

# Inspection report for Broad Green Children's Centre

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Local authority	London Borough of Croydon
Inspection number	367761
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Matthews HMI

Centre governance	Acorns2Oaks Ltd. Board of Trustees
Centre leader	Lauraine Nicholson (CEO) Daniela Orsi (Childcare Services Manager)
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	West Thornton Primary School Kingsley Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Canterbury Day Nursery and Pre-school

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## Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

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

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

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre's managers and staff, representatives from the local authority, members of the board of trustees and some of the centre's partners, including from health and education services. They had informal discussions with parents and carers and children. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Broad Green Children's Centre is run by a registered charity, Acorns2Oaks Ltd. The centre currently comprises two linked sites, Canterbury Children's Centre and Kingsley Primary School. It was designated in 2004 and located in a purpose-built community centre. The Canterbury Centre includes pre-school provision during term time and a nursery that provides day care for up to 44 children aged from six months to five years, from 8am to 6pm for 48 weeks of the year. It also offers holiday activities, family support and outreach services. The centre has provided courses for adults learning English as an additional language and computer courses.

The centre serves an area of high social and economic disadvantage that is culturally and ethnically diverse. Most families are from minority ethnic communities with Asian families making up the largest group. Adults have low levels of skills and at 30%, unemployment is higher than the borough average, with 18% of adults claiming out-of-work benefits. Higher than average numbers of families live in rented accommodation than in the rest of Croydon. The health of families is worse than in the borough as a whole and almost 30% of children are overweight. Many of the children attending the nursery have low levels of language and communication skills, special educational needs and English as an additional language.

The Canterbury Centre is currently undergoing significant change and the senior management team is newly appointed to take this forward.

## 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

The Canterbury Centre is satisfactory overall. It provides services of good quality and meets the needs of its users well but its effectiveness is currently constrained by some limitations in its leadership and management. The centre offers good value for money. Activities are well attended and the centre is successful in signposting its users to services offered elsewhere while it works proactively to extend its own offer. Outcomes are good overall, although facilities within the centre do not support integrated working with health services. Users are not involved enough in the governance of the centre and some important aspects of leadership and management are in the process of improvement or not yet in place.

The centre's care, guidance and support for families are excellent and make a significant difference to the lives of many parents and children. Good systems for assessing the needs of children and families help to tailor services to individuals. In this way, the centre has shown success in improving outcomes for the most vulnerable, such as in adopting healthier lifestyles and coping with stress. Children are safe and protected well. They enjoy their learning thoroughly and make at least satisfactory and often good progress. Parents learn much about how to support their children and a significant number have taken courses, for example in English as an additional language, which have helped them to gain qualifications and work. The centre is highly welcoming. Staff are respectful of both children and adults and relationships are harmonious. Staff value and use users' views about provision to improve services and parents are confident about sharing personal concerns with staff because they get the help they need.

Staff show a high level of commitment and a strong sense of purpose. Strong multi-agency partnerships and community networks improve outcomes for families. Partnerships with parents are a particular strength. Safeguarding arrangements are good, resources are used and managed well to improve outcomes for families and the expertise of staff is used increasingly in the running of the centre. The inclusion of all families is central to the centre's vision and practice. Staff speak the range of

languages used in the community and effective family support and outreach work with vulnerable groups, such as with parents in temporary accommodation, improves outcomes.

The trustees and the newly appointed senior team are focused on maintaining good quality services, extending the range and reach of the centre's provision and improving outcomes. The vision for the future of the centre is clear and discussions with partners on the way forward are underway. Restructuring is strengthening the centre's capacity to deliver a wider range of targeted services. Change is managed well and supported very well by the trustees and the local authority. Consolidating arrangements for governance and accountability, embedding the new management structure and linking the advisory board more closely to the centre, are in transition. Although action plans identify the right priorities and targets, intended outcomes are not clear enough to measure how well the centre is doing and what it needs to do to improve further. Evaluation of the centre's work is not yet fully effective because it is not using all the evidence available to it from feedback and data to target its work and plan for the future. Taking all these factors into account, the capacity for future improvement is satisfactory.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Strengthen governance and accountability arrangements by:
  - embedding the new management structure
  - linking the advisory board more closely to the centre
  - including parents and carers and other users of services in the governance of the centre.
  
- Work with the local authority to install facilities for health services to be provided in the centre.
  
- Strengthen evaluation by ensuring that the centre:
  - uses evidence from feedback to show clearly the impact of its services on outcomes
  - uses other data and information to evaluate and target its work and to plan for the future
  - has action plans with clear outcomes and measurable targets.

## **How good are outcomes for users?**

<b>2</b>
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Outcomes for children and families who use the centre are mostly good. Children enjoy healthy meals and snacks and have good opportunities for outdoor play that develop their physical skills. 'BOOST' sessions help families to adopt healthier living

through regular exercise and good nutrition, as do special events such as 'Well London' and community days. However, integrated working with health and the centre's impact on health outcomes is relatively limited. For example, a hand basin is not yet installed in accommodation that would be otherwise suitable for health services. This omission prevents the centre offering the specialist advice and support to parents and carers of babies and young children to address health needs in the local community, such as high levels of childhood obesity.

Children show safe behaviour and a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Outcomes are improving for children assessed as in need and on child protection plans. Parents are well aware of how to prevent accidents through advice and support from home visits, group sessions, special events such as community days and family support work. They report feeling safe at the centre and share concerns with staff. As a result, strong levels of success in improving their confidence and skills to deal with risks to their children from traumatic events in their lives, such as domestic violence, are a significant feature of the centre's work.

Children make at least satisfactory and often good progress in their learning and social development from their starting points. They enjoy their learning a good deal and are prepared for school well. Parents like coming to the centre because they learn about how to support their children's learning and development at home and use the activities that they are given to do so. 'Stay and play' sessions in particular provide them with interesting ideas. Outcomes for parents learning English as an additional language are good in that a significant number achieve qualifications.

Children make good progress in their personal development, behave well and forge good relationships with others. The centre's role in the community is established strongly. It is highly welcoming and respectful to both children and adults and this positive behaviour is modelled by families using the centre. Parents are encouraged strongly to express their views on the quality of support from the centre and do so with confidence, knowing that staff value what they say. The parents' forum has recently been reinstated, but users do not yet contribute fully to the governance of the centre.

Children make good progress in developing skills for learning and records of their development are used to ensure a smooth transition to school. Parents and carers receive much help for developing their independence through provision for adult learning, such as for English as an additional language, and some continue onto training and employment. Parents and carers also receive valuable advice for training and employment from effective signposting to Jobcentre Plus, and personal support enables them to access benefits to which they are entitled, including for childcare and housing.

<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>
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<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?**

**2**

The centre knows the needs of its users very well. Thorough and sensitive assessment ensures that services are tailored to individual children and families and records show improved outcomes. For children, regular observations and rigorous review of their progress inform next steps in learning well. Multi-agency meetings promptly identify those with additional learning needs and secure good support, such as guidance for addressing special educational needs and challenging behaviour. Family support, outreach workers and good partnerships with a range of agencies ensure good access to appropriate services for vulnerable families, such as health facilities offered elsewhere.

A wide variety of well-planned, stimulating and enjoyable activities and good resources help children learn and develop. Learning opportunities for adults are of the same good quality, as are activities planned for parents and carers and children together. The personal achievement of adults is celebrated and the centre's strong encouragement to continue in learning results in increased confidence and raised aspirations. Some parents continue to gain qualifications, such as in childcare, some find work or work placements and others volunteer.

The good quality of services for children is a key strength of the centre, as are services that develop parenting skills, such as 'stay and play'. Holiday activities and community events receive equally positive feedback from users. Numbers attending are increasing. Prompt referrals direct targeted groups in the reach area to services not provided by the centre. Records and feedback show the success of effective support, for example in completing forms and making appointments that access services provided by the borough. The centre is acutely aware of current gaps in its services, such as for baby clinics, additional pre-school provision and opportunities for adult learning, and it is determined to extend its offer.

Care, guidance and support for children and parents of outstanding quality characterises the work of the centre and its effectiveness enables the centre's users to develop the well-being of their families with confidence and independence. Children have very good relationships with staff who are warm and caring. Strong and trusting relationships with parents encourage them to seek help when needed.

Many do so and several report effective personalised support that has helped them to overcome major difficulties in their lives, improved their self-esteem, developed their parenting skills, helped them to cope with family relationships and prevented family breakdown.

<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?**

**3**

While the centre is well organised, runs smoothly on a daily basis and offers good value for money, some limitations in its governance, accountability and evaluation currently inhibit its development. Centre staff work well as a team and show strong commitment to its day-to-day work. Services and activities are of good quality, meet local need well and are well attended. Users of the centre are encouraged strongly to offer their views on the quality and impact of services and many do so. They identify strong satisfaction and generally good outcomes. A parents' forum has been recently reinstated to strengthen their role in developing provision but users do not yet contribute as much as they should to how the centre is run. Resources are used well for the benefit of users. Staff are deployed to make the best use of their skills so that outcomes for families improve, and their expertise is used increasingly in the running of the centre. The purpose-built accommodation, which is welcoming, inclusive and safe, encourages reluctant families to use its services. Outreach services to vulnerable groups in the community improve outcomes for families experiencing difficulty.

The inclusion of all children and their families is central to the centre's vision and effective in practice. Statutory duties are met. The centre has good information about the groups of users it serves and consistently seeks their feedback on the quality and usefulness of provision. Leaflets and information on the centre's services and those within the local area are highly accessible, available in community languages and used by parents. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that relevant information about each child's background and needs informs provision. Children with additional needs receive good multi-agency support that improves outcomes in their learning and welfare. Parents from diverse groups meet with others during 'stay and play' sessions and share the achievements of their children through pictorial records of their 'learning journeys'. The needs of vulnerable families are assessed and met well through effective family support and outreach work that



reduces isolation, and from well-targeted multi-agency intervention as necessary.

Safeguarding arrangements and those for recruiting and vetting staff are robust and information is updated regularly. The safeguarding policy provides clear guidance for practice. Staff have undertaken relevant training and know what action to take in response to safeguarding concerns. Risk assessments are generally thorough.

Strong partnerships improve outcomes for children and families, and partnerships with parents and carers are very effective. Links with community organisations, such as the Tamil community, reach groups not accessing the centre's services. Parents are successfully signposted to services within the community, such as those in a local church hall, to health services not available at the centre and to provision from its linked sites. Referrals from health professionals are supported very well to overcome, for example, mental health difficulties that affect family relationships.

Considerable changes that are taking place to broaden the efficiency, range and reach of the centre's provision serve to strengthen its effectiveness for the future but reflect on its capacity to improve at a time of transition. New arrangements are not yet implemented fully and not known by all staff. Further co-options to the board of trustees are planned to strengthen its decision making and the locality advisory board is not linked strongly the centre. Staff restructuring is very recent and the newly appointed senior management team has begun to address necessary changes. Roles and responsibilities are clear and training needs are identified and underway. The centre is clear about its strengths, areas for development and key target groups, and the draft service plan identifies the right priorities, but not all targets and outcomes are clear enough to show the impact of services and the progress the centre is making towards its priorities. Attendance at activities, feedback from users, observations of children and families, and family casework shape and improve services but self-evaluation is not supported well by this evidence of successful outcomes. Other data and information available to the centre, such as reach data from the local authority, are not used to help the centre set itself targets, identify how well it is contributing to improving outcomes at a local level and to plan for the future.

<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>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>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>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**

Inspectors took account of the outcomes of the May 2010 inspection of provision in the nursery. This inspection judged the nursery's overall effectiveness to be satisfactory.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Canterbury Centre on 25–26 May 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall, mainly because many changes are taking place at the moment and these are not all in place.

During the inspection, we held meetings with many of the centre's staff and some of the other people who help to run it. We were also pleased to be able to speak to some of you to find out what you think of the centre and the services it offers. We took your views into account when we made our judgements and we also looked at what you have written about activities that you have been to, and the help that has been given to you. You told us that you were pleased with what the centre offers and how it helps you and your children.

We saw and heard about much that is good. The centre has good services that meet your needs well and it gives good value for money. Activities are well attended and staff are good at pointing you towards services that are not on offer in the centre. The way that the centre offers guidance and support to families is excellent and this helps to make a difference to the lives of many of you. The centre takes a lot of care to find out what it needs to do to help individuals and it makes sure that services are right for them. Children in the centre are safe and protected well. They like their learning very much and they make steady and often good progress. Parents learn a

lot about how to support their children at home and many parents have taken courses that have helped them to gain qualifications and work. The centre is very welcoming. Staff are respectful and have good relationships with children and adults. Adults are confident about sharing personal concerns with staff because they get the help they need. You have said that staff value your views about services and you give them important feedback on what difference these make for you.

Those in charge run the centre well and they are determined to make it even better. They have strong partnerships with other services in the borough and with groups in your community, which they use well to help you. Partnerships with parents are strong and staff work hard to include all families in the centre's activities. This is helped by the fact that staff speak the languages used in your community and work with families in their homes as well as in the centre.

The changes that are taking place are going well but we have asked the centre to make sure that new arrangements work well, to strengthen its plans and to use all the information that it has available to it to help plan for the future. We have also asked the centre to work with the borough so that health services are based there, and to get better at including those who use the centre in the way it is run.

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