

# Inspection report for Crane Park Children's Centre

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Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	362460
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Lynda Welham

Centre governance	Local Authority
Centre leader	Sue Hardwick
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Norman Avenue Hounslow Middlesex TW5 9HQ
Telephone number	020 8894 9837
Fax number	N/A
Email address	craneparkcc@hounslow.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Crane Park Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Crane Park Neighbourhood Nursery

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
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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.

Crane Park Neighbourhood Nursery was inspected on 15 October 2010 under Sections 49 & 50 of the Childcare Act. The report of this inspection is available on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Crane Park After Hours School Club was inspected under Sections 49 & 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on 18 October 2010. The report of this inspection is available on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

An inspection of Crane Park Primary School was carried out on 18–19 October 2010 under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. 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 leader, the local authority officer, representatives from the locality support teams, and a representative from the Advisory Board of the centre, parent groups, health professionals and early years staff. 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

Crane Park Children's Centre is in the Hanworth area of the Borough of Hounslow. The centre and the local authority work in partnership to manage the children's

centre. The centre is situated on the site of Crane Park Primary School, with the headteacher and the Governing Body contributing to the strategic and operational management of the centre. The Centre serves an ethnically and socially diverse community, reaching out to 865 under five year olds, of which 74 per cent fall into the 30 per cent most deprived part of the borough.

There are three primary schools in the reach area, Crane Park, Oriel and Forge Lane, and Lindon Bennett which is a school for children with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. The Centre covers seven Super Outreach Areas, three of which are in the top 10 per cent of the most deprived nationally for income deprivation affecting children. In the Centre's reach area, many families rely on workless benefits and there are high levels of lone parents and teenage pregnancies.

Crane Park is a Phase One centre and was designated in November 2005. The initial focus of the centre from 2005 was the provision of childcare via the Neighbourhood Nursery with support from the lead school, Crane Park. Hounslow Children's Centres reviewed their focus in March 2009 and full core offer status was achieved in February 2010. A new centre manager was appointed and has been in post from April 2009 and an outreach worker and designated early years teacher have been in post since January 2010. A governor from Crane Park Primary School sits on the Advisory Board, with membership including delivery partners and statutory services.

## 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

The overall effectiveness of Crane Park Children's Centre is satisfactory. It provides a welcoming and safe environment for all its users. Those who use the centre appreciate and recognise the positive impact it has on their lives. A typical view expressed by a user is, 'The centre is a lifeline to me.' The centre is effective in extending the experiences of its users by offering some activities in different locations, enabling users from different parts of the borough to meet others beyond their own home area. The centre offers a satisfactory range of services for children and their families, but it is not yet targeting and engaging specific groups, particularly those who are normally hard to reach.

The centre's approach to safeguarding, safe recruitment and child protection is satisfactory. Safeguarding policies meet requirements and are effectively used in practice, although leaders do not monitor and review the procedures systematically and ensure that all staff training in child protection is regularly updated.

Parents and carers spoken to by inspectors were overwhelmingly pleased with what the centre is providing, although there was some criticism of the limited information provided for users who want to access training and concerns that some suggestions for new activities fall at the first hurdle, for example, fitness classes for women only. Some key support teams, for example antenatal and breastfeeding support teams, are successfully engaging with parents across the locality, but this does not yet extend to all groups, for example families caring for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The monitoring and evaluation of service provision is at an early stage of development. The local authority has not conducted a satisfaction survey among users in all its localities which is centre-specific and which could be used by leaders at Crane Park to set priorities to improve and reflect a broader service provision. Whilst the centre has provided parents with the opportunity of forming a parents' forum, this has yet to get going and no parents or carers sit on the Advisory Board of the centre.

Leadership and management of Crane Park are satisfactory overall. The main barriers to future improvement are the lack of clarity regarding governance and accountability and leaders' current inability to demonstrate that services are reaching those who need it most within the centre's designated area. The centre has responded to children's weak early literacy skills by employing a qualified early years teacher to strengthen children's communication, language and literacy through the promotion of purposeful play, although the impact of this is not easily measurable in the short term. The role of the outreach worker has been effective in expanding the range of provision and improving the engagement of users. These initiatives, combined with the way resources are utilised to provide a satisfactory range of provision, demonstrate that the centre has a satisfactory capacity to further improve.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Develop systematic monitoring and evaluation systems to:
  - ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to meet the needs of the centre and its users and to identify where training needs to be updated
  - to clearly show the impact of the centre's work on outcomes for children at the centre and in the locality.
- Extend user representation at the centre to reflect the needs of the full range of the community within its reach area.
- Work with the local authority to clarify the roles and accountability arrangements of the centre leaders.

## How good are outcomes for users?

<b>3</b>
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The enjoyment and achievement of children attending the Crane Park centre is satisfactory and rapidly improving. The centre has begun to track children's progress

as they move into the nursery and then on to school so that it can evaluate the effectiveness of its provision on future outcomes for children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Users report that they enjoy coming to the centre and that activities and groups help to build their self-confidence. Parents feel that their children are better able to mix socially and that their behaviour has improved as a result of accessing the centre's provision. As one parent said, 'My child loves coming here – it is the only place he has ever settled to and he always can't wait to come back.'

Children and adults are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through physical activities, for example 'Kiddy-Kicks' and yoga groups. The 'Grub Club' teaches adults and children how to cook cheap, nutritious meals. Children's general health is supported well as they are encouraged to develop positive hygiene routines in the centre such as helping to clean the preparation surfaces with their parents and carers afterwards.

Children's behaviour at the centre is good and staff ensure that children in their care are safe. The centre offers effective support for individual families where there have been child protection concerns. Staff model positive interaction with children that benefits their physical and emotional well being, exemplified by one parent's comment, which said, 'I have learnt to handle the children gently and listen to them.'

Uptake at activities offered by the Centre varies, but at the more popular sessions, such as the sewing circle, attendance is good. An outcome of this provision is helping parents to improve their economic stability by making soft furnishings and children's clothes themselves. A few adults progress to undertake a formally recognised qualification at college which has inspired others to look at future learning. Parents and carers are helped to improve their opportunities for future employment through classes in English for speakers of other languages.

<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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>

## How good is the provision?

3
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Crane Park Children's Centre effectively promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all the children who attend. Staff are strongly committed to providing children with a positive learning and care experience. Good support is provided to help children settle into the centre and meet children's individual welfare needs.

Accommodation at the centre is generally safe and suitable and space outdoors is good. Resources are of high quality and age appropriate for the children who use the centre. The outside play area is attractive and conducive to improving children's gross motor skills and encouraging active play.

Links between the centre and Crane Park Primary School are strong and the early years leader supervises the work of the teacher in the Centre. This enables effective planning for activities which are linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. An example of this is the implementation of 'Toddler Talk' this year to improve children's early literacy and communication skills. Whilst this provision has not been in place long enough to fully measure its impact, anecdotal feedback from parents is very positive, with one parent reporting that her toddler is 'more sociable and able to express his needs without having a temper tantrum to do so'. Improved partnership working has led to offering Crane Children's Centre services from school sites rather than just the main site, to address the needs of parents in those areas. The centre does not yet sufficiently publicise its services to ensure that it reaches out to the most vulnerable families.

The use of images and resources around the centre that reflect all members of the community reflect the Centre's commitment to inclusion. Different religious festivals and celebrations are incorporated into the centre programme, all families are encouraged to take part and attend and the centre is fully accessible to parents and children with disabilities.

The range of services, activities and opportunities offered at the centre are constantly reviewed and programmes changed in response to participation rates and feedback from users; for instance, at their request, a crèche was provided for members of the sewing group. The breastfeeding advisory clinics and antenatal clinics are well used. Users report that they appreciate meeting at the centre because it is more convenient and the setting makes them feel less apprehensive than that of a hospital environment. Outreach services are improving and whole families have been able to access services and activities together at holiday periods. There is a need, however, to target other identified groups in the reach area such as families affected by domestic violence.

Services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of the current users, but this is only a small representation of the wider community. The centre is not yet proactive enough in engaging the most vulnerable families in its reach area and plans drawn

up to address this are imprecise.

<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>3</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>3</b>

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

**3**

The lines of responsibilities for leadership and management of the Crane Park Centre are presently under review. The Advisory Board represents the array of partners that the centre works with but does not include parent representation, although parents' views are fed into the Advisory Board via the parents' forum. There are suitable links established with partner organisations, such as the midwifery team and with commissioned service providers, such as the Speech and Language Therapy Service and the Family Information Service.

Parents and carers are very positive about the centre's efforts to ensure that users from all ethnic and social backgrounds, as well as different genders, have an equal opportunity to access services and improve their own lives and those of their children. This is clearly evident in the way the centre has provided a group, in partnership with extended services, whereby fathers can access activities and support.

Safeguarding is suitably prioritised, and procedures and policies are satisfactory, although a rolling programme to review policies as to their continued suitability has not yet been established. Appropriate recruitment and vetting checks are made on staff and protocols are established with other safeguarding services.

Although centre staff employed by the school have regular performance management and targets set to improve their effectiveness and performance, systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the centre itself are insufficiently developed. However, the way leaders and managers of the centre responded to a local needs analysis of low standards of attainment in literacy is beginning to have positive outcomes in improving children's progress.

Whilst the centre's development plan rightly identifies its priorities based on data provided by the local authority's audit of need, this plan lacks detail of how and when the key priorities will be delivered and of the resources required to deliver them. Nevertheless, in the year since the core offer was implemented, rapid progress has



been made in integrating provision such as the promotion of healthy eating and physical exercise, antenatal care and extended services at outreach centres. These partnerships and integrated working, together with the sharing of resources with the primary school and day nursery, provide satisfactory value for money for all parties.

<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>3</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 community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision</b>	<b>3</b>

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

The inspection of the Crane Park Neighbourhood Nursery carried out on 15 October 2010 judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to be good.

This inspection also took account of judgements made at the inspection on 18–19 October 2010 of Crane Park Primary School.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Crane Park Children's Centre on 19–20 October 2010. 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, schools and with you. We judged that your centre provides satisfactory 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 the sewing circle, the toddler group and the opportunities for adult learning, such as the First Aid training. You told us that the centre's introduction of 'Toddler Talk' 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. Some parents, however, felt that requests for specific activities were sometimes not actioned quickly enough or not at all.

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. Parent and carer representation on the Advisory Board would also support your views being effective in developing the range of provision and services the Centre provides.

The centre helps you and your children to be healthy by its provision of 'Grub Club', where sound guidance is given about enjoyable, nourishing meals. Your children have plenty of opportunities to play both inside and out, which helps keep them fit. The centre is very inclusive of all children and families and celebrates diversity. The children's behaviour at the centre and its outreach centres is good and you and your children are safe, as all safeguarding requirements are met satisfactorily.

Those of you who attend the antenatal clinic and the breastfeeding support group speak very highly of the friendly, expert staff who work at the centre and you greatly appreciate these services being located in the centre.

The sharing of resources and expertise between the centre, the nursery and the early years department of the school helps your children improve their early literacy skills. Adult learning has enabled some parents to gain formal qualifications leading to paid employment in the centre and the primary school. The centre recognises the need to provide a wider range of family learning and parenting classes.

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 clarify the governance and accountability roles of the leaders and managers of the centre.

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).