

# Inspection report for Greenfields Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Ealing
<b>Inspection number</b>	365675
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan Lindsay

<b>Centre governance</b>	Governing body on behalf of the local authority
<b>Centre leader</b>	June McHugh
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Greenfields Children's Centre EY280837

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 registered early years/childcare provision was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under Section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006. The report of this inspection is available on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager and staff, a representative from the local authority and a member of the advisory board and governing body. They also held meetings with partner agencies, including the health services and voluntary organisations, parents and other users of the centre.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documents, including key policies, the centre's improvement plan, user surveys and the centre's evaluation of its services.

## Inspection judgements

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

### Information about the centre

The centre was designated in 2005 as a phase one centre and the full core offer of services was provided from December 2008. It is managed by the governing body under a service level agreement with the local authority. The advisory board, made up of representatives of partner agencies, governors and those who use the centre, provides challenge and support. Members of staff include the head of centre (who is also headteacher of the nursery school), deputy head, extended services manager, project developer, administrative assistants and a cook. Nursery school staff are also involved in the work of the children’s centre. The centre is situated in an area of social deprivation in the Southall Green Ward of the London Borough of Ealing. It is ranked within the top 20% of the most deprived wards nationally and has the 17<sup>th</sup> highest level of child poverty in London. The London Borough of Ealing has the fifth highest number of children of parents claiming out of work benefits. The vast majority of families come from Asian, African and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds, with increasing numbers from Somalia and Eastern Europe. The centre also serves the Irish Traveller community. There are 22 languages spoken at the centre. There are 985 children under five in the reach area (an increase of 110 from the previous year, reflecting the transient nature of the community as well as an increasing birth rate), of whom 540 are registered with the centre. Children’s skills and levels of development on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are well below those expected for their age.

The purpose-built centre is open from 8 am until 6 pm on weekdays only, for 48 weeks of the year. It shares the site with a fully integrated nursery school, facilities for day care and children in need, an early intervention room for children with social and communication difficulties, and a range of integrated services.

#### Overall effectiveness

**The effectiveness of the children’s centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community**

**1**

#### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**1**

## Main findings

Greenfields Children's Centre is providing an outstanding service. It has had a particularly significant impact on the most vulnerable groups in its catchment area through a very strong focus on early years development and also on adult learning. Families' lives are improving as a result of the extremely well-targeted support that is made available through partnerships that have developed to an outstanding degree. For example, the work of the clinical psychologist and other health partners has been vital, not only in improving children's behaviour but also in developing parenting skills and families' physical and mental health. Those who use the centre feel extremely welcome no matter what their background and they show high levels of trust in the centre staff and the partner agencies because of the excellent levels of care, guidance and support. As a result of all the centre's work and very high levels of staff expertise, there has been a very discernible narrowing of the achievement gap between the lowest 20% of children at the Early Years Foundation Stage and the rest, and also in improving the levels of worklessness and thereby reducing the economic gap too.

An excellent emphasis on healthy lifestyles, with a focus on problems specific to the reach area, such as asthma and mental health issues, is having a very positive impact on the health and well-being of those who use the centre. Safeguarding is a very high priority in the centre and staff are fully involved in Common Assessment Framework and child protection plans through the highly effective partnerships that are in place, making the centre a 'one-stop shop', as one of the partners described it. This has led to very positive outcomes for families and tangible improvements to the lives of many in the reach area. There are very high levels of enjoyment and achievement by those who use the centre and confidence building is particularly strong. 'I learnt a lot about myself' was one of many similar comments made by those who access the centre.

Governance and day-to-day management of the centre are outstanding and there is a very clear understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for development, which is based on highly accurate self-evaluation. However, the centre's improvement plan is subsumed in that of the nursery and day care facility as the services offered are seen as a 'seamless' provision. As a result, although the correct priorities are incorporated in the plan, targets for improving the children's centre are not yet measurable or specific enough. In addition, some of the data that could be used to set measurable targets have only recently been made available to, or collated by, the local authority.

With outstanding outcomes for the community it serves, an excellent understanding of its own work and a strong commitment from all parties to continue to improve, based on a lack of complacency, the centre has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase the effectiveness of the centre's improvement plan so that targets are more specific to the children's centre by:
  - using the data that have recently become available to measure impact in specific areas that relate to children's centre outcomes
  - ensuring that the governing body and local authority set targets that are specific to the children's centre.

## How good are outcomes for users?

<b>1</b>
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An excellent understanding of the health needs of those in the community has resulted in a very strong focus on increasing families' understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. Above-average childhood obesity levels gave rise to a focus on physical activity through the gardening club, which also emphasises healthy eating, 'Sticky Fingers' cooking activities for parents and children, and weaning advice, including support through translators, for example through a specific Tamil group. There are high participation rates for these activities and parents report that they have a very clear understanding of how to lead healthy lives as a result. In addition, a recognition of the significant levels of mental health issues in the reach area led to the weekly sessions of the clinical psychologist, who has had a very positive impact, not only on the lives of children with specific needs but also in the wider community, by addressing adult issues. There is no recent data on teenage conception rates but the centre is successful in reaching young parents who attend the universal services. Immunisation rates and breastfeeding data have only just become available and show the reach area to be slightly below the national figures. Although there are no year-on-year comparisons, anecdotal evidence from health partners is that both figures are improving.

Adults and children feel extremely safe in the centre, not only because of the excellent site security but also because they have developed very high levels of trust in the staff. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'I have grown to trust them with my child.' This is especially noticeable for groups such as Somali and Traveller families, with whom the centre has been particularly successful in engaging. Children have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe and parents have benefited very significantly from parenting courses, first-aid classes and links with the Crime Prevention Officer. Staff and partner agencies are very adept at spotting any concerns in relation to child protection matters and they swiftly instigate and manage Common Assessment Framework plans and participate in multi-agency meetings for child protection plans. As a result of the highly integrated and effective support, the number of such plans in the local area is falling and fewer children are going back on to plans.

Children make excellent progress in developing the skills required to help them in the future. This is reflected not only in their good achievement at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, where results are improving in the reach area year on year, but also in their confidence levels when they move on to the next stage in their lives.

There is a strong focus on helping parents prepare their children for this, with the psychologist running courses and translators there to help when needed. Parents state that their children have very high levels of confidence and they too feel their parenting skills have improved significantly as a result of the work of the centre and courses such as 'Keeping up With the Children' and 'Makaton Signing'. Opportunities for adult and community learning have also had a very significant impact on families, including those who have been hard to engage. For example, the centre's work with the Traveller community is exemplary as it has offered volunteer roles and then work to members. Consequently, they have not only improved their own skills and opportunities and helped their children's learning but have encouraged other families to do so too. Many other users have gone on to increase their language and technology skills, which they say has made a tangible difference to their own and their children's lives. Very high levels of enjoyment were evident during the inspection in all the activities observed.

Everyone who uses the centre feels a part of it. Not only do the users contribute fully to decision-making but they were fully involved in designing the building, which now reflects the different cultures in the community and was described as 'a place of sanctuary' during the inspection. Children were also consulted and the calming and tranquil water features in the entrance are a result of their views. The use of simple but effective evaluation sheets after each course and activity, and the availability of translators where necessary, mean that everyone is able to communicate their views and so help to shape services. For example, the needs of the increasing number of Somali families in the community were recognised and met by establishing successful weekly coffee mornings. The way staff treat everyone with high levels of respect is copied by those who use the centre so that community cohesion is greatly enhanced. Members of the community also happily share their skills, for example through the knitting group and the dance and drama class, which also adds to the very strong sense of community spirit within the centre.

A very high number of families are benefiting from the adult training that is on offer. This includes a variety of courses for users whose first language is not English, some of which also focus on specific areas such as health, family finances and driving test theory and enable users to add to their skills and therefore their employability. Parenting courses play a very effective part in helping children develop excellent skills for their future. A significant number of case studies and a wide range of anecdotal evidence show that many adults progress to further training and work as a result of the input from the centre and its partners, such as Jobcentre Plus.

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, and their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>1</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>1</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 and employment</b>	<b>1</b>

### **How good is the provision?**

<b>1</b>
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The needs of the families who use the centre are extremely well assessed, not only by centre staff but by partner agencies such as the Coram Foundation and the health services, who run some of the activities. There is also a very high level of understanding of the specific needs of the most vulnerable groups in the community as well as sensitivity to different cultural backgrounds, such as for those of Traveller and Somali heritage. This means that highly individual tailored packages of support can be put in place quickly, for example through Common Assessment Framework plans. Consequently, the care, guidance and support offered to families and the wider community are outstanding because of the way the different services work together. The majority of the home visits and outreach work are done by Coram Foundation workers, whom the local authority has commissioned to deliver services in the borough's children's centres. However, centre staff work extremely closely with them and therefore families benefit from the very high levels of expertise of both groups. Because of the confidence that staff have instilled in the community, families are quick to turn to the staff for support in times of crisis, such as with housing or benefit problems or when there are sensitive mental health issues. In many cases, the support offered has led to a greater degree of confidence for the families so that the results for the family as a whole have been extremely positive.

On a great many occasions, the seamless nature of the provision across the children's centre, the nursery and the day care setting has been instrumental in the highly successful promotion of learning and development for all who use the centre's services. For example, the nursery visit to Littlehampton included other members of the community who access the children's centre, enabling them to have a memorable first visit to the sea. The very strong emphasis on children's early learning and development, enhanced by the expertise of the nursery staff (including those with specialist knowledge of autism) and the very wide range of partners, has had an extremely positive impact on outcomes, particularly in relation to families' personal, social and emotional development. Sessions for parents and children, such as 'Talk Time', run in conjunction with the Coram Foundation and the speech and language service, have been instrumental in helping children develop skills for the future. The achievement of adults and children is celebrated routinely, for example with certificates and celebratory meals at the end of courses, thus increasing the sense of achievement and confidence of the families involved.

There is an extremely wide range of services, activities and opportunities offered by the centre, resulting from the strong awareness of the needs of the community and adapting to meet those needs. Target groups, such as lone parents, children in



workless households and children with specific needs or disabilities, are increasingly involved in centre activities and the number registering with the centre is growing significantly. Very high participation rates reflect the popularity and effectiveness of the services. The centre is, however, restricted to some extent in meeting the needs of those who work, as planning regulations mean that it is not able to open in the evenings or at weekends. Despite this, the centre is becoming increasingly effective in attracting fathers to centre activities, for example through the gardening club, and continues to look at ways to involve them even more.

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>

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

<b>1</b>
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Day-to-day management of the centre is excellent and staff morale is very high which contributes significantly to the excellent outcomes. Governance and accountability arrangements are very well established. The governing body covers all aspects of the setting, which are largely run as one service for the community, and the advisory board incorporates all the partners and agencies that are specific to the children's centre. All are exceptionally committed to providing high-quality services that meet the specific needs of the community and the work of the advisory board is instrumental in this by providing a platform for discussion and evaluation. There are good levels of representation from those who use the centre on both the governing body and the advisory board and so they are fully involved in the centre's governance.

There is a palpable sense of high expectations from all involved with the centre, from the local authority to members of the governing body, staff and families who use the centre and, although there is a sense of pride in what the centre has achieved for the community, there is no complacency. Priorities for development are clearly understood but the development plan does not yet have clearly defined measurable targets that are specific to the children's centre, rather than the combined services. This is also due to the lack of up-to-date or precise data relating to aspects such as childhood obesity, where the bands for the reach area are between 18% and 50%, and teenage pregnancies, where the data go back to 2008.

The centre is extremely well resourced in terms of staff expertise, liaison with partners and also the very high-quality physical resources and environment that are all much appreciated by those who use it. With increasing numbers using the services and excellent outcomes for those who already access the centre, it gives

outstanding value for money.

The centre is highly inclusive and all are made to feel welcome as soon as they enter. 'They make you feel comfortable' was a very common view given by those who use the centre. All cultures are celebrated, such as through the annual International Day, where very large numbers of the community attend and many are involved in displays of dance and sharing different foods. Because all feel valued there, the centre has been highly effective in increasing the confidence levels of families so that there have been tangible benefits in narrowing the achievement gap between different groups. Children and families with disabilities are very well catered for through the multi-agency approach and through specific groups, such as special weekly 'Stay and Play' sessions for children with special educational needs. The centre is fully compliant in relation to disability requirements, as it is with safeguarding regulations.

Safeguarding is given an extremely high priority, with all the appropriate Criminal Record Bureau checks carried out on those who have access to children, daily risk assessments of the premises and regular audits done by the governing body. The staff deal sensitively and effectively with issues of domestic violence and the centre is a base for volunteer 'buddies' to support victims. The centre works extremely effectively with other agencies to safeguard children as staff are very well trained in child protection matters, and partnerships are highly effective.

Such strong partnerships with a very wide range of services, including health professionals, the Coram Foundation, Supportive Action for Families in Ealing, Traveller Achievement and Jobcentre Plus, have had a highly positive impact on outcomes for families in the community. The way that all those involved evaluate the impact has also been very instrumental in devising specific services, and support is often given on an individual basis. For example, 'story catching' exercises done with adults and children who have used the services show high levels of satisfaction and very positive outcomes such as in providing specialist support or leading to employment. User surveys are overwhelmingly positive about how the centre has helped. 'Everything is perfect' was a very common response. The results of feedback and evaluation from families and partners have been used very effectively to shape services for example, classes for non-English speakers, focusing on health and other specific aspects, and computer classes providing help to complete a curriculum vitae at the request of group members.

<p><b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p>
<p><b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p>

<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>1</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>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>1</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>1</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>1</b>

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

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Greenfields Children's Centre on 13–14 July 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

During our visit, we looked at your centre's plans for improvement and numerous other documents. We spoke to a wide range of partner agencies working with the centre as well as staff, a member of the advisory board and governing body and a representative from the local authority. We also visited all of the centre activities taking place during the inspection and spoke to a substantial number of users of the centre.

Thank you for your participation in the inspection. Those of you we spoke to were unanimous in your praise for what the centre has done to help you and your children learn and develop. This is because you feel very welcome when you come to the centre and you feel you have a say in what goes on there. 'They make you feel comfortable' was a common view expressed during the inspection. The levels of trust that have been built up in staff mean that you feel very confident to speak to them, even about highly sensitive matters. Because the partnerships with other agencies have been developed to such a high degree, there is often a well-tailored package of

support put in to help you. The centre has been very effective in helping you and your children lead healthy lives through activities such as the gardening club, dance and drama group, and 'Sticky Fingers' cooking classes. Through strong relationships with the health services, there is also excellent support for specific needs such as child development, breastfeeding, weaning and immunisation, and for mental health matters through support from the clinical psychologist. There are many ways for you to be involved in the running of the centre and, in fact, the community was consulted about the building even at the design stage. Now that it is up and running, your views are still listened to very well and so services and courses are run that suit your needs such as the driving theory course, learning to use computers, parenting courses and classes that help your language skills. As a result, many of you say you feel more confident in many aspects, such as how to help your children learn and develop and move on to school. Some of you also told us that the centre has helped you to find work and so improve the circumstances for your whole family. Consequently, the centre achieves outstanding outcomes and gives excellent value for money.

The way the centre is governed and managed is also outstanding and everyone has a very clear picture of what needs to be done to keep getting better. However, the centre's improvement plan covers all areas, including the nursery and day care facilities, and so it is not yet specific enough to be able to set targets specifically for the aspects that affect the children's centre in order to check how well it is doing in improving your lives and those of your children. This is the only thing we have asked the centre to improve on.

As the centre has made such an impact on the outcomes for so many people and all those involved are committed to continue to improve and are very clear about the areas for development, the centre has an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

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