCOFSW has also supported more than 50 families from the most excluded sectors of the community; 42 of these have engaged with the centre and 29 families continue to engage and receive additional centre services. The centre is increasing registrations effectively, while simultaneously making homes in the area safer, by offering access to free safety assessments and safety equipment through the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) scheme on registration.

Children receive an excellent start to their education. The centre analyses children's attainment on entry into the five closest receiver schools and uses the information to increase the amount of support it offers for children's communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development skills. The centre staff follow up the progress of children through their first term at their various primary schools. These schools report that the centre's children are 'learning ready' and that by the end of the first term in school they have caught up to their peers.

Even the youngest children enjoy wonderful activities in the centre, such as the 'Tuning into Children' music sessions led by members of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Older children enjoy the film days in the hall held during the holidays, and the many exciting outings. Parents book time to use relaxation resources, such as the two multi-sensory rooms, or the splash pool with their children before and after activities. Satisfaction surveys attest high levels of adult enjoyment, for example, during parenting classes or when learning information technology skills.

Families have access to an impressively wide range of activities, which is regularly monitored and adapted to meet changing needs. For example, when the local college reduced the courses available, the centre combined literacy and numeracy for adults with sessions based around improving children's literacy and numeracy skills. Parents were redirected to on-line courses and two parents have subsequently successfully completed adult numeracy courses.

Parenting skills and behaviour management is fostered extremely well by the centre, which offers differentiated training. Parenting courses are improving parents' ability to understand and modify their children's behaviour, while the 'Choices' programme uses cognitive behaviour therapy principles to help parents understand and modify their own behaviour, taking ownership of their choices.

The community parents' programme is highly successful at building community cohesion. As well as promoting positive parenting skills, centre staff sensitively identify local concerns such as racial and social harassment and skilfully encourage parents into the centre for support. There is a high level of parental involvement in decision making on the management board. Case studies and personal testimony provide compelling evidence of progress made, for example, some parents with communication problems were sufficiently empowered to attend national conferences, other parents were proud to tell inspectors they now can lead meetings of professionals as a result of centre support.

Families are helped towards economic independence very well. The 'Volunteers into Posts' (VIP) programme has successfully placed eight of its ten volunteers into paid work. The Job cafe, in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, SENCIA and JET (Jobs Education Training) has supported 36 out of 42 attendees into paid employment since April 2010. Higher education and enterprise are fostered effectively by encouraging parents to learn skills and attend accredited courses which lead to self-employment, for example, marketing skills, which they practice by promoting the centre's work in the locality. Case study evidence shows some users now run their own businesses.

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	1
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	1
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	1

How good is the provision?

1

The centre uses data to assess the needs of its registered users exceptionally well. Community parents provide extremely useful evidence of the range of needs of the wider community, which informs how well the centre plans to meet the needs of the reach area. The leadership swiftly adapts the services to suit emerging needs, for example, speedily relocating some activities delivered from the West Everton Community Centre to enhance take-up.

A highly effective multi-agency 'team around the child' approach means that those children subject to the CAF process receive bespoke support. There are two tiers of quality assurance of the CAF records to monitor how well the process continues to meet the needs of vulnerable families.

The centre systematically records outcomes in terms of distance travelled from inception to completion of activities, courses and interventions as well as user satisfaction rates. Ongoing evaluation of each activity and every outreach visit is used very well to supplement the assessment of needs and this information is used very effectively to reshape service delivery, to ensure continued usefulness and to monitor that the impact on outcomes demonstrate that services are providing value

for money.

Children leave the nursery school and day care well prepared for their future academic and social lives, as attested by the latest Ofsted reports which judged the nursery school and day care as outstanding and good, respectively. The annual 'celebration of achievement' event encourages adult users to recognise how far they have progressed in their personal journeys towards physical, mental, emotional and financial health and this is encouraging users to take on responsibility for improving their family's prospects.

The range of services and activities offered is impressive and the centre can demonstrate good participation, attendance and retention rates for most activities, such as the baby clinic and use of the pool for physiotherapy, splash and rhyme and dad's sessions. The coordinator's reports for the management board show careful recording of attendance and retention rates for all activities, which are referenced for the Every Child Matters outcomes and clearly demonstrate quarter on quarter increases in access to the services provided. For example, outreach workers have supported 34 families between 1 April 2010 and 18 October 2010. The community parents' programme has 16 parents in training, including four from an adjacent children's centre, attending with their coordinator in an example of shared good practice.

As well as extensive data gathering and analysis to evidence impact, the centre has compelling evidence of the less measurable but highly positive outcomes arising from the provision. For example, parents report significantly increased awareness of their child's emotional needs following attendance at parenting classes. Information is then analysed to identify key challenges and the centre leaders are continually looking for ways to improve.

Excellent care, guidance and support are offered, both in-house, through meticulous brokering of partnership services, and through sensitive and skilled outreach and family support. The centre distributes information and guidance effectively about its services through a variety of media including leaflets in the 12 community languages, signs, cartoons and the many plasma screens distributed throughout the centre. Users say the centre 'empowers' and 'helps us to become stronger'. Good quality information is easily available to support the centre's priorities of reducing smoking, obesity, alcohol and drug abuse, and increasing breastfeeding and awareness of how to maintain sexual health. These supplement the support offered by courses run by agencies such as La Leche and the 'Fagends' smoking cessation programme. Families undergoing intense hardship or crisis told inspectors of the life-changing support given by the centre and its partner agencies, for example 'keeping my family together.' As a result, users are enthusiastic ambassadors, advertising the centre as a first-stop source of support to neighbours and friends.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	1
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The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	1
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	1
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

The leadership team have the benefit of many years of experience delivering a service on the site, through the changing phases of development towards what is now the children's centre. They are rightly seen as experts in their field and this is demonstrated by the outstanding provision they have organised, leading to outstanding outcomes for service users. The centre is a model of excellent practice to other children's centres and to providers in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors, hosting events such as the 'Healthy Children, Healthy Minds' conference for cross-sector early years practitioners. Governance is extremely effective. The local authority and management board hold the children's centre to account rigorously and have challenged the centre about issues, such as evaluation and value for money. The governance arrangements were reviewed and amended to ensure parity of focus on all areas of the centre's work.

Leaders are ambitious for the families in the area and offer a highly effective, integrated service, which is changing the lives of the centre's users. Self-evaluation is accurate, and based on rigorous monitoring of the impact of services upon outcomes for users. Searching self-analysis by leaders at every level is subject to rigorous scrutiny by the management board and informed by the views of the local authority. The leaders' identification of the many areas they seek to improve evidences their reflective practice and continuous self-challenge and is strong evidence for the centre's outstanding capacity to improve.

The finance sub-group of the management board monitors value for money diligently. They risk assess the ongoing viability of services, such as the splash pool and the commissioned services to ensure demonstrable cost effectiveness and ensure financial probity with public funds. Excellent partnership working also demonstrates outstanding value for money as duplication of work is eliminated and resources are shared in the community, for example, the gardener is shared with Faith school.

The nursery school was recently awarded the highest level of Liverpool's Inclusion Award and the centre as a whole is an exemplar of good practice in promoting equality of opportunity among users. The centre knows the percentage of minority ethnic users in the area and is prioritising increased participation for this group. The centre is aware of racial tensions in the area and is pro-active in supporting victims of racial and social harassment. 'It's like a second home, I have made so many

friends from so many cultures...’ said one parent. Exemplary support is given to families of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, delivered through exceptionally effective partnership working.

Safeguarding arrangements are of the highest standard, with high quality CAFs ensuring effective early identification of services required and careful monitoring of children’s progress throughout the process. The centre delivers positive outcomes across the wider safeguarding agenda, for example, it pro-actively supports those involved in domestic abuse or violence. Highly effective partnership working delivers support for the most vulnerable at times of crisis and complements well the pre-emptive work which is the mainstay of the centre’s service delivery. All policies and procedures are in place to safeguard users and are reviewed annually. Staff and volunteers are trained to the appropriate level to support their roles and responsibilities.

Outstanding partnership work underpins the successful delivery of services. Co-location of some key health partners is increasing the take-up of vital health services; for example, having the CAMHS team on-site ensures a timely response to the early identification of children with development delays or difficulties. This has significantly reduced the percentage of non-attendance at CAMHS appointments. These are five per cent at the centre in comparison to 35% in other CAHMS services. Professional partners expressed high levels of confidence in the work of the children’s centre and this view was unanimous amongst those who contributed to the inspection. Typical comments included: ‘The quality of care in the day care is second to none, staff are very knowledgeable about safeguarding and monitor those on child protection plans well ensuring they are effective and families make good progress’ (from a social worker.)

The views of parents and users are solicited regularly regarding activities and interventions, in order to monitor their impact upon raising outcomes and to reshape subsequent service delivery. High levels of user engagement on the management board ensure genuine participation in decision making. Those not yet involved in the centre are encouraged to become active registrations by cold-calling and the word-of-mouth recommendations by user-advocates. Children’s views are sought, valued and acted upon when planning activities in the childcare services to capitalise upon their interests.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	1
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	1

The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	1
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	1
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	1

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

The most recent inspection reports for the nursery and day care provision on to be found on the Ofsted website. These were taken into consideration when judging the enjoying and achieving, learning and development and economic well-being of children.

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. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected Everton Nursery School and Family Centre on 26 and 27 January 2010. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Thank you for giving up your time to share your views about your experiences as parents, carers and volunteers in the centre.

Inspectors agree with you, your centre is an outstanding source of support, help and guidance and is helping to improve your families' opportunities to live healthy, safe, happy and productive lives. Many of you have been supported into paid work because of the centre's Job Cafe and highly effective partnerships with Jobcentre Plus. The very high quality nursery, childcare and crèche arrangements give valuable

respite for parents and carers and frees you to develop skills and access courses which build your skills and confidence, help you make friends and improve your future job prospects.

Some of you told us that the centre has helped you keep your families together in times of great crises and hardship, or in the ongoing challenges caused by unemployment, disability and unsuitable housing. Centre staff use their extremely effective partnership links to call on professionals from health, education, voluntary organisations and social care to make sure you get the best service.

The centre is an exciting and welcoming place with all staff at every level fully behind the management's vision to make life better for Everton residents. Inspectors agreed with your views about how impressive the range of activities and facilities are, including the pool and the soothing multi-sensory rooms. We can see that the leadership are always thinking of ways to help you, such as the 'Can't cook, will cook' sessions where you can take the ingredients home to practice the recipes.

The community parents' scheme is really successful in helping other parents in the community. Some of the volunteers have gone from being helped in the scheme to supporting others. The training and supervision of this scheme is developing a group of local residents into a fantastic resource for the neighbourhood, especially useful for helping those families who are less confident with the professional agencies. Inspectors heard moving accounts of how the centre is improving your lives, such as 'I knew nobody, didn't speak English – I was like a baby myself needing to learn everything again and this centre helped me to do that, it is beyond belief.' Some families are still together, or have safer housing, because the centre staff worked with its partners to support individuals and families promptly.

The centre leaders want the very best for the users, and work tirelessly to improve the provision to enable this to happen. The local authority and management board rigorously checks how well the centre is working. We have asked the local authority to give the centre more data about people who live in the area served by the centre, which will help the leadership focus its services where they are needed most.

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