

Inspection report for Selhurst Children's Centre

Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	365842
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

Centre governance	Governing body of Selhurst Early Years Centre
Centre leader	Anita Mohindra
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Selhurst Early Years Centre
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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.

An inspection of the maintained Nursery was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with parents, senior managers from the centre, members of the governing body and professionals from a number of partner organisations, including health and a range of voluntary sector providers. 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

Selhurst Children's Centre is situated in South Norwood. The centre was designated in May 2007. The community is diverse, ethnically, socially, culturally and economically, and the Nursery school and children's centre serve an area of mixed housing with significant pockets of deprivation. There is a high level of workless households and dependence on benefits. Over a fifth of households with children are lone parents. Children come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and more than half of the children in the Nursery school speak English as an additional language. Children enter the Nursery with levels of skills that are below expectations for their age. The centre provides the full core offer of services for 0–5-year-olds and their

parents and carers by working in partnership with a wide range of services commissioned by Croydon Council. **The local authority have delegated full responsibility for governance to the governing body of Selhurst Early Years Centre.** During its four- year history as a children’s centre, the range of provision has increased. The centre opens six days a week in response to need.

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

Selhurst is a good children’s centre. Parents and carers, children and adults who work in the centre all praise the quality of the work it does. Those who participate in its wide variety of activities or use its facilities benefit significantly and users talk positively about their experiences. The centre has a good impact on the lives of children and their families. One user stated, ‘There’s always lots to do here and staff are friendly and helpful.’ Another said that they had been well supported by staff during a recent family crisis and were directed to other organisations that provided the help they needed.

Over the last three years, the centre has been developing its offer steadily and, as a result, is engaging many more families. Activities are popular and very well attended. The headteacher and centre manager work hard to ensure that the centre provides what the community needs. Consequently, its profile in the local area has been raised. The centre’s performance has improved, outcomes for users are good and its strategic plan is realistic. Self-evaluation is accurate and centre staff have a good understanding of what they do well and where they need to make improvements in order to improve the life chances of children and their families. In light of this, the centre’s capacity for improvement is good.

The centre is managed well and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. This is the result of good-quality teamworking between the headteacher, the centre manager and all staff. Together, they have contributed much to the development of the centre. An outstanding area of its work is the way it has increased its range of services, activities and opportunities to meet the needs of users and the wider community. For example, opening hours have been extended to Saturday mornings. This is because of the way the views of users are taken into account to change and tweak provision. Parents and carers say they value the way that they are consulted through the ‘wish list’. As a result, the centre is able to ensure that services reflect the needs of children and families.

Any users who have difficulty accessing services are supported well, for example through crèche facilities while undertaking courses. Some of these are accredited and help those users who need to improve their basic skills in order to get back into employment. Those from minority ethnic groups who speak English as an additional language are also helped through translators. The support group for parents whose children have special educational needs and/or disabilities has a good uptake. Any individuals who need extra support and guidance are identified by centre staff and good inter-agency working ensures they are well supported. A high priority is given to welfare and safety. All adults are vetted carefully to ensure they are suitable to work with children. **Safeguarding procedures are robust and as a result users benefit from a safe and secure environment which builds their confidence.**

Leaders make effective use of information such as users' feedback on the sessions they attend and detailed case studies to evaluate the impact of services. They are currently implementing new systems for recording data about the different groups served by the centre and their take-up of services but these systems are in the early stages of development. The use of national and local data to gauge the longer-term impact of the centre is also at an early stage of development. There are good systems for assessing children's progress in the Nursery, but less information about how well they learn in the 'drop-in' sessions.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Improve the centre's use of data in evaluating the impact of its services by:
 - refining the systems for recording and analysing information about the take-up of services by the different groups in the reach area
 - making increasingly rigorous use of national and local data to measure the longer-term impact of services on the outcomes for users.
- Implement effective systems for assessing and recording children's learning during drop-in sessions.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Outcomes are good in all areas. 'Come and cook' sessions have had a positive impact on attitudes to eating and sessions are well attended. The centre has made its own recipe book which parents are keen to borrow. Easy access to health specialists through strong partnership working ensures parents are more confident in matters such as breastfeeding and weaning their babies. They say they appreciate the helpful advice provided by the family support assistants who work alongside them on a one-to-one basis. This develops confidence and independence. Parents have made changes to their lifestyle as a result of the 'Healthy Lifestyle Course' and were able to make new friends. It is clear that the centre has made a positive difference to many families. The available data are beginning to reflect the positive impact of the centre's work in some areas. In others, it is difficult to gain a clear picture of how well it is doing, for example in helping users to stop smoking or in gauging trends in teenage pregnancies. Children who use the centre improve their physical well-being by playing in the outdoor area.

Parents are happy in the knowledge that their children are safe during their time at the centre. **Safeguarding procedures are robust and as a result users benefit from a safe and secure environment which builds their confidence.** Staff ensure that children behave sensibly and learn how to share and take turns. They use toys and other equipment in a safe way. Many parents have benefited from the parenting groups and advice provided by the centre. For example, some have attended support groups to help with behaviour management. The safety of children has been further enhanced through the effective support offered to parents which has enabled them to improve their parenting skills. Users have also benefited from the installation of smoke alarms and support with assessing risk, for example road safety. **As a result, parents and carers feel more confident in providing a safer environment for their children.** The common assessment framework process is well established in the centre and is used well to support children and their families. It is used particularly sensitively with some vulnerable families and with those from minority ethnic groups. The good work done with the refugee centre and the Turkish group has ensured that these families have been encouraged to attend the centre. Well-targeted casework contributes effectively towards improving the lives of those children with child protection plans and looked after children. In addition, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are catered for well.

On the whole, children's behaviour is good. They learn to take turns and to share with each other. They are confident to speak to visitors and ask questions about why they are in the centre. Children make good progress, especially in developing their language and communication skills. This is because staff model language consistently during focus sessions, particularly in the sensory room. Two-year-olds were keen to practise their colours while taking turns to talk about each one. Some used computers independently while others cut, pasted and stuck materials to make pictures. They move freely, make choices and develop their independence as they use resources that reflect all areas of learning during indoor and outside play. They are happy and purposefully engaged in play, supported by staff and parents. Adults make progress in their learning through courses run by the centre, some of which are accredited, for example in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). In addition, parents have many opportunities to learn alongside their children in 'play and stay' sessions. Parents are proud of the books they have made which demonstrate their children's learning. Informal systems like these enable leaders to know where users are in their learning but these do not always capture information well enough to gauge the impact of their work.

Users give their views about the centre in a number of different ways such as a 'wish list', questionnaires, comment books and through the 'open door policy' the centre has developed. Parents are pleased that many of their suggestions are acted upon by centre staff. One said, 'Staff are always willing to listen to what I say.' Some parents are part of the advisory board, parents' forum and governing body. This ensures that users are able to contribute effectively to the strategic management of the centre and are well informed about future developments. Good support and advice are

provided for users about a range of employment opportunities and about how to improve chances of gaining work. However, the impact of this is not as good as it could be as jobs are not advertised proactively in the centre through Jobcentre Plus.

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	2

How good is the provision?

2

Early assessment of need is a high priority for the centre, for example through first ports of call such as midwives. The centre has recently begun to have 'handover' meetings to ensure that no information about families' specific needs is missed. The most vulnerable are well signposted to other services they might need and good quality inter-agency work effectively improves outcomes for these families. Any referrals are made efficiently so that the appropriate professionals are engaged to serve the child's needs. Common assessment framework procedures are followed carefully if required. **The most vulnerable children have effective child protection plans in place which ensure their safety and well being.** A wide range of case study evidence demonstrates the centre's high levels of success in improving the quality of life for those who face significant challenges in their lives. The e-start data system is in the process of being implemented but is not yet fully operational. The formal analysis of data to inform planning is developing but not yet as effective as it could be.

As children move from the 'stay and play' sessions into the Nursery the family support workers meet with the key workers to talk about the children's needs and assess their capabilities. This enables a smooth transition. Assessments made of those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are based on staff's accurate observations of learning. These show that children make good progress in their learning during their time at the centre. There is less information about how well users and their children make progress during 'drop-in' sessions but systems are currently being developed for those who attend the 'stay and play' and other

parenting groups. Provision for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. The centre works well with parents, and individual education plans are regularly reviewed. This ensures targets are set as a result. A local authority staff member meets with the centre manager to discuss targeted support for parents. Staff discuss with parents courses suitable for their needs, such as accredited literacy, language or numeracy. Other courses provide exceptionally well for families, for example a 'digital families course' helps parents to learn about using ICT equipment with their children. Children and families are able to learn together. Anything that the parents are learning is linked to the children's learning; for example support for parents who are developing their spelling skills is linked effectively to how children learn to spell at school. Extra Saturday provision has contributed greatly to the outcomes for users of all ages. There are opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities, including drumming and football.

Good care, guidance and support offered to young children, parents and other users ensure they are well supported in times of difficulty. Services are well promoted in the community through an active outreach programme delivered through family support resources. Priority is given to the face-to-face promotion of services and support, especially for the most vulnerable. Users say that these services have improved their quality of life. In addition, if a service is required which the centre cannot offer, families are directed to where they are able to access it. The centre engages particularly well with users to ensure services meet their needs.

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	1
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

Leaders and managers are effective in ensuring that provision and the outcomes for users are improving. Enthusiastic governors contribute well to developments at the centre and there are clear lines of accountability. **They ensure that procedures in place to safeguard children are rigorous and regularly review policies for child protection and health and safety. This ensures that the centre is a safe place for children and their families.** The performance management arrangements for staff are good and targets are linked clearly to training needs and the service plan. The advisory board is well developed and contributes effectively to evaluating the centre's effectiveness. Strong relationships with other agencies and health professionals ensure that effective processes are in place to cross-refer

between different services. A wide range of case studies show that integrated approaches work well and are narrowing the gap between more vulnerable groups and the general population. Users' feedback is used well to inform the centre's self-evaluation and the identification of priorities. Systems for recording and using data to evaluate the centre's impact, particularly over the longer term, are at a relatively early stage of development.

Staff are deployed well and resources are effectively matched to the needs of users. As a result, the centre provides good value for money. The headteacher and centre manager work extremely well together and have ensured that their vision for the future has been shared by staff and users alike. Consequently, all have a clear understanding of the targets to be achieved. Leaders at all levels want nothing short of the best for children, parents and carers, and other users. The centre manager liaises with an array of partners to ensure that high-risk families do not fall through the net. Links with health services are effective and ensure that outcomes for users continue to improve, particularly health, safety, welfare and economic well-being. Users also comment about the way the centre always has time for them. As one commented, 'Staff are always approachable and easy to talk to.' Equality and diversity are promoted well. The centre provides easy access for those users with disabilities. Managers are clear that early identification of need is crucial. Children on the two-year-old pilot are tracked carefully and data show that this has been effective in enabling boys to catch up with girls in their learning and development. The diverse needs of the centre are represented well. Effective links with community groups are used well to break down cultural and language barriers. Leaders make every effort to engage families not currently involved in the centre, for example by renting a stall in a local market to publicise services.

Safeguarding arrangements are good as a result of well-managed inter-agency working and the focus of all staff on early intervention and effective teamwork. High levels of care for the most vulnerable, including those with emotional and physical issues, ensure the improving well-being of users. The centre is proactive in providing advice and support for users involved in domestic violence. Emotional support has been provided for some users who needed temporary refuge. Case studies show how the centre has helped to rebuild confidence so that users can move on with their lives. Systems for the vetting of adults to ensure their suitability for work are effective.

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	2
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

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

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision within the Selhurst Early Years Centre was inspected at the same time under the section 5 arrangements for the inspection of schools.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Selhurst Children's Centre on 9–10 June. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank those of you who took the time to speak to us during the recent inspection. When we spoke to you, you told us that you were particularly pleased with the caring and supportive attitudes of all staff at the centre. You also said that you were pleased with the way the centre gathers your views and opinions and that you feel listened to.

We found that the good teamworking between the headteacher, centre manager and all the staff ensures that children develop well and that your skills and confidence as parents and carers grows. Everyone works hard to provide clear, helpful advice about how to stay fit and healthy. It was good to hear about the 'come and cook' sessions and how they led to a book of recipes which you like to borrow. It was also encouraging to hear how some of you have become more confident in managing your children's behaviour through 'lunch and learn'. The centre is a central place where you are able to get advice, support and help, and many of you make new

friends there. The centre also steers you towards other agencies for extra help and support, and some of you have been able to return to work as a result.

You are able to participate in a variety of activities with and without your children, even on a Saturday. You have told us that you enjoy these, particularly the gardening, 'stay and play', cooking and baby massage. You have found literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology courses enjoyable. They have made you feel more confident.

The centre is a safe and secure place to bring your children. The inside spaces and outside grounds are welcoming and provide areas for your children to play and explore while they learn. Most of the children are making at least good progress in many areas of their development. Sometimes, the centre staff do not always write down the progress they see during 'drop in' sessions so we have asked them to do this so that they can gain a clearer picture of how well your children are doing.

Some statistical information is being used to help plan for future services but it is not yet fully computerised. This means that leaders cannot always see how well they are doing or whether they have met targets. We have asked the leaders to ensure that this information is 'at their fingertips' so it can better help them to spot the things they need to improve. It will also help them to see how well they are doing compared to other centres locally and nationally.

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.