

# Inspection report for Hyde Flowery Estate Children's Centre

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| <b>Local authority</b>     | Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council |
| <b>Inspection number</b>   | 383972                                |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>    | 23-24 November 2011                   |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b> | Susan Bain HMI                        |

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|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Centre leader</b>               | Sarah Billington                  |
| <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> | Children 4Most |

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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.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors held meetings with staff, representatives from partner services and the local authority, as well as talking informally to parents and carers. They observed the centre's work including: activities provided at the centre and a satellite centre; documents and policies; safeguarding arrangements and data.

## Information about the centre

Hyde Flowery Estate Children's Centre is located approximately seven miles east of Manchester city centre and serves a large geographical area. The centre was opened as a phase one Sure Start children's centre in September 2006. Its reach initially covered the central Hyde and the Flowery Fields area but it has recently increased to cover the whole of the Hyde area, including Newton, Gee Cross and Godley. A motorway running through the area creates distinctive community areas: Hyde Central; Hyde Flowery; Hyde Newton; and Godley/Gee Cross. The community profile is predominately White British and Bangladeshi; approximately 35% of families are of Bangladeshi origin.

The centre is wholly accountable to Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (the local authority; the council). The centre's provision was part of a service redesign in April 2011 when pre-existing services were integrated to create a single Youth and Family Service for children aged 0 to 19. The service redesign resulted in changes to governance and management and a reduced staffing and budget for the children's centre. The centre coordinator took up post in May 2011, with responsibility for all children's centres in the Hyde, Hattersley and Longendale area.

Hyde Flowery Children's Centre has two satellite centres, one of which is currently not in use. Approximately 1,300 children were registered at the end of October 2011. The centre is open five days each week opening at 8:30 each day. From Monday to Wednesday it closes at 17:00, on Thursday at 16:30 and on Friday at 16:00. The centre houses a private nursery provider, Children 4Most, and a café, which serves

the local community and provides all catering for the private provider. There are five primary schools in central Hyde; one of these, Hyde Flowery Primary School is on the same site as the centre.

**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**

**3**

### **Capacity for sustained improvement**

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

**3**

## **Main findings**

The centre is a welcoming and secure place offering good resources and a satisfactory range of services. The centre coordinator, staff and their partner agencies have worked hard since the service restructure to develop new teams and establish an integrated model of service delivery within the locality. The activities and support available are effective in developing parenting skills, resolving crisis in families and promoting healthier lifestyles. Centre users feel very safe at the centre and they report that they understand how to apply good safeguarding and safety practice at home for their own children, or those they care for.

Inspectors observed the effectiveness of practitioners’ interactions with children and parents on children’s improved socialisation, the development of good relationships, and positive behaviour. Parents, carers and children enjoy the activities offered at the centre. Good quality interaction and well-organised routines help children and their families become confident and develop friendships. Parents learn how they can support their children’s development through play. There are indications of improved outcomes for families and children, but arrangements to collect and analyse data are not sufficiently well developed to ensure that staff always know enough about the needs of the local community to support their planning or to monitor the impact of their work.

The centre is highly conscious of the need to be cost effective. The multi-agency referral and allocation process helps to integrate services and reduce duplication to ensure that reduced resources are targeted to the neediest families. The timing of delivery of related provision on a single day ensures that families with babies receive the support they need without making multiple journeys. However, the centre’s good resources are underused for much of the week. The centre, on-site day care and café are open every day, but the centre’s published programme reflects just one day

each week when sessions are offered throughout the day and typically only one session on each of the other weekdays. Centre staff and users recognise that service levels have reduced.

The centre welcomes feedback from parents and centre users, and evaluates each activity. However, structures for parents to be involved in decision making, planning and evaluation were adversely affected by the service redesign process. At the time of the inspection, the advisory group had not met for seven months and the parents' forum had been suspended since March 2011. Plans were in place to reintroduce both groups.

The centre has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. Effective evaluation and improvement measures by the local authority early years' senior team have improved provision in early years' settings. Staff and stakeholders are satisfactorily involved in the self-evaluation process and content of self-evaluation, for example through their project reviews. The centre's self-evaluation and development plan are detailed and informative, but lack evidence from accurate data to inform judgements and actions. However, the centre's self-evaluation identified all key areas that inspectors found as areas for improvement and action plans are already in place to rectify the weaknesses. It was too soon to judge how effective these actions would be.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Develop and implement effective systems to collect and analyse data that will enable managers and other staff and partners to accurately plan to meet local need and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the centre's work by:
  - ensuring that data held by individual staff and partners is coordinated to provide a clear and comprehensive overview of the centre's work and impact.
- Urgently provide appropriate channels of consultation to engage users fully by:
  - re-establishing the advisory board ensuring that representation includes a balanced proportion of parents, carers and other centre users
  - providing training for board members so that they understand their remit and terms of reference
  - re-establishing the parent's forum
  - providing stakeholders with the information they need to question and hold the centre to account.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

|          |
|----------|
| <b>3</b> |
|----------|

The centre has a satisfactory range of health promotion activities that includes ante and post natal and breast feeding support. The 'Leap4Life' programme focuses on increasing physical activity and exercise; other sessions place a strong focus on

promoting good personal hygiene routines and healthy lifestyles. The structure of children's play time at the centre encourages a good balance of quiet rest times and vigorous free movement and play. The well-designed outside play area provides ample opportunity for fresh air and exercise. Partnership work with nutritional workers, health visitors and midwives supplements this provision. The centre targets breastfeeding support for mothers from the Bangladeshi community, where breastfeeding is less prevalent. Data show that breast feeding rates for the area are around the national rates but declined between 2010–11 and 2011–12. Although obesity rates for Tameside improved very slightly from 2008–09 to 2009–10, they remain slightly above national rates. The centre has insufficient data to evidence the impact of its health interventions, such as reduction in children's accident rates, hospital admissions, and immunisation rates.

Children are secure in safe and supportive environments. Practitioners are very safety conscious during sessions and children receive warm and responsive care. Safety messages are skilfully incorporated into activities. For example, information about safety at home as babies become mobile is incorporated into the baby clinic. Childminders share good practice relating to risk assessments and children learn to handle tools carefully in structured sessions and to play sensibly on large play apparatus. Practitioners demonstrate clear and consistent boundaries and expectations. Health and safety reminders are widely displayed around the centre. All centre staff have received Common Assessment Framework (CAF) training. Social care staff report increased referrals as a result; prompt intervention has reduced their level of concern about children's safeguarding within families and in some cases has prevented child protection measures being implemented.

The planning and resourcing of children's play establishes a challenging environment where play is supported and extended. Parenting and family relationships improve. Sessions are highly enjoyable and provide a quality time for parents and their children. Children's Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores show improvement. In sampled local schools, most are around or just above the average for Tameside; one is significantly higher, but another significantly lower. The gap is closing for the achievement of the lowest 20% of children. Speech and language therapy is very effectively directed towards home support, which has resulted in improved communication for the targeted children. Focused early intervention activity, for example, 'Baby Babble', supports speech and language development for babies. However, the centre has no data to enable informed judgements about the impact of its work on improved outcomes. For example, how well children who have experienced children's centre intervention achieve by comparison with those who have not.

Parents feel that their suggestions are welcomed at individual activity level. They are routinely consulted and feel comfortable to make suggestions about ideas for session plans, such as making hand and foot prints with paint and creating Christmas decorations. Their ideas guide future planning. However, some parents reported that community members do not know about the centre. Too few families are involved in decision making at the centre and some comment that they do not know how they

can become more involved.

The centre provides up-to-date information about job clubs, vacancies, and access to a computer to find work. The high number of childminders in the area receives good support and professional development for their work. The highly effective parenting provision commissioned from Barnardo's has contributed to reduced isolation for parents and carers and enabled families to become more independent. Although the centre has plans to develop volunteering, this is at an early stage and too soon to judge. Wider adult learning, such as literacy, numeracy or English as an additional language is not actively promoted, although signposting to courses is available and the centre can offer courses on site if there is enough demand. However, no courses were offered at the time of the inspection and none were planned for this term. No data exist on how many unemployed parents gain paid or unpaid work.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

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| <b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>  | <b>3</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>3</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>3</b> |

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

**3**

The centre has an adequate understanding of the needs of families using the centre, making good use of the local knowledge of its partners during the multi-agency allocation process. The range of provision offered has reduced since the service redesign, but shows a clear link with council wide priorities to improve outcomes for children. Targeted outreach work at the Asha Centre provides effective bi-lingual work with Bangladeshi women to improve their language and parenting skills. Commissioned work with Barnardo's is highly effective in promoting positive parenting skills. A range of summer activities are available for children. However, parents report that the range of provision is much less than they experienced with their older children and centre staff acknowledge this. The volume of referrals is high and families needing additional universal support are referred to another children's centre or the Family Information Service. The centre lacks data to help them identify specific local needs to support planning and assessment of need. It is not fully clear whether any particular groups are not being reached.

Sessions and activities are well planned with clear aims and objectives. The centre provides a vibrant, child friendly learning environment and promotes purposeful learning and independence. Well trained and knowledgeable practitioners sensitively observe children, encouraging and extending each child’s curiosity and learning well. Children have plenty of space and time to pursue their own interests, both indoor and outside. Parents learn effective skills in communication and parenting that support their child’s language and social development very effectively. However, there is insufficient data available about the impact of personal development and learning on improved outcomes.

The centre’s users report effective personalised support. Family and parenting services, guidance and support through the centre and its partners effectively support families at times of crisis; for referred families, services are purposeful and beneficial. The centre offers a wide range of written information, including some in community languages, to help families find the support they need. Managers recognise that there are gaps in the support that is available, for example, links with Jobcentre Plus are under developed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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

**3**

The council’s strategic vision and direction for an integrated Children and Families Services is clearly expressed and the centre’s management and communication structures enable staff and partners to understand how the centre’s aims and priorities link to overall strategy. Professional supervision is carefully planned and managed. Much staff development has been provided to support staff to work as a flexible and integrated team, to take forward the centre’s purposes. The centre’s activities show clear and direct links with authority-wide strategic priorities but it is not clear that they meet local needs fully.

Activities are evaluated, but this often reflects the perceptions of attendees rather than objectively measuring improvement. The loss of a data analyst, following the local authority’s redesign of the service, has adversely affected the availability and usefulness of data to support the centre’s planning and evaluation of its work. The centre no longer receives locality data relating to, for example, worklessness, lone parents, and families on benefits to inform its planning and targeting. Health-related information is not available for all aspects of work. Individual teams and the centre



have much data available, for example on the 'UMIS' referral system, but much relate to volumes of activity rather than its impact on families. Where data are available, it is not clear how they are used. Data are insufficiently coordinated and analysed at centre level to support judgements about the impact of work. The centre provides satisfactory value for money. It is working hard with partners to provide an adequate range of services at a time of reduced staffing and budget.

The centre is fully inclusive and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are actively involved in activities. A clear focus is placed on early intervention work; there is evidence of closing the achievement gap for low achieving children and improved outcomes for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Good, targeted work with the Bangladeshi community includes provision delivered in Bangla; information is available in community languages. Fathers are welcomed and actively participate, but numbers are low. Saturday provision targeting fathers was cut. Insufficient data are available to show that the most disadvantaged groups in the areas are identified and their needs are met. For example, the self-evaluation indicates an increase in the number of Black African families in the area, but it is not clear how this information is followed up to establish how best to meet their needs.

The safeguarding policy has been recently reviewed and fully revised, drawing on consultation and the expertise of wider partners. The revised policy is very detailed and includes information to ensure that staff, volunteers, and other users understand the potential indicators of abuse and what to do in the event of suspected abuse, but is still at draft stage. Case studies indicate that safeguarding concerns are promptly and very effectively dealt with. The centre maintains an appropriate record of enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for all staff, frequent visitors and partners' staff. Job roles are risk-assessed and individual risk assessments are in place during the process of CRB check renewal. All staff have completed mandatory safeguarding training. Health and safety takes a very high priority. Risk assessments are in place for all rooms and activities.

The centre's numerous internal and external partnerships are working closely together to take forward the aim of an integrated service. A very recent partnership event was effective in bringing partners together across the area. Staff are becoming more confident in working alongside partners to ensure a holistic approach when meeting individual family needs. Specialist partners are readily called upon, for example, to support speech and language development. Voluntary sector partners are used effectively for particular aspects of provision, for example, Hyde Community Action work proactively with the Asian community and Barnardo's are commissioned to provide the parenting strategy. Partners hold their own data and a coordinated overall view of partnership activity and its impact is not available.

Users' views are regularly requested, following each activity, about the quality of their experience. Expressed views are almost always positive. However, the formal structures for user involvement have declined significantly. Advisory board representation does not include enough parents. Over the past year, meetings have only included one parent. Parents report that they do not know how they can

become more involved with the centre. Centre staff are aware of the need to re-establish the board urgently; the board's remit has been reviewed with a plan to relaunch the board in December 2011. Parents' forums were suspended at the end of March 2011 and are not planned to start again until early 2012.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| <b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>                         | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>  | <b>4</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>3</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>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>                | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose</b>     | <b>3</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>3</b> |

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

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Hyde Flowery Estate Children's Centre on 23 and 24 November 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We found the centre bright and the staff welcoming and helpful. The centre is very secure and protects your children well. The helpful information staff provide helps you to understand how to keep your children safe and healthy. Those of you we spoke to commented about the support you had received and how effective this was. We found that the activities provided by the centre, such as 'Baby Babble' and 'Stay and Play', are helping you to understand how to play with and talk to your children in ways that support their language development from a very young age. Children and parents/carers enjoy the activities they attend and make new friends. The knowledgeable staff encourage children to explore their surroundings. The well-designed outdoor play area provides very good resources for imaginative play in the fresh air.

The centre has a large number of partners and works well with them to help ensure that you receive the right support and advice quickly. However, the centre does not have enough accurate information about the local area to help it to plan and to check how effective its work is so that it can find ways of being even better.

You may be aware that the centre was part of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council's redesign of its services in April 2011. The centre's staff and partners are working hard to establish the best service they can with the reduced staffing levels they now have. Some of you have told us that there are not as many activities at the centre as were available when you attended with your other children. We agree that, on some days, the good resources that the centre provides are underused. The centre staff know that they urgently need to put an advisory board in place to help their decision making. The previous board did not have enough parents and carers involved; some of you have told us that, although your views are welcomed, you do not know how you could become more involved. If you would like to have an input in helping to shape the centre's future for you and for other families, please tell someone at the centre.

It was a pleasure to meet some of you during the inspection and to learn about the ways that the centre benefits you and your families. Thank you for contributing to our evidence base by sharing your comments and views so openly.

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