

# Inspection report for Wingfield Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Barnet
Inspection number	366319
Inspection dates	9-10 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Lynda Welham

Centre governance	London Borough of Barnet
Centre leader	Liz Bartlett
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Mercury, The Concourse, Grahame Park Estate, Colindale, London NW9 5XN
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Wingfield Children's Centre

The inspection of this Sure Start Children's Centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

## 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 registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, senior leadership team, front-line staff, the local authority, representatives from the range of services offered and with the Advisory Board, and parents and carers who use the centre's facilities. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

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## Information about the centre

Wingfield Children's Centre is located at the bottom of a block of medium-rise flats within the Grahame Park Estate, Colindale in the London Borough of Barnet. It a phase one centre, the first Children's Centre to be opened in Barnet in 2006 as part of the Sure Start programme. Grahame Park is categorised as being amongst the 30% most deprived areas in the UK and the area is in the process of a major regeneration.

The population of the estate is ever changing and highly diverse, with families originating from all around the world represented on the estate. A high proportion is from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe, many of whom can be described as economic migrants. Many speak little or no English. Most users are living in rented accommodation, some of whom are on short-term leases due to the regeneration project. As a result, the local community is very transient. Those living in the area close to Wingfield Children's Centre are mostly categorised as living in social housing with uncertain employment, struggling to achieve rewards and mostly reliant on the council for accommodation and benefits.

Less than 200 metres from Wingfield Children's Centre are two schools with nursery classes – The Orion Primary School and Blessed Dominic RC School. Children enter the centre with a range of skills below that expected of children of this age. The local schools are oversubscribed for both nursery and reception places. Barnet's school census data 2009 shows that, within the centre's reach area and compared to the overall Barnet Data, 20% fewer children are categorised as 'White', 21% more children are categorised as 'Black or Black British' and more children reach area are being supported at Action Plus support.

The centre is directly managed by the London Borough of Barnet. The local authority, in partnership with the centre manager, parents and linked agencies, provide governance for the centre. The centre has an established Advisory Board which meets termly and oversees the development of the centre. It contains representatives from all partners in the centre such as health, social services, community education, disabled children's services, childminders and two parents who are centre users.

The centre delivers the full core offer, providing mandatory integrated childcare and education for children aged 2-5 years for 48 weeks of the year, 'Stay and Play' sessions for parents and children, health and outreach support and vulnerable children's services to families and children in the local community. In response to local need, the centre has recently provided an additional 16 Nursery places and offers a bespoke service of collection of children from local school nurseries to allow them to access lunchtime and afternoon childcare sessions.

The Nursery was inspected in December 2010 and the inspection report can be found on the Ofsted website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## 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

Wingfield is a good children's centre. The atmosphere is warm, welcoming and calm, but it has a buzz of purposeful activity. The centre has a positive impact on the lives of those who use its facilities, who take part in activities that the centre organises or those it directs to other organisations. Adults and children who attend the centre talk positively about what it offers. A parent, representing the views of many, said that the centre has helped her improve her English and parenting skills. Others spoke of their sense of isolation on arrival in the community and how the centre has helped them feel valued and welcome and that they have been able to make new friends by accessing the centre's services. Families in crisis turn to the centre for support and one parent, supported through her depression, reported that access to the centre had, quite literally, saved her life.

The centre has developed significantly over the past year. It now offers additional childcare and outreach services, such as a pick-up service from local school nurseries at lunchtimes and a crèche for parents who wish to access further education. It has been innovative in its marketing campaign, for example using social networking sites successfully to engage with more users.

Centre data and local knowledge identifies that the centre is accessed well by families originating from abroad, but there is some evidence that white families who are socially or economically disadvantaged are not accessing the centre's services. The leadership team have plans in place to redress this imbalance through the recently appointed Outreach Worker. The centre manager is working robustly to change the local misconception, which may be held by this group within the wider community.

Despite the best efforts of the centre manager, partnership working with Jobcentre Plus is not well established and there are no formal facilities in place to support parents and carers who wish to enter employment. Nevertheless, the centre has done its best to overcome these difficulties through signposting and referrals to local services and by including members of Jobcentre Plus on its advisory body.

Users' views are highly regarded and taken into account. Their views about the quality of services provided are sought following sessions and courses and through annual User Satisfaction Surveys. Only a few parents are represented on the advisory board and the Parents' Forum is at an early stage of development, which limits parents' influence on the management of the centre and its future development.

The centre is very inclusive in all of its work. It adopts a holistic approach to family support, addressing not only the need for practical support, but also offers therapy and courses to support the emotional well-being of its users. The needs of each individual child and their family are of the highest importance and the staff understand the needs of individuals and specific groups. Adult education classes in English are provided to those from minority ethnic groups as it was recognised as an important step for many of its users. 'The centre has been a lifeline to me and my family' was a phrase often used by users when talking to inspectors.

The welfare and safety of those attending Wingfield are given extremely high priority. The provision for children's safeguarding is outstanding and families and individuals who need additional help and guidance are well supported by the strong inter-agency work between the centre and external providers. Early identification and intervention are hallmarks of the centre's service providers.

A strong ethos of care, concern and determination to help users achieve high outcomes permeates the centre's work at all levels. For example, accompanying users to hospital visits and the local advice centre known as 'The One Stop Shop'. All staff undergo appropriate checks on their suitability to work with children. Overall, high levels of care for the emotional and physical well-being of each child and user are a strength of the centre.

The centre has been successful in working with children and adults who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small, but well resourced sensory room has been established in the centre, representative of the importance attached to the education of children with additional learning needs. Specialist services have been brokered to support other children with specific needs, for example the advisory service for children with autism and the Speech and Language Advisory Team.

Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and centre staff have a good understanding of their reach community. The centre is beginning to receive better information from the local authority about the community the centre serves and about the centre's contribution to the local authority's outcomes for children and families. There is more to do to analyse this information and to use it to identify which groups need targeted activities. The centre's systems for gathering data have not been in place long enough to enable comparisons from year to year. The centre is well managed. The collegiate approach, passion and drive demonstrated by staff successfully help improve the life chances and make a real difference to the families who access the centre. The significant improvement in its overall performance, the positive outcomes for users and its realistic yet challenging strategic plan indicate that the centre's

capacity for improvement is good.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Use data analysis as part of centre self-evaluation to ensure that all provision is effective over a sustained period of time and to set challenging targets for the future.
- Engage more fully with under-represented white British families in the local community reach area.
- Formalise arrangements to encourage and support parents and carers who wish to enter employment or training.
- Develop the role of the Parents' Forum and provide training for the new parents who sit on the Advisory Board.

## How good are outcomes for users?

2
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The centre is effective in promoting healthy outcomes through its guidance, activities and strong links with other agencies. The large and well-resourced outside play and garden area encourage risk-taking and physical activity for children, the majority of whom live in accommodation without a garden or outside play area. Children at the centre are provided with well-balanced healthy meals and snacks which take account of cultural and medical needs. The cook provides recipes for parents and carers to try at home and the centre has achieved Five Stars from the Food Standard agency. Standards of hygiene around the centre are very high.

Strong links with other partners such as the Anna Freud Parent-Infant Project promotes better communication between parent and baby, and parents, carers and their children benefit from attendance at well established healthy lifestyle programmes.

Weaknesses in dental health is a recognised concern within the local authority and the centre reach area. The centre signposts users to dental provision, provides oral health promotion at various delivery points with Health advice provided by health colleagues, for example, during children's curriculum activities and staff training. This has been in partnership with the authority's strategic 'Happy Oral Health Programme.'

All staff at the centre, outreach workers and health partners see the safety and well-being of users and their families as a key priority. They provide a variety of sessions to support families' awareness of potential dangers. For example, during national safety week, the centre promoted safe practices through visits from the fire brigade

and police and families were given safety equipment for the home.

The centre knows its families and the locality well. Early identification of concerns and intervention by the centre's special educational needs co-ordinator, Outreach Worker and health visitors, along with other agencies, play an important part in the reduction of harm to children. Information from case studies about children who are subject to a child protection plan illustrates that, as a result of support through the centre, children's safety is enhanced. The Common Assessment Framework is used effectively when specialist intervention is required. All parents, including those receiving specialist assistance through the centre, expressed high or very high levels of satisfaction with the service they have received. Courses for fathers include tips for managing behaviour and implementing parenting routines, are run in the centre by partner agencies. A father attending the 'Dad's parenting group' said that he felt he had become a better parent, less prone to anger and more able to understand his daughter's needs as a result of this provision.

During both the inspection of the children's centre and the separate inspection of the nursery education and childcare provided by the centre, inspectors found that the children really enjoy their learning. Staff recognise the different learning styles of individual children and have devised innovative ways to extend their learning. For example, boys are encouraged to draw a picture of the model they have just constructed as a means of developing their mark-making skills. Children demonstrate high levels of confidence and are keen to show visitors what they are doing. From a starting point below that which might be expected of their age, children make good progress. Staff have identified that attainment in communication, literacy and language skills are particularly weak on entry to Wingfield and have implemented programmes such as 'Every Child A Talker' and additional phonics sessions to address this weakness. A further response to this need is that Speech and Language Therapists attend the 'Stay and Play' sessions, demonstrating how parents can enhance their child's receptive and expressive language skills through structured play. One parent said that her child had become much more sociable and confident through being able to express his needs without having temper tantrums when interacting with his peers. Many staff are bi-lingual and are able to support children and their parents who have English as an additional language, which impacts positively on their learning. Children are learning skills for the future through well-organised play provision. They have opportunities to exercise choice and independence. Nursery children are involved in menu planning and in evaluating meals provided by the centre as part of developing an understanding of healthy foods.

Throughout the centre, children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff are good role models and treat children, visitors, parents and each other with the utmost respect. Community cohesion within the centre is very strong. Users are able to communicate their views about the services offered by the centre through evaluations and questionnaires. Centre staff are always prepared to listen to users' views and ideas. Two parents have a role on the Advisory Board. This ensures that users' representatives are informed about strategic planning and make important

contributions to decision making in the centre.

Short courses provided at the centre, have enabled parents to develop skills to return to work. One parent, having attended a First Aid course and a course to improve her confidence and self-esteem, now works as a crèche volunteer and sees this as her pathway to returning to the world of work.

Breakfast and tea time clubs, along with crèche facilities, enable parents to access early and late childcare, allowing them to work or attend further education. Parents recognise the valuable and practical support and advice provided by the centre. One stated 'The centre changed my life' through emotional support, practical guidance on parenting and advice about seeking employment.

*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>1</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?

**2**

Until recently there was a lack of data about the potential users in the locality.

Despite this problem, the centre knows its users well and its knowledge has increased in the light of the local authority's recent provision of robust and accurate data. Although the analysis of data is a relatively new process, staff have good local knowledge. The response to this knowledge is that provision has been matched to most needs and interest. Although fewer events have been offered, attendance at all courses and events has increased and has enabled the centre to introduce high-quality provision for users' welfare, health and social needs. Taking into account comments made by users about the services, the centre ensures that where needs are not being met, services are changed and tailored to meet requirements. For example, through its own evaluation of the need for more affordable and local childcare, an additional 16 nursery places were provided.

Baseline assessments and regular tracking of children's progress in the nursery are used to match provision to individual needs very well. Exciting, active learning opportunities which are well planned and shared with all adults in the nursery enable



children to make good progress against most of the areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although progress and levels reached in communication, language and literacy remain low. The Early Years curriculum is well planned and learning intentions shared with key workers and volunteers to maximise children's participation and progress. Learning is active and exciting. For example, the children were experimenting with polar bears and ice and creating their own Arctic world from models and shaving foam, using appropriate descriptive language. Procedures for transition into and out of the nursery are good and include the sharing of records of achievement, accompanied visits to schools and home visits. The centre has eight receiver primary schools and the four schools who responded to questionnaires about the effectiveness of transfer information felt it to be 'very useful and informative.'

Parents said that they felt well informed about their children's progress and enjoy the 'Learning Journey' books which each child takes home, celebrating children's work through work samples and photographic records. Children who are the subject of individual education plans are well supported in 'small steps' learning and multi-agency working.

The centre's Business Manager has formed a group to assist parents to apply on-line for school places. Parents spoke very highly of this support, especially as many families on the estate are at an early stage of speaking English and also do not have internet facilities at home.

A wide range of case study evidence indicates that users who face challenges can show improvement in their lives as a result of their engagement with the centre. Time and again individuals and families have reported that children are happier, they themselves feel less isolated and depressed or that they have improved their basic skills and English language acquisition through attending the centre. One parent described it as 'A lifeline to me and my family.'

A more structured approach to visits to families in the catchment area within two months of birth has led to the centre Outreach Worker making joint home visits with the Health Visitor. These visits have led to an increase in the number of users accessing the centre.

Despite the centre manager's best efforts, it has been difficult to engage Jobcentre Plus with the centre. The centre has met the problem by running its own 'Welfare Rights' group and signposting users to a nearby One Stop Shop in the community precinct. Given the high levels of worklessness in the reach area, however, more formal arrangements for providing advice to jobseekers is required.

Accommodation at the centre is safe and suitable and space outdoors is excellent. Resources are of high quality and age appropriate for the children who use the centre. The outside play area is particularly attractive and conducive to improving children's gross motor skills and encouraging active play and risk taking. Parents expressed how good it was that their children could play outside in safety, as the

majority of the families live in flats without access to a garden.

Ante and post- natal clinics are well used and breastfeeding outreach services are improving. There is a need, however, to target other identified needs in the reach area such as smoking cessation more robustly.

Links with housing partners has enabled the centre to help solve housing problems for its users, for example the Outreach Worker helps with form-filling and advice and accompanies users to the local One Stop Shop for help and advice.

Reducing domestic violence is cited on the Local Authority's Young People's Plan and a pilot scheme runs in the Borough, involving two targeted children's centers. The centre is good at signposting users to this service.

*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>1</b>

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

**2**

Senior leaders and managers understand arrangements for governance and accountability very well. Whilst arrangements for the annual monitoring of the Business Plan with the Borough is in place, until recently there has been a lack of statistical analysis showing the impact the centre has had over time on its reach area. Despite this, the leadership team of the centre have carried out their own surveys and analyses and continued to improve provision and outcomes for the centre users. Leaders and managers of the centre are highly qualified professionals, with a shared vision and ethos to improve outcomes for the centre users.

Ambitions for the development of the centre are high. The improving links between the local authority, together with the existing strong links between the advisory body and senior leaders, enhance long-term strategic planning, especially in relation to sustainability, development plans and service provision. Senior leaders lead different areas of the centre's provision, work collaboratively and are ensuring that provision is integrated and better monitored. Leaders have worked hard to build effective links with health services and other services, which enable the centre to provide relevant and cohesive provision.

Communication is good and the centre has good processes in place to ensure strong cross-referral of different users' needs across services. It fosters good working relationships with a wide range of services such as Barnet College and the local Health Centre. An advisory board is in place and now includes representatives from local schools. The centre leader/manager meets with other centre leaders in the West Network, sharing good practice and avoiding duplication of services. Although the Parents' Forum is underdeveloped, partnership and trust between parents and centre are good. 'The staff don't judge me and I feel I could confide anything to them and they would help me' was a view expressed by a parent.

Evaluation of the centre's provision is improving through the use of questionnaires, user feedback and responses to the centre's monthly newsletters. As a consequence centre leaders are accurate in their evaluation of their effectiveness but it would be further improved with the use of objective, independent figures and statistics over time.

The centre provides good value for money because outcomes for children and their families are good. Good use is made of available space and many rooms are multi-functional. The centre's facilities, such as the outdoor learning area, are used by local childminders, benefiting children in the wider community. It is the leading supplier of childcare under the two-year-old pilot scheme within the Borough. This has led to a number of families accessing nursery education at an early stage and also identifies families who require family support and outreach.

Equality and diversity are promoted well. The centre brokers support for children with learning and physical difficulties, for example a child with complex needs attends the centre as part of a shared placement. Children receive individual, timely and well planned support to access the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Rooms are accessible to those with disabilities and the centre has further extended its provision by creating a sensory room.

Local events, such as Community Days, are attended by centre staff and they advertise the services available to enable the wider community to understand and access them.

Safeguarding is of the highest priority and procedures and policies are outstanding. Appropriate recruitment and vetting checks are made on staff and protocols are established with other safeguarding services. Senior staff have undertaken enhanced training in child protection and induction procedures for new staff in safeguarding are exhaustive. All staff members have undergone 'in-house' or on-line training in child protection procedures and record keeping of attendance at inter-agency meetings and Common Assessment Framework paperwork is excellent.

*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>
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<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>1</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>2</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 inspection of Wingfield Early Childhood Care and Nursery carried out on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2010 judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to be good.

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

## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Wingfield Children's centre on 9-10<sup>th</sup> December 2010. We judged the centre as Good overall.

During our visit, we looked at the centre's plans and documents, visited a number of activities and talked with staff, representatives of the local authority and with you.

We judged that your centre provides good support for you and your families. All the parents and carers we spoke to were positive about the care and education offered to their children and to themselves at the centre. You told us that you particularly enjoyed and benefited from the opportunities for adult learning, such as English classes and First Aid Training. You were also very positive about the centre staff and how welcome and valued they make you feel when you attend the centre. You told us that the centre's introduction of 'Every Child A Talker' and the 'Stay and Play' sessions are helping your children improve their early literacy skills and helping you to understand the value of purposeful play. Inspection evidence supports these views.

We have asked the centre to be more systematic in the way in which they measure the impact on how well the activities they do provide improve outcomes for you and your children. You can support this by joining the parents' forum and making your views known. Another recommendation is that training is put in place for parent members of the Advisory Board, and for those new to the role.

We have also asked the centre to work more closely with the local Jobcentre plus to provide information and advice about job opportunities and to ensure that all groups represented in its local community access the services the centre provides.

The centre helps you and your children to be healthy by its provision of home cooked three course meals and the provision of recipe ideas. You greatly appreciate the opportunities your children have to improve their health and physical skills by enjoying the outdoor learning areas at the centre.

The centre is very inclusive of all children and families and celebrates diversity. The children's behaviour at the centre is outstanding and you and your children are safe, as all safeguarding requirements are fully met.

Those of you who attend groups at the centre speak very highly of the friendly, expert staff who work at the centre and you greatly appreciate other services, such as information about Welfare Rights and how to apply on-line for your child's school place.

The fact that the centre picks children up from local nurseries at lunchtime is appreciated by those of you seeking further training or education.

Participation rates are improving but we have asked the centre to increase its efforts to encourage engagement with services from the wider community and those who are most vulnerable.

The staff at the centre work well together as a team and are passionate about improving outcomes for you and your children. We have, however, asked the local authority to liaise more closely with the centre in evaluating the impact of its services and in providing information to them which will show which groups might benefit from the centre's provision most.

We would like to thank those of you who spared the time to speak with us and we very much appreciated your willingness to share your thoughts and feelings about the Centre.

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