

# Inspection report for William Bellamy Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	383570
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jan LLOYD HMI

<b>Centre leader</b>	Lin Green
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Not applicable
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	William Bellamy Children's Centre Nursery

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

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, senior representatives from the local authority, the core staff at the centre, staff working within the locality, parent representatives on the advisory board and many partner agencies. Inspectors met parents, carers and other users of the centre.

Inspectors observed the centre's work and looked at a range of documentation including key policies, data, the centre's self-evaluation documents, development plans and case studies.

## Information about the centre

William Bellamy Children's Centre is managed and operated by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. The centre opened in May 2007 and is a phase one centre. The building is on the same site as the William Bellamy infant and junior school and is one of three children's centres in the East locality. Services are provided across the three centres to complement each other, share resources and avoid duplication. The centre provides the full core offer including family support, child and family health services, training, a crèche and support from Jobcentre Plus. The centre has a nursery, which is provided by Chestnuts. This is a new provider who started in September 2011 and will be subject to a separate inspection.

The centre is located in the Heath ward to the north-east of the borough. The ward is mainly residential and consists of houses and medium-rise blocks. Heath ward has the highest percentage of young people in the borough, with the most migrant population. In 2009, 10% of the population was aged 0 to 4, 3.9 percentage points

above the national average. In May 2011, the ethnic profile for children aged 0 to 5 years was 44.9% from a mix of different minority ethnic groups. Successive waves of immigration to the borough and the migration of families from neighbouring Inner London boroughs have contributed to a significant increase in the child population. Children's range of skills and abilities on entry to school are greater for those children who have attended the centre, especially in the areas of communication and social skills. In 2010, 39% of children in the borough were living in poverty. In February 2011, 17.8% of the working age population in the borough were receiving key out of work benefits compared with an average of 12.4% in London. In Heath ward, 45.7% of children aged 0-4 are living in households dependent on workless benefits.

## 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**

**1**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding children's centre with strong leadership and an energetic and highly motivated staff team. It provides exceptionally high quality services for children and families within the local area and plays a significant role in the life of the community. It is fully committed to providing an inclusive environment and very effectively removes barriers for individual children and families. The high priority given to safeguarding children and families is central to all that the centre does.

The centre is very successful in engaging families from its hard-to-reach groups. The small core team of staff in the centre work very effectively with the wider team of staff in the borough, two other centres in the locality and the wide range of other partners to deliver a comprehensive range of services. Assessment of needs is thorough and parents speak highly of the ongoing support, information, advice and guidance. Typical comments from parents include 'This centre has changed my life' and 'The staff are amazing. Nothing is too much. They have become my role models and I now know that anything is possible.' Children really enjoy coming to the centre and, as one parent said, 'My children have brilliant memories of the centre.'

Outcomes for families are outstanding across all areas. The development of children's speech, language and communication levels is a high priority and, in

partnership with the borough, the centre provides an exceptionally well-planned and delivered programme of activities to support play and communication. The 'Little Rhyme Makers' sessions effectively target this area and, due to popular demand, the centre is now running three sessions a week. The end of the Early Years Foundation Stage profile for children who have attended the centre has improved significantly since the previous year.

The excellent partnership work and the integration of services across the locality ensure that the quality of provision for users of the centre is outstanding. The centre delivers a wide range of activities to meet the identified needs of families and children. One parent commented that there is always something on and that their child gets really excited when they are coming to the centre.

The centre is highly focused on improving further and the capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. The centre has set itself aspirational aims and objectives, and effectively uses self-evaluation to monitor and review its progress. It uses comprehensive data information from the borough to set realistic targets, to track, evaluate and improve the centre's performance as well as comparing it to local and national performance indicators. The self-evaluation form and development plans are discussed at the Children's Centre Community Forum, senior management team meetings and team meetings. However, leaders do not have an overarching centre development plan so that progress across all of the area development plans can be more effectively monitored.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Draw up an overarching centre development plan to summarise the area development plans so that senior managers can more effectively monitor progress across all areas of improvement.

## How good are outcomes for families?

<b>1</b>
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The centre is making a significant contribution to improving the outcomes for a very large majority of its users, especially vulnerable children and families. The partnership work with health services is excellent. All the mothers interviewed about the antenatal, postnatal and child health clinics reported how much help and support they had received. In January to March 2011, 73.7% of mothers initiated breastfeeding in the borough but the figures were lower in the Heath ward. In response to this, the centre is working with the health services to establish a breastfeeding peer support group and increase awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding. The very high level of teenage pregnancy is now decreasing and in 2009/10, the centre reached 64 pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers. This increased to 76 in 2010/11. Child obesity figures are slightly higher than in the borough but the centre ran a 'Getting Ready for Weaning' course and, following its success, is now running a weekly weaning advice workshop in partnership with

health visitors and community nursery nurses. The centre actively promotes healthy eating and fitness including the 'Sports Fit' sessions on Saturdays and the family cycling sessions in partnership with Transport for London.

Feedback from the parent surveys show that 100% of children and families feel safe when accessing the services at the centre and the safeguarding procedures ensure they are protected exceptionally well. Staff encourage parents and carers to think about the safety of their children. Parents who have attended the parenting courses report a clear improvement in their confidence and parenting skills. One parent said. 'What would I have done without this help and support?' Families who attend the centre trust the staff and feel able to share any concerns with them. Stringent review and monitoring for children on child protection plans shows that there is a significant and sustained improvement in outcomes with excellent and well-planned ongoing support and provision for the children and families. Parents' feedback shows that there has been an improvement in how they interact with their children and manage their behaviour. The centre is currently working with 42 families where there is a Common Assessment Framework in place to support the child and their family.

The centre encourages volunteers and provides excellent training and support. A growing number of parents involved with the centre have attended further training, moved on to vocational training courses and are either applying for, or have moved into, employment. A new work experience project with Jobcentre Plus and the local Work Programme is targeting significant numbers to move either into further training or into employment. The Jobcentre Plus adviser is now at the centre for three days of the week and in 2010/11 carried out 540 interviews, a very significant increase on the previous year. From April to September 2011, the total income of families who have received support to claim unpaid benefits or to move into work has been raised by a total of £99,000. Effective tracking of target families shows that they are improving their skills, economic stability and independence.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target 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, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, 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 parents, including those from target groups, 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, including those from target groups, 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 centre works in partnership with the wider team in the borough and other services to rigorously assess the needs of the most vulnerable children and families. The detailed assessments lead to an individual plan, which is regularly reviewed and updated. Parents are treated with sensitivity and respect and they very much appreciate this. The centre has a high level of contact with targeted groups in the area and has exceeded its target baseline for working with teenage mothers and lone parents. Work with the number of fathers is still low but improving. The centre is increasing the marketing targeted at fathers and is working towards recruiting at least one father onto the Parent Forum.

The centre uses the information from the assessments, as well as other information from parents' surveys and feedback, to provide opportunities to meet the identified needs of both parents and children. Participation rates and attendance levels are very good and information from parents shows how beneficial the activities are. Parents speak very highly of the parenting programmes and especially enjoy the activities where they can play with their children and talk with staff about any areas of concern. The 'Babies to Briefcases' courses for teenage mothers, run jointly with Connexions and the local further education college, have been very successful with all eight learners on the first course progressing onto further training. The 'Sports Fit' sessions attract fathers and their children and are connected with the local football club. Feedback from parents and children is very good with a very large majority of children saying that they enjoyed spending special time with their parent or carer. The centre celebrates the success of its children and parents through certification ceremonies, celebration days, a borough-wide parents conference and through local newspapers.

The level of care, guidance and support is exceptionally high and the very effective personalised support enables families to develop their well-being across all identified areas. Well-planned systems ensure a very fast response for families and individuals, especially in times of crisis. Frontline staff are well qualified; most have an information, advice and guidance qualification at level 3 and some are working towards level 4. The partnership with Jobcentre Plus offers excellent employment advice and another local organisation provides an independent welfare benefits advisory service at the centre.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>1</b>

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

**1**

The strong leadership within the centre and the excellent partnership working with the borough underpin the high quality, integrated provision. Staff have a clear understanding of the different roles, responsibilities and services. The comprehensive framework of meetings enables different groups and levels of staff to share good practice, evaluate provision and identify improvements. Very effective professional supervision supports staff at all levels and professional development of staff is given a high priority. Staff have clear, ambitious targets to work towards and these are integrated into the development plans, which are rigorously monitored and reviewed at monthly meetings. Parents are encouraged to become involved through the Parent Forum and the parent representatives make a significant contribution at the Children's Centre Community Forum. Parents work very effectively as ambassadors for the centre.

The borough's data systems are very comprehensive and produce easy-to-understand reports. Self-evaluation very effectively uses the thorough analysis along with a wide range of additional information including feedback from parents and children. The individual development plans set priorities and challenging targets for improvement but, at present, there is no overarching development plan to enable an overview of the progress of developments.

The very effective arrangements for safeguarding children underpin the work of the centre. The centre fully meets statutory requirements and the support and training for staff in the borough are exemplary. All staff have monthly supervision, which includes safeguarding and case supervision where appropriate. The recently introduced triage system for referral uses a central team, which prioritises the cases to ensure that families are able to access support and intervention quickly at an appropriate level based on assessment of need. At locality level, the Multi Agency Locality Team has been integrated with Targeted Family Support services and provides a clear and coordinated approach to safeguarding. The centre is an integral part of the safeguarding support and is currently working with a large number of families with positive outcomes. The partnership with the Parent Infant Mental Health Services provides excellent support for targeted families.

The local area is very diverse in its population and the centre actively promotes



equality and diversity and tackles discrimination. It provides cultural events that celebrate diversity and break down barriers, and works with families from across all the ethnic groups in the area. The centre has multilingual staff and uses Makaton and picture cues to improve communication. The borough has recently recorded a CD of parents singing songs in their own languages to broaden the diversity of resources for the 'Little Rhyme Makers' sessions.

The number of families the centre works with continues to grow and the feedback from parents is a testament to the excellence of its work. The centre gives excellent value for money through the very good services and activities it offers, its contribution to work across the locality and its wide range of partnerships. The centre's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</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 partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>1</b>

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

None

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Complaining about inspections*, which is available from our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Summary for centre users

We inspected the William Bellamy Children's Centre on 5–6 October 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

We would like to thank all of you whom we met for telling us about how much the centre helps you, your families and your children. You told us how much you and your children enjoy coming here and how friendly and supportive all the staff are. The centre manager and the staff are all passionate about improving the services for all of you. You told us how useful it is to be able to meet the health visitors and midwives at the centre and the support they have given you. You also told us about all the different activities at the centre and we were able to visit a small number of them. We could see how much you and your children really enjoy coming here. Our discussions with you and the staff helped us to make the decision that this centre is outstanding overall.

Many of you told us how useful the better parenting courses are and how they help to give you confidence to deal with any issues you are having with your children. You enjoyed meeting other parents and carers who were experiencing similar issues to yourself. We were particularly impressed with the development of your children's speech, language and communication skills and enjoyed visiting the 'Little Rhyme Makers' session. We also enjoyed the time we spent in the 'Babbling Baby's' session. The 'Family Cycling' looked great fun and a good way to keep fit. Unfortunately, we did not have time to join in the cycling but we did see you setting out. You also told us how much you enjoy the sessions where you can play with your baby or child and get some good ideas to use at home.

Your centre provides excellent services to give you information, advice and guidance, such as the welfare benefits advisory service, community legal advice and the opportunity to meet with the Jobcentre Plus adviser to look at moving into employment. We also talked with some of you who are volunteers at the centre and you told us how much you enjoyed doing this. We know how much the staff value the time you give. We did not have time to see all the training and workshop activities that are available to you but we did talk with some of you who have gained qualifications and are now moving on to further training. You spoke very highly of the support the centre is giving you and that you are now managing to achieve things that you never thought possible.

All of you told us how very safe you feel in the centre and we saw the excellent systems that are in place to keep you and your children protected and safe. For example, all staff are trained in how to safeguard children and the senior leaders make sure that everyone working in the centre is suitable to do so. You told us how you made friends through coming to the centre and that some of you have set up a group, which meets to 'knit and natter'.

Thank you for welcoming us into your centre and giving up time to talk with us. We wish you, your families and the centre all the very best for the future.

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