

Inspection report for Jessop Children's Centre

Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	383761
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2012
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Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Jessop Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Not applicable

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Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

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

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

An inspection of the co-located/partner primary school was carried out at the same time as the inspection of the centre under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report of this inspection is available on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with representatives of the local authority, members of the advisory board and parents' forum, centre users and various partners including those from health, education and voluntary sector organisations.

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

Information about the centre

Jessop Children's Centre is a phase two centre located in the south east of the borough of Lambeth. It serves a diverse community in an area with variable levels of affluence and social deprivation. The majority of families are of White British heritage, but other families represent a range of ethnic minority groups. The reach area includes Lower Super Output Areas of Matlock, Milkwood, Ruskin, Southwell and Bowling.

The school's governing body manages the centre on behalf of the local authority. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the centre, but on a daily basis, management responsibility for the centre is delegated to the centre manager. An advisory board also contributes to the governance structure.

Services offered at the centre include health support, early years education and activities, adult education and employment and job search support services. Jobcentre Plus provides information including vacancy lists.

The centre is co-located with Jessop Primary School. A separate inspection report for the school is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk. The index of multiple deprivation 2010, places the centre in the top 30% of the most deprived areas nationally. The most recent available child well-being data places the centre within the 30% lowest level of well-being nationally. The most recent available data also show that around 39% of children in the reach area live in households dependent on workless benefits.

Children in the reach area enter the Early Years Foundation Stage provision with skills at levels lower than typically expected for their age.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children’s centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for families

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

1

Main findings

Jessop Children’s Centre provides outstanding provision for families. As a result, overall outcomes are outstanding. The centre has engaged with 85% of children in the area. This impressive figure means that the very large majority of children in the area are involved in centre activities. The centre works exceptionally well with health partners. As one health professional said, ‘It’s easier for us to work here as some families find the medical model of health intimidating – the centre offers a better environment.’

Although partnership arrangements with health partners are outstanding, the centre is conducting further negotiations to ensure it can receive contact information for new births. The centre also works very well with early years and adult education providers to ensure parents and children make good educational progress. Data show a strong and improving trend in the number of children who achieve the 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. The percentage of parents who enrol on accredited courses is lower than their participation rates in other learning activities. However, their attendance and achievement rates on accredited courses are excellent. Precise data on parents’ progression to employment or into further education are not available. However, evidence shows that parents are well prepared for employment.

The centre is highly respected by partners and parents and carers. Its role as a significant force for good within the community is widely recognised. It inspires families to make positive contributions through their work as volunteers. Parents also contribute well to their local community by donating food and clothes to support families in need. 'Staff here go the extra mile – they really do care,' was the view from one parent, which reflects the views of many. The outstanding support provided to families helps them with practical needs, such as those relating to housing and food. Parents also value the excellent emotional support they receive from staff and the partners they work with at the centre.

Safeguarding is a high priority at the centre. Staff respond in a highly effective manner to support families with children on child protection plans or where safeguarding concerns have been identified. Partnership work with organisations from the private, statutory and voluntary sectors is excellent and highly productive.

The centre's excellent commitment to equal opportunities and inclusion underpins its work. As a result, the number of families from key target groups, such as fathers and families from minority ethnic groups, who now use the centre has increased significantly. The centre's successful work is also narrowing gaps in achievement between those children who achieve the 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest.

The quality of leadership and management is excellent. At all levels strategic and operational management of the centre are very effective. There is also a strong culture of continuous improvement. This is evident from the rigorous use of performance management systems, excellent analysis of data and high-quality self-evaluation processes. This, combined with the excellent quality of leadership and management, means that the centre's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Build on existing work with health partners to explore mechanisms for obtaining new birth contact information to ensure early contact with new parents.

How good are outcomes for families?

1

The promotion of health is excellent. At 93%, breastfeeding initiation rates for the borough are excellent and much higher than the average for London and for England. Through the Milkspot sessions, and also through excellent guidance from midwives, support to promote sustained breastfeeding is excellent. Obesity rates are falling and families' understanding of how to improve their health is excellent. Through an impressive antenatal programme offered at the centre in conjunction with a local hospital, women develop effective skills to take blood pressure and urine

tests and to interpret the results. The centre is, however, still trying to obtain new birth information from its health partners. The lack of this information limits its ability to provide early support to new parents.

Families feel very safe at the centre. The visible promotion of safety is excellent and rigorously implemented safeguarding procedures contribute to families feeling safe. Child protection rates for the reach area are very low. However, the centre works in a highly effective way with families from outside the borough with children on child protection plans. They live temporarily in residential assessment units in the area. The centre has developed an effective programme to help these families improve their parenting skills and their capacity to keep their children safe. The Common Assessment Framework is used as appropriate to identify safeguarding needs. Through excellent support from the centre, the needs of looked after children are also very well met.

Children and parents enjoy activities organised by the centre. The centre's teacher works very effectively with the co-located school and early years providers to promote the achievement and development of children. The percentage of children in the reach area who achieve 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile has increased significantly over time and is improving. It now stands at 63%. However, the centre is continuing to implement strategies to narrow the gap between the percentage of girls who outperform boys in achieving the 78 points. As a result of the work of the centre, children make a good transition to school. The personal development of adults is also good. Retention and achievement rates for adults who enrol on adult education courses, such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) or family learning courses, are also good.

Parents make an excellent contribution to decision making at the centre and also at local authority level. Through their various volunteer roles, such as those on the parents' forum and the advisory board, parents' contribution to the centre is outstanding. Their outstanding contribution also includes one parent who sits on the local authority's commissioning panel for children's centres. The centre promotes positive behaviour of children and is widely recognised for its positive role in the community. As one parent said, 'The centre is the community.'

A significant number of parents participate in education and training. From courses such as a video production course, parents develop good transferable skills such as team working and communication skills. They also become better prepared for work through well-designed programmes that help them develop their confidence and their job search skills. As one parent said of staff, 'They've given me the confidence to go out and look for work.' Children also develop good skills for the future such as confidence and good communication skills.

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	1
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lifestyles	
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
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	1
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?

1

The centre has made excellent progress in increasing the participation rates of its key target groups. These include fathers, lone parents, families from minority ethnic groups and families with disabled children. There is an excellent match between the needs and interests of the community and the provision of services. This is reflected in excellent attendance rates. The centre's use of data to assess wider community needs is excellent. The assessment of individual needs is also excellent. The centre offers an exceptional range of well-planned sessions for children, such as Little Sprouts. This session incorporates outdoor play with growing and tasting food. A systematic approach to outreach work ensures the centre effectively reaches out to the wider community.

The quality and range of provision for both parents and children to learn, develop and thrive is excellent. The centre works very effectively with different adult learning and early years providers to ensure families can access high-quality learning opportunities. Programmes are exceptionally well planned and reviewed to ensure they reflect clear learning outcomes. They are also explicitly linked to the Every Child Matters outcomes. Provision is very responsive to need and to wider community priorities. For example, programmes such as 'Raising Boys' have been developed in response to the educational underachievement of boys in the borough. Centre staff promote a 'can do' attitude for all families. This raises both aspirations and the confidence of families to move on with their lives.

'If it hadn't have been for the centre, I don't know what I would have done,' and, 'The centre has been a lifeline as I am on my own.' These are just some of the reflections from parents about the quality of outstanding support they have received from the centre. As a result of this support, families progress and become more independent, informed and confident to take responsibility for their own lives and that of their children. During times of crisis, families are very well supported. Staff often have to deal with complex problems faced by families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. These include those with no recourse to public funds. Staff

are very sensitive to their needs and their fears. They ensure the practical and emotional needs of these families are well met.

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	1
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	1
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

The quality of leadership and management is excellent. At every level of strategic and operational management, including governance through the advisory board, arrangements are very clear and well understood. The centre is managed by a highly-committed and energetic centre manager who is supported by a highly-competent and very committed team of staff. They carry out their responsibilities exceptionally well and are highly respected and valued by partners and parents.

Centre objectives are closely aligned to local priorities and community needs. Performance management of the centre and of staff is outstanding. Accountability arrangements are clear and staff work to clearly defined objectives which are periodically reviewed. Evaluation of activities is a highly rigorous process that drives improvement. Evaluation is well linked to development planning and effective target setting. Data are used exceptionally well to monitor the centre's performance and to continually assess needs.

Staffing resources are used exceptionally well to ensure overall centre objectives are met. Staff are very well matched to their roles and staff retention rates are excellent. The centre is very well used and outcomes for all families are at least good and some are outstanding. Value for money is therefore excellent. The centre has highly productive relationships with a wide range of partners. They highly value their work with the centre and share with staff a strong sense of common purpose to improve the lives and life chances of families. They also contribute exceptionally well to the review and evaluation process.

Inclusion and promotion of equality are at the core of the centre's work. The gap between children who achieve 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest is therefore narrowing. The gap has reduced from 34% in 2010 to 30% in 2011. Activities such as the 'Raising Boys' programme have been established to help narrow the gap between boys' and girls' educational achievement. Through activities like the Sensory Sensations group, the centre's work with families who have children with complex needs is particularly impressive. One

parent said, 'Staff invested in our children and their progress. This was the first place we came where the staff focused on what our children could do rather than what they can't do.'

Outreach work has been used in a strategic way to target families who have previously been under represented in centre activities. Families are viewed as partners and make an excellent contribution to the development and review of provision. Satisfaction rates are excellent and evaluations, the parents' forum and surveys are also used exceptionally well to capture the views of parents. As a result, user engagement is excellent.

Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. Safeguarding procedures which include Criminal Records Bureau checks, vetting and risk assessments, are rigorously implemented. Staff are well trained in a range of safeguarding issues which supports their work with families. Signposting and referrals to other agencies, such as those with expertise in dealing with victims of domestic violence, are also very effective. The centre's use of a signed 'safeguarding statement' for every activity offered is exemplary. It ensures staff take personal responsibility and accountability for reporting any health and safety or safeguarding concerns they observe during sessions. Through very effective use of a Section 11 audit tool, safeguarding practice is constantly reviewed and improved.

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	1
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
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	1
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	1

Any other information used to inform the judgements made

during this inspection

Findings from the concurrent inspection of Jessop Primary School were used.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Jessop Centre on 2 and 3 May 2012. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

Many thanks for talking to us during our recent visit to your centre. We agree with your views and found your centre to be a very welcoming, friendly and safe place. Centre staff take safeguarding very seriously and this clearly helps you to feel safe at the centre.

We were particularly impressed with the range of health support and guidance that is offered at the centre. The statistics we looked at show how well many of you are doing in breastfeeding your babies. By attending sessions on healthy eating and speech and language therapy sessions, many of you are also learning how you can improve your own health and that of your children. Some of you gave us specific examples of what your children can now do as a result of the health support and guidance you have received at the centre.

We know the centre has worked hard to try and get hold of information about new births in the area. However, this is something we would like staff to keep working on. This would give staff the opportunity to provide support at the earliest opportunity to new parents.

Statistics we looked at also show that your children are making good educational progress at the centre. Staff work hard to plan activities to help your children have fun at the centre and at the same time develop their knowledge and skills. Staff also provide good support to help your children make a successful move on to school.

Some of you are also making good educational progress on family learning courses and other courses, such as English for speakers of other languages. We know that you and your families are also benefiting from learning how best you can support your children's development and improve your parenting skills.

The contribution many of you make through your roles as volunteers and your participation in the advisory board and the parent forum is impressive. Your hard work is very much appreciated. Your practical support to help families in need by donating to the food bank is exemplary.

The overall support for families who use the centre is outstanding. We know from talking to you, and from looking at case studies, that when crises arise families receive excellent support at the right time. Because the support offered is of such a high quality it helps you to move on in your lives. It also helps you to make the right choices for yourselves and for your children.

We were impressed with the way the centre reaches out to families from different backgrounds and who sometimes live with very challenging circumstances. We were also pleased to talk to families who have attended the Sensory Sensations group. You told us how much you felt supported and valued by the staff. We were pleased that you shared with us your observations of the progress your children have made since they started attending the group.

The excellent relationships centre staff have established with different partner organisations contribute to the excellent range of activities that the centre is able to offer. Like you, staff from partner organisations value the work of the centre and have a high regard for staff.

Many thanks for taking the time to talk to us during the inspection. We wish you and your families all the best for the future.

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