

Inspection report for Pinner Wood Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Harrow
Inspection number	365832
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Centre governance	London Borough of Harrow
Centre leader	Kelly Edwards
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Pinner Wood School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Pinner Wood School

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 co-located/partner primary school 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, the acting centre coordinator, deputy centre coordinator, local authority service manager and other staff from across the Harrow network of children's centres, including outreach workers and social welfare workers. Inspectors observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Pinner Wood, a phase two children's centre, formally opened in January 2009 and is co-located on the site of Pinner Wood School. The centre delivers a range of services including a crèche facility for the children of adult learners, family learning, smoking cessation, speech and language therapy and midwifery. Families are encouraged and able to access services from any of the children's centres in Harrow and outreach services are delivered to families from across this network.

The centre is situated in Pinner ward, Harrow. Pinner ward is ranked as the 13th poorest for families living on income of less than £15,000 and 8th for the number of individuals claiming income support. Pinner has one of the lowest rates of unemployment in Harrow. There is one Super Output Area in Pinner ward, the Mill Farm housing estate, which is one of England's 20% most deprived.

Sixty one per cent of children speak English as their first language, and other languages spoken include Gujarati, Tamil and Urdu. Census data from 2001 show that the population of Pinner was 78% White, including White British, 15% Asian, 4% Black and 3% Chinese and other. However, the demographics are changing and

in the Pinner cluster of schools, 35% of children are White British, 20% are Asian Indian and 15% are of other Asian origin. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge, skills and understanding generally below those expected for their age.

The local authority is responsible for governance. A joint management committee, which oversees the Pinner and Pinner Wood Children’s Centres, operates as the advisory board. The headteacher and a governor of the school are members of the management committee.

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

Pinner Wood Children’s Centre is welcoming and friendly. Parents and children alike say that they feel safe and supported. Since the centre opened in 2009 the number of families accessing services has steadily increased, including those from the more deprived area that the centre serves. Leaders, managers and other staff promote equality and diversity. Parents and children from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds are well represented, and they learn together in activities such as ‘stay and play’, which is helping to strengthen the increasingly diverse local community.

Parents say that the outreach workers and social welfare workers provide good support to them in times of crisis. Those who access counselling cite improvements in their own emotional well-being and ability to cope with adversity. For example, a mother who had suffered with post-natal depression felt more able to support and care for her children. Midwifery clinics are well attended and peer support for breastfeeding is effective. Breastfeeding rates have improved and are now above the national average. A parent explained: ‘I attended breastfeeding classes which helped me to feel more confident about breastfeeding my second child.’

Changes to the way in which speech and language therapy is delivered at the centre, including a new triage system, has helped to reduce waiting times and increased the number of children who receive support to develop their language skills. The use of

the Common Assessment Framework is underdeveloped, and staff do not therefore use a common approach to assessing the needs of children and families.

The achievement of children in the co-located nursery is improving. However, the gap between the lowest achieving children and the other children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has widened over the past three years. Changing demographics, with many children unable to speak English when they arrive in the area, is contributing significantly to this. The children's centre, working closely with extended services and the school, has begun to address this. For example, the centre delivers activities in the summer term and holiday to support children with their transition to Pinner Wood School. Parents are supported to develop their numeracy and literacy skills through, for example, the English for Speakers of Other Languages programme. The centre provides a crèche for their children, which is well resourced. Some parents who access this programme go on to use other services at the centre and access further training to develop skills for work. Links with Jobcentre Plus are limited and support to parents to gain employment is therefore restricted.

Management have not developed systems to routinely evaluate or measure the impact of services, and they do not effectively analyse the data that is available to them. The centre's development plan is not sufficiently outcome focused and does not set out ambitious targets for improvement. Staff are therefore unclear about what the centre's priorities are. However, the management committee has correctly identified that self-evaluation is an area for development and has recently established a working group to improve this. The joint management committee, which includes a governor and the headteacher from Pinner Wood School, is ably positioned to provide the support required to drive these improvements. Capacity to improve is therefore satisfactory.

The centre meets all its statutory duties. Safeguarding procedures are effective and all staff undertake regular safeguarding training.

Recommendations for further improvement

- The local authority should improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - training managers to use effective systems to evaluate the impact of services on individuals
 - supporting staff to use data to identify, for example, vulnerable children and parents, including fathers, who are not accessing the centre, and develop strategies to reach them
 - creating a centre development plan with partners, which is based on robust analysis of data, and which clearly sets out ambitious outcome-based targets for improvement. Ensure that this plan includes specific, measurable, achievable and realistic targets
 - continuously monitoring the centre's development plan, and providing

more targeted support and challenge to enable the centre to improve outcomes for users.

- Make further use of the Common Assessment Framework to strengthen, and standardise, the assessment process for children and families.
- Encourage Jobcentre Plus to work closely with the children’s centre to improve access to employment for centre users.

How good are outcomes for users?

3

Parents, grandparents, and children enjoy attending sessions such as ‘Little Chef Big Food’ during which they learn how to cook healthy food together. As one parent said, ‘these sessions are fabulous’.

Health outcomes for children and families are improving steadily. However, parents do not access the smoking cessation service provided at the children’s centre and the percentage of users who quit smoking remains extremely low.

Parents are positive about the parenting programmes they have experienced and say that these have helped them, for example, to improve their confidence and their children’s behaviour. Children’s behaviour, when they are at the centre, is good and there are no reports of bullying. Their confidence and self-esteem are developed through positive interactions with staff who, for example, say ‘well done for helping to tidy up’.

Adults’ evaluations of the centre’s programmes to improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills, or develop English as an additional language, are positive. However, the lack of effective links between Jobcentre Plus and the centre limits users’ ability to progress into such as work. Case studies demonstrate that children’s language development is improving through a range of provision, including the Triage sessions which are delivered by the speech and language therapist. Children’s Early Years Profile scores in the co-located nursery have improved between 2007 and 2010 and children are well supported to make the transition from the centre to school. Those children that have attended the children’s centre have slightly raised scores compared to the rest of their year group.

Children and parents say that they know how to keep themselves safe and feel safe at the centre. Systems ensure that centre workers carry out regular checks of the grounds and outside play area to ensure that they are safe for children. Numbers of children on the child protection register and those who are looked after are low. Some centre staff are trained to use the Common Assessment Framework. However, its use is limited at present. Information and advice are displayed throughout the centre on a range of safety issues, including domestic violence.

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have

3

healthy lifestyles	
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	3
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	3
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?

3

As one parent said: 'Staff are approachable and professional.' Referrals between services are effective and swift, and families receive targeted support in a timely manner. The number of people accessing counselling, Relate sessions and the crèche facilities between 2009 and 2010 doubled. Parents' evaluations show that the quality of counselling is strong, and that the service helps to improve their emotional well-being. Comments made include 'My counsellor was fantastic, non-judgemental and helped me back into the real world as I was in despair most of the time.' Parents say that the outreach team has supported them with a range of challenges, including sleep patterns, feeding, dealing with allergies and poor behaviour.

The centre provides verbal and written information, advice and guidance on a range of issues to users in a number of different languages. For example, the oral health and dental care service provides advice on encouraging children to brush their teeth and how to register with a dentist.

The Parents As First Teachers (PAFT) sessions are well attended. At the PAFT baby and toddler drop-in session, centre workers create an environment in which parents lead the discussions about health issues that their children are experiencing and what to do about these. Parents and children enjoy these sessions, which promote their purposeful learning and development.

Workers assess the needs of individual children and families and coordinate appropriate support as required. However, there is no common approach to this and staff delivering learning sessions do not always establish the starting points of children effectively. Support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. For example, a case study showed how effective intervention had improved a child's behaviour and prevented him from being permanently excluded.

The number of families using the centre has increased, and 54% of all nought to four year olds living in Pinner ward now access the centre. However, fathers are underrepresented and the centre does not engage sufficiently with families from the Mill Farm area. Families from a wide range of backgrounds including those from

Poland and Afghanistan feel confident to use the centre.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	3
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	3

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

The centre's small part-time management team has high aspirations for children and families and has effectively engaged a number of key partners in delivering services from the centre. The centre is fully accessible and diversity is celebrated at the award ceremonies, for example, where parents from a wide range of backgrounds receive certificates for successfully completing adult learning. Children with disabilities are successfully included in the work of the centre.

The centre's management committee, which includes a wide range of partner organisations, a teenager and a parent, is beginning to provide more effective support and challenge to the children's centre coordinator. The engagement of parents in the governance of the centre is limited. However, as one parent said: 'I feel confident to express my views and they are acted upon by the workers.'

In discussions with staff at all levels, there is some lack of clarity about what the centre's priorities are and what it should do to improve. Data provided by the local authority do not enable the centre to sufficiently identify need at a ward level, and limited National Indicator data, or equivalent, are not routinely made available to the centre. The centre's management therefore is restricted in its ability to set ambitious targets based on local need.

The centre's development plan, which has not recently been updated, is not sufficiently focused on outcomes for users. The centre's self-evaluation is broadly accurate, and managers know what they need to do to improve the centre. Staff evaluate some of the sessions that they deliver and this information shapes future delivery of services. However, the evaluation of outcome data is limited, and managers do not use this to inform the centre's development plan. Supervision of staff is effective and well received by staff.

The way in which staff resources are deployed across the network is efficient and enables the centre to provide a wide range of support from a relatively small physical base. The centre is well used and staff are steadily improving outcomes for users. Value for money is therefore satisfactory.

The effective outreach services ensure that families receive early support to prevent, whenever possible, referrals to social services. Safeguarding procedures are in place and relationships with key agencies, particularly to protect children, are effective. Criminal Record Bureau checks are carried out and the centre is working to implement a policy of renewing these on a three-yearly cycle. Centre staff attend appropriate training. Management ban mobile phones onsite, challenge visitors politely, and request that parents sign to say that they understand about the centre's duty to safeguard children. Information about how to deal with domestic violence is easily accessible in the centre.

Capacity to improve is satisfactory. The centre's management committee, which includes the headteacher and a governor from the recently inspected co-located primary school, is working closely with the centre's management to implement improvements including the development of more effective evaluation.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	3
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	4
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	3
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	3
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	4
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	3
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	3

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

Findings from the concurrent inspection of Pinner Wood School were used to inform some judgements during this inspection.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Pinner Wood Children's Centre on 22 and 23 June 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

The centre has successfully reached more families since it opened in 2009. Just over half of the children aged nought to four in Pinner ward now access Pinner Wood Children's Centre. However, fathers are underrepresented and we have asked the centre to work more closely with the local authority to reach out to those fathers, and families, who do not currently make use of the centre. You can help the centre to provide services to these people by encouraging other parents in your community to attend.

Outreach services are effective and the counselling service is helping more families in times of crisis. As one parent stated in the service evaluation: 'My counsellor was fantastic, non-judgemental and helped me back into the real world as I was in despair most of the time.'

The 'Little Chef Big Food' activities help you and your children to undertake purposeful activities together and to learn more about healthy eating and food from different cultures. The 'Stay and Play' sessions are well attended and are effective at encouraging you to develop positive relationships with your children and to learn about their development.

The support that mothers receive is positive. The midwifery clinics, which are very well attended, and the breastfeeding peer support programme are successfully encouraging more of you to breastfeed your children, which is in turn leading to improved health benefits.

The 'Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities' programme has had positive benefits for families. Many parents say that they now have more confidence and are better able to manage their children's behaviour, for example. All of you that we spoke to during the inspection said that you felt safe and secure at the centre.

The 'English for Speakers of Other Languages' programme has made a positive difference to the lives of many people who are new to your community. The centre works effectively to integrate parents and children from a wide range of backgrounds and ethnicities, for example families from Afghanistan and Poland.

We have made a number of recommendations to the centre to enable it to become more effective. We have asked the local authority and the centre's management committee to be more challenging to the centre's management so that they can drive improvements faster. We have also asked the centre to do more to evaluate how effective services are and to set more ambitious and detailed targets for improvement. You can help the centre to become even better by giving your views on the services you use and getting involved in the running of the centre, through volunteering for example.

We have also asked the centre to work more closely with Jobcentre Plus to improve the support available for those of you who want to gain employment. In addition, we have recommended that the centre's management accelerates the use of the Common Assessment Framework to more effectively understand your needs and provide appropriate support.

We believe that the centre's management, supported by the management committee, has satisfactory capacity to improve the centre.

We wish you well for the future and thank you for making us feel so welcome.

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