

# Inspection report for Triangle Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Haringey
<b>Inspection number</b>	384170
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 June 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marion Wallace

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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Not applicable
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Triangle Nursery

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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, members of the management advisory board, local authority, a range of providers, members of the young parent support group, teachers and other staff, health practitioners and parents.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's operation plans, evaluations, service agreement outcomes, key policies and safeguarding procedures. They also visited Triangle House.

## Information about the centre

Triangle Children's Centre is a modern, purpose-built centre and Triangle House is a satellite building providing additional services. The centre has been open for five and a half years and is a phase one children's centre funded by the local authority. The centre serves families in the Seven Sisters area and London Borough of Haringey. It is a designated integrated centre which includes full day care for children from six months to five years, a Nursery with 75 places and 92 children on roll and a Reception class of eight children. There is a central reception area, indoor space, a large hall, purpose-built and accessible rooms and two outside play areas. Childcare is provided through crèches and the centre's full day care facility. The centre has been part of a two-year pilot playgroup project. The campus is shared with and used by the local community. There are close operational links with the other three cluster children's centres in the area. The head of the centre has been in post since September 2008. The Cluster Management Advisory Board and the Management Advisory Board are made up of representatives of the local council, health representatives, deputy and centre manager governors, and centre staff. There are a wide variety of courses for parents, and children and after-school care and holiday courses many of which are run on site. The centre works in partnership with a range of social, care and health agencies and also signposts families to specialist facilities.

The centre offers the full core purpose and is open each weekday for 50 weeks of the year, including some evenings and weekends. A large majority of families in the area use the centre; the average number of parents who use the centre each week is 657 and the average number of children seen is 500 per week. A wide range of income groups use the centre's services. There is a high level of unemployment and a very high proportion of families move in and out of the area throughout the year. Levels of deprivation range from 0 to 10%, 10 to 20%, 20 to 30% nationally to families who are more affluent. Many of the families come from homes with some level of social disadvantage. Many parents using the centre come from households where no one is currently in work and the family is in receipt of benefits. There are a few teenage mothers and children who live in households headed by a lone parent. Families come from a wide range of ethnic groups. The highest numbers of families are Black African, followed by White other and Black Caribbean. Many children's levels on entry to Early Years Foundation Stage provision are well below those 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**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**2**

## Main findings

Despite severe funding cuts and major restructuring over the last 12 months, the children's centre provides good support to children and families in its reach area. Staff have worked extremely hard to ensure good outcomes have been maintained and new projects are identified to contribute to sustainability in the future. There are effective partnerships with a range of professionals from health services, citizens advice bureau and the local authority. Vulnerable families feel very well supported because strong relationships throughout the centre and outreach areas are effective. Children achieve well in the Nursery, Reception and day care facilities in all areas of learning and make good progress over time. Safety is a priority and staff ensure a safe and secure environment at all times. Those families and target groups identified as in most need of support are making good progress in overcoming barriers in their lives. Families appreciate the secure and welcoming environment.

One parent, representing the views of many said, 'There are a lot of staff working in the centre who are passionate about improving the lives of all who enter the centre.'

Leadership is good. The head of centre, deputy and middle leaders have demonstrated flexibility and clear vision in dealing with the restructuring and funding cuts. There is a strong drive and determination to overcome barriers, maintain services and improve the quality of provision. The centre knows its own strengths and areas to develop well and uses a range of methods to gain feedback and to evaluate the effectiveness of the centre. Areas to develop and actions are clearly identified and this ensures the centre is proactive in developing projects to continually improve its provision. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous, although systems to collect and analyse data over time are not as well developed as they could be. Innovative projects such as the youth café and centre, which are designed to increase the centre's sustainability, are progressing well.

Both the cluster and the newly formed management advisory board challenge and support the centre well. Evidence suggests that, prior to restructuring involvement on the parents' forum was strong. However, as a result of the changes, parental involvement is more limited, although there are plenty of opportunities for parents to suggest ideas and to evaluate the services.

The centre's good capacity to improve is evident in the way leadership has maintained the quality of provision and expanded the centre's influence across its reach area despite funding cuts. The centre maintains and initiates contact well with hard-to-reach families in a diverse and transient population.

Parents talk positively about the good communication and help and advice from those who work in the centre and also from other agencies. The centre is well known and respected and the building is a local landmark. Parents talk appreciatively about the good opportunities they have had to attend courses to improve their parenting skills, to develop confidence in speaking English and to gain further skills and qualifications. Communication with potentially vulnerable members of the community, such as lone parents and those who do not speak English as their first language, is good and as a result they attend regularly and benefit from the activities.

The centre works well with local centres and schools and has strong partnership links with specialist services and health professionals. High numbers of families engage with the centre. The needs of target groups are given priority care and support. Community cohesion is strong because groups value and respect each other.

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

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Strengthen the parental representation on the Parents' Forum and Advisory Board and increase opportunities for parents and carers to become more involved in the running of the centre and in decision making.
- Improve the systems and methods of collecting data so that interpretation of data and summaries can be used as effectively and efficiently as possible.

## How good are outcomes for families?

<b>2</b>
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Healthy lifestyles are successfully promoted through a variety of activities and families have access to a wide range of integrated services. Most mothers successfully breastfeed their babies because health practitioners guide and support them well. Obesity rates have declined. The monthly weighing clinic is popular and well attended. Data show good improvement in the number of adults who give up smoking. Many comment on learning about healthy eating and providing an improved diet for their families. Families, especially those in target groups and in most need of support, benefit from this positive impact on their physical, mental and emotional health. The outdoor area promotes opportunities for young children to develop their physical skills, such as climbing and balancing, extremely well. Healthy snacks are enjoyed by the children during the day and the after-school clubs. Older children learn to prepare their own food.

The environment is safe and secure because security systems are well established. Staff are very experienced and skilled at encouraging vulnerable groups to engage in the centre's activities and to feel safe enough to share their concerns and to receive practical and emotional support. Safeguarding is a priority for adults and children. The centre carefully plans individual support and guidance for vulnerable families. Tailor-made support ensures that outcomes for children who are subject to a child protection plan and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) are good and children are safe.

Young parents say their support group is effective. They value the regular visits to the centre, sharing lunch and child care, and receiving support from a planned programme such as managing finances or parenting issues. Many parents have attended the first aid and parenting courses and talk positively about how they have helped with feeding babies and dealing with sleep deprivation.

Children enjoy the activities and make good progress in all areas of learning in the Nursery, Reception class and drop-in play sessions. The Nursery and Reception areas provide a stimulating learning environment both indoors and outdoors. Children learn to play with and alongside each other, cooperating as they observe the ladybird through the magnifying glass or helping each other pile the sand into the large

bucket. They learn to develop communication and social skills to equip them well for the future. Behaviour throughout the centre is good, reflecting clear expectations and good relationships with centre staff. The centre's data shows that outcomes for adults and children are good. However, access to the data is not easy because of the systems used.

Families, including those from vulnerable groups, have good opportunities to develop parenting courses and are clearly signposted to opportunities to improve their academic skills. They gain confidence and qualifications; many volunteer for jobs within the centre and gain experience for future employment. One young parent described how the outreach and centre support had enabled her to go to college and gain distinction in her modules on health and social care, which will help towards becoming a social worker. Many of the young parents were optimistic and ambitious to gain or improve their qualifications so that they could eventually achieve employment.

Prior to the restructuring, the Parents' Forum was making a positive contribution to decision making within the centre. Since reorganisation, it is less effective and parents do not fully contribute to the Advisory Board. The centre recognises this is an area they would like to resurrect.

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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>2</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

**2**

The centre knows its families well. It plans individual support for vulnerable families and consequently is popular and attendance rates are good. The centre provides a wide range of activities to meet the needs of different groups within its reach area, such as the 'Stay and Play Drop-in' activities for children under one and under five and the 'Older and Bolder' coffee morning for the over 50s. English literacy classes enable parents to improve their skills and encourage them to progress to further

courses.

Provision for health and safety is good. The centre has a regular focus week on safety in the home and wider community. The outdoor area provides an excellent range of activities and is a stimulating learning environment, encouraging children to develop physical competence. Health professionals and citizens advice bureau professionals work closely with the centre and other agencies to ensure the needs of individual families are met. Children settle into the Early Years Foundation Stage provision well because induction procedures are well organised.

Care, support and guidance for vulnerable families and day care children are good. Parents in vulnerable situations and parents with children who have additional needs appreciate the quality of care they receive. The after-school club is popular and well attended. Children develop self-care skills, for example helping to make their own tea, such as toast and scrambled eggs.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well provided for through good access to the building and appropriate professional support. All workers at the centre are experienced and show good awareness of the management strategies needed to overcome day-to-day problems. Support for those who are subject to domestic violence is good. The sessions to support those who are new to this country and speak English as an additional language are popular and well attended, despite the lack of funding for a crèche.

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>2</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?**

**2**

The head of centre and deputy are passionate about maintaining quality services for the community. They work productively with middle leaders to ensure projects are successful. Senior leadership demonstrates clear vision and leads by example. As a result, the centre has maintained good outcomes and provision. They are fully supported by the newly formed cluster management board who hold them to account. Their strong motivation to maintain a wide range of services ensures that the staff and resources are effectively deployed to provide good value for money.

The local authority and advisory boards challenge the centre well, ensuring good quality provision. As a result, outcomes for the large majority of families, including



target groups and those in most need of intervention and support, are good. The centre knows its strengths and areas to develop very well and all staff are committed to improvement.

Safeguarding procedures are good. All staff have been subject to an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. There are rigorous recruitment checks for all staff and training is updated appropriately. All staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures and are challenged by the head of centre's regular safeguarding quizzes. All policies meet requirements and are implemented fully. Risk assessments are thorough and monitored regularly.

The centre uses a wide range of methods to collect feedback from questionnaires and evaluations. Families' evaluations of activities and courses and responses to 'satisfaction surveys' are positive and records show the centre is proactive in responding to parents' suggestions and concerns, such as the youth café and extended hours of opening.

The centre celebrates the diversity of its local community well and inclusion of all families is a strength. There is no discrimination and everyone is valued. Vulnerable families and children and families with disabilities are fully included and well supported by the centre.

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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>2</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>2</b>

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

Results of the 2 year pilot for 'Stay and play drop in.'

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Triangle Centre on 14–15 June 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

We would like to thank those of you we met and who spoke to us about the centre and its work. It was very helpful. We agree with you that the centre and all the outreach areas are a good place for you and your children to attend and that all the staff involved in the centre's work do an effective job to help you all. You told us how friendly and approachable everyone is and how the centre has helped you and your children. We enjoyed seeing you use the 'Stay and Play Drop-in' for the under 1s and the under 5s and the 'Older and Bolder' coffee morning for the over 50s. The Young Parents Support Group is obviously very popular with very young parents who attend regularly because they appreciate talking to other young mums and learning more about life skills and parenting skills. Children in the Reception and Nursery were all happily engaged and making good progress in all areas of their learning. Parents who attend the English literacy classes are enthusiastic and keen to improve their skills on further courses.

The centre plans a good range of activities for you. We were particularly pleased to see how activities and courses had been maintained despite the reduced funding and recent restructuring. Many of you who have faced challenges in your life talked positively about how well the centre listened to you and gave you good advice to help you manage your life.

The centre helps you in many ways, for example the support it provides for young and single parents and those of you who are experiencing domestic difficulties. It provides valuable support and practical help to help you provide a healthier diet for your children and provides useful guidance to help you with your parenting skills and your children's learning. Opportunities for you to contribute to the decision-making are clearly evident in your responses to courses but we would like more of you to be involved in the decision-making through a Parents' Forum so that you can contribute more to the advisory board.

The centre is particularly good at involving families who are especially vulnerable or may be hard to reach. Your children make good progress in their learning and

behave well because they enjoy all the activities offered. The 'Stay and Play Drop In' and other activities are well organised and popular. All of the people who work at the centre do an effective job and the head of centre leads the centre well. The centre leaders are experienced and they work very hard to overcome difficulties and to provide the best services possible. You told us that the centre is a warm and welcoming environment. The centre leaders and cluster management board work effectively together to monitor and evaluate children's and adults' progress well. The work that they do to assess what is needed and to put plans in place to make things even better is effective but we have asked them to improve the systems they use so that information can be accessed more swiftly.

The centre ensures that children and families are safe and well protected. Staff are all very experienced and well trained, and regularly update their training in safety aspects. Your children's security and safety are of the highest priority and good records are kept to ensure that all who work at the centre are properly qualified and meticulously checked.

It was a pleasure to meet you during the inspection, to see you enjoying the activities and to hear your views. We hope that you and your children and many more families who live in and around the centre will continue to enjoy and benefit from the many activities and services the centre offers. Thank you again for contributing to the inspection by sharing your comments and thoughts so openly.

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