

Inspection report for Ealing Hospital Children's Centre

Local authority	Ealing
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Ealing Hospital Children's Centre (118124)

The inspection of this Sure Start children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

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Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

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

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with the children's centre's leaders from the National Health Service (NHS) Trust and the local authority, members of staff, representatives from the local authority, a range of agencies who work in partnership with the centre, members of the advisory board and families using the centre's services.

They observed the centre's work at antenatal clinics, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including key policies, the centre's self-evaluation documents, its three-year service plan and data about people who use the centre.

Information about the centre

Ealing Hospital Children's Centre is a phase one centre that is situated in a purpose-built area on level one of Ealing Hospital. The centre was designated in March 2006 and is run by the National Health Service (NHS) Trust on behalf of the local authority. The centre works in partnership with the Hanwell Early Years Centre, which is managed by the local authority. The local authority commission Coram to provide outreach services for families.

The advisory group contributes to the management of the centre and includes representatives from a number of community and statutory partners. There is a parent parliament which meets every three months and feeds into the advisory group. The children's centre is open from 7.00am to 5.30pm, each weekday. The Early Years Centre, which includes the Family Information Service (FIS) is open from 8.00am to 6.00pm each weekday.

The centre serves an area that is ethnically, socially and economically diverse. There are high levels of crime and a high number of vulnerable families in the area. The take up of further education is low. There are 945 children under five in the reach area, with around 18% of children living in households dependent on workless benefits. The largest ethnic groups in the reach area are White British and Asian. There are smaller percentages of other ethnic minority groups, including Black families and an increasing number of White European families. Several languages other than English are represented among centre users, including Punjabi, Urdu and Polish. The levels of skill shown by children when they start the early years provision is below those expected for their age, especially communication and language. The centre is situated in one of the 30% most deprived areas nationally.

The children's centre offers multi-agency services for children under five years of age and their families. These include midwifery services, family support and support for those seeking employment. Many services are delivered from the Hanwell Early Years Centre. Families also attend stay and play sessions held at another local centre.

The NHS Trust provides childcare for children in the early years age range. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and is open from 7.00pm to 5.30pm each weekday, all year round.

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

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

Ealing Hospital Children's Centre is satisfactory, with some good features. Care, guidance and support are a strength, particularly for the more vulnerable families. Friendly and approachable staff have built high levels of trust amongst families, who feel nurtured and well supported, particularly when they experience difficulty. Families are happy and extremely positive about the support the centre provides and the way that it is helping to improve their lives.

The centre works with partners to provide an appropriate range of services, which is leading to satisfactory outcomes for children and families in the area. The early years

provision promotes purposeful learning well and children are independent learners. Children's early language skills are developed through regular and enjoyable singing and story sessions. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities use props, such as selecting a 'star' to inform adults of their song choice. Parents value the opportunities their children have to play and they enjoy supporting their children's learning through stay and play sessions. These sessions have not always been appropriately placed in the community in order to meet the needs of target groups. The centre has identified this and is working with partners to ensure that sessions planned for the new year are targeted and meet the needs of families. For example, a session with a focus on language and communication is planned in one of the more deprived areas where many families speak English as an additional language. Case studies, known as 'story catching', show how some families have improved their economic stability. The Family Information Service signposts families seeking training and employment to appropriate partners. However, there are not enough opportunities at present for parents to develop their skills for the future.

The centre has strong links with health professionals and the large majority of families are accessing appropriate health services. Health outcomes for the families accessing services are good. The emotional health and well-being of pregnant teenagers and teenage parents are promoted well because they engage effectively with the Family Nurse Partnership. The take-up rate for teenage mothers breastfeeding their child at six to eight weeks is above the national average due to the good support they receive.

Keeping families safe lies at the heart of the centre's work. Children's well-being is enhanced by the effective implementation of the NHS and local authority safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff and managers at the centre are well trained, particularly in relation to child protection, and the centre is proactive and works collaboratively with key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children. The family support work is helping those who are identified as more vulnerable or experiencing difficulties in their lives, such as domestic violence, to make significant improvements. Discussions with parents and 'story catching' confirm there is good evidence of improved outcomes for children on child protection plans and those children identified as in need.

The centre has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. It is beginning to make better use of a range of helpful data collated by the local authority and local knowledge to identify needs and target services. For example, in the last year the centre has successfully increased the number of families it reaches, including increases from some of the target groups, such as families from minority ethnic groups and those dependent on workless benefits.

Leaders from the NHS and local authority know the centre's major strengths and priorities for development. They conduct a range of monitoring activity within their particular service but this is not reviewed collectively and, as a result, the current self-evaluation is not supported by evidence of impact on outcomes for families. Managers of services have recently come together to start the process of fully

evaluating the centre's services using the 'Ealing Storybook' format to review and monitor the effectiveness of services.

The centre gathers feedback from families through a range of questionnaires and evaluations. Parents and carers are consulted about some activities and planned services, but their views are not consistently gathered and not enough families are systematically and routinely engaged in the governance of the centre.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Together with the local authority and partners, improve the rigour of self-evaluation in order to:
 - fully evaluate the effectiveness of services
 - track the impact that services are having on outcomes for families
 - more precisely identify what outcomes the centre aims to achieve in improving the life chances of children and families when planning new services.
- Develop the parent parliament in order to engage families in shaping services and the governance of the centre.
- With partners, develop the work to support parents in improving their education, learning and development and provide more opportunities to prepare for employment.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

The centre is an early stage of evaluating the impact of its work. The evidence available demonstrates the positive contribution the centre is making to improve the outcomes for families. Families are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their children healthy. The large majority of pregnant women in the area attend the hospital antenatal clinic or clinics held in the community. Good support for breastfeeding is provided by health partners, and take-up rates at six to eight weeks have increased, although remain a priority for the centre. A breastfeeding peer support session is now being established within the hospital to further support this work.

There has been a reduction in obesity rates in the area. Reducing obesity remains a priority and the centre works in partnership with another local children's centre to deliver stay and play sessions. The 'Mind, Exercise, Nutrition and do it' (MEND) programme is delivered as part of these sessions, encouraging families to enjoy meal times, 'bin the bottle' and develop a greater awareness of sugary food and drinks. The infection control team from the hospital visits sessions with a powerful hand hygiene activity, which highlights the importance of hand washing.

Children and families feel safe when accessing stay and play sessions. Outreach workers are supporting families to develop a good understanding of how to keep

their families safe. Parents and carers are helped to keep their families safe in the home. The centre provides home safety packs to social workers for home visits to vulnerable families. Parents are encouraged to manage their children's behaviour in safe ways through information such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) publication 'Effective Ways to Manage Behaviour' and nursery staff are good role models for families who access funded childcare places. The nursery staff monitor children who are subject to a child protection or children in need plan closely. Early intervention strategies ensure children are protected against harm and receive the support they need, for example referrals to speech and language therapy. Those subject to the Common Assessment Framework are supported extremely well.

Children accessing nursery places are making good progress in developing their social skills and in gaining confidence and independence. Around 86% of children achieve a total of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, which is above the local authority average. The centre is successfully narrowing the achievement gap between different groups of children and helping to promote good behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and a keen interest in basic skills. The centre has identified the need to provide and develop more opportunities for parents to improve their education and training. Families are signposted to courses in the community, such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and parenting courses held at other local centres. There is some evidence that families are improving their levels of confidence so improving their economic stability.

Inclusion runs through the centre's work. The integration of multi-agency services supports opportunities for children and their families. The centre has been successful in targeting and supporting families from minority ethnic groups and some other target groups. They are now focusing on engaging more fathers and male carers in centre activities. The centre held a male carers day during the summer, which was successful in engaging fathers, grandfathers and other male carers in their children's play and learning. There are positive relationships between parents, staff and children. Parents spoken to report that they feel staff listen to them and that they are made to feel extremely welcome and are part of the community as they build friendships with each other. One parent reported, 'The centre has helped me to get to know other people, socialise and not be isolated.' Parents feel able to share their views and opinions with staff. However, the centre is aware there is less opportunity for parents to influence decision making and centre planning.

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	3

and social development	
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	3
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	3

How good is the provision?

3

The centre provides suitable services and activities that satisfactorily engage the majority of the priority vulnerable groups in the community. Experienced staff know individual families well and have a secure understanding of the needs of the majority of families in the area. The quality and range of services are integrated to meet the personal, social, health and safety needs of families. The centre works closely with key partners, such as health, Coram, social care and speech and language therapists in order to assess and support the needs of families. The needs of those identified as needing specific support are assessed well in order that improvements are seen. Outreach work for one-to-one support for families in the home is having a positive impact for families. This is evidenced through 'story catchers', showing the positive impact on outcomes of those in need and experiencing difficulties in their lives. The trusting relationships that develop are effectively engaging families to access additional support, which is available elsewhere, such as the charity organisation 'Empowering action and self-esteem' (EASE) and the 'Supportive action for families in Ealing' (SAFE) team. Parents say they value the support they receive. They say their workers are approachable and find the centre extremely welcoming.

The early years centre provides a range of helpful information for families and provides support to families when completing application forms for school places and two-year-old funding. The centre also provides a range of information within the hospital. This information covers a range of topics from support for those suffering domestic violence to drug and alcohol support. The centre makes effective use of the hospital's interpreter and translation service in order to provide information and guidance to those who have little or no English. However, the centre does not always know the impact of providing such information for families and the implications.

Currently, there is no established stay and play other than the session held in partnership with Windmill Park Children's Centre. The centre has two new groups planned for January, including a 'Bumps to Babes' session, which will operate from within the hospital. When the stay and play session was closed due to low attendance at the Hanwell Methodist Church, staff directed parents to alternative sessions held at other centres. A breastfeeding peer support group is now being held in the children's centre each week and workers are advertising the group within the community in order to increase attendance. Local childminders are supported well in their development and attend specific training held at the early years centre.

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

Governance and accountability arrangements are in place and enable those responsible to work together to ensure the centre is meeting the needs of families in the area, including target groups. Leaders have scrutinised available data and highlighted key priorities for further improvement, which link to the local authority's strategic planning. The advisory board is developing in its role to ensure the effectiveness of services and the centre has plans to promote the parent parliament to engage parents in shaping services and the governance of the centre.

Procedures to evaluate the work of the centre are in place and provide a sound understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for improvement. The current self-evaluation focuses on the early years provision and demonstrates the impact on narrowing the achievement gap for the lowest 20% of children and the rest. It is not yet rigorous enough when looking at the other services the centre provides. The centre is beginning to pull together the information held by the local authority and partners in order to demonstrate the impact the children's centre services are having on the outcomes for families.

The centre manager is successfully motivating the staff team to drive improvement. All staff are appropriately supervised by their own agency and relationships with key partners are becoming increasingly clear and understood. The centre and the early years centre are strengthening the links across both sites and with partners in order to develop high-quality integrated and sustainable services. This is beginning to be seen with the development of new stay and play sessions and the plans to provide a crèche for the family links parenting course. The use of resources, including the deployment of staff, and satisfactory outcomes demonstrate the centre is providing satisfactory value for money.

The centre promotes the inclusion of children and their families. Early intervention strategies ensure children with additional needs receive the support they need, for example referrals to speech and language therapy.

Safeguarding is given high priority. A safeguarding audit is completed every three months to ensure all practices and procedures are regularly reviewed and kept up to date. Recruitment practices are effective and ensure all adults working with children

are suitable. There are strong links within the hospital to ensure the health and safety of families.

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	3
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
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	3
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	3

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

The inspection judgements from the early years inspection that was carried out on 22 November 2011 were used to inform judgements.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Ealing Hospital Children's Centre on 7 and 8 December 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Your children's centre has some key strengths. It provides you with a safe and inclusive environment where you and your children feel safe, valued and respected.

Those of you we spoke to told us that you appreciate the good care, guidance and support you receive, particularly when you experience a difficulty or change in circumstance. This is because staff are friendly and approachable and you have built trusting relationships. We found out that you are happy and extremely positive about the support the centre provides.

The centre works with partners to provide an appropriate range of services, which are leading to satisfactory outcomes for you and your children. The nursery promotes purposeful learning and, as a result, your children are developing good levels of independence. Children's early language skills are developed through regular and enjoyable singing and story sessions. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities use props, such as selecting a 'star' to inform adults of their song choice. You told us you value the opportunities you have to play and support your children's learning through the stay and play sessions. However, you are disappointed that the session in Hanwell recently closed. This is because sessions have not always been set up in the most appropriate place in the community and result in low attendance. The centre has identified this and is working with others to ensure that the sessions they have planned for the new year are targeted and meet the needs of more families. For example, a session with a focus on language and communication is planned in one of the areas where many families speak English as an additional language. Some case studies, known as 'story catching', show how some of you have improved your economic stability. You are provided with some information about seeking training and employment. However, we have asked the centre to provide more opportunities for you to develop your skills for the future.

The centre has strong links with health professionals and the large majority of you are accessing appropriate health services. As a result, health outcomes for those of you accessing services are good. For example, the emotional health and well-being of pregnant teenagers and teenage parents are promoted well because they engage effectively with the Family Nurse Partnership. The take-up rate for teenage mothers breastfeeding their child at six to eight weeks has increased due the good support you receive.

Keeping families safe lies at the heart of the centre's work. Children's well-being is enhanced because the staff are trained and know how to keep you and your children safe. They ensure all adults working in the centre are suitable. They work with other key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children. The family support work some of you receive when you are experiencing difficulties in your lives, such as domestic violence, is helping you to make significant improvements.

Leaders from the NHS and local authority know the centre's major strengths and what it needs to improve. They conduct a range of monitoring activity within their particular service, but this is not reviewed collectively, and, as a result, the difference the services are having for you it is not always clear. Managers of services have recently come together to start the process of looking more closely at reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of services and the planning of new services so more families benefit. The centre asks you for feedback through a range of questionnaires

and evaluations. You are consulted about some activities and planned services. We have asked the centre to develop the parent parliament so more of you are involved in shaping services and the governance of the centre.

We were pleased to talk to some of you during the inspection and were grateful for your views and comments. Thank you for contributing to the inspection at Ealing Hospital Children's Centre.

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