

# Inspection report for Tunstall Nursery School and Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Croydon
<b>Inspection number</b>	365867
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 April 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Kubiak HMI

<b>Centre leader</b>	Diane Ward/Chris Palmer
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Tunstall Nursery 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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## 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 representatives from the centre management, local authority, frontline staff and partner agencies. They observed the centre's work, looked at a range of relevant documentation, and spoke to families using the centre.

## Information about the centre

Tunstall Nursery School and Children's Centre is a phase two centre which was designated in 2007. It is situated in Addiscombe ward, close to Croydon town centre. There are currently 1,315 children living in the centre's reach area. The reach area is mixed in terms of deprivation. Employment rates are good and a minority of families are claiming out of work benefits. Residential areas consist of a majority of privately-owned homes with small areas of predominantly social housing.

The majority of families in the reach area are of Asian heritage with approximately 29% from White British heritage and 22% from Black heritage. Children's levels of skills and understanding on entry to school are above average for their age. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage around 81% of children achieve at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage, with communication, language and literacy the weaker area.

The majority of services operate from the centre which is based in a part of the school. The centre provides the full core offer and works in partnership with a number of agencies. Interim governance arrangements are provided by the school's governing body.

Children's centres in Croydon are currently undergoing a re-structuring process and as a result Tunstall Nursery School and Children's Centre will become part of a collaboration of local centres. The new arrangements are scheduled to come into place in September 2012.

## 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

The children’s centre is making a satisfactory contribution to improving outcomes for families. The centre is well respected by families who use it and groups are popular and well attended. One parent summarised the views of many, ‘Tunstall is a very exciting place for my son to spend his time. He is happy and enjoys all of the activities.’ Good features of the centre include safeguarding arrangements, the promotion of equality and diversity and the care, guidance and support families receive.

The centre provides an inclusive environment which celebrates the rich diversity of the community. Access to translation and interpretation services ensures that any language barriers are effectively overcome. Staff are very sensitive to the individual needs of all families who use the centre, especially children who may have additional needs.

Comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and as a result families report feeling safe at the centre. They are relaxed and enjoy their time there. The implementation of robust recruitment procedures ensures the suitability of staff and volunteers. All families who access the centre are seen as individuals and tailored support ensures that their needs are well met.

Families are encouraged to share their views and comments with staff about the centre and many contribute to written evaluations. However, informal feedback is not effectively captured and formal written feedback is not evaluated sufficiently. Systems for communicating changes as a result of suggestions made to the centre by families are not in place. Opportunities for users to be actively involved in the interim governance arrangements are limited.

Many families who access the centre are those most in need of intervention and support. However, overall registration rates are low and as a result the centre does not have an accurate picture of the needs of families within its wider reach area. Therefore, services are not always targeted where they will have the most significant

impact in bringing about improvements. The majority of the centre's groups are universal and therefore open to all families; however, these services sometimes lack clear aims and objectives and families are not effectively signposted to other available services.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A strong sense of teamwork exists amongst centre staff who are enthusiastic and passionate about their work and are committed to improving outcomes for families. Staff development is a priority for the centre and staff attend courses linked to their areas of work. Interim governance arrangements are satisfactory with adequate support and challenge being offered through the school governing body. The centre's self-evaluation processes do not fully demonstrate in all areas the impact that services are having on improving outcomes for families. There is limited data provided to centre managers and staff by the local authority, this hinders their ability to accurately set targets and demonstrate the impact of the centre's work in all areas. Leaders have an accurate picture of areas for development but these are not always closely linked to the service plan. As a result, the centre has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- For the local authority to improve the quality of data available in order to:
  - more precisely assess the needs of families within the reach area
  - be able to target services at those most in need of intervention and support
  - effectively evaluate the impact of services on improving outcomes
  - set ambitious targets through the service plan to bring about improved outcomes for families.
- Strengthen the contribution of families to shaping services and develop the range of provision by:
  - capturing informal feedback from families
  - effectively analysing written evaluations
  - devising systems to communicate outcomes and decisions more widely.

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

<b>3</b>
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Families actively and enthusiastically engage and enjoy the activities at the centre. The Forest School initiative which has recently been introduced is very popular with parents, particularly fathers. Information about how children learn is displayed and follows the Early Years Foundation Stage principles. The impact of activities can be seen as Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) scores show that children who have accessed activities at the centre make better progress than those who have not. Staff are skilful educators and act as good role models, encouraging parents to engage and enjoy activities with their children. Parents are encouraged to take photographs of their children at the centre and record these in their Family Journey

booklet; however, these are not always maintained. Parents benefit from a range of training and, as a result, some become volunteers at the centre. Many volunteers undertake accredited courses and have gained paid employment. Volunteers are actively involved in activities, such as the May Fair where they develop a range of skills including planning, organisation and promotion.

A range of initiatives and activities promotes improved health outcomes and healthy lifestyles. Groups such as Big Cook, Little Cook encourage families to cook fresh, healthy meals together; however, the centre does not monitor whether families continue to maintain healthier lifestyles. Families are encouraged to bring fresh fruit when attending groups. They are encouraged to be active and children benefit from open access to an outdoor play area. Obesity levels are 2.6%, are very low. Around 50% of women breastfeed their children at six to eight weeks which is above average for the local authority. Staff signpost families to access smoking cessation support; however, they do not have specific data for their reach area to support their work. Staff have a good understanding of the emotional needs of families and groups, such as Babyzone, are appropriately targeted at parents with very young children.

Promoting the safety of the families is a priority for the centre and as a result parents report that they feel safe when accessing services. Families feel relaxed and comfortable visiting the centre and this was echoed by one parent who commented that on their first visit to the centre they 'felt warm and welcomed'. The centre has been proactive in building links and engaging with families who have experienced domestic violence. Although this work is still in its infancy, there are positive indications of the impact of this aspect of the centre's work on empowering and supporting families. The centre supports families most in need through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), including signposting to a range of services. The numbers of children on child protection plans in the reach area is low; however, this information is not always readily accessible to the centre.

Regular opportunities exist for parents to share their views about the centre, both informally and formally; however, this is limited to the low numbers of families who access the centre and informal feedback is not effectively captured. Feedback and evaluations are not analysed systematically nor is information about changes as a result of feedback communicated to families. Opportunities for parents to contribute to the governance of the centre are limited. The current interim governance arrangements mean that decisions are made by the full school governing body; however, in the proposed new governance structure it is anticipated that families will be more actively involved.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for families*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</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>2</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?**

<b>2</b>
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The children's centre and nursery school work as an integrated provision and there are seamless links between the two provisions. A particular strength is the collaborative work on Forest Schools with joint staff training and development for the project. Space within the centre is well used. The large and well-equipped outside area has been developed to provide separate areas for the centre's children and the children who attend the nursery. This allows children to see activities in other areas and aids transition for children between the centre and nursery. Groups such as Stay and Play are popular and as a result the centre runs a number of these groups.

Links have been built with partner agencies and organisations, although the quality of these is variable. The centre has been proactive in building links with private, voluntary and independent early years providers and facilitated a joint training event as part of the Learning Community initiative.

Groups are well attended and popular with families, who will often attend the centre most accessible to them. One parent's comment echoed the views of many, 'I cannot praise the services that the staff provide highly enough.' However, the total reach of the centre is low and too few parents attend overall. Despite this many families who attend the centre are from target groups. Data is not always sufficiently analysed to assess whether the needs of families from the wider reach area are being met.

A package of learning and development has been devised in conjunction with some parents; however, this is not systematic and does not take into account the need for a wide range of views. Courses such as first aid and baby massage are particularly popular with parents and take-up rates are good. The centre is proactive in trying to more effectively engage local adult education providers in supporting families, but the success of this is variable. Volunteers at the centre receive a good package of ongoing support and many have been successful in obtaining paid employment in the centre and nursery.

Families accessing the centre receive good quality care, guidance and support. Staff are knowledgeable about local services. Good partnership working and clear communication ensure that tailored support is offered to families. At times of crisis

families are well supported. Structured parenting programmes improve the skills of those who attend. Staff are committed to supporting families, including those from target groups, in achieving the best possible outcomes and they have high aspirations for them. The centre has been effective in engaging dads and male carers, particularly through the weekend group. Many parents spoke highly to inspectors about how the centre has supported them. One parent, capturing the views of many, stated that, 'The advice has made an impact on my family life.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>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>2</b>

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

<b>3</b>
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Staff work effectively as a team and are committed to improving outcomes for families. Line management procedures are clear and understood and performance management procedures are in place. The interim governance arrangements are clear.

Procedures for evaluating services are not fully robust. Service evaluations, including feedback from parents, are not rigorously evaluated nor are they used to inform future planning. Changes made as a result of parents' contributions are not communicated well. The centre is over reliant on obtaining the views of families accessing their services and is not proactive in seeking the views of families in the reach area.

The centre's self-evaluation and service plan lack detail and targets do not always link back to improving outcomes for families. The lack of available data impacts on the centre's ability to set targets and to monitor progress in all areas. It also means that it is difficult for the centre to establish where it needs to direct resources. Staff and partner agencies have limited opportunities to feed into the self-evaluation process. Systems to monitor the centre's work are not consistent and the current reach is limited. As a result the centre provides satisfactory value for money.

Space is well utilised and the outside area is particularly well resourced. Partner agencies are encouraged to run services from the centre and a booking system is in place. The centre is building links with partner agencies and is committed to developing these as it is aware that these impact on its ability to effectively support families and target services.



An effective safeguarding policy and procedures are in place which cover both the centre and the nursery. Recruitment procedures are rigorous and robust with all necessary checks kept up to date. An information board informs families about safeguarding. Some families from target groups are effectively engaged in the work of the centre. Effective links have been established with the local women’s refuge and staff are working sensitively with these families and making a difference to their lives. Staff have experience of using the Common Assessment Framework process. Comprehensive risk assessments are completed, including for specific outings.

Families who use the centre reflect the rich diversity of the local community. They speak a wide range of languages and some basic information has been translated into other languages. The centre has been successful in working with the local refugee centre and supporting them in providing activities for their children. The centre has been successful in engaging fathers and male carers and this is now being developed further. Children and parents with additional needs are well supported. The range of celebrations throughout the year is reflective of the community.

Effective working between the centre and the nursery exists, and sharing experience and skills benefit users of both provisions. Activities such as the weekly joint singing session break down barriers and support transition arrangements.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</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>2</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**

An inspection of Tunstall Nursery School was undertaken in March 2011 and an overall judgement of 'outstanding' was awarded.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected Tunstall Nursery School and Children's Centre on 18 and 19 April 2012. We judged the children's centre as satisfactory overall.

We found that the centre provides you and your children with a good level of care, guidance and support. You told us that you find the centre a very welcoming place and we agree with you. Those of you who need additional help are well supported by the centre's staff who demonstrate a good understanding of the issues which you face and are able to advise and guide you. Some of you told us that the centre made a significant difference to the lives of your families. As one parent told us, during a difficult time the centre's 'help was amazing'. Many of you told inspectors how things have improved with your children, for example their behaviour, through the ideas and suggestions given to you by centre staff.

You have access to a wide range of groups at the centre, with Stay and Play sessions being very popular. Many of you attend the various courses at the centre and take-up rates are good. Some courses have been arranged following ideas and suggestions put forward by yourselves but these are too few and do not always involve enough parents. Those of you have attended programmes to support you in developing parenting skills and building better family relationships report that it has made a difference to your lives and families.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. All staff and volunteers are subject to a rigorous recruitment procedure and have access to relevant training. Security for the building is good and staff are vigilant about who has access. Risk assessments are carried out throughout the centre to ensure that the building is as safe as possible for you and your children. As a result, you report that you feel safe and inspectors could see that you were relaxed in the centre.

Healthy lifestyles for you and your families are promoted throughout the centre. You are encouraged to bring fresh fruit to groups which staff then cut up and offer to children at snack time. Activities such as Big Cook, Little Cook encourage you to cook

fresh, healthy meals with your children. Your children benefit from the attractive and well-resourced outside area which is available all year round. This allows your children to engage in physical activities. The centre is looking to establish stronger links with health partners.

Equality and diversity are a strength of the centre and celebrate a wide range of backgrounds. The centre is proud that families who use the centre speak many languages and values the contributions you make. You have the opportunity to participate in a number of celebrations and festivals which reflect different cultures. Those of you who have disabled children or may be concerned that your child may have additional needs or need additional support are well supported. You are seen as individuals and treated with respect by staff.

The centre satisfactorily self-evaluates the services that it offers. Many of you have told staff about your views of the centre and have completed written evaluations of the courses and groups you have attended. We have asked the centre to look more closely at how they use your comments and suggestions to shape future services. We have also asked them to look at how they can involve families who do not use the centre in this process to make sure that services are meeting the needs of more families in the area.

From its self-evaluation document the centre produces a service plan which identifies areas it needs to develop to bring about further improvements to your lives and those of your families. Although it receives some data which show how things are improving for you and your families, this is limited. We have asked the local authority to provide the centre with data which will help the staff to set clearer targets and be able to show how the work they are doing is making a difference.

The children's centre has established excellent links with the nursery school. Joint working and excellent transition arrangements ensure that those children who move from the centre to the nursery school are well prepared and settle quickly.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come and meet with us and who spoke to us around the centre and within the different groups. We appreciate the opportunity to hear your views and thoughts about the work of the centre. We are grateful to you all and wish you and your families every success for the future.

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