

Inspection report for Edmonton Children's Centre

Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	383923
Inspection dates	18–19 April 2012
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	160123 Edmonton Children's Centre

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.

Report published: May 2012



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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 an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with centre leaders and frontline staff, health professionals, local authority officers, Jobcentre Plus, partner agencies and parents.

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

Information about the centre

Edmonton Children's Centre is located in one of the 10% most deprived areas in the country. This phase one children's centre was designated in March 2006, although it was initially opened in 2001 as a local Sure Start centre. The centre is managed by the local authority and is located within Edmonton Green Shopping Centre. All activities are run from the centre. Many families in the area live in temporary accommodation.

There are 1,612 children under five in the reach area. Most families in the reach area are of White Turkish, Somali, Black Caribbean and White British heritage. There are 465 lone parents in the reach area, compared with the borough average of 290. The Edmonton Green ward teenage pregnancy rate is the second highest in the borough at 78.8%, the borough average being 49.6%. Unemployment rates show that the number of families in receipt of both in and out of work benefits is increasing. Children's levels on entry to early years provision are significantly below those expected for their age.

At the time of the inspection, the centre manager had been in post five months. The centre runs a range of integrated services, including health, adult education, support for teenage parents and family support. The centre's childcare is provided by Edmonton Children's Centre. The nursery is registered to care for 52 children and was last inspected in July 2009. The findings of the report can be viewed at www.ofsted.gov.uk

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

Good leadership and management have benefited the centre since its designation in 2006. A strong culture of continuous improvement is underpinned by good evaluation, and supported by a highly motivated and cohesive team. The centre manager continues to improve the good standards established before her appointment to the permanent position during a year of significant restructuring and change.

Edmonton Children's Centre offers good support to families and young children and serves its community very well. 'My life has changed for the better – I am confident and happy.' This sentiment was repeated in many different ways by the families interviewed by inspectors. The belief that the needs of each individual child and their family are very important underpins the good quality care, guidance and support that the centre provides. A range of effective partnerships provide universal, targeted and specialist programmes that are highly valued by parents and their children. A clear focus on target groups ensures that equality and diversity are promoted well and underpin everything the centre does.

The centre provides a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment; there is a feeling of enjoyment and purposeful activity. It provides particularly good-quality support for children and families who are vulnerable or are at risk of having a poor start in life. The work of the centre is making a noticeable difference to the start children are making at school. Programmes aimed at adults are raising their aspirations, providing inspirational and practical help and support for parents and families to achieve better futures. The safety of families at home, at work and in the centre is a vital part of the centre's work. The safeguarding of children and those adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable, such as women subject to domestic violence, is very good.

Assessment of need is good. Data are used very well to record the progress that

children are making, and to provide staff with challenging targets to further improve the outcomes for families. Most parents and their children achieve well, gaining considerably in confidence as a result of the extensive range of provision that the centre offers. A good range of learning opportunities, combined with good guidance and support, are effectively increasing the number of parents who are progressing from users to volunteers, to further learning and/or employment.

The local authority plays a key strategic role through its challenging annual review of the centre's effectiveness and its own self-evaluation. The outcomes of data analysis are used well by the centre to enhance and adjust the quality of the provision. As a result, most outcomes, including health and children's achievement, are improving steadily. The drive for continued improvement, based on clear priorities and a good understanding of the reach area, combined with effective leadership that motivates staff, are ensuring that the centre's capacity to sustain and further develop the provision is good. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensure that the management team remains clearly focused on improving the quality and impact of the services and activities provided. Families are engaged well in the evaluation of programmes and activities. Leaders recognise the need to increase further the number of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. The centre's self-evaluation does not make sufficiently rigorous use of data to support judgements about its impact and effectiveness.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase the range of ESOL provision to meet the growing needs of the reach area and all target groups, ensuring effective progress for users.
- Ensure that the judgements made in the centre's self-evaluation are well supported by a good range of data.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Staff work to improve the health outcomes for children and families with increasing success. The centre effectively promotes healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. Children enjoy healthy snacks and have access to fresh drinking water at all times. The centre develops children's physical skills through soft play, including sensory play. Children enjoy opportunities to be active and to develop new skills. Parents are fully involved in physical play and have fun with their children.

Teenage mothers are well supported by health service professionals and services within the centre. There is good attendance at their focus groups and 58 have attended over the last year. Young mothers receive antenatal care, with advice and support about safe sleeping, breastfeeding, bathing and baby massage. Individual assessment is offered to parents and has proven very successful, with parents commenting on improved understanding of their babies' needs.

Parents value the health services, and have easy access to many, including speech and language therapy. This good service supports families who have speech and language concerns. Early intervention ensures there is no delay in initiating support for children with complex needs. Families have good access to counselling in the centre: 74 parents received support in the last year, involving 300 sessions. Improved outcomes for parents result from support for their self-esteem, enabling them to return to education and work. In English Language Proficiency courses 31 parents gained a certificate in 2011 and were offered college places.

The existence of few child protection cases demonstrates that staff take swift and appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are identified. Children and vulnerable adults show improvements in their confidence and skills. Activities are well organised and supervised with thorough risk assessments. Discussions with parents demonstrate that they feel safe at the centre. Parents mentioned how the centre transformed their lives when they found themselves in an abusive relationship. One commented, 'Without this children's centre I may possibly be dead.' Children with disabilities and special educational needs are well supported.

Activities engage all target groups very well in a variety of well-planned experiences. Children make good progress in learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile shows an increase in the number achieving 78+ from 32.2% in 2010 to 53.3%. Stay and Play and Rhyme Time support children to be independent and make choices about their play. Staff extend children's learning through play, for example by supporting early counting skills and the recognition of colours and shapes. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are developed well. Staff receive good guidance and support from the speech and language therapist, so they can support children and advise parents on how to extend children's learning. A 'getting ready for school' group develops children's concentration skills and promotes the enjoyment of books and reading. The 'strengthening families' accredited training programme focuses on raising self-esteem, promoting positive praise with children, valuing home culture and being healthy. This programme provides very good opportunities for families to access training, helping them to support their children and to create positive outcomes. They are more confident to deal with challenging behaviour, and to support their children's learning and overall well-being.

Parental involvement in the governance of the centre is good. Parents are very positive about their engagement, and discussed how the centre has listened to their views and responded to their wishes. For example, the centre has set up a buggy park for parents following a suggestion on the 'wishing tree'. Parents are very complimentary about the services provided, although at times they have to wait because sessions are very popular. Parents enjoy volunteering in the centre, helping new parents to settle and access the services available. Staff promote positive role models, which result in children displaying cooperative and responsible behaviour. The number of parents improving their employment chances using Jobcentre Plus at the centre has risen from 79 in 2010 to 2011 to 223 in 2011 to 2012.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families:

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

How good is the provision?

2

The centre works in close partnership with a wider team in the local authority and other services to assess the needs of the most vulnerable children and families within the reach area. Detailed assessments lead to clear individual plans for children and families. Plans are reviewed regularly to ensure that services continue to meet the needs of families. Parents are treated with respect and sensitivity, which they appreciate. The centre has a good level of contact with targeted groups in the area and this is increasing year on year, in most cases exceeding the targets set by the local authority. The proportion of local lone parents using the centre is 64%, and the proportion of teenage parents is 100%. The services for teenage parents are very well attended and supported by a team of professionals, such as health visitors, midwives, sexual health nurses, and Connexions. These services provide a very good environment for young parents to meet each other for support and to develop friendship groups. Centre staff take positive steps to alert new users to services available on particular days. The centre has a good range of outreach services aimed at its target groups, such as Home Start, the Young Parents' Project and temporary accommodation workers.

The outreach worker effectively promotes the centre to families in the target groups, such as White Turkish families, and enables families with particular language needs to benefit from the centre's services. The number of children with a disability or a parent with a disability and/or special needs using the centre has risen by 26% since 2010 to 2011.

The centre promotes learning and development effectively. All activities are purposeful, promote good learning and impact positively on the outcomes for children. It actively celebrates the achievements of children and families with certificates and displays of children's work around the centre. The centre effectively enables adults and children to improve their educational and personal development,

as well as increasing their confidence and self-esteem.

There is strong evidence to demonstrate that families in crisis receive effective care, guidance and support. Discussions with parents and evidence within case studies show that staff are effective in initiating appropriate support for families. Strong partnership working with other agencies and effective signposting ensure that families receive the services and support they need to overcome a wide range of personal and social problems, such as domestic violence, debt and potential homelessness. Family support services have been streamlined and coordination between services is effective when meeting the needs of families and individuals in crisis.

These are the grades for the quality of provision:

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

How effective are the leadership and management?

2

The centre manager and her staff are respected by families and partners. Leaders are clearly focused on good service delivery and are very committed to, and take pride in, the work of the centre. Governance and accountability are clear, with effective structures extending from the local authority to the children's centre, and are focused on achieving good outcomes for all families. Roles and responsibilities are clear and understood. A variety of data is used very effectively by the local authority to assess and plan for meeting the needs of the reach area and target groups. This includes feedback from families, data from the local authority and the health authority and an analysis of workforce development needs. The most recent round of commissioning of services based its priorities on the analysis of outcomes for families, government priorities and local priorities. The local authority's very robust monitoring of impact is guided by detailed and clear objectives. To ensure greater accountability some funding is decentralised so that services and activities are better tailored to families' needs. Examples include 'parenting programmes to strengthen families', physical activities to reduce obesity, employability programmes, 'women like us', and involving other centres to ensure sustainability. Staff training and development are central to the management of the centre. Self-evaluation is comprehensive, but overly descriptive and not robustly supported with data. Priorities identified are accurate and are leading to improvement in services and outcomes for families.

Safeguarding is given high priority, and all policies and procedures are consistently implemented. Robust vetting and recruitment processes are in place for all staff and

volunteers. Training in safeguarding and child protection is given high importance. The centre plays an important role in seeking to ensure that children are safe and, where necessary, child protection plans are implemented effectively. The centre works to ensure that victims of domestic violence are protected. Case studies demonstrate that staff take swift and appropriate actions when safeguarding concerns are identified.

Effective partnerships provide an integrated approach to ensuring that families in the target and reach groups have improved opportunities in life and improved outcomes. The centre is proactive in meeting the needs of its diverse community. Good displays and photographs throughout the centre celebrate diversity and promote inclusion. The centre actively promotes equality of opportunity and has zero tolerance of discrimination. It has a sensory room to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

Staff are committed to reaching all families in the area and the centre has seen a steady increase in the number of families attending its services. Outreach workers are making good progress in reaching target families. New Children registered increased from 273 in 2010 to 2011 to 285 in 2011 to 2012, in total 860 children are registered. The centre is a vibrant and diverse environment. Members of all communities are welcomed, supported and empowered. As one commented, 'Staff are very approachable and helpful.' Good strategies are in place to narrow the achievement gap, as indicated by the improving outcomes on the Early Years Foundation Stage profile. The centre is making a very positive impact on the community, providing good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management:

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood	2
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	2

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

None.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Edmonton Children's Centre on 18 and 19 April. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank all of you who made us feel very welcome and spent so much time talking to us during meetings and activities. Many of you told us how the centre has had a transforming effect on your lives and has helped you to turn your lives around. The centre plays an important role in your lives.

The team that leads the centre is highly motivated and manages the centre well. Throughout the time we were at the centre, we only heard positive comments about the groups, activities, support and staff. Standards are good and improving. The centre offers good support to families and children, and serves its community very well. All of you were very positive about the welcome that the centre provides. The centre has formed a range of very effective partnerships with local health, education and social services to the benefit of the children and families within its community. The centre works well with its partners and other organisations across the area to provide as many opportunities for you as possible. The services provided are well focused on community needs.

The centre provides a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment. We were very impressed by the way the staff ensure that you are safe at the centre, and with the information that they provide for you on home safety. It is a place where you and your children can make new friends, and take part in a wide range of interesting activities. Many of you told us how much you enjoyed attending sessions such as Stay and Play and Young Parents Project Lunch Club. The centre supports vulnerable children and families very well. It is making a noticeable difference to the start children make at school. The centre raises parents' aspirations and self-confidence, providing good learning opportunities. The centre assesses the needs of parents and children very well. Throughout the inspection, parents and families constantly remarked on the difference that the centre was making to them. One of the good activities you mentioned was Time to Talk, which provides space for you to get guidance and information about other services to support your individual needs.

Health outcomes for children and families attending the centre are improving. Teenage mothers are very well supported, as are single parent families. Families have good access to counselling services within the centre. Parenting support sessions boost parents' self-confidence in their ability to support their children's development. The centre supports those of you who want to move into education and employment through its work with Jobcentre Plus and the local education providers. Parents' involvement in the governance and development of the centre is good. Outreach services are very successful at promoting the centre. Families in crisis receive effective care, guidance and support.

We have asked the centre to provide additional English language courses in order to meet the growing demand. We have also recommended that the centre managers make better use of data when completing their self-assessment.

We would like to thank you all once again for your time and enthusiasm in talking to us, and to wish you all the best for the future.

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