

# Inspection report for Church Hill Nursery School and Children's Centre

Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	366467
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Nina Bee

Centre governance	Church Hill Nursery School and Children's Centre
Centre leader	Maxine Lafayette
Date of previous inspection	15–16 October 2009 (pilot inspection)
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Linked school if applicable	The Church Hill Nursery
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	N/A

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 additional inspector and one early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the centre coordinator and her senior leadership team, the headteacher from the nursery school, governors, staff and members of the sub-committee who represent the governing body, local authority representatives, and partner agencies, including representatives from the health service. Informal discussions with parents were held.

The centre's work was observed, and the inspectors looked at a range of relevant documentation including key policies, the centre's evaluation documents, its development plans, evaluations of services and data about the users of the centre.

## Information about the centre

Church Hill Children's Centre was opened in 2007 and is a phase two centre. It is situated in the London Borough of Waltham Forest in the Hoe Street ward. The children's centre and the nursery share the same building. It is open for forty-eight weeks each year. This is a culturally diverse area containing people from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. Most families come from White British, East European and Asian backgrounds. Within this area are three lower Super Output areas which have high levels of deprivation.

The centre is run by the centre coordinator but the headteacher of the Church Hill Nursery School oversees its work. The governing body of the school is responsible for the overall governance of the centre. A sub-committee, appointed by the governors, monitors and evaluates the work of the centre. It reports back to the governing body each term. Provision is based in the children's centre, the nursery school and out in the local community. Children enter the nursery with a range of skills and understanding, either in line with or lower than those expected for their ages.

## 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**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**2**

## Main findings

Church Hill Children's Centre is a welcoming place to visit and serves the families which live in its reach area well. The coordinator gives a very strong lead to the centre. She exhibits exceptionally good organisational and communication skills and values the work of everyone. As a result, the centre runs very effectively and efficiently on a day-to-day basis and staff morale is high. Relationships with parents are excellent. Many parents were keen to speak to inspectors about how the centre has helped them, especially in developing parenting skills, assisting them in moments of crisis and accessing support they may need through partner agencies, such as the health service.

Partnerships with the local community and other agencies are outstanding. Each term, partnership meetings are arranged, which enables everyone who is involved in the work of the centre to meet and discuss their work. There is much focus on teamwork and how everyone aids the success of the centre. This contributes to the high satisfaction among the staff. Leadership and management are good. The centre coordinator is well supported by her experienced senior managers who include the headteacher of the nursery. There is a clear sense of drive and passion and they have a good understanding of the difficulties they face in the challenging area they reach out to. As a result, users are supported well. Information is collected on who is registered and which groups use the centre the most. The data shows that the number of Caribbean and Black African families who have registered and are centre users is low. However, the centre has identified that registration procedures are in need of development. The centre has lots of information about many of the different groups they reach out to but lacks specific information about pregnant teenagers, teenage parents and children from workless households.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and thus well supported. The centre works hard to encourage its families to eat healthily and ensure that their homes are safe environments for children. Adults have opportunities to take part in courses to develop life skills, for example to improve

their personal development and how to get ready for work. The take up of these courses is good and they are reasonably well attended, enabling some attendees to think positively about future employment. Evaluation of its work is an important feature. Users are actively encouraged to fill in evaluation forms and have discussions with staff about their feelings about the support they receive. Filled-in evaluations forms, written comments and discussions with users show that families are very positive and appreciative of the good quality support and guidance they receive, especially from the outreach workers. The centre meets all safeguarding requirements and staff ensure it is a safe environment for adults and the children they bring with them. The number of users accessing this good quality support has increased during the past two years as more families attend the centre. As a result, the centre demonstrates a good capacity to sustain improvement.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the processes for gaining and analysing data so that specific groups, such as teenage parents, pregnant teenagers and children from workless homes, are more engaged in the work of the centre.
- Improve procedures for collecting data to show a more accurate figure of minority ethnic groups, particularly Caribbean and Black African families who use the centre.

## How good are outcomes for users?

<b>2</b>
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The centre's evaluation shows that services are clearly making changes to the lives of the users and their children. Users benefit from a range of sessions which encourage them to develop good parenting skills, such as the importance of talking to babies and how to develop learning through play. From an early age, issues such as dental hygiene are focused on well.

There is good attention to safety and what to do in the event of a fire. Secure systems keep the building and the grounds safe. In addition, on entry to the centre, visitors are encouraged to use the gel dispenser to try and eliminate germs and disease. Parents appreciate the crèche facilities, which are provided when they attend sessions and meetings, because they know they keep their children safe.

Activities observed in the centre and off site demonstrated good participation and much enjoyment. Parents and carers spoke of how they and their children had benefited from them; for example on the Play Bus, where children, parents and carers thoroughly enjoyed activities on a London bus which has been developed into a safe and secure mobile nursery. During snack time, healthy eating was effectively promoted as children and the adults were encouraged to eat fruit. Excellent links with the health service and other relevant support agencies enable the centre to support vulnerable children and families very effectively. Outreach workers know

these families and their children very well so are able to contribute easily to assessments and reviews. They build trusting relationships and give very good quality support to vulnerable families. Individuals spoke of how they could not have managed without the support they had received from the outreach workers at the centre.

Young children and babies are well behaved and show obvious enjoyment when they visit the centre. Observations show that, during sessions, they are happy to engage in play activities alongside their mums. They learn to trust the staff they come into contact with and begin to interact well with others. Relationships between staff and parents are excellent. Parents cannot say enough positive comments about the centre staff. Activities are interesting and adults say they are always well resourced. The centre is quick to identify children who have any special educational needs and/or disabilities. Excellent links with Church Hill Nursery School show that evidence is building that, where children and their families have benefited from the centre, they make good progress during the time they spend in the nursery school.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for users*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable 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 users 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 users 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 are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>	<b>2</b>

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

<b>2</b>
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The centre is good at assessing the needs of the children and how best they can support the families. Staff are well experienced in their areas of specialism so assessments cover the whole range of needs, including those for vulnerable families and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Sessions, for example, regularly focus on helping parents gain a better understanding of how to interact with their children and effectively develop speech and language skills. 'Drop-in' sessions give childminders opportunities to talk with each other and to discuss issues with staff. Good opportunities are available for parents who speak English as an additional language to improve their English when they gather for a coffee time session. International Day originated from these sessions, where all cultures are celebrated, and has become an annual event. Excellent links with members of the health service enable new parents to be expertly supported as they learn to breast

feed. Parents spoke of how they would have quickly given up without the support from the centre. Visiting Day enables parents to come and speak to outreach staff about concerns they may have. Observations show that individual needs are very well met in this session. For example, adults are given support in filling out registration forms while others are given clear sign posting to other agencies. A similar opportunity is organised once a month for dads to drop into a Saturday session. Centre data identify that most of these dads are from White British families and staff acknowledge that more focus is necessary to reach out to different ethnic groups. Adults have good opportunities to develop their self-esteem and learn life skills such as how to keep out of debt. The practical support that is offered to families in crisis is viewed as a lifeline by many.

Adults were very keen to speak about the good and, at times, outstanding quality of care and support that they receive from the centre. Users are supported well to improve, especially as they develop parenting and life skills. The centre acknowledges that more needs to be done to engage some harder-to-reach groups and families, for example pregnant teenagers and teenage mums as well as children who come from workless households. Self-evaluation shows that staff are already aware that the number of Caribbean and Black families, especially Black African families, are not accurately reflected in the data.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>

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

**2**

The shared site and the excellent links established with the nursery school are key strengths in the leadership and direction of the centre and contribute greatly to its success. The centre coordination involves all staff in the self-evaluation process to identify strengths and areas for improvement. In addition, the parents' forum enables users to link with the management group. Parents say that their views are sought and acted on and inspection evidence supports this. Users are confident to air their views on evaluation forms and during conversations with staff. They feel comfortable to state what they think about improvements which could be made. The development plan identifies key priorities but does not always clearly link with the self-evaluation form. Priorities, especially those connected to outcomes, are at times too vague. There are effective links between the sub-committee and the nursery's

governing body. Arrangements and lines of accountability are well established through the work of the sub-committee and the nursery's governing body. As a result, all, including members of the sub-committee, are well informed and so are able to challenge and support the centre when necessary.

Staff are suitably trained and so are alert to the safety and welfare of children and adults. Safeguarding arrangements are robust, as are the centre's approach to safe recruitment and child protection. Excellent relationships with other agencies and clear lines of responsibility within the centre enable staff to move quickly if issues arise. All staff work hard to make sure inclusion is central to all the centre does. Accessibility to the centre's facilities is good and effective levels of support are provided for users with specific individual needs. The centre is clearly impacting positively on the area it serves.

*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 extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</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>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>2</b>

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

The children's centre and nursery were both involved in Ofsted pilot inspections in October 2009. The centre has maintained the good support it provides to the area it serves. Improvements are evident in issues related to safety and safeguarding which were judged to be satisfactory and are now good. The extent to which improvement issues and evaluation are used to shape and develop services and activities has also improved from satisfactory to good.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Church Hill Children's Centre on 1 – 2 February 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the work of the centre and are particularly appreciative of the support they receive from the outreach workers and the health service. It was really nice to meet and talk to so many people who told us how the centre had helped them and their children. Thank you for your contribution to the inspection. The very strong leadership of the centre coordinator and her dedicated team provides you and your families with a good range of services that are well adapted to suit the needs of all individuals.

Those of you who use the centre are much better now at staying safe and healthy and looking after your families. We know this because many of you told us of what you had learnt. We agree with you, the centre is a very welcoming place to come to. Staff have worked hard to make it safe for you and your children. The centre is excellent at working closely with other agencies, such as the health service and social services, particularly to help children and families who need extra help and support.

Parents, carers and children are benefiting from the good provision provided by the children's centre. Some of you are keen to attend classes to improve your skills. These must be enjoyable because we noticed that attendance on these courses is good. Good quality sessions are prepared for you to improve your parenting skills and children to develop basic skills. This means that parents and carers gain more confidence and expertise and children are well prepared when they start nursery school.

Staff are good at helping you to decide what is needed to improve your lives and then ensure that you access the right services. The care and support they give is good overall. Families in crisis, where often many different agencies are involved, receive outstanding support. Excellent partnerships between the staff and other agencies enable this to happen. Staff at the centre and their partner agencies



provide you and your families with a wide range of varied services that cater for all needs.

We have asked the centre to make two improvements. First, we would like it to gather more information on certain groups, such as teenage parents, pregnant teenagers and children from workless households, so that it can address their needs more effectively. Second, we would like the centre to try and increase the number of Caribbean and Black African families who register and use the centre.

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