

# Inspection report for Nestles Avenue Children's Centre

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Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	367841
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Wendy Ratcliff HMI

Centre governance	Local authority
Centre leader	Surrinder Aulak
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Nestles Avenue Hayes Middlesex UB3 4QA
Telephone number	01895 558147
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	saalak@hillingdon.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	London Borough of Hillingdon, Nestles Avenue Children's Centre

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
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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 registered early years/childcare provision was carried out the week before the inspection of the centre under Section 3 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

This is the first inspection of the centre. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the head of centre, the senior leadership team, members of the advisory group, staff, local authority representatives, and partner agencies, including representatives from the health service. They had informal discussions with parents and children, and visited sessions in the community.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including key policies, the centre's self-evaluation documents, its service plans, action plan, evaluations and data about people who use the centre.

## Inspection judgements

**Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

## Information about the centre

Nestles Avenue Children's Centre was designated in 2003 and was the first children's centre in Hillingdon. It is run directly by the local authority and provides all elements of the core offer. There is an advisory group of representatives from a number of community partners to provide guidance and support. A parent forum, known as a 'coffee mornings/afternoon' feeds into the advisory group.

The centre serves the Pinkwell ward as well as other surrounding areas. There are 975 children under five living in the centre's catchment area, with around 42% of under fours living in poverty. The centre serves one of the 30% deprived areas in the

country. The area has a range of different housing accommodation, which includes temporary housing. The local population comprises of a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Data show that 56% of families are White British or other White backgrounds. Around 33% of families are from Asian backgrounds. There are smaller percentages of other minority ethnic groups and approximately 20 different languages are spoken in the community. There is an increasing number of families of Polish and Somali heritage and a number of asylum seekers and refugees. In 2010 around 35% of children achieved a total of at least 78 points across the Foundation Stage Profile with communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy being the weaker areas. This is lower than both the local authority and national averages.

The centre provides childcare for children under eight years and is registered on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register. Both the childcare provision and the children’s centre are open on weekdays from 8.00am to 6.00pm and are open all year except Christmas and bank holidays.

**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**

Nestles Avenue Children’s Centre makes a good contribution to improving outcomes for users through the good support it provides families. This is because those in charge are demonstrating a clear vision and have an accurate understanding of the centre’s strengths and areas for improvement. There are good relationships with key partners. Together they are taking steps to improve the already good outcomes for users and to develop services for the target groups, for example those in the most deprived area of the reach who are yet to engage in services. As a result, the centre’s capacity to improve further is good.

Staff are passionate about their work and are an effective team. They are involved in the evaluation process that leads to the setting of future targets in line with the priorities set by the local authority. However, targets are not always precise enough to measure the impact of outcomes. The centre has begun to track the longer term impact of its users, for example, by completing learning journeys for some families who are accessing the centre’s services. They are not yet making full use of the available data to fully analyse and track the impact that the services provided are having for all users.

Outcomes for users are good and improving. Those using the centre enjoy and highly appreciate the services offered. They feel the centre is responsive to their needs and

cite many examples of how it has impacted positively on their lives. For example, the course 'Managing Your Money', run by the Citizens Advice Bureau, was successful in raising users' awareness of financial issues including budgeting for meals and dealing with bills. One parent reports increased confidence and 'how to save on bills and save energy at home'. Families are improving their awareness of home safety through events such as Safety Week. Children are making good progress in their communication and language skills because of input from speech and language therapists (SALT) during 'Small Talk' sessions. Users are responding well to health promotions such as the health fair and opportunities during activity sessions to gain a greater understanding of healthy diets. Many users benefit from English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses, which build their confidence, self-esteem and make it easier to be part of the community. For some this has led to gaining recognised qualifications and progress to further training with a view to gaining employment.

Children's safety and well-being are enhanced by the effective implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures. Safeguarding is at the heart of the centre's work. Users benefit from good levels of care, guidance and support. They value the welcoming, inclusive and safe environment, as well as the amount of time staff spend listening to, and supporting them, particularly when they are experiencing a crisis. This is reflected in one user's comment, 'We feel safe here.' The centre has established secure links with outside agencies, such as health visitors and speech therapists, to target specific support for those users who need it the most. Several case studies confirm the positive impact this intervention is having on improving users' lives.

Users make a good contribution to shaping services as the centre regularly seeks their views. The numbers of users accessing the centre's services is increasing and much of this is attributed to families sharing their positive experiences within the community. The data provided by the local authority are helping staff to identify areas of need in the wider community where there are more vulnerable families who are not yet accessing the centre. As a result, staff are distributing information written in English about the centre in these areas. The centre makes good use of interpretation for those using the centre with little or no English as some staff speak other languages and parents help each other. However, written communication is not always accessible for the wider community.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Develop the effectiveness of the centre's evaluation cycle to ensure all available data are more robustly analysed to make targets more precise and to enable outcomes for users to be explicit.
- Consider the way in which information about the centre and its services is provided for the wider community, including those who do not speak English.

## How good are outcomes for users?

2
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Parents and children who attend the centre are well informed to make healthy choices about food based on positive and practical experiences. For example, at the dads' session, fathers gain a greater understanding of the health benefits of making their own pizzas rather than ordering a takeaway. The 'Active Kids' session is helping families to understand the importance of physical exercise leading to healthier lifestyles. Mothers are well supported in breastfeeding through the breastfeeding support drop in. The centre is also actively promoting the benefits of breastfeeding during group sessions such as the young parents group and the Afghani women's group. However, the data show that the numbers of mothers who stop breastfeeding in the first six to eight weeks remains high. Events such as a 'tooth party' are promoting users' awareness of dental health. Parents and carers are made aware of the hidden sugars in fizzy drinks and children receive a toothbrush and toothpaste from the 'brush for life' team. They are shown the correct way to brush their teeth. As a result, an increasing number of families are registering with a dentist.

Ensuring the emotional well-being of users is a high priority for the centre, particularly those with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, identified as a child in need or subject to child protection plans. Families with children with autism benefit from attending the 'Early Bird Course'. Families are gaining a better understanding of their child's disability and how to engage and play with their child. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is used effectively to identify specific needs, ensuring users are able to fully access appropriate services. Family workers are key in this work with vulnerable families and build trusting relationships so families feel able to engage with other professionals to access the required help. Children and families feel safe when at the centre. Parents report that they are developing an understanding of fire safety and take up checks from the fire service to install fire alarms. They benefit from guidance in learning how to effectively manage their children's behaviour in safe ways. Young parents are developing a greater understanding of how to keep their children safe when at home and when outdoors. For example, at a teddy bears picnic in the park, the family worker ensures parents contribute to a risk assessment and take responsibility for keeping each other safe.

Children and parents join together to enjoy playing and learning in a warm and welcoming environment, for example for 'Rhyme Time' and 'Story and Rhyme Time'. Parents are supported to play with their children and some families are completing learning journeys. These are helping parents understand the learning and stage of development of their child. Children accessing the two-year-old funding, those identified as children in need and those on child protection plans are benefiting from places within the early years provision and are making good progress in their learning. Children are supported well as they start school. Sessions held at Cranford Park School provide key messages for both children and their parents about the transition to school. For example, staff refer to children starting at nursery school soon and that mummy will leave them, but just like in the story 'Owl's Babies' she

always comes back. The school reports that those children who have accessed the children’s centre settle quickly at nursery. Adult users are developing their confidence and parenting skills as they access a range of different activities and courses. Some users have attended volunteer training, which has led to new groups being established, such as SPLAT (‘stay, play, learn and talk’), a group for parents run by parents. Achievement is highly valued and celebrated, which is helping to raise users’ aspirations. The centre has begun to work in partnership with other local children’s centres in order to develop the programme of adult learning and is considering more effective ways of tracking users’ achievements.

The centre seeks the views of users at the end of sessions, through questionnaires and the ‘coffee afternoons/mornings’. Other parents help those with English as an additional language to share their views. Children also have opportunity to share their views, for example at the end of ‘Story and Rhyme Time’ one child circled the smiley face on the feedback form and made marks on the paper requesting a story about a zebra at the next session. The range of different activities offered is enabling families to access the services they need in the community, for example the Afghani Women’s Group provides information about registering with a doctor and joining the library. The centre is established at the heart of the community and celebrates a range of different festivals. Users treat each other with respect and community cohesion is promoted.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for users*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<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>2</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?**

<b>2</b>
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Centre staff have a good understanding of the needs of the community and their particular needs. They are effective at assessing the needs of individual children and families who use its services. For example, the centre makes effective use of the Common Assessment Framework to ensure the individual needs of vulnerable families are identified and planned for. Users feel very well supported, particularly when in times of crisis. This is encapsulated by one user who states, ‘The centre has been a lifeline for us and Nestles is an invaluable part of our community.’ Good

relationships are in place with a range of key partners including social care, health, speech and language therapy, JGA, Refugee Effective Active Partnership, Jupiter House and the Asian women’s group. The centre follows clear processes to involve these partners in targeting services for individual children and families, ensuring support packages are put in place. For example, there is a strong partnership working between the centre’s family workers and the workers at Jupiter House. This joint working is benefiting the young parents in temporary accommodation as they are helped to develop parenting skills, access benefit advice and make the changes they need to gain permanent housing. Provision is tailored to meet these needs through targeted services such as parenting courses, and attendance at the young parent group and the Afghani women’s group. The childminders ‘Stay and Play’ drop-in group enables childminders to work together professionally and to share best practice.

The centre is beginning to use the data made available from the local authority and information from partners more accurately to target services. For example, Foundation Stage Profile scores are below both the local authority and national averages and the centre have begun to gain information from the school in order to identify the weaker areas. As a result, these areas, including personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy, are the focus when planning children’s centre activities. The centre is engaging with its target groups and recognises more needs to be done to increase the number of vulnerable families in the community accessing the centre. The local authority has provided the centre with some useful information identifying where in the reach these families are. They publicise the centre’s services within the community and deliver ‘flyers’ in the identified area. However, it is not clear that all families can access this information due to language barriers and, as yet, this or other potential difficulties have not been explored.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<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>2</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

**2**

The leadership of the centre is good. Governance arrangements are secure at all levels and there are clear lines of accountability in place. Members of the advisory board, which includes parent representatives, are clear on the centre’s aims and objectives. The whole staff team shows enthusiasm, motivation and commitment to



improving outcomes for users and striving towards high quality services. Line management arrangements are clear and staff fully appreciate the opportunities for professional development, for example studying for the Early Years Foundation Degree. The head of centre involves staff in the process of self-evaluation in order to identify strengths and priorities for improvement. The targets in the service plan link to strategic planning. These are then used to set the centre’s action plan. There are many targets and these are not always precise enough with clearly measureable success criteria in order for the advisory board, the local authority and managers to fully assess the impact on outcomes. The centre is gathering a range of evidence to demonstrate impact, including case studies and learning journeys for some families. However, it is not yet systematically tracking outcomes explicitly well to show the full impact of the services they provide. The centre provides the local authority with quarterly returns informing them of the number of users accessing services. Until recently these records were kept manually. The local authority has recently introduced a database in order to help the centre to gather, record and analyse information in a more effective way.

Effective leadership and management ensure professionals work together to improve outcomes for families. Safeguarding arrangements are given good priority and robust measures are in place to protect centre users, including risk assessments. All staff are aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns. Safer recruitment practices are followed and the centre has effective systems to ensure all visitors to the centre follow safe practices. The centre is working with other centres across the cluster to ensure services are not duplicated and to make effective use of staff’s knowledge and skills, such as different languages spoken, providing value for money. However, on occasions, there is a delay in services being delivered, for example a first-aid course has been postponed whilst the centre awaits financial approval from the local authority.

The centre has a strong commitment to providing an inclusive environment and removing barriers. For example, crèche places are provided in order for parents to access courses, such as ESOL. Family support workers help families to access important health appointments and to have an understanding of decisions made at case conferences. The centre recognises that achievement of users is low within the reach area and data for the foundation stage profile scores are beginning to be used more effectively to plan activities in order to narrow the achievement gap.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>2</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**

An inspection of the early years provision at the children's centre took place on 4 July 2011 and received an overall judgement of outstanding. This report has been used to inform judgements during this inspection.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Nestles Avenue Children's Centre on 14 and 15 July 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Your children's centre provides you with an attractive, safe environment where you and your children feel well cared for and valued. Those of you that we spoke to told us that you really enjoy the range of activities on offer, from drop-in groups such as 'Stay and Play', 'Rhyme Time' and 'Active Kids'. From our observations, discussions and case studies, we were able to see that the centre is having a positive impact on your lives. We found that the care, guidance and support that staff offer you is good. You told us how much you appreciate the relationships you have with the staff and how they take the time to listen, particularly when you may be experiencing a crisis.

Staff are enthusiastic and work effectively as a team. They are committed to helping you make positive changes in your lives. Outcomes for users are good and improving. We enjoyed hearing about the 'tooth party' and how this helped you gain

a greater understanding of dental health, such as the hidden sugars in fizzy drinks. Your children enjoyed receiving their free toothbrush and toothpaste from 'brush for life' and learnt how to brush their teeth correctly. As a result, some of you registered with a dentist.

You told us that you and your children enjoy the range of activities available and the focus on promoting good health in some sessions and healthy snacks is helping you gain a better understanding of healthy lifestyles. Events such as Safety Week and visits from the fire service to install smoke alarms are helping you to keep your families safer in the home. The teddy bears picnic was a success for the 'Young Parents' group and you worked together to ensure your children were safe in the park.

Those in charge have set targets in order to continue to improve the range of services they provide so they can reach even more families in the community, particularly those who may be feeling more vulnerable. They have developed some secure partnerships with other professionals and organisations in order to improve the lives of you all, for example with health visitors and the speech and language therapist. The 'Small Talk' sessions, run by the speech and language therapist, where you can highlight any concerns you have about your child's speech are making a difference. As a result, children are making good progress in their communication and language skills.

Partnerships with key agencies are working well so they can offer the correct support and guidance, for example to help you access services for your children with additional needs. It was good to hear how the 'Early Bird' course is helping families with autistic children to gain a greater understanding of autism and gain useful tips for engaging and playing with their children. You told us how some courses have helped to build confidence and self-esteem, such as the confidence building course. It was good to hear how some of you benefited from the 'Managing Your Money' course run by the Citizens Advice Bureau which included guidance on how to budget for meals. English for speaker of other languages (ESOL) courses are vital for helping you feel part of the community and for some of you has led to gaining a qualification.

Safeguarding procedures are good and staff know what to do to ensure you and your children are safe. For example, staff are trained in how to safeguard children, and leaders make sure that all those working in the centre are suitable to do so. Staff also ensure that any risks in the community venues are minimised.

We know that the centre staff encourage you to evaluate the activities and share your views about the sessions you attend. We heard that some of you are involved in the 'coffee mornings/afternoons', which is the parent forum where ideas about the centre are shared. This provides you with opportunities to have your say in developing the services the centre provides. It was good to see children sharing their views and requesting a story about a zebra for the next group session at Cranford Park School. We could see the children's centre is very much part of the community and is promoting an inclusive environment so you all feel welcome. It was good to

hear that those who use the centre who do not speak English are helped by staff or other parents to access services. However, we did notice that information about the centre is not always accessible to those who are not yet using the centre.

The centre receives some useful information from the local authority and partners about the area it serves. It is also collecting information from you and partners about some activities. We have asked the centre to look at this range of information more robustly in order to make targets more precise and to enable it to show the full impact the different services are having on your lives.

We would like to thank the centre users for speaking with us and contributing to the inspection at Nestles Avenue Children's Centre.

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