

# Inspection report for Winterbourne Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Croydon
<b>Inspection number</b>	383571
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan Lindsay

<b>Centre leader</b>	Tony Ahmet
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Centre address</b>	Winterbourne Road Thornton Heath Surrey CR7 7QT
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 689 0978
<b>Fax number</b>	0208 684 4052
<b>Email address</b>	office@winterbourne-inf.croydon.sch.uk

<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Winterbourne Nursery and Infant School
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Not applicable

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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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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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 nursery and infant 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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager and staff, representatives from the local authority and members of the advisory body. They also held meetings with partner agencies, such as the health services, parents and other users of the centre.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the centre's service plan.

## Information about the centre

The centre was designated in September 2007 as a Phase 2 centre. It provides the full core offer of a children's centre. It is managed by the governing body of Winterbourne Nursery and Infant School on behalf of the local authority. The centre is open 50 weeks of the year on weekdays and occasional Saturdays. The centre serves nine super output areas covered by Bensham Manor and West Thornton wards, neither of which are considered to be very disadvantaged areas. The former is said to be one of the most ethnically diverse in Croydon and London and approximately 60% of about 980 children under five in the reach area are from Black and minority ethnic groups. The percentage of children aged from birth to four living in households dependent on workless benefits is 30%, although this only relates to the Bensham Manor ward as other figures are not available. There are no recent data available in relation to the percentage of eligible families benefiting from the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Children's levels on entry to early years education across the reach area are below that 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

Winterbourne Children’s Centre provides a good service. Outcomes are generally good and improving. It is particularly effective in helping children learn and develop and in providing well-targeted support for parents, especially for those who are most vulnerable. This is because staff are committed, knowledgeable and caring. One parent, reflecting the views of many others, stated, ‘Staff are so genuine, welcoming and willing to help. They love their job and it shows in the care.’ Staff are skilled at spotting any safeguarding concerns. They are effective in working with other agencies to support families through Common Assessment Framework (CAF) plans, resulting in improved outcomes for those families. As a result, families feel very safe at the centre and have a great deal of trust in the staff. The skills and opportunities of a large number of adults, especially from some target groups such as young parents, are being enhanced through good-quality training and information. This has however been limited, because there has been little practical input from Jobcentre Plus.

Everyone receives a warm welcome to this very inclusive centre. Families’ views are listened to and acted upon and the parents’ forum is an effective mouthpiece. The organisation and day-to-day management is good and there are clear lines of responsibility for governance. The advisory body plays an effective part in the centre’s self-evaluation, although it has had a more limited role in setting challenging targets. This is because the local authority has not been able to provide the centre with enough specific, recent data about the reach area, and some Key Performance Indicators. In addition, the centre’s service action plan is too unwieldy. This means that whilst there is a clear understanding of the centre’s strengths and areas for development, the centre’s ability to measure their impact in some areas is hampered. In addition, although some partnerships are strong and effective at centre level, information that would be useful to the centre at a more strategic level is hard to obtain. Nevertheless, staff have been effective in increasing the numbers who access the centre, have targeted specific vulnerable groups well and have been successful in

improving outcomes, especially in children's early development. This, combined with strong leadership and management, means that there is a good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- The local authority should provide or facilitate up-to-date reach area data to enable the centre to measure its impact on a more regular basis, especially in relation to Key Performance Indicators.
- Improve the centre's service action plan so that targets are measurable, specific and challenging by:
  - gathering and using data to measure the centre's impact in more aspects
  - strengthening the involvement of the advisory body in devising the action plan and setting targets.

## How good are outcomes for families?

<b>2</b>
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The centre has had a positive impact on the understanding of a large majority of families about how to lead healthy lives. This is because there has been a strong focus on educating parents and utilising expertise from a range of health agencies such as dentists, health visitors and midwives. This has had a positive impact on health outcomes, such as local breastfeeding rates that have been sustained at levels well above the national average. The childhood obesity rates are only available at borough level and show a level marginally above the national rate. Healthy eating for adults and children is promoted well at the centre, as is physical exercise with children encouraged to use the outdoor area during Stay and Play. In addition, 'Baby Boost' classes and the 'Here for Health' initiative with baby clinics now held at the centre have been effective in improving the numbers from target groups accessing the services. This is especially so for more vulnerable groups such as teenage parents.

Families feel very safe when they are at the centre and all of those spoken to have a high level of trust in staff. Parents also have a good understanding of how to protect their children through the centre's regular first-aid courses and visits from the police community support officer and the fire services. Consequently, a rising number of those from the most vulnerable target groups are given the skills and confidence to care for their children. For example, the centre has been very effective in supporting parents who attend a local parenting assessment centre. Staff are fully involved in instigating and managing Common Assessment Framework plans, with their effective support leading to families 'stepping down' from formal proceedings. Although the number of child protection plans is reducing, the local authority can only provide data for an area much wider than the centre's reach area.

Children and adults using the centre show very high levels of enjoyment in all the sessions. Children particularly enjoy sharing activities such as reading with an adult

at the Funtime Friday session. All the activities are well planned, with a strong focus on early years development, and the impact can be seen in rapidly improving outcomes for children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The numbers reaching levels expected for their age has risen year- on -year to 67.5% in 2011, 58.5% in 2010, against a national average of 59%. Also significant is the way the gap has narrowed between the lowest 20% and the rest from 22.8% in 2010 to 22% in 2011, which is well below the national average of 31.4%. Most of the families using the centre develop their skills well, especially in relation to parenting and early years development. Their personal development and education are also enhanced through good links with Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT) which has delivered courses in literacy, language, numeracy and information and communication technology.

Adults are very good role models and consequently all the children using the centre behave well and develop positive relationships. 'My children are much more confident and better behaved,' was a common view. Families feel very involved in the centre and know their views are listened to, for example to have name labels and a 'buddy' system to make it easier to strike up conversations. Volunteers make a valuable contribution and enhance their own skills. The highly multicultural nature of the local community is reflected in those using the centre and all treat each other with respect. Staff are on hand to help with any translation difficulties so that all can make a positive contribution. The parents' forum and parent representation on the advisory body, including families from vulnerable and target groups, ensure a good level of involvement in governance.

The strong focus on early years development means that children are making good progress in enhancing their skills for the future. Individual learning journeys, that record children's achievement in pictures and text, enable parents to be fully involved in their children's development. Adults are given good advice and guidance from some agencies and this has led some, including a good number of young parents, to return to education, training or employment. However, it is difficult for the centre to measure the impact, other than anecdotally, as there has been no updated information in relation to the families benefiting from the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Also, relatively tenuous links with Jobcentre Plus mean that its input has been limited.

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	<b>2</b>
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	<b>2</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>2</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>2</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>3</b>
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## How good is the provision?

<b>2</b>
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Centre staff are very knowledgeable about families' needs, and use this well to target and support vulnerable groups. For example, an individual needs analysis is carried out for every participant on courses and activities. However, data about the percentage of some target groups in the reach area are not available. Nevertheless, the centre can show that the numbers from all target groups who are registered at the centre are increasing. This has been particularly so for Black and minority ethnic groups, lone parents and teenage parents, the latter group being one identified as in most need of support. The centre has also been effective in providing targeted services and activities to support the most vulnerable, such as the weekly Young Parents group and Funtime Friday sessions as well as Peers Early Education Partnership courses.

Enabling children and adults to learn and develop is at the heart of the centre's work. All the activities and sessions are focused around developing early learning skills, improving parenting skills and increasing the numbers from the most vulnerable groups who use the centre. The centre celebrates achievement well, awarding certificates at the end of all the courses to adults and children. This helps them to build on their self-esteem and improves outcomes for many.

Good care, guidance and support are provided by the caring staff who impart their knowledge and support in a non-judgmental way. Typical views were, 'The staff are brilliant for advice,' and, 'I would be lost without the centre.' Staff make good use of the expertise of other agencies, such as Croydon Information Support Service and the Early Intervention Service to support the most vulnerable groups. This is especially so for those in times of crisis, such as on the point of being made homeless or whose home is considered unsafe for children. Consequently, families who use the centre feel it is having a great impact on their lives.

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	<b>3</b>
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	<b>2</b>
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups.	<b>2</b>

## How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The centre leader, manager and coordinator work well together to ensure the smooth running of the centre. They are clear about the centre's strengths and areas for development. Governance and accountability arrangements are clear and the advisory body consists of all the main partners involved in service provision. The members play an effective role in the centre's self-evaluation and there is a strong commitment to continue to improve outcomes. However, the service plan does not make key priorities clear and the lack of some data has meant that not all targets are measurable or challenging enough.

Centre resources are of good quality and are used well to meet the needs of target groups and those most in need of support. The staff are well trained and experienced, deployed well and very good use is also made of the partner school's early years staff expertise, a valuable resource in helping the transition to school. The numbers using the centre, especially from target groups, are increasing year-on-year and outcomes are improving. Consequently, the centre gives good value for money.

The attractive and welcoming centre is fully accessible to those with disabilities and is highly inclusive. Those who use the centre reflect the very culturally diverse area it serves. All ages mix well together and are assisted in their participation through the provision of crèche facilities and staff on hand to translate and support those with disabilities. Concerted action to include specific groups who most need support has led to improved outcomes and a narrowing of the achievement gap.

Safeguarding procedures meet all statutory requirements. Required Criminal Records Bureau checks are carried out and the relevant assurances given by partner agencies. Staff are well trained in how to spot and deal with any safeguarding concerns amongst those who use the centre, such as if there are suspicions of domestic abuse or risks to children. This includes where children or their carers have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good knowledge of the families and skill in managing Common Assessment Framework plans and other inter-agency work mean that the risk of harm is significantly reduced.

There are some strong and effective partnerships in place, particularly with the partner school. Others, such as with health practitioners are good and improving at 'ground level'. However, at a strategic level there has been some historic difficulty in the sharing of health information and in some agencies having a proactive, physical presence in the centre. For example, although Jobcentre Plus is represented on the advisory body, it does not offer any direct services there. The centre has managed to minimise the impact by providing alternative sources of support and guidance and training staff, for example to give benefits advice, so that outcomes are generally good, especially for the most vulnerable groups.

Families who use the centre have very high levels of satisfaction with its services.



Their views are very frequently sought and children are also included, such as by being given a camera to record what they enjoyed most at the Super Dad activity. The limited data that are available show that centre is effectively reaching out to engage groups in the community who are harder to include, by targeting services and shaping its services to meet their needs. The Young Parents group is a notable success in this regard, especially as some participants have gone on to be involved in the centre's governance and in presenting their views at the annual conversation.

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	<b>2</b>
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	<b>3</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>2</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>2</b>
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	<b>2</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>3</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>2</b>

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

The findings from the concurrent inspection of Winterbourne Nursery and Infant School contributed to this inspection in particular with regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage information.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Winterbourne Children's Centre on 17 and 18 November 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

During our visit, we looked at your centre's plans for improvement and numerous other documents. We spoke to a range of partner agencies working with the centre as well as staff, members of the advisory body and representatives from the local authority. We also visited all of the centre activities taking place during the inspection and spoke to a substantial number of families using the centre. Thank you for your participation in the inspection. Those of you we spoke to were very positive about what the centre does for you and especially for your children, helping them learn and develop well. Typical views expressed were, 'It's like a second home,' and, 'Staff are so genuine, welcoming and willing to help. They love their job and it shows in the care.'

The centre is particularly successful in helping young children learn and develop because this is a strong focus of their work and staff are skilled in delivering activities and courses. They have also helped many of you to develop your own skills in parenting so that you have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives, keep your children safe and how to help develop their independence. This has had a positive impact on the levels children reach at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Many of you have been supported to improve your own educational skills and this has led to a return to education, training or employment. This has had a particular impact on the younger parents.

Everyone feels safe in the centre and you have high levels of trust in the staff. They work well to safeguard you and your children, enlisting the help and guidance from other agencies well when more specialised, targeted support is required. Many of you spoke highly about how the centre has helped you. You are also included well in the way the centre is managed and your views are listened to with regard to changes and improvements. Most of the partner agencies who work with the centre do so effectively, although a small number are not providing as much information to the centre as they could.

The centre runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and the advisory body is effective in the way the centre is governed. There is a clear and accurate understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for development. However, the local authority has not been able to provide some of the information the centre needs to measure its success in some areas. This also means that the centre's written document outlining key priorities for improvement does not set out measurable, ambitious targets. We have asked the local authority and the centre to improve this aspect of their work.

The well-trained staff and other high-quality resources are used well and have had a positive impact on outcomes for many, especially where help is needed most, and so the centre provides good value for money. Everyone is enthusiastic and committed to improve and involve even more people in the community who could benefit from their services. There has already been a positive impact on many outcomes especially in relation to children's early development and for those who need the support most. As a result, the centre is well placed to continue to improve.

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