

Inspection report for Ethelred Nursery School and Children's Centre

Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	366384
Inspection dates	19-20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Wendy Ratcliff HMI

Centre governance	The Governing Body of Ethelred Nursery School and Children's Centre
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Linked school if applicable	Ethelred Nursery School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Ethelred Nursery School and Children's Centre

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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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and a Senior Early Years Inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the head teacher and the centre manager, representatives of the advisory board, governing body, staff, local authority representatives and partner agencies. They had informal discussions with parents and carers and with children, and visited a session at the Mary Sheridan Health Centre.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including key policies, the centre's self evaluation documents, its develop plan, evaluations of services and data about people who use the centre.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Information about the centre

Ethelred Nursery School and Children's Centre was designated in 2004. It is run by the school governing body on behalf of the local authority and provides all elements of the core offer. There is an advisory board, which works in collaboration with two other local children's centres. This feeds into the governing body and provides a membership, which includes staff, parents/carers, stakeholders, multi-disciplinary professionals and local authority representatives. A parent voice forum feeds into the advisory board.

The centre comprises of three separate buildings, the nursery school, the children's centre and Natasha's studio. Each has its own outdoor area. The nursery school operates on weekdays during term time from 09.00 to 15.15. The children's centre is open on weekdays from 08.00 to 18.00 for 48 weeks of the year. The centre is registered on the Early Years register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It provides extended services for children from two to eight years. The breakfast club operates from 08.00 to 09.15, the after school club from 15.00 to 18.00 and a holiday club runs during the school holidays. The centre offers a crèche on some weekdays for parents attending courses.

The centre serves areas in the Bishop's and Prince's wards as well as other surrounding areas. There are 841 children under five living in the centre's catchment area, with around 37% of under fours living in households dependant on workless benefits. The centre serves one of the 30% deprived areas in the country. The area has a high proportion of high-rise social housing. The local population comprises of a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Data shows that around 23% of families are from Black, Black British African/Caribbean and 28% of users have White British or other white background. There are smaller percentages of other minority ethnic groups and 55.8% of children have English as an additional language. There is an increasing number of families in the community of Portuguese heritage. In 2010 the children's centre catchment area saw an increase in the percentage of children scoring at least 78 points across the Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) scores to 52.56%, with communication, language and literacy the weakest area.

Ethelred Nursery School and Children's Centre has the Investors in People Award (IIP) and is in the process of renewing Basic Skills and Healthy Schools awards.

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

Overall effectiveness of Ethelred Nursery School and Children's Centre is good with some aspects, which are outstanding. This is because those in charge are demonstrating a clear vision and have an accurate understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for improvement. There are good relationships with key partners. Together they are taking steps to improve the already good outcomes for users and develop services for some target groups, for example for fathers and families in the community of Portuguese heritage. As a result, the centre's capacity to improve further is good.

Staff are enthusiastic and work well as a team. They are involved in the self evaluation process that leads to the setting of future targets. However, targets are not always precise enough to fully measure the impact of outcomes. The centre has begun to track the longer-term impact for its users, for example, by tracking the Foundation Stage Profile scores for those children who access services at the centre. They are not yet systematically using available data to analyse and track the impact services provided are having for all users.

Outcomes for users are good and improving. Many users are responding very well to sessions on oral health promotion, raising awareness of hidden sugars and the importance of tooth brushing. Weekly baby massage sessions are popular, provide an excellent opportunity for mothers to bond with their baby, and enhance emotional wellbeing. Families are improving their awareness of safety in the home through events such as child safety week when they are provided with free resources that help them make their home a safer place. Those using the centre enjoy and highly appreciate the services offered by the centre. Parents and carers report that they and their children feel safe when using the centre. One parent reports, 'if your children do not feel safe you cannot leave them.' They feel the centre is extremely responsive to their needs and cite many examples of how it has impacted positively on their lives. Children are making good progress in their communication and language skills because of input from speech and language therapists (SALT) during stay and play sessions. One parent reports, 'My child had speech and language delay and due to the speech therapy here is now making very good progress.' Children's behaviour is exceptional and they are developing positive relationships with both adults and peers. Children attending the breakfast club start their day in a calm and social environment. They know the routine well and have excellent relationships with each other and the adults. Parents feel they and their children are benefiting from

the 'two year old pilot scheme' where younger children access the after school club sessions for three hours a day. One parent reports, 'It is a great help to me and my daughter has made really good progress'. Early indications show that the scheme is helping children make good progress in their communication and language skills and personal, social and emotional development.

Children's safety and wellbeing are significantly enhanced by the effective implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff exemplify high quality practice as they see safeguarding at the heart of the centre's work. Users value the welcoming, safe environment and the range of quality services that are contributing to their good and improving outcomes. The centre knows the local community well. They use this knowledge and the data provided by the local authority to effectively and sensitively assess individual users' needs. Staff are friendly and approachable and have built high levels of trust amongst families who feel supported, particularly when they are feeling vulnerable or experiencing crisis. One parent when talking about her contact with the centre reports 'Life does not seem that bad.' Early intervention programmes and established links with other professionals are having a positive impact for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families. The centre works with the whole family and follows their journey targeting integrated services in line with their needs. Inclusion is central to the centre's vision in engaging the community. Barriers to services are removed as the centre provides crèche places for courses, for example, they run the crèche for two fathers who are accessing a course in web design at a nearby college.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Further refine the centre's ability to target resources by:
 - strengthening and making more precise the centre's targets
 - tracking the impact of the services provided are having on the outcomes for users.
- Continue to develop the services for specific target groups including fathers and families of Portuguese heritage.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

The centre is developing systems for evaluating the impact of its work and available evidence demonstrates that the centre's work is improving and, in the aspect of positive contribution, strongly improving the outcomes for users. Ensuring the emotional wellbeing of users is high priority for the centre, particularly those with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those subject to support from the 'team around the child' or child protection plans. Common assessment framework (CAF) is used effectively to ensure those with additional needs are able to fully access services. Outreach workers are key in this work and build trusting relationships so families feel able to engage with other professionals to access the

required help. Families in times of crisis feel confident to approach the centre for support and trust adults to help them.

Parents and carers are responding well to 'cook and eat' sessions where they gain an understanding of reducing fat and sugar in cooking therefore promoting a healthier diet for their families. One father reports, 'I now cook meals at home for the family and have learnt how to involve the children.' The 'Young Parents' group benefit from targeted sessions such as input from the dietician, oral health team and SALT helping to develop their confidence and parenting skills.

Users feel highly valued as their views are listened to. One parent reports, 'they are always looking for new ideas and suggestions and not standing still'. The centre plays a significant role in the life of the community and provides regular opportunities for celebrations such as Eid, Diwali and Black History Month, as a result community cohesion is greatly enhanced. Children's behaviour in the children's centre is excellent. There is high impact of learning going on for the children, which is confirmed by the data for the foundation stage profile. Evidence is building that those who have contact with the centre have a smoother transition into school. The key worker system is highly effective in this transition particularly when supporting those with English as an additional language. Parents are developing a range of skills when they attend a variety of courses. Parents value the opportunity to play with their children during stay and play sessions. They are gaining a greater understanding of how to support their children's learning. One parent reports, 'they help with the play and learning which is useful as my English is not that good.' Parents confidently discuss the courses they have attended, such as 'Triple P' and 'Confident Parent Confident Child' and how these have helped develop their parenting skills and manage their children's behaviour more effectively. There are examples of how individuals, who have attended training courses, become volunteers and/or go on to further education, such as volunteering at the monthly Portuguese play and song time.

The children's centre teacher works well with the childminders providing advice and support at the weekly drop in. Childminders report that training sessions relating to art and craft and healthy eating to be inspirational and help them promote outcomes for children through their childminding services.

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, and their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
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 and employment.	2
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How good is the provision?

2

The centre provides a warm and welcoming environment. Families feel well supported by the centre and the services it provides. The centre is highly effective at assessing the needs of the children and families who use its services. Assessments cover the whole range of needs, including the needs of those most vulnerable. Users accessing the centre's services feel very well supported, particularly when in times of crisis. One parent reports, 'coming to the centre means I am not on my own.' The centre is highly effective at supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and CAFs are used to ensure children access integrated services and other professionals. Centre staff, particularly the outreach workers, have a good local knowledge and have an empathy with the needs of the users. They use this knowledge well to build trusting relationships in order for users to benefit from those services, which will help them most. Services are tailored to meet the needs of specific target groups such as 'Digital Dads' photography course, young parents drop in and Portuguese family learning.

Achievement is highly valued and celebrated. Users are directed to further courses once they achieve, for example personal enrichment training and life skills (PETALS), which supports parents back into training and work. Attendance at courses is raising parents' aspirations, which in turn is helping them to support their families. Provision to help children learn and develop is outstanding.

There is a good range of services that reach the wider community but the centre is not yet using data well enough in targeting services for all possible groups. The number of families of Portuguese heritage accessing services has increased but the centre recognise more needs to be done. The father's group is not currently running and the centre is looking at ways to ensure fathers continue to use the centre services. The centre has been successful in the varied range of services it provides as the numbers of users has increased year on year with some users then becoming volunteers to help support the services provided. However, the centre is not yet generating sufficient data of its own to enable it to analyse which services are having the most impact in making a difference for users so it can further improve its provision.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	1
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	2

The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	2
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How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The whole staff team show enthusiasm, motivation and a commitment to improving outcomes for users and striving towards high quality services. Line management arrangements are clear and staff value professional development opportunities. The newly established advisory board is embedding and is already ensuring services are sign posted and services across the three children's centres are not duplicated, demonstrating good value for money. The centre have built strong and effective partnerships with other agencies and providers commissioned to deliver services in order to ensure the provision is of good quality and matched to the identified needs of users. For example the Baytree woman's centre provides a range of courses including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and the 'Gasworks' gallery projects. One provider reports that 'Staff are dynamic and proactive in their approach which has resulted in strong links with the college.' Effective partnership working with speech and language therapists and professionals working with children with disabilities is also making a significant contribution to improving outcomes for users.

The centre has a strong commitment to providing an inclusive environment and removing barriers. For example, a Portuguese early years educator is allocated as the key worker for those families speaking Portuguese and crèche places are made available in order for adults to access courses. The data the centre is beginning to collect for the foundation stage profile is showing that the achievement gap for children accessing centre services is starting to close. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding and all staff are well trained and highly aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns. Safer recruitment practices are followed rigorously and the centre has effective systems in place to ensure all visitors to the centre follow safe practices.

Governance and accountability are clear. Governors are working well with centre leaders in developing their role in monitoring the quality of services provided by the centre. The centre is working well with the local authority. The centre manager involves all staff and governors in the self evaluation process in order to identify strengths and areas for development. Staff and governors are involved in 'inset' days to help reflect on practice, share the centre's vision and contribute to future targets. There are many targets within the centre's development plan. These are not always precise with clearly measurable success criteria. The centre collects a wide range of data. This includes a detailed data pack from the local authority that they use, along with their local knowledge to identify and target services. The centre is gathering evidence of impact through case studies. It is not yet systematically tracking outcomes sufficiently well to show the full impact of the services provided or analyse the available data precisely enough in order to improve the good quality provision even further.

The centre has a parent voice forum where some parents share their views and

contribute towards shaping services. Most parents are keen to share their views by talking to staff. Children contribute their views in a variety of ways, for example through the use of drawings. Parents are actively involved in the governance of the centre as they represent the views of users on both the advisory board and governing body.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	2
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
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	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	2
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	2

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Ethelred Nursery School and Children's Centre on 19 and 20 January 2011. We judged the centre as good overall with some aspects which are outstanding.

Your children's centre provides parents and their children with a warm and welcoming environment where they feel safe and secure. One parent reports, 'if your

children do not feel safe you cannot leave them.’ Staff and centre users have built trusting relationships and show mutual respect for each other.

Those in charge manage the centre successfully and have a good understanding of what they do well and where they need to improve further. The governing body, which includes parent representatives meet regularly to ensure that the services the centre provides, meets the needs of the users. There are good relationships with key partners. Together they are taking steps to improve the already good outcomes for users and develop services for some target groups, for example for fathers and families in the community of Portuguese heritage. The centre identify many targets for its further development. Not all the targets are precise enough in order to measure the impact services are having on improving outcomes.

Staff are enthusiastic and work well as a team. The centre has begun to track the longer-term impact for its users, for example, by looking at how well children who accessed services at the centre are doing once they are in reception class. However, they are not yet systematically looking at all available data to analyse and track the impact of services for all users.

Outcomes for users are good and improving. Many users are responding very well to sessions on oral health promotion, raising awareness of hidden sugars and the importance of tooth brushing. Weekly baby massage sessions are popular, provide an excellent opportunity for mothers to bond with their baby, and enhance emotional wellbeing. Families are improving their awareness of safety in the home through events such as child safety week when they are provided with free resources that help them make their home a safer place. Those using the centre enjoy and highly appreciate the services offered by the centre. They feel the centre is extremely responsive to their needs and cite many examples of how it has impacted positively on their lives. Children are making good progress in their communication and language skills because of input from speech and language therapists (SALT) during stay and play sessions. One parent reports, ‘My child had speech and language delay and due to the speech therapy here is now making very good progress.’ Children’s behaviour is exceptional and they are developing positive relationships with both adults and peers. Children attending the breakfast club start their day in a calm and social environment. They know the routine well and have excellent relationships with each other and the adults.

Children’s safety and wellbeing are significantly enhanced by the effective implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff exemplify high quality practice as they see safeguarding at the heart of the centre’s work. Users value the welcoming, safe environment and the range of quality services that are contributing to their good and improving outcomes. The centre knows the local community well. They use this knowledge and the data provided by the local authority to effectively and sensitively assess individual users’ needs. Staff are friendly and approachable and have built high levels of trust amongst families who feel supported, particularly when they are feeling vulnerable or experiencing crisis. One parent when talking about her contact with the centre reports ‘Life does not seem that bad.’ Centre staff

identify any additional needs of the children quickly and because they have established links with other professionals they can provide extra support. This is having a positive impact for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families. The centre works with the whole family and follows their journey, targeting integrated services in line with their needs. Inclusion is central to the centre's vision in engaging the community. Barriers to services are removed as the centre provides crèche places for courses, for example, they run the crèche for two fathers who are accessing a course in web design at a nearby college.

Parents feel they and their children are benefiting from the scheme where younger children access the after school club sessions for three hours a day. One parent reports, 'It is a great help to me and my daughter has made really good progress'. Early indications are that the scheme is helping children make progress in their communication and language skills and personal, social and emotional development.

We would like to thank the centre users for speaking with us and contributing to the inspection at Ethelred Nursery School and Children's Centre.

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