

Inspection report for Millfields Children's Centre

Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	367780
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2011
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Centre governance	The Governing Body of Millfields Community School
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Date of previous inspection	This is the centre's first inspection
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Linked school if applicable	Millfields Community School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Millfields Children's Centre Day Care EY345034

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.

Report published: June 2011



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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 management team, representatives from the cluster group, the governing board sub-committee, The Learning Trust and the head of early years. They spoke to parents and carers who attend the centre and to partner organisations including Jobcentre Plus and the midwife.

They observed the centre's work including the childminding network, 'Stay and Play' and 'Big Cook, Little Cook'. They looked at a range of relevant documentation including the centre's self-evaluation and action planning.

Information about the centre

Millfields Children's Centre was designated in 2006 and is governed by a sub-committee of the governing body of Millfields Community School, which is situated on the same site. The school headteacher has overall responsibility for the centre. The day-to-day centre management is the responsibility of the assistant headteacher who is also part of the school. They have specific responsibility for early years and divide their time between the centre and the school. The centre is based in the school with a separate entrance. Centre staff are employed directly by the school. Day care is offered on site and is managed through the school. The day care was inspected separately. There is also a nursery in the school.

The centre is open for 48 weeks of the year, from 8am to 6pm weekdays, and on some Saturdays. The centre is a Phase 1 centre and provides the full core offer. Services are run within the centre and through a cluster working model. There are five centres within this cluster. Some services work at a cluster level with other services delivered at a local children's centre level. Users are encouraged to attend the most accessible locations for them.

The centre's catchment area is mixed in terms of deprivation. The local population is mostly White British, with approximately one third from African families. There are a small but increasing number of eastern Europeans moving into the area. The number of children under five living in workless households is above the national average and this figure is increasing. Attainment on entry to Nursery is below average. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage around 66% of children achieve at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with communication, language and literacy and physical development the weaker areas.

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

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

Millfields Children's Centre is a good and improving centre, with some outstanding features. The care, guidance and support, alongside the level of enjoyment and achievement of users at the centre, are particular strengths. The centre is fully inclusive and welcoming to all children and families. Some parents and carers travel specifically to this centre and report that this is due to the friendliness of the staff and how they are made to feel welcome. Users value the safe and welcoming environment provided there. The safeguarding of all who use the centre is a high priority. Risk assessments are undertaken across the centre. Recruitment procedures are rigorous and robust and are consistent with the procedures in the school.

The partnership working of the centre is outstanding. The centre management team has made excellent links with partner organisations and has been proactive in engaging them in the centre. They have also worked hard at ensuring that the children's centre and day care are an integral part of the school. Joint in-service training, resources, policies and procedures, and shared staff have supported this work. The leadership team is clear about the strengths of the centre and the areas where it needs to develop and this feeds into its action planning. The baseline assessment and success measures for some areas, however, lack specific detail. Data are available for the centre in relation to its reach area and the impact of its work in

bringing improved outcomes to users within the cluster. However, data are not always broken down to centre level available and this limits the centre's ability to accurately assess its work, to set centre-specific targets and to measure their success.

Outcomes for users are good overall. Parents and carers value the positive relationships that staff build with them and their children. They are able to contribute to the work of the centre through regular satisfaction surveys and evaluations of specific activities. Parents and carers have the opportunity to be part of the parents' forum and a crèche is provided to enable them to attend. Their views and ideas are acted upon and discussed at the children's centre governing body sub-group. The group has recently been established and members are very clear about their responsibilities. They are aware of their role and the actions they need to take to develop the group as it becomes more established.

The centre is part of a cluster model of children's centres within Hackney. There are six centres within this cluster. Some services, such as the outreach team, work on a cluster level with other services delivered at a local children's centre level. The cluster works hard to ensure that resources are allocated to the most appropriate centre. This also reduces the risk of duplication of services and resources and supports the centre's focus on providing excellent value for money. The centre is aware of what it needs to do in order to develop further and therefore the capacity to improve is good.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Together with the local authority and partners, improve the quality of data available in order to:
 - assess more accurately the needs of the community within its reach area
 - evaluate the effectiveness of services
 - track accurately the impact services are having on improving outcomes for users.
- Develop the action plan by including more specific targets, reviewing it regularly and setting new targets when necessary.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

The centre is making a positive contribution to improving the outcomes for its users through good quality services. Discussions with users show high satisfaction levels with the services offered. The centre has been proactive in addressing the rise in obesity levels. Sessions such as 'Big Cook, Little Cook' have encouraged parents and

carers to prepare healthier meals at home. Children, parents and carers have also enjoyed growing and eating fruit and vegetables from the garden. Sessions which promote exercise have also been introduced for families, with some specific adult-only activities, for example, yoga. Attendance at children's developmental checks is improving and parents and carers are signposted to baby massage sessions which support their babies' emotional development.

High regard is given to promoting safety at the centre and, as a result, families feel safe when accessing services. Parents and carers have developed a greater understanding of first-aid treatment through attending first-aid courses. Discussions at weekly cause-for-concern meetings with the centre and regular multi-agency team meetings ensure that families who are experiencing difficulties are identified early. Strong partnership working and early identification of families ensure that additional support is offered and has a positive impact on improving their situations and securing children's safety. Parents and carers are gaining confidence and skills in how to manage their children's behaviour through positive role modelling by staff and structured parenting programmes.

Parents and carers engage in their children's learning and information available helps them to gain a greater understanding of how they can support their children's development. The integrated approach to working ensures that parents and carers continue to engage with their children's learning through the day care and school nursery. Children have many opportunities to engage in stimulating activities and are also given plenty of opportunities to play outside in the covered roof garden. Staff have begun to evaluate the impact on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores, and children who attend the centre make better progress than those who do not attend. The parents' forum meets regularly and feeds into the work of the centre. Parents and carers are encouraged to feed back on the work of the centre. Children's behaviour at the centre is excellent and staff set clear boundaries for the children and act as positive role models.

Parents and carers are raising their aspirations and gaining confidence in their skills and abilities through attending a range of courses. The partnership with Jobcentre Plus has shown some success in parents and carers being able to gain paid employment. There has been greater success in parents and carers accessing external training and college courses to improve their skills and employability. All users seen as part of the inspection spoke highly about how they enjoy attending the centre and the activities it provides.

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	1

their personal and social development	
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

There is a range of good quality services and activities which are matched to the needs of the current users. Initial assessments are undertaken by a range of professionals and individual families are identified. The centre works closely with other local children's centres and other agencies to support individual families. There are regular opportunities for centre representatives to meet at multi-agency meetings to discuss individual families. The use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process for individual families ensures that they receive support from the most appropriate services.

The centre is highly committed to promoting learning and development for users, ensuring enjoyment and the range of services meets their needs well. The centre recognises the need to do more work to engage certain groups of the community. It has recently developed the involvement of fathers at the centre through its 'Dads behaving Dadly' group. As one father commented about attending with his son, 'It's good for him and it's good for me.' The centre has begun to develop its work engaging teenage parents; however, it is too early to assess the impact of this work. The management team has established seamless links between the children's centre, day care and school. These established links and excellent partnership working have been used in a range of ways to improve outcomes for families. For example, they have been able to identify gaps in children's learning and focus activities across the range of services to reduce the gap.

The various drop-in sessions provide a range of activities for parents and carers to engage in their children's play. Information displayed around the centre informs parents and carers what their children are learning from different activities. The provision of the toy library allows parents and carers to access a range of equipment and resources in order to support their children's learning at home. Users have the opportunity to participate in a range of activities and training at the centre including courses on English as a second language and computer courses.

Developmental checks are offered by the health visitor at the centre when children are aged between eight and 10 months and at 27 months. The centre has seen a significant increase in parents and carers attending these checks. The provision of the baby massage sessions on the same morning as the eight to 10 month developmental checks encourages attendance at both. Effective signposting and information in the centre ensure that parents and carers are aware of the different

activities at the centre and what it has to offer. The quality of care provided by the centre is excellent. The personalised support offered to centre users very effectively helps families develop their well-being across all outcome areas. Parents and carers report that staff treat them with respect and that they are always professional and available to help. Parents and carers feel that they can approach staff for support in times of crisis. One parent who had used the centre told us how she enjoyed coming to the centre and commented, 'Millfields became part of my life.'

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	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The day-to-day management of the centre is very well organised and this ensures that the centre's activities run smoothly. Governance arrangements are secure and understood at all levels. The governing body sub-committee, which is newly established, is clear about its focus. It has been quick to understand the role of the centre and understand its responsibilities in holding the centre to account and improving it. Staff morale is high and all are committed to providing children and families with good quality services. The staff team are enthusiastic and passionate about their work. They are committed to improving the outcomes of users by developing services further. The centre has been proactive in obtaining data from some partner organisations and data are used at centre level and cluster level to evaluate the effectiveness of their work. However, a lack of a full range of data at centre level impacts on the centre's ability to improve its specific services further. Despite this, the action planning covers the main priorities for the centre, although it sometimes lacks specific baseline information and measurable success criteria. The centre encourages feedback from parents and carers, users and partner organisations of the centre. They have built up excellent partnerships and these contribute to evaluating and shaping centre services.

The premises are secure and there is a shared entrance with the day care facility. Staff are vigilant in maintaining a safe and secure environment. Rigorous recruitment procedures, undertaken centrally by the school, are in place to ensure that staff and volunteers are appropriately checked and cleared to work with children. Commissioned services are responsible for checking the suitability of their own staff who work at the centre. Safeguarding arrangements are in place and these are consistently effective across all of Millfield's services.

Equality and diversity are promoted well throughout the centre. The centre staff speak a range of different languages and are available to translate if required. The centre has translated the timetable of centre events into a number of different languages and these are displayed in the centre's reception area. Staff are confident to challenge discrimination and to discuss any issues with parents and carers. They are working to involve more fathers at the centre. The building is fully wheelchair accessible and the centre has worked at improving facilities for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities by developing the sensory area which is located within the school. The centre has recently completed an equality and diversity audit and has been proactive in developing some areas further.

The centre provides excellent value for money. The cluster works hard to ensure that resources are allocated to the most appropriate centre, which reduces the risk of duplication of services and resources. The centre ensures that commissioned services provide value for money and regular evaluations ensure they continue to do so. The excellent partnership working with the school, the sharing of resources and joint staff training allow access to a wider range of resources and experiences.

The centre is at the heart of the community and staff have worked hard to promote the centre. This work is having an impact on improving attendance figures. However, the lack of data specific to the centre means that senior leaders cannot accurately identify areas where they need to direct their resources.

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	1
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	1
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider	2

community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	
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Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The inspection of the day care attached to the children's centre was inspected in February 2011 and was judged to be good overall.

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. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected Millfields Children's Centre on 22 and 23 June 2011. We judged the centre as good overall with some outstanding features.

The centre, which is based within Millfields Community School, provides you and your children with a safe and secure environment. You report that you feel valued and well cared for and that staff know when you need support and are there to help you. It is part of, and works with, a cluster of local children's centres. This working together is a strength and benefits you as you are encouraged to visit any of the centres.

The centre uses its available space effectively and the main activity room is well used. Your children are also given plenty of opportunities to play outside in the covered roof garden.

Staff at the centre value your comments and contributions about how the centre can improve and, where possible, they act on these. They undertake regular evaluations of the services and ask your views through questionnaires. The staff know the community well and are very committed to supporting you and your children's development and skills. Many of your children access the children's centre nursery and the school. The staff across these provisions have worked hard to ensure that transitions for your children between the services are smooth.

The senior leadership team of the centre and the governing body sub-committee meet together. They have a clear understanding of how the centre needs to develop. Your views are sought through the parents' forum and are taken forward to the sub-committee to help the centre improve its services further.

The centre receives a range of data from the local authority. Services available to you could be more effective if the centre had data which was specific to it and we

have asked it to make sure that it obtains this data and uses it. This would help the centre to target its work more effectively and also check that it is improving the outcomes for you and your families.

The centre self-evaluates the services it offers. It looks at areas where it needs to develop and these feed into its action plan. We have asked it to make targets and measures of success clearer. Your views about the centre feed into this process. Those of you who are on the sub-committee are effectively involved in reviewing the action plan.

There is mutual respect between staff and all the users. One of you commented that 'staff are respectful and friendly' and we agree. The staff have high expectations of you and want you to achieve. They are very skilled in offering you an excellent level of care, guidance and support. One of you commented, 'They know when you are having a bad day and will check out that you are ok.'

You report that you enjoy the courses at the centre. Those of you who access courses to develop your parenting skills report a big improvement as a result. You value the crèche that is provided for your children as this allows you to focus on your studies.

We would like to thank the centre users for speaking to us and contributing to the inspection of Millfields Children's Centre.

We wish you and your children all the best for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.