

Inspection report for Pyrgo Children's Centre

Local authority	Havering
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Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	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.

An inspection of the co-located 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 senior managers from the centre, frontline staff, parents, partners, members of the advisory board and a representative of the local authority linked to the centre.

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

Information about the centre

Pyrgo Children's Centre was designated in 2008 and is situated adjacent to Pyrgo Priory Primary School at the eastern edge of the Harold Hill area. There is no linked provision with the school. Harold Hill is a large scale post war social housing development, built at the end of the Second World War, and is in Havering's Gooshays Ward. Although Havering is generally affluent, there are inequalities and pockets of deprivation within the borough, particularly in the Harold Hill area. Pyrgo's reach area has high levels of deprivation, for example the Central Park area is among the 14% most deprived in England.

The centre shares staff and resources with the local Chippenham Road Children's Centre which is also overseen by Pyrgo's centre manager. Havering is currently working towards establishing a 'Hub and Spoke' model in which the Pyrgo centre would become one of the three spokes with Ingrebourne Centre as the hub. The centre is governed by the Children's Centre Local Advisory Group (CCLAG) and is managed directly by Havering Local Authority. The advisory board comprises key partners including agency representatives, parents and the local authority. There are no childcare facilities at the centre. The centre's offer includes family support, child and family health services and employment advice.

Pyrgo's reach area is less ethnically diverse than other parts of Havering with 3.2% of the population from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and most families of White British heritage. Unemployment in the reach area is above the Havering and national average. For example, 6.2% of residents in the Gooshays Ward claim Job Seeker's Allowance against the Havering average of 3.3% (Havering Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2010). Children in the centre's reach area demonstrate skills below the levels expected on entry to Early Years Foundation Stage provision.

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

The overall effectiveness of the centre is good. Safeguarding is outstanding. The centre provides effective and increasingly well-integrated services for a community where a large majority have high levels of need. The centre's leaders have established a clear vision and understand the needs of the community well. Effective strategies and a clear business plan underpin the vision, resulting in good outcomes across most areas of the centre's work. With an impressive track record of bringing about improvement, the centre demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

Staff work effectively with families to provide good activities and high standards of care and support. The majority of families who live in the area use the centre and value its services and the total number of those registered continues to grow. The centre has very effective family support and group workers who promote the centre well. The staff have built a strong and positive reputation within the community and this has established trust and confidence in partners and the services it delivers. One parent echoed the views of many when she remarked, 'Staff at the centre leave no stone unturned; it's like a big burden lifted off your shoulders.'

Many of the families who met inspectors described feeling proud of their centre and their many achievements. There are good opportunities to encourage families attending the centre to contribute positively to their community and the life of the centre. Children behave well at the centre and develop positive relationships with

each other and adults. Families are listened to and feel they are included in making decisions about how the centre is run. Although the parenting courses provided are of a high quality and used well by targeted parents, opportunities for those seeking to undertake training or find paid work are underdeveloped.

Staff have exceptionally well-developed skills and understanding of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. They use these very effectively to provide a safe and secure environment within the centre. Risks are identified quickly and are effectively managed. This ensures that families who are experiencing change and challenging circumstances in their lives share their concerns with staff because they trust them and know they will receive effective support.

The centre leader and local authority team manager have sustained strong and effective leadership. The centre's leaders have been effective in assessing the needs of the families accurately and targeting resources to identified groups, for example lone parents, teenage mothers and fathers in the area. As a result, key outcomes for these groups have improved in recent years. Although the local authority provides the centre with a range of data on key performance indicators, these data are for the borough of Havering and not specific to the centre's reach area. As a result, self-evaluation is satisfactory because the impact of the centre's work cannot be evaluated with full precision.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- The local authority should ensure that the provision of data is specific to the centre's reach area so that the impact of the centre's work can be evaluated more precisely.
- The children's centre should extend parents' opportunities to participate in further training to enhance their employability skills, and monitor their participation and progression in these activities.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Health outcomes are improving as the large majority of families in the reach area are accessing the many services provided. The centre is tackling obesity effectively through the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity in sessions. The Family Cooking and Cook and Eat sessions have improved families' understanding of the importance of nutritional value and a balanced diet. The number of four- to five-year-olds identified as obese has reduced in Havering from 308 in February 2011 to 260 in March 2012. Mothers are actively encouraged to breastfeed their babies. Recent data show that the number of mothers initiating breastfeeding in Havering increased from 460 in February 2011 to 1,847 in March 2012. The percentage of mothers sustaining breastfeeding after six to eight weeks also increased in the same 12 month period from 35% to 39%. In addition, the promotion of emotional well-

being is a strong aspect of the centre's work.

The centre is a very safe place and security arrangements are robust. Children learn how to keep themselves safe and to recognise dangers through play. Through well-targeted parenting programmes, parents develop the confidence to manage their children's behaviour. Good links with the community police officer ensure that parents are kept well informed about wider aspects of safety. There are striking examples of families facing challenging circumstances showing improvements in their parenting skills. As a result, there is evidence of improved outcomes for children on protection plans, those subject to the Common Assessment Framework processes and looked after children.

Parents and their children really enjoy the opportunities to interact with others through popular sessions such as Stay and Play, Music and Movement and the Multicultural Group. The respite crèche provides a structured programme of learning and development for a group of vulnerable children who achieve well as shown by the centre's sharp monitoring and tracking of children's progress. Many lone parents have successfully completed parenting courses which have equipped them with the skills they need to manage their children's behaviour successfully at home. The gap in attainment between the lowest achieving 20% of children at the end of Reception Year and the rest has been closing at a faster rate in Havering compared to nationally over the past few years.

Parents believe that the centre promotes a strong culture of mutual respect and inspectors agree. Parents are regularly encouraged to evaluate and suggest improvements to their learning activities. The parents' forum meets regularly and their views help to shape the centre's services, for instance, the suggestion to put on a programme of Family Cooking delivered by a chef who is also a member of the centre's advisory board. Children behave well and show respect for and make friends with others. They are encouraged to make choices about the toys they play with and the food they eat. This is enabling children to become more independent in developing social skills and in becoming inquisitive learners.

Parents report that their engagement with the centre has improved their confidence and independence, which in turn has led to a better quality of family life. There are examples of some families improving their economic stability as a result. One parent has become a volunteer and now manages the Multiple Births Group where twins from different families interact with each other and develop good social and emotional skills. Although courses, such as English for speakers of other languages, have been offered to parents who speak English as an additional language, opportunities for further training and development to enhance employability skills are currently limited.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families.

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

How good is the provision?

2

The centre, along with its partners, meets the needs of targeted groups well, particularly those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. It is particularly effective in assessing the individual needs of children, including those who are vulnerable and have complex needs. All referrals to the centre trigger a series of actions which result in well-coordinated support. Services in the centre are adapted well to ensure they meet the needs of children and parents. Parenting needs are also assessed thoroughly as a result of the attention to detail that family support workers provide. A high proportion of families are registered with the centre and most are residents of the Gooshays Ward, which is the most deprived ward in Havering. The centre is particularly successful in engaging lone parents and families in workless households.

Activities are of a good quality and give parents valuable opportunities to further develop their confidence and parenting skills. Sessions are clearly targeted to attract children or mothers at particular stages of their child's development, for example Baby Massage and Baby Signing are offered at the early stages of childhood development. There is a strong focus on supporting families who need particular help in developing children's speech, language, and social and behavioural skills. The range of varied provision, including that offered at the Chippenham Road Centre, meets much of the needs of the community and helps children to learn well and make good progress. The centre recognises that more training and development opportunities can be offered to parents to enhance their employability skills.

The quality of care and support for all centre users and in the home is particularly good. Families with children on a child protection plan receive personalised support plans and help to negotiate care packages with other agencies. The high quality care and support provided by group workers in the respite crèche ensure that children have the confidence to take appropriate risks and to learn independently. Families receive good guidance on choices to be made and are signposted well to other services.

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

Governance and accountability arrangements are clear and understood and links between strategic planning and service provision are effective. The Children's Centre Local Advisory Group (CCLAG) has wide participation and governance is increasingly effective. Good partnerships with health and social services have made a strong contribution to improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable families in the centre's reach area. Insightful leadership has ensured that effective provision is made in local childcare settings for the children of targeted families eligible for the Two Year Offer, making a real difference to their early learning and development.

Day-to-day management is efficient and the premises are used well. Staff morale is high because centre leaders have created a culture of continuous improvement underpinned by a caring ethos. The use of resources, including the effective deployment of front line staff across two centres coupled with the good outcomes for families, demonstrates that the centre is providing good value for money.

There is a range of monitoring and evaluation systems in place, which ensure services are of good quality, improving outcomes for families and helping staff to identify where they need to develop services further. The centre's self-evaluation is accurate and leads to well-considered targets for improvement, for example providing more opportunities for new mothers to sustain breastfeeding and parenting skills for teenage mothers. However, the provision of data from the local authority is not specific to the centre's reach area; as a consequence, the impact of the centre's work cannot be evaluated fully.

The inclusion of all families, including disabled children and those with special educational needs, is at the heart of the centre's work. This has resulted in significant improvements in the involvement of all families, especially target groups and those families in greatest need. A growing number of fathers now attend the well-managed Dad's Group, held every other weekend at another local children's centre. The centre has been successful in narrowing the gap for the most disadvantaged, demonstrating good equality of opportunity.

The centre's work is underpinned by very comprehensive and highly effective safeguarding procedures, which are clearly understood by all, ensuring the risk of

harm to children is significantly reduced. Recruitment checks are very thorough. All staff, volunteers and partners are vetted to ensure their suitability for working with children. Staff are very well trained in safeguarding as a part of their induction. In addition, early intervention is a key principle underpinning the centre's work and is highly effective.

The centre has been very successful in reaching out to target groups. Families express high levels of satisfaction with the centre and its staff. Their views are sought regularly and there are good examples of how this feedback has been used to make changes in the range of programmes offered.

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	3
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	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	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 Pyrgo Children's Centre on 22–23 May 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you for your help and contribution to the inspection. Those of you we spoke to told us how grateful you were for the support you had received from the centre and the difference it had made to your lives. We read your comments in the many evaluations about the courses you have attended and services that you use. We agree that Pyrgo provides you with good quality care, guidance and support because the needs of each individual child and family are given high priority. For example, the very competent and caring centre staff assess needs swiftly and put together a tailored package of support for any referral made. This early intervention approach has resulted in significantly improved outcomes in, for example, children's and parents' physical and mental health.

Outreach work and the centre's links with many other agencies are giving you the skills and confidence to overcome difficulties you are experiencing. The centre provides health improvement courses such as Family Cooking and parenting skills courses such as Incredible Years, both of which you enjoy and gain much benefit from. Although English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) was delivered at the Chippenham Road Centre last year, the centre does not provide sufficient training programmes to help many parents gain the skills they need for future employment. We have asked the centre to extend opportunities for you to participate in further training. That said, the centre provides a good range of activities that effectively promote the learning and development of children. Music and Movement, Multiple Births and activities in the well-managed respite crèche were all observed by inspectors and found to be effective in developing children's social and communication skills. In addition, the centre takes great care to ensure that you and your children are safeguarded and that the centre is a safe place to be.

The senior staff, together with the local authority, lead and manage the centre well. They listen to your views carefully to ensure that the provision meets your needs and that everyone is fully included. They know what the centre needs to do to improve and are keen to help your representatives on the Children's Centre Local Advisory Group (CCLAG) carry out their roles as well as they can. However, the data that the centre receives from the local authority on key performance indicators are for the whole of Havering and not at the level of the centre's reach area. This means that the centre cannot evaluate precisely the full impact of its work. Nevertheless, the centre's leaders are able to show the good impact of the centre's services on different groups, for example, lone parents, fathers and teenage mothers. We have asked the local authority to provide the centre with data that are specific to its reach area.

The centre values its partnership with you fully and respects your ideas. For example, centre leaders regularly review the outcomes of your evaluations of all the programmes and activities and adjust provision in the light of what the data are

telling them. In addition, the parents' forum meets regularly and feeds back its ideas on how the provision can be made even better. Significant improvements have been made over the last few years showing that the centre has good capacity to improve further, both under the current arrangements and in the planned transition to the new 'Hub and Spoke' model for the four children's centres in Harold Hill.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come and speak to us, we are very grateful and we wish you every success for the future.

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