

Inspection report for Norman Jackson Children's Centre

Local authority	Richmond
Inspection number	366387
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Philip Mann HMI

Centre governance	Local authority
Centre leader	Ellie Young
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Not applicable

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.

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Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, representatives from the local authority and other external organisations, health services, local headteachers, parents and carers of children. 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

This is a phase-two stand-alone children’s centre in a 70% disadvantaged area. It was designated in January 2010 to provide a wide range of services to local parents and carers. There is no regular day care provision. The centre facilities are located in a converted house in the grounds of Hampton Hill Junior School. Governance is provided by an advisory board consisting of representatives from health and social services, the voluntary sector and local authority. The centre serves a mixed residential area with pockets of social deprivation. The attainment of children into the Early Years Foundation Stage in the local area is broadly in line with nationally expected levels. The main local population is White British, with about a quarter of families being from minority ethnic backgrounds. Levels of unemployment are about average.

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

This is an effective children’s centre that is making a positive difference to the health, well-being and development of a wide range of users in a welcoming, friendly setting. Much has been achieved and outcomes are good and improving. The rate of increase in new registrations is significant. Leadership is good and overall the centre demonstrates good capacity to have even greater impact on local services and the outcomes of the most vulnerable families within the community.

The centre manager demonstrates high expectations of staff. Under her good leadership staff fully share the centre’s vision for providing support to a wide range of users. Relationships between staff and all users of the centre are very positive and these build a sense of trust between all parties. This is a key strength. The centre provides good levels of advice and support about how parents and carers can access a wide range of services to develop their parenting and life skills. Rapidly increasing numbers of users are attending the courses provided. The involvement of fathers is improving.

Outcomes are good in nearly all areas; they are satisfactory in those related to economic well-being. This is because opportunities for adults to develop skills in literacy, numeracy and information and computer technology (ICT) are limited. In contrast, regular courses develop parenting skills in a range of areas such as safety in the home, healthy eating and managing children's behaviour are effective.

The centre is becoming increasingly responsive to the needs of the whole community through highly effective outreach work and comprehensive knowledge of the local area. Staff actively seek the views of parents through regular questionnaires and a newly formed parents' forum. Many parents and carers comment very positively about how the centre has impacted successfully on their family and their own lives. For instance, one mother wrote, 'I don't know what I would have done without the centre. Staff are always friendly and helpful.' Another wrote, 'I was so glad to find this place and believe that these services are actually essential.'

An inclusive ethos within the centre promotes community cohesion well. Parents and children feel safe and welcome because of robust safeguarding procedures. Centre staff are sensitive and respectful towards the needs of all users and model positive attitudes openly. The centre environment is very welcoming and homely but the information available does not fully reflect the community's cultural diversity.

Governance arrangements are robust. Data are regularly gathered to support the monitoring of provision and inform accurate self-evaluation. These data have yet to be analysed with precision to measure success and identify further opportunities to match future support to the needs of the most vulnerable and hardest-to-reach members of the community.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Ensure that the centre environment fully reflects the diversity of the community it represents.
- Provide greater opportunities for adults to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Ensure data are used effectively to support self-evaluation, measure effectiveness and target services even more closely towards the neediest families in the community.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Children enjoy eating fresh fruit and healthy snacks in the centre settings. The promotion of this approach to healthy living is helping to reduce further very low obesity rates at age five. The healthy cooking sessions are greatly valued by parents and carers, who develop good attitudes towards eating at home with their children.

Health visitors provide excellent levels of guidance, support and information about children’s health through regular baby developmental sessions at the centre. The numbers of mothers still breastfeeding at six weeks is increasing because of the good guidance provided by professionals at the centre.

Outcomes for staying safe are good. This is because parents receive consistent messages from a range of health professionals either through their attendance at first aid courses or specific home visits about how to treat minor ailments at home. Parents demonstrate good levels of understanding about safety issues as a result. Children who attend ‘Stay and Play Plus’ sessions settle very quickly and respond very positively to the care and support of childcare worker and other adults. These children are helped to understand about behaving safely and sensibly and learning to take risks in a safe environment when playing outside and pushing small wheelbarrows in the fruit and vegetable garden. Systems for identifying children and families who are vulnerable or at risk are effective, and support for these families is helping to keep children safe. The premises are welcoming, safe and secure and there are effective procedures for minimising risk.

Analysis of data indicates that outcomes for young children under five are improving locally. Children using the centre facilities are well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Personal and social outcomes are good and many children and parents grow in confidence as a result of attending activities at the centre. Parents make new friends quickly, displaying a sense of enjoyment and new friendship within a supportive and growing community when attending the wide range of well-designed course and sessions. The active parents’ forum contributes effectively to the development of further services through regular meetings with the centre manager. Parents who speak English as an additional language respond very well to high quality teaching. Some of these parents take further qualifications in English as a result of this good provision with a view to seeking employment. However, there are limited opportunities for other parents to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and use of computers in readiness for getting back to work.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, and their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	2
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	3

How good is the provision?

2

Information related to the registrations of users and attendance at centre sessions is gathered methodically and monitored carefully by the centre staff and local authority to inform future strategic planning. Staff build trust with families effectively and assess their needs very effectively using a variety of assessment techniques. Monthly multi-professional meetings provide a very effective means of monitoring the impact of support for the most vulnerable users to ensure actions are taken. Furthermore, the Common Assessment Framework procedures are implemented rigorously and fully engage a wide range of professionals in monitoring the implementation of support for the most vulnerable users. Data from satisfaction surveys are used well to identify aspects of further improvement in provision.

The range of services has continued to rapidly increase, particularly related to health. These are being adapted to the needs of different users and target groups. Effective outreach work is becoming increasingly cohesive because of highly effective integration between a wide range of professionals. Activities are of good quality and promote purposeful learning amongst a wide range of users. Sessions such as the 'baby massage' and 'stay and play plus' instil a sense of well-being in mothers and babies. Breastfeeding advice is carefully tailored to individual need and very well received by new mothers. The development of effective outreach activities for the most difficult-to-reach parts of the community is a positive step forwards.

Staff are very caring and work very hard to provide a secure and nurturing environment in the centre settings. They build excellent relationships with users, who often return to access additional services. High quality childcare is offered on site through rigorous commissioning procedures. Support is effectively tailored to meet the needs of users and this is especially so in terms of crisis. Highly skilled outreach workers are very successful at using activities such as home visits and play and stay sessions to sensitively gain access to users in familiar surroundings.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Effective leadership and management have quickly established this centre in this very

mixed community. Governance arrangements are secure and clearly understood by all parties. The advisory board has firmly established lines of accountability with clear terms of reference. Plans are in place to include user representation on the board. Day-to-day management is good. Centre leadership has successfully instilled a sense of teamwork and purpose amongst a small but dedicated staff team. Roles and responsibilities are very clearly understood and effectively delegated to centre staff. Communication amongst staff and key partners is excellent. The local authority plays a full strategic role in developing the centre as part of a cohesive package of childcare. The improvement plan provides a structured approach to further development in line with both local authority and centre priorities. A good start has been made to use data to support accurate self-evaluation and to develop the range of services further. Monitoring reports for each service are detailed and clearly linked to set targets and users' outcomes. However, these good data have yet to be used with precision to carefully target services to the needs of all users and especially those who are hardest to reach.

Value for money is good. Commissioning arrangements are rigorously applied to ensure best use of limited financial resources. Staff are deployed well to provide a growing package of services for users. The quality, range and use of resources are good overall, with some high quality resources in the centre settings and especially the garden area. These are effectively matched to the needs of users. However, there are missed opportunities for adults to develop their computer skills in the centre because equipment is not fully operational.

Equality and disability legislation is fully implemented and policies are in place. The entrance area is welcoming but images and the information available do not fully represent the diversity of the local community. Access to the centre facilities by families from a variety of ethnic groups is satisfactory. Staff tailor support services to the needs of individuals. For example, good levels of support are provided for those parents who speak English as an additional language or have a disability. Parents are provided with good support and guidance to access the right help at the right time for their child.

All requirements related to recruitment and safeguarding are met well, with good procedures for risk assessment. Highly committed staff work closely with a range of professionals to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are effectively monitored and actions are taken to help and support children and families in crisis.

Effective partnerships exist between the centre and a range of other agencies and local support networks. For instance, the centre has established some strong links with other local organisations to support the development of a good range of services for a growing number of users. Strong links exist between the adjacent school on the shared site and the garden area is used by children from a local children's hospice. However, links with organisations to help users to get back into work are underdeveloped.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	2
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
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	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	2

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Norman Jackson Children's Centre on 30–31 March 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Many of you told us that staff are very caring and supportive. We agree with you and in fact we feel that this is a real strength of the centre. We were impressed with the good leadership of the centre manger and the sense of teamwork between the staff and the advisory board. Together they work hard to support both your children's development and your own skills and confidence. Good information is provided about how to be healthy and safe and how to get extra help for your family. This is improving the health and well-being of your and your families really well. In future the centre is going to provide even more activities, including helping parents in getting back to work.

Norman Jackson Children's Centre is a secure and safe place for you to bring your children. The rooms are welcoming and allow your children to play happily while they

learn indoors or outside in the beautiful sensory garden. The centre provides a good place for you to meet other parents and people who can help you and your families. Staff provide a warm welcome to all who use centre. However, they recognise that more could be done to provide information in different languages and activities that fully reflect the diversity of the local community to ensure that everyone feels welcome.

The staff use information well to plan activities for you and your children. However, we have asked them to use this information even better to make sure more parents and children from all backgrounds know about the centre and use it regularly.

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.