

Inspection report for Woodlands Park Children's Centre

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| Local authority | Haringey |
| Inspection number | 362629 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 December 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Glynis Bradley-Peat |

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| Centre governance | Governing Body of Woodlands Park Nursery School and Children's Centre |
| Centre leader | Peter Catling |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |
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| Linked school if applicable | Woodlands Park Nursery School |
| Linked early years and childcare, if applicable | Woodlands Park Nursery School |

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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 maintained nursery 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.

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, senior managers from the centre, representatives from the local authority, members of the governing body and professionals from a number of partner organisations, including health and a range of voluntary sector providers. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection judgements

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

Information about the centre

Woodlands Park Nursery School and Children's Centre and link children's centre services at Downhills Primary School are situated in South Tottenham. The centre's link work with Downhills has established a good basis for effective joint working. The community is diverse, ethnically, socially, culturally and economically and the Nursery school and children's centre serve an area of mixed housing with significant pockets of deprivation. There is a high level of workless households and dependence on benefits. Over a quarter of households with children are lone parents. Children come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and a large proportion of the children in the Nursery school speak English as an additional language. Children enter the Nursery with below average levels of skills for their age. The centre provides the full core offer of services for 0–5 year olds and their parents and carers by working in partnership with a wide range of services commissioned by Haringey Council. The governing body of Woodlands Park Nursery and Children's Centre is responsible for the management of the Children's Centre. During its six year history as a children's centre, the range of provision has increased.

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

1

Main findings

Woodlands Park Children's Centre is a good centre. It is a warm, welcoming and safe place because staff have high expectations for all users. The centre has good relationships with the local community and deserves its high profile reputation. It works well in partnership with the link centre at Downhills Primary School. New parents complimented the reception given to them on their first encounter with the centre and one said, 'I will definitely come again as the environment is so calm and welcoming. I got a lot out of the session which focused very well on the needs of my young child.' Parents praise the way they are treated by centre staff, who encourage good attendance and participation in a range of services. Good quality support is both appropriate and well suited to the needs of users. Children, parents and carers are able to learn together through a wide variety of opportunities provided on a daily

basis. The chances for families to learn together are good; for example the use of story sacks promotes communication and problem solving.

The head of centre's calm but highly effective leadership has galvanised excellent team-working; it is clear that the ambition for the future of the centre is shared by all staff. The governing body contributes well towards the running of the centre. The stimulating and challenging outside environment encourages children to develop an outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles and safe practices. Children learn how to keep safe through well-resourced role play. For example, children play purposefully with their pretend hoses as they put out a fire and demonstrate that they want to help save their friends from danger. Technology is used well to both enhance the learning of children, parents and carers and to prepare all users for both the next stage of their education and the world of work. In light of these considerable strengths, there is an excellent capacity for further improvement.

Adult volunteers help in the centre and have become positive assets to other users. Within the gardening group, they support children to develop knowledge and understanding of the world. Children delight in growing their own vegetables and fruits which they can then later eat. There are a number of valuable opportunities available in the centre which are well attended and highly valued by users. Adult learning courses, some of which lead to accreditation, including English for speakers of other languages and information and communication technology, are very popular and oversubscribed. Although services are coordinated within the cluster, there are still long waiting lists and the centre has yet to develop ways of fully meeting local demand for these services. Support and advice from Job Centre Plus has been effective and, alongside courses offered by the centre, has had a good impact on getting users back into work. Adults are signposted well towards possible training and employment.

The children's centre delivers its core offer well and front-line staff work enthusiastically together to ensure that appropriate referrals are made to a range of targeted services. Systematic use of the common assessment framework ensures that no vulnerable family slips through the net and that needs are identified early. This ensures that the centre's response is well coordinated. Although the centre is provided with a large quantity of data by the local authority, they are not always in a format which enables a clear measurement of the impact of its work. Plans are in place to computerise systems which will promote better analysis in order to plan more effectively for future services. The centre recognises this is a high priority.

Diversity and culture are celebrated well through a good range of activities and experiences planned for users. Parents and carers have enjoyed cooking traditional healthy foods from their own cultures to share with other users and their families. Discussions with fathers show that they have been welcomed and supported in the centre. Parents speaking English as a second language feel that their children have been well supported. Staff learn key words in a variety of home languages to promote children's sense of belonging. The centre develops parents' and carers' self-esteem well. Parents say that their lives have improved since they have been

attending the centre. In the words of one parent, 'My children are much better behaved and I believe that I am a better mother.' Users feel very safe and safeguarding is good. Staff are well trained and policies and procedures have been implemented well.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve the use of data to analyse the impact of services and to support future planning by:
 - implementing the computerised system as planned
 - ensuring that the local authority works closely with the centre.
- Develop new ways of meeting local demand for specific services which are currently oversubscribed by improving partnership working within the cluster.

How good are outcomes for users?

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The highly successful promotion of healthy eating and exercise has resulted in great improvements in children's health. Parents access healthy cooking courses and say that these have been really enjoyable and help them to prepare healthy meal options for their children. Some say they are much better informed about their baby's development because of the weighing clinic and advice provided about diet. Children are supported to live a healthy lifestyle through the excellent standard of food that is offered to them at the centre. They make the most of the opportunities provided for them to play energetically and to take rests when they are tired. At the end of the day, children happily help with the preparation of their afternoon tea. Carefully targeted support has ensured improving trends in breastfeeding and teenage pregnancy rates. This is the result of the strong links evident between health professionals and high quality inter-agency working. A teenage sexual health clinic offered at Downhills site has been particularly successful. At Woodlands there is a preventative training course for vulnerable teenagers that supports those at risk of getting pregnant.

Parents are rapidly developing improving knowledge about how to keep their children safe, for example through attendance on first aid courses. The recent 'safe at home scheme' organised by the outreach service at the centre has ensured that parents are much more aware of issues to do with keeping children safe at home. Vulnerable parents receive free safety equipment such as smoke detectors. They state that they feel safe and secure within the setting. Children move confidently within their environment and do not seem distressed when their parents leave them, demonstrating that they feel safe. Those children who are most at risk, particularly those who are looked after, are well cared for. Their needs are closely monitored through very effective multi agency working; record keeping is relevant and detailed. Those subject to common assessment processes are very well supported and

provision is regularly revisited.

Home visits have had a good impact on children's ability to settle in quickly into the nursery school. These home visits and the close working partnership with parents and other providers support an integrated approach towards promoting positive outcomes for children.

Children make good progress from their starting points in developing skills for the future. Clear records of where children are in their learning ensure that progress is tracked effectively. Children enjoy using the centre facilities, are very well behaved and are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. This is because adults working in the centre are approachable and provide good levels of care. Transition into the next school is also smooth because of the close links which have been developed.

Some parents have acquired new skills and this has enabled them to go back into the workplace. They are more knowledgeable about benefits and tax credits which has then spurred them on to seek employment. Parents say that they feel more confident to support their children's learning after attending numeracy and literacy training within the centre. Caring staff contribute well to developing the self-esteem of both children and their parents and carers. Personal development and well-being prosper as a result. Children and families enjoy good recreational activities held at the centre, which include singing and music sessions along with stay and play sessions. This provides good opportunities for parents and carers to make new friends.

Increasing numbers of users are attending courses in English and information and communication technology; these are highly valued. However, there is insufficient provision in place for these classes. The centre cannot cope with the demand of a very much needed service. In addition, the demand for play and stay sessions is high and some parents are turned away.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

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| 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, and 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 | 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 | 2 |

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| 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 high quality care for young children and their families. Parents and children are happy within the environment and demonstrate that they enjoy the experiences available to them.

The centre ensures that appropriate assessment of need is high priority. Needs are identified early through first ports of call, for example first appointments with midwives. These are utilised well to ensure other services are signposted clearly, especially for the most vulnerable. There is good evidence of effective inter-agency working through individual case studies which show that several services work effectively together to improve outcomes for families and their children. They record how well adults are doing and record learning goals, review them and offer accreditation. Staff ensure referrals are initiated for children so that the appropriate professionals are in place to serve the child's needs. Common assessment framework procedures are followed carefully and engage a variety of professionals through frequent meetings, and reviews plot progress. Users are satisfied with the range of services offered but some complain of long waiting lists for some services; vulnerable users are well supported.

It is clear that the centre, in liaison with school, offers purposeful learning and development opportunities for its users. They are supported to improve their educational and personal development through a training and volunteering programme. There is real trust between users and the centre staff. Personal learning is celebrated well through special events organised by the centre which recognise all parents' achievements, whether this is in training or their work as a volunteer. This boosts confidence and ensures that participation rates are maintained. A few users would like more up-to-date timetables for all the local provision and services so as to be able to plan their time more effectively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision.

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| The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users | 2 |
| The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users | 2 |
| 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 | 1 |

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Governance is good and there are clear lines of accountability. Governors are enthusiastic and contribute well to good leadership of the centre. Parents and carers and users are all represented alongside local partners. Some hard-to-reach parents and carers have been actively engaged in the governance of the centre. The work of the centre is regularly discussed and the governing body contributes towards the centre development plan effectively. Performance management is in place and information is shared to set targets for improvement. The governing body's broad set of skills ensures good strategic planning which directs the work of leaders well. Governor's use of data in analysing the performance of the centre requires further development.

The head of centre has facilitated outstanding teamwork. Staff are creative and highly professional, always wanting nothing short of the best for children, parents and carers and other users. Self-evaluation is accurate because the centre knows its strengths and areas for improvement well. These are incorporated fully into the development plan, which shapes priorities and sets challenging targets. Resource implications are clearly identified, especially those relating to training for staff. As a result, outcomes are improving for users. A good start has been made to using data to improve planning but the current system does not facilitate clear analysis. Plans are in place to introduce a more effective electronic system. The good partnership working with the Downhills site promotes good value for money. Staff are deployed well and resources are effectively matched to the needs of users. However, the oversubscription of some services means that some users do not get rapid enough access to English lessons, for example.

All necessary policies are in place and equality and disability legislation is fully implemented. Evidence shows that children with special educational needs who attend the 'TOPS' and other drop-in groups make better progress than their peers. The sensory room has a good impact on these children and other users. The centre has introduced a system of target setting that means that gaps between different groups are identified at an early stage and appropriate planning is put into place to meet children's needs. This work is having a positive impact both in terms of children's attainment and staff knowledge. Safeguarding is given a high priority; vetting and recruitment procedures are rigorous. Staff are well trained and safeguarding is an integral part of induction for new staff. The same systems are in place in the Nursery and the children's centre and are good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| he 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 | 1 |

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| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 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 |

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

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision within Woodlands Park Nursery School and Children's Centre was inspected at the same time under the Section 5 arrangements for the inspection of schools.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Woodlands Park Children's Centre on 8–9 December 2010. We judged the centre as good overall.

When we spoke to some of you during the inspection, you told us that you were pleased with the caring and supportive attitudes of all staff at the centre. We found that there is excellent team-working taking place under the leadership of the head of centre. All staff work very hard to ensure that children develop as well as they can and that your skills and confidence as parents and carers grows. Clear and helpful advice is provided on how to stay safe and be healthy. The centre steers you towards the extra help and support you are entitled to and some of you have been able to return to work as a result. The centre is a safe and secure place to bring your children. The rooms and outside grounds are welcoming and provide areas for your children to play and explore while they learn. Most of the children are making at least good progress in many areas of their development.

The centre is a central place where you are able to get advice, support and help and many of you make new friends there. Statistical information is being used to help plan for future services but it is not yet computerised. We have asked that plans for this are put into action quickly. We have also asked that the information received by the centre from the local authority is better analysed so that the centre can see more clearly how much progress it is making when compared to other centres.

You are able to participate in a variety of activities with and without your children. You have told us that you enjoy these, particularly the English and information and communication technology lessons and the stay and play sessions. We also noted that there are long waiting lists for some of these classes. We have asked the centre to consider new ways of delivering these services so that more of you are able to take part.

We would like to thank all of you who found time to talk to us and we wish you and your families the best for the future.

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