

# Inspection report for Copley Close Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Ealing
Inspection number	362459
Inspection dates	30 November 2010 – 1 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Kath Beck

Centre governance	Local authority
Acting Centre leader	Clare Welsby
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	EY396178 Copley Close 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.

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector and an early years inspector. They held meetings with a representative of the local authority, leaders of each of the main organisations that make up the centre, front line staff, representatives from the range of services offered, parents including some who are being trained as 'parent champions', and a local headteacher. Inspectors observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Copley Close Children's Centre is situated on the border of Hobbayne and Cleveland Wards in the London Borough of Ealing on the Copley Close Estate. It was designated as a children's centre in 2005 with the leadership provided from within the day care provision. Changes to the provider for day care means the local authority has taken temporary leadership of the children's centre. The local authority holds service level agreements with the two main providers that constitute the children's centre. Day care is delivered in one building by Cybertots, a private provider. Other services, including a crèche, are delivered in separate nearby buildings by Empowering Action and Social Esteem, known and referred to in the locality as EASE, a voluntary sector community-based provider. Coram, a charity, with whom the local authority has a borough-wide service level agreement, also contributes to services of the centre in the community hall and other locations. A new phase three children's centre is being built within the catchment area at Hathaway Primary School.

Arrangements for governance include the Locality Partnership Group, which oversees all of the children's centres in the local authority. The centre provides the full core offer including childcare, family support, child and family health services, and has links with Jobcentre Plus. Copley Close is within the 30% most deprived areas in the country and has the highest population of under-fives in the borough. Most families come from diverse minority ethnic groups, but largely from Black African backgrounds. Copley Estate, which consists of low-rise flats, is due for regeneration.

Unemployment rates and the number of families on benefits are higher than the national average. The day care admits children from the age of three months. Children's development when they first start at age two or three years in the day care is lower than what is expected for their age.

## 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**

**3**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**3**

## Main findings

Overall, Copley Close is meeting the needs of users and the wider community satisfactorily. Many of its core offer services are provided in a range of locations, close by or in other parts of Ealing, as the main base has room to only provide day care and space at EASE is restricted. Originally, the leadership of the day care was also responsible for the management of the centre. As there has been a change of day care provider, the focus has been on raising the quality of the new provision. It was inspected last year and judged to be good. Since then, the local authority has overseen the centre as a whole and is currently reviewing arrangements for its leadership as part of its overall service delivery. Early years provision in the day care and child care for young children in the community hall is good. Children and their parents and carers take up the variety of the services on offer. The range of services responds well to the varied needs of the multicultural community and all have full access to its provision. Relationships between the staff, children, and parents and carers are trusting. Information from case studies shows that the centre has provided significant support to families in times of difficulty. Personal testimonies from users spoken to during the inspection confirm that the centre has empowered them to make changes to their lifestyles. Among many positive comments about the centre, one says, 'This centre has saved my life.' In empowering users who are subject to domestic violence, the centre has enabled children, their parents or carers to enjoy and achieve in their personal development, safeguard their well-being and safety, as well as gain economic stability and independence.

Each of the providers contracted to deliver the services for Copley Close has its own independent, effective leadership and management responsible for their aspects of the centre's provision. They are all practitioners determined to do the best for the community. They provide programmes that meet the needs of their users and know the areas that they want to improve within their own provision, such as promoting

children's communication skills, or reducing child poverty. Currently, there is insufficient coordination of the three providers to give a joined-up approach to the delivery of the range of services. This affects the centre's key priority to increase its reach within the community. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection were pleased with what the centre is providing, the warm welcome staff offer and the good care, guidance and support they receive. They criticised the quality of the accommodation and its lack of space. Staff ensure the limited space is used flexibly and efficiently for administration, delivery of courses or confidential one-to-one sessions. That said, lack of space means that provision, such as that for health professionals, is inconveniently located further away. Parents and carers have appropriate opportunities to express their views about the courses and events they undertake, but their involvement in governance and decision making about the services is limited. 'Parent champions' are being trained to enhance their skills and understanding of the centre so that they can play an effective role in the newly formed centre advisory board.

The strengths and commitment of the separate providers are indicative of a satisfactory capacity to improve. For example, there is a good, clear outline plan that sets out accurately the issues that the centre as a whole might address to bring about further improvements. In a separate project to reduce child poverty, that also impacts on the work of the centre, one provider has set rigorous numerical targets to be met over a year. Scrutiny of data collected shows this provider has met or exceeded their targets for this year. The local authority is working with the providers to extend collection and analysis of data that is specific to the immediate locality. Neighbourhood data currently available indicate a steady increase in the reach of the centre's services. Overall, the numerical data collected is not sufficient to show how all the services operating through the centre have brought about lasting improvements in the local community. Similarly, while current methods for self-evaluation identify strengths and areas for improvement, they do not include the views of all service providers or parents and carers.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Review the overall leadership and management of the centre so that there is an improved and joined-up approach to the delivery of the services.
- Implement better self-evaluation procedures that enable all involved with the centre to reflect on their effectiveness and inform the centre's development plan.
- Increase the involvement of parents and carers in the governance of the centre, so that they are able to contribute to decision making about centre developments.

- Refine the ways in which the centre as a whole gathers information to judge how successful it is by using data from all providers to show the impact of its services in the longer-term and wider community.

## How good are outcomes for users?

2

Staff in the day care attended training in promoting and providing nutritious meals. Consequently, children eat well during the day and grow, harvest, cook and eat vegetables during the year. Children in the crèche and stay and play prepare healthy snacks. Healthy eating and exercise are promoted soundly throughout the centre. The borough dietician, outreach workers, and health visitors promote courses to enable parents and carers to provide healthy meals. Children take part in daily exercise, but there is insufficient information to show that this provision is having an impact on lives away from the centre.

The safety of staff, children, parents and carers is a key priority for the centre. A substantial part of its work relates to the reduction of domestic violence. Buddies give victims the tools to resolve problems and take the necessary steps to improve their lives, keep themselves and their children safe and free from mental harm. In giving their thanks to the centre, one user wrote, 'Without EASE, I am not sure I would have got my life back.' Information from case studies and the local authority shows that the centre works closely with a range of services to support children on a protection plan or subject to a Common Assessment Framework programme in order to keep them safe. The day care has several places for children in need. The crèche provides respite for families in times of difficulty. Parents and carers are confident that the centre keeps their children safe at all times.

Children, parents and carers make good strides in their educational, personal and social development, economic stability and independence. The provision of a range of childcare provision has enabled more users to access courses to help them to learn English, stay in education or take up courses leading to qualifications. Case studies and personal testimonies confirm that volunteers at the centre often gain the skills to take up employment, such as childcare, administration or buddying. Inspectors did not carry out a full inspection of the range of childcare, but spent time observing and looked at examples of records of progress. Children in the day care, crèche, after-school club or stay and play were found to enjoy their learning. The centre has commissioned the services of a speech therapist enabling children and their families to access the help they need quickly. This, together with a stronger focus in the day care on developing communication skills, is helping children to communicate more effectively. While the progress of children in the day care is monitored, the day care leader currently does not maintain close links with the local schools to check the impact of provision, although the data is available from the local authority. Almost all parents and carers who responded to a survey of the services

provided by the centre expressed high levels of satisfaction.

Children attending the centre behave well as engaging and interesting activities are provided. In all childcare provisions, children were found to be developing skills that will help them in the future. Outreach workers, links with Jobcentre Plus and the One Stop Job Shop in the centre provide advice to parents and carers about returning to work or claiming the benefits to which they are entitled. Productive links with housing authorities help users to improve their living conditions. Parents and carers, especially those who are 'parent champions' or volunteers, make an effective contribution to the running of the centre and the good outcomes. Their contribution to decision making is limited. Good local knowledge, trained volunteers and leaflets signpost parents and carers to additional provision within the borough that meets their needs.

*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>3</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>3</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?**

**3**

Appropriate assessment procedures enable the centre to make relevant provision for users' welfare, health and social needs. In-depth knowledge of those working and living in the area, and general data from the local authority and the views of the Local Partnership Board, inform the programmes available to the users. The prime objectives are to engage more fathers, and reduce child poverty and domestic violence. While providers make use of community facilities, and there are plans for regeneration and new building within the area, limited space restricts the breadth of provision on site. That said, the centre has been successful in increasing the involvement of fathers as 'parent champions', raised the number of parents completing their training and taking up work, and enabled more low income families to access childcare. However, there is insufficient data to show the impact of the centre's other provision over time. Some services, such as child health are reported to have dwindled at the centre because there is no room to leave pushchairs. Consequently users travel further away. There is not sufficient coordination between the three main providers and some services, to ensure that communication of

specific needs is robust. The advisory board is not fully constituted with representation from relevant services to oversee and challenge the centre. Health services and outreach workers are cooperating with EASE and Coram to avoid duplication of provision. There are few links between these two main providers, including the crèche, and day care to ensure resources are put to the most effective use.

The centre places good emphasis on promoting purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users. Parents and carers confirm that provision is making a difference to their lives by giving them the skills to take actions and make decisions independently based on new learning. As a result, their self-esteem is raised and they are confident about trying to get work. In an evaluation of an aspect of the service, one parent said, 'Well, I mean, EASE stands for Empowering Action Self-Esteem, so that's what their aim is, to help people to believe in their own abilities.' Through buddying systems, parents and carers are supported in seeking appropriate advice and making important decisions to change their way of life. Achievement is celebrated during local fun days. Free or low price childcare facilities have made it possible for users to access training and development opportunities easily. Further opportunities for users to enhance their educational and personal development stem from links with Jobcentre Plus and local colleges.

The centre provides a variety of services to meet the core offer. They are adapted to meet the changing needs of the community, but much of the provision for young mums, baby clinics, 'pops and tots' and healthy cooking are provided across the borough. This means users need to travel beyond the estate to access these services. Take-up of courses and provision is sporadic and is at its highest in the summer months. Outreach workers seek to promote the engagement of more users through leaflets, home visiting and, along with 'parent champions', spread the advantages of the centre by word of mouth. They gain the trust of individuals finding themselves in difficult circumstances and provide practical support as well as advice about the services available. Case studies show they are successful in encouraging new users to take advantage of the positive atmosphere offered by the centre. This help has then opened new horizons or enabled young students to remain in further education. Adults or children with special educational needs or disabilities can access all the programmes and drop-in sessions, and this gives them confidence.

Good quality care for young children, parents, carers and other users is improving the outcomes for individuals and families. The care shown and guidance provided to the victims of domestic violence is a significant strength. Parents and carers say they are valued as individuals and their particular needs addressed. They reported that through the recognition of their abilities they were approached to train as a 'parent champion'. As a result, their enthusiasm for life was restored. Parents and carers benefit from the courses to learn English as they increase their confidence in communicating with others in the community. Users benefit from workshops to reduce smoking, alcohol consumption and drug abuse. The One Stop Job Shop adviser and outreach workers give good advice about how to write a job application and interview techniques, and refer users to Jobcentre Plus.

*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>3</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>3</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?**

**3**

Arrangements for governance and accountability are in place, but they are not consistently understood by parents, carers and professionals. The advisory body has only been established recently and does not have sufficient representation, especially from parents and carers, to challenge the centre's performance. Many see EASE as the children's centre, although the name, Copley Close Children's Centre is formally the title of the childcare provision. This is because EASE, as it operates nearby, provides many of the services, has a higher profile within the community and a reception area where advice can be sought and received instantly. All staff are supervised well by their own leaders and managers, but this arrangement is not integrated fully within the centre's management processes. Some key partners are engaged in supporting and cooperating with different providers to develop integrated provision, but other partners are not engaged fully. These are the reasons, along with the construction of a purpose-built children's centre nearby, why the local authority is currently reviewing its service delivery in order to provide consistent high quality, sustainable integrated provision within the locality.

Leaders and managers of the separate provisions are determined to make a difference to the lives of children, parents and carers within the local and wider community. They strongly promote the inclusion of children and families from all backgrounds and celebrate diversity. Volunteers often help with translation if users do not speak English. Currently, the provisions are working towards their own priorities, but they have drawn up an outline plan to bring about an integrated, well-coordinated service. High quality practice in self-evaluation such as that stemming from planning and monitoring effectiveness in a project to reduce child poverty is not consistent across the centre. This evaluation included the planning of actions, based on specific targets linked to data that can be monitored effectively. Consequently, it is possible to monitor the impact of the project on outcomes in the short and long term. Generally, data are not used well in the centre as a whole to set numerical targets, measure impact on outcomes and enable the local authority to offer greater challenge in its annual review meeting. Case studies give the centre a clear view of



its impact on individuals in the short-term, but it is less aware of its long-term effectiveness.

Robust procedures for safeguarding keep staff, children, parents and carers safe. All staff have been subject to an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check and trained in child protection. They are also trained to keep safe when working alone. Links with outreach workers and other professionals help to protect vulnerable children and adults. Volunteers and 'parent champions' are trained in safeguarding and have a clear understanding of the importance of ensuring children and users are kept safe. First aid and parenting courses are popular and viewed as helping parents and carers to be safe. The centre is proactive and collaborates well with other agencies to reduce the risk of harm. In particular, it shares its expertise and trains others to enhance their roles in reducing domestic violence across the borough.

The centre is committed to working with other partners to improve outcomes for all. Users praise the ways in which the centre works with them and make useful suggestions for improvement. For instance, the local authority is considering recent requests to provide the crèche on five rather than four days a week as part of its review of service delivery. Accommodation is safe, although space at EASE is restricted. The fabric of the buildings used by the day care and EASE, as well as the community hall, is in poor condition and undervalues the efforts of staff and users. However, there are plans for improvements in accommodation. Important strands in the service level agreement relating to the financing of leadership of the centre as a whole have not been addressed; the centre provides satisfactory value for money.

*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>3</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>3</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>3</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>3</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>3</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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider</b>	<b>3</b>

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

None

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 Copley Close centre on 30 November and 1 December 2010. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Thank you for taking the time to talk with us during the inspection. You said that your centre has helped you to make important changes to your lives and to those of your children. Many of you are proud to be volunteers and those of you who are training to be 'parent champions' are enthusiastic and looking forward to playing an important part in the life of the centre. Training is planned to help you to know what you are expected to do and how you can contribute to the advisory board so that you can contribute effectively to decisions about the centre's development.

Copley Close is meeting your needs, although many of its services are provided in a range of locations, close by or in other parts of Ealing. While the local authority is committed to developing good quality provision within the area, currently the main base has room to only provide day care and space at EASE is restricted. You told us that although the accommodation is in need of refurbishment, the welcome you receive at the centre is always warm and helpful. You particularly appreciate the way staff at the centre care for you and give you the 'tools' and confidence to solve the challenging problems you face. You trust the staff and they make you feel valued. This, together with your participation in courses, such as learning English, is helping you to enjoy life, become independent and confident to find work. Children in the day care, crèche and stay and play enjoy their learning and achieve well as there are interesting things for them to do.

As you probably know the leadership of the centre was previously provided through the day care provision. The changes in the day care provider and a focus on raising the quality of this service means that the local authority is now overseeing the leadership of the whole centre. It is currently reviewing arrangements for the centre as part of its overall provision for children's centres in the locality. During the inspection, we found early years provision in the day care, crèche and stay and play to be good. You really appreciate the way the crèche gives you a break to give time

to your studies, to learn to speak English and help you out when you are under pressure. You are confident that the centre takes good care to ensure that you and your children feel safe.

EASE, Coram and Cybertots all have their own good leaders and managers who are responsible for their aspects of the centre's provision. They are all determined to do the best for the community, but they do not always collaborate well enough to help even more people to make the most of all that the centre offers. Not all of the services contribute their views to the centre's checks on its self-evaluation and planning for the future. An outline plan that sets out accurately the issues that the centre needs to address to bring about further improvements has been drawn up and is forming part of the local authority review for the centre's development. The local authority is developing its data collection and analysis systems, but overall the data collected are not sufficient to show how all the services operating through the centre have brought about short or longterm improvements in the local community.

We have asked the local authority, leaders and managers to:

- Review the overall leadership and management of the centre so that there is an improved and joined-up approach to the delivery of the services.
- Implement better procedures that enable all involved with the centre to reflect on their effectiveness and inform the centre's development plan.
- Increase the involvement of parents and carers in the governance of the centre, so that they are able to contribute to decision making about centre developments.
- Refine the ways in which the centre as a whole gathers information to judge how successful it is by using data from all providers to show the impact of its services in the longer-term and wider community.

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