

Inspection report for Moreland and King Square Children's Centre

Local authority	Islington
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Moreland Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Moreland Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Kings Square Nursery School

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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 senior leaders, members of the Advisory Board, local authority, a range of providers, teachers and other staff, health practitioners and parents and carers.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the centre's operation plans, evaluations, key policies and safeguarding procedures. They visited Moreland Primary School and Kings Square Nursery.

Information about the centre

Moreland and King Square Children's Centre shares a site with Moreland Primary School. The centre serves families in the Finsbury area of Islington. It is a small designated integrated centre which includes full day care; there are two rooms and a garden for the children and a temporary building on Moreland Primary School grounds. The centre has been open for three years and is a Phase 2 children's centre funded by the local authority. It came under the governance of the local authority in August 2011 and prior to that it was under the governance of Moreland Primary School. An interim head leads the centre supported by a family support and outreach manager. There are close operational links with the local primary school, King Square Nursery and the Golden Lane Children's Centre. The Advisory Board is made up of representatives of the local council, parent governors, centre users and centre staff. Childcare is provided through the centre's day-care crèche and stay-and-play sessions. There are a wide variety of courses for parents, carers and children. Many

of the sessions are run on the site. The centre also signposts families to larger centres and specialist facilities. It works in partnership with a range of social, care and health agencies. The centre opens from 9.00am to 5.00pm each week day for 50 weeks of the year. The majority of families in the area use the centre, the average number of parents and carers who use the centre each week is 75 and the average number of children seen is 85 per week. There is a high level of unemployment and a high proportion of families move in and out of the area throughout the year. Levels of deprivation range from the most deprived 10% nationally to relatively affluent families. Many of the users come from homes with some level of social disadvantage. There are many families living in temporary housing. There is a small minority of lone parents and a few teenage mothers. The area is very diverse; families come from a wide range of ethnic groups. The largest group is White British. Many parents and carers using the centre come from households where no one is currently in work and the family is in receipt of benefits. Children's levels on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are much lower than those expected for their age.

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 families

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

The children's centre provides good support to children and families in its reach area. Outcomes are good and the common feature across these is the effective partnerships with a range of professionals from health services, the local authority and voluntary organisations. The good quality provision is delivered in a safe, secure environment where caring and trusting relationships are nurtured well. As a result, children achieve well in all areas of learning and make good progress over time. Target groups and those children and parents and carers identified as in most need of support are making good progress in overcoming barriers in their lives. All users comment on the warm and welcoming environment which helps to create a safe, supportive atmosphere that benefits all users.

Adult users grow in confidence as a result of attending the good range of activities at the centre. Parents and other users are positive about the benefits. As one said,

'Great, the centre has helped me learn how to be a better parent, it is good to talk to other parents and we can all learn from each other.'

Good leadership, strong drive and clear vision to overcome barriers are provided by the centre manager. She is well supported by the family support outreach manager, the local authority and senior leaders of local children's centres. Leaders and users evaluate the effectiveness of the centre well and from this they identify what needs to be done to improve. The good self-evaluation ensures that the centre is continually improving but there is limited involvement of parents and carers in the decision making, which feeds into the centre's development planning. The centre's ability to demonstrate sustainability ensures that decisions are made which are effective in continually improving provision. The centre's good capacity to improve is evident in the way leadership and governance continually expand the centre's influence across its reach area, in tackling disadvantage and narrowing the achievement gap. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and data are used effectively to improve the provision further although the centre recognises the challenging job of engaging hard-to-reach families in a diverse and transient population. As such, this continues to be a correct focus for improvement.

There is good communication with families who are directed to help and advice from those who work in the centre and also from other agencies. Local service providers speak highly of the centre which has become well known in the local area. The centre provides good opportunities for parents to improve their parenting skills, develop confidence in speaking English and to gain further skills which help them to gain qualifications. Communication with potentially vulnerable members of the community, such as lone parents and those who do not speak English as their first language, is good and as a result they attend regularly and benefit from the activities such as 'International Breakfast Club'.

The centre has strong partnership links with local schools, specialist services and health professionals. It works successfully with its partners to offer dedicated care and support, tailored to the individual needs of these groups. The impact of this is that these families are now engaging more frequently with the centre in higher numbers and there is clear evidence of greater community cohesion.

Parents and carers appreciate greatly the good quality of the childcare and the support and knowledge they have gained. The Parents Forum has been established and a few parents sit on the Advisory Board but the centre acknowledges more innovative ways need to be found to extend parents' and carers' involvement in the running and decision making of the centre.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Strengthen the parental representation on the Parent's Forum and Advisory Board and increase opportunities for parents and carers to become more involved in the running of the centre by finding innovative ways to help as many parents and carers as possible to be involved in decision making.
- Devise more ways to identify hard to reach and vulnerable families in the local community.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

The centre successfully promotes healthy lifestyles through a range of activities, support and guidance. These make a positive impact on the physical, mental and emotional health of its families including target groups and those identified as in most need of support. Data show good improvement in breastfeeding and oral health. Most mothers successfully breast feed their babies because health practitioners guide and support them well and users have good access to a wide range of integrated services. The number of users who give up smoking is increasing. Most have a good understanding of how to provide a healthy lifestyle and diet for their children. The centre successfully involves parents and carers in activities, such as healthy cooking and family outings to the seaside. Children develop their physical skills well through activities such as climbing, balancing, pulling and pushing in the crèche garden. Staff make good use of the limited space available. Healthy snacks are enjoyed by the children.

High levels of security ensure a safe and secure environment for all users. Vulnerable groups receive both practical and emotional support and users feel safe enough to openly share their concerns with staff. Children are safeguarded well. Home visits ensure support is tailor-made for vulnerable families. Those who have a child protection plan are very effectively supported and consequently their outcomes are very good. Successful early intervention ensures the number of children on child protection plans has reduced. The support for children subject to Common Assessment Framework processes is good. Help for lone parents is effective and this group says that they have been well supported with good advice on domestic issues, income support and in coping with their lives. Parenting courses are popular and well attended and support parents' understanding well. One grateful parent commented, 'I have learnt how to keep my family safe.'

The development of all areas of learning, including children's personal and social skills, is good. This equips children well for the future. Parents and carers report improvement in their children's behaviour as a result of the help and support they receive from staff. Users enjoy the many activities provided by the centre; consequently, outcomes for children and adults within the centre's reach area are good. Primary school data show very clearly that children who have attended the centre make good progress by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Adults access a wide range of activities and opportunities for learning, gaining confidence and qualifications which support them to prepare for future employment. Over a third of families using the centre are engaged in training and adult learning. Data show good improvement over time for target groups and families most in need. Families have good opportunities to develop parenting, creative and academic skills through courses in the centre and in partner centres such 'Three Corners'. Knitting and sewing classes are very popular and well attended. One parent proudly showed visitors a dress she had made for her daughter, and bags to store resources in the centre. Adults are encouraged to develop their awareness of parenting skills. In one group the parents and carers were enthusiastically discussing how they curbed their children watching too much television, and when to use positive praise. One parent said she had learnt the importance of supporting her child to complete homework.

Centre activities provide families with good opportunities to play and learn together. In the healthy cooking session children had good opportunities to develop their coordination skills rolling and pulling and squeezing the dough. Adults encouraged parents and carers to talk about the activity using exciting words such as 'squishy and squashy' to describe the dough. The toy library also provides parents and carers and their children with good opportunities to play and learn together. The Winter Festival provides a good opportunity for users and members of the local community to celebrate together.

A few parents attend the Parent's Forum and contribute to the Advisory Board but the centre would like more parents and carers to be involved.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre knows its users well and it collects data about the attendance, progress

made by children and adults, the take-up of services and the increasing reach area. This is used effectively to plan activities that are focused on users' needs. Health and education professionals work closely with the centre to assess and review the needs of users and target groups. There are good links with local schools, nurseries, children's centres in the area and other agencies that effectively inform assessments and help the centre to meet learners' individual needs well. The provision to help children learn and achieve is good. The centre, however, misses opportunities to make useful observational notes on children's starting points and this hampers them from having even better information to show when progress is possibly outstanding. Activities, trips and sessions to help children prepare for school are good. The Early Years Foundation Stage staff in the primary school were impressed by the new children who had settled into school so well. The vast majority of these had been to the centre.

The quality of care and support for vulnerable families is good, as is the care and guidance of children who attend the day-care crèche and the many other courses. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well provided for, both in the physical accessibility of the building and through good access to appropriate professional support. All workers at the centre are experienced practitioners who show good awareness of the management strategies needed to overcome day-to-day problems. Parents and carers are well supported by staff. Support and courses for those who are subject to domestic violence are good. Data indicate very good outcomes for those attending the 'Safe landings' course. The two sessions to support parents and carers who are new to this country and who speak English as an additional language are popular and well attended. Users speak positively about the support they receive.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	2
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

Leadership and management are consistently good at all levels. The centre manager and her senior leadership team provide clear leadership with high expectations for the community firmly at the heart of the centre's work. The Advisory Board and staff share their aspirations and are strongly motivated to provide a wide range of good quality and effective services to the community, particularly those that are hard to reach and vulnerable. All work together well to ensure that the work of the centre runs very smoothly. The effective deployment of staff and resources ensures good

value for money. Leaders' well-informed knowledge of the centre's strengths and areas to be improved underpins their strong commitment to continuous improvement. Outcomes for the large majority of families, including target groups and those in most need of intervention and support, are good.

The Advisory Board provides purposeful levels of challenge to the centre and contributes effectively to ensuring the good quality provision and safeguarding procedures. There are rigorous recruitment checks and arrangements for professional supervision. All staff working at the centre have been subject to an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. The centre ensures all partners are fully trained and that safeguarding procedures are known to all and effectively carried out. Policies are clear and implemented fully and risk assessments are rigorous and monitored regularly.

The centre is successfully and continually engaging more users in the reach area through an extremely wide range of partnership links and through the centre's good knowledge of its own reach area. Data show clearly that more users are engaging with the centre year by year. Early intervention to support those who are vulnerable is a priority. Partnership links with other professionals is very well organised and support systems ensure children and their parents and carers are given the help that they need.

Users' evaluations of activities and courses and their responses to questionnaires are positive. Parents commented how much they enjoyed visiting the centre and how much their children benefited from engaging in the activities. The views of parents and users are constantly sought and acted upon.

A few parents and carers serve on the Advisory Board but the centre would like to increase this number. The centre promotes the inclusion of all families within the reach area and celebrates diversity well. Children and families with disabilities are fully included and well supported by the centre. It gathers valuable information about the different groups of users and evaluates their engagement. For example, case study evidence indicates that the centre has been very effective in working with children and parents and carers who are experiencing difficulties at home and those from minority ethnic groups. The centre has identified that it needs to do more to identify vulnerable groups especially among those who are only in the area for a short time.

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 effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and	2

effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	
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 partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	2

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Moreland and King Square Children's Centre on 4 and 5 October 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank those of you we met and who spoke to us about the centre and its work. It was a great help to us. We agree with you that the centre is a good place for you and your children to attend and that all the staff involved in the centre's work do an effective job to help you all. You told us how friendly and approachable everyone is and how happy you and your children are when they are in the centre. We could see that those of you who use the centre regularly enjoy and benefit from all it has to offer, such as the 'Stay and play,' knitting and sewing sessions and the toy library.

We think the wide range of things that the centre plans for you is good. We were particularly pleased to see how many of you were involved in helping your children make the pitta bread in the healthy cooking session and how enthusiastically a group of you talked about different ways to encourage your children to be sensible and responsible.

The centre helps you in many ways, for example the support it provides for lone parents and those of you who are experiencing domestic difficulties. It provides valuable support and practical help to make your homes safer for your children and

useful guidance to help you with their learning. Opportunities for you to contribute to the decision making are clearly evident in your responses to courses but the centre would like more of you to be involved in the decision making and to contribute more to the Parents Forum and the Advisory Board. It is also, correctly, constantly looking for ways to involve more families who are especially vulnerable or may be hard to reach. Your children make good progress in their learning and behave well because they enjoy all the activities offered. The smooth transition from the centre to King Square Nursery and Moreland Primary School is good. The 'Stay and play' and other activities are well organised and popular. All of the people who work at the centre do an effective job and the centre manager leads the centre well. There is a good sense of teamwork, especially among the leaders, Advisory Board and all those who use the centre. The work that they do to assess what is needed and to put plans in place to make things even better is effective. They are well supported by efficient systems and administration procedures.

The centre ensures that children and users are very safe and well protected. Staff are all very experienced, well trained and regularly update their training in safety aspects. Your children's security and safety are of the highest priority and good records are kept to ensure that all who work at the centre are properly qualified and meticulously checked.

It was a pleasure to meet you during the inspection and to hear your views. We hope that you and your children and many more families who live in and around the centre will continue to enjoy and benefit from the many activities and services the centre offers. Thank you again for contributing to the inspection by sharing your comments and thoughts so openly.

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