

Inspection report for Tottenham Children's Centre

Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	384189
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Reporting inspector	Rosy Belton HMI

Centre leader	Claire Marchant
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Tottenham Children's Centre Tottenham Infants School Tottenham Road Enfield N13 6HX
Telephone number	0208 829 1100
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	ccentre@tottenham.enfield.sch.uk

Linked school if applicable	Tottenham Infants School
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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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 the centre manager, headteacher of the school, the deputy headteacher, assistant head of inclusion, the chair of governors, an advisory board member, a local authority representative, health professionals, partner agency representatives and parents.

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

Information about the centre

Tottenham Children's Centre is a phase one centre designated in September 2006 and gained core offer status in July 2009. It serves 601 children aged under five. The centre is located on the site of Tottenham Infants School, which includes a nursery with 60 part-time places and a breakfast and after-school club provided through an independent agency. New arrangements to cluster local centres under single governance and operational structures were established in April 2012. Tottenham is clustered with Trinity at Bowes Children's Centre, which provides full daycare through an independent nursery and is within walking distance.

The centre is accountable to the local authority. Governance is through the school governing body and there is an advisory board in place. The headteacher of the school offers direct line management of the centre manager. Services are delivered by the centre manager and one early years worker. The centre shares support services with the school. The local authority commissions programmes centrally.

The centre is one of 23 in Enfield, with a reach area close to the boundaries of the boroughs of Haringey and Barnet. It covers five super output areas of which four are in the 30% most disadvantaged with 41% of children living in households dependent on workless benefits. Nearly 6% of families are benefiting from working tax credit.

The area has a mix of housing including temporary accommodation, bedsits, owned homes, hostels and housing associations. The local community is very diverse with just over 47% of children from ethnic minority groups the largest being Somali, with Caribbean and Bangladeshi coming an equal second. Almost half of all children in the area speak English as an additional language. On entry to Early Years Foundation Stage provision, children’s skills, knowledge and abilities 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

Tottenham is a warm and welcoming centre that provides stimulating activities in a safe environment. Families love coming to the centre and benefit from a good selection of services all year round. As one parent said, ‘The centre is a friendly place and the manager makes everyone feel at home.’ Parents and children mainly achieve good outcomes. Parents are encouraged to keep themselves and their children healthy and many take advantage of activities to help them do this. Obesity rates are improving. However, the centre does not closely track the impact of its interventions to reduce obesity. Good safeguarding arrangements ensure children and parents are protected.

The children that enter the co-located school do very well. The school has monitored children who have attended the centre and the Early Years Foundation Stage data reveal the good progress and achievement that they make. Data show that the gap between the lowest achieving children and their peers is narrowing. Transition arrangements in preparation for their next steps in learning are good. However, measuring the progress of children who go on to attend other schools has proved difficult, as baselines are not clearly established. Provision to help parents learn English is very successful and contributing to their economic and social well-being. As one learner said, ‘This has been so good for me, I feel more confident in talking to people.’ Signposting to other services helpfully directs parents to further learning opportunities; however, posters and notices are not in an easy to understand form to help parents for whom English is an additional language or those with reading difficulties. The care, guidance and support that families receive are good. Support

for parents and children with specific challenges in accessing help, or in learning the skills they need to deal with difficulties, are good. One parent said, 'I have developed skills to do things I hadn't been doing, but I have also had things that I was doing right, confirmed.' Another said, 'I have learnt how to communicate better.' Parents report an increase in confidence and preparedness for potential problems.

The centre's leadership is good. Management by the headteacher and centre manager is effective and well coordinated to enable a well-integrated service. Overall, the use of data to review performance is good; it is used well to assess the performance of the centre and highlight the reach area's most challenging issues. However, finding the best ways of measuring the success of specific activities are a challenge for the centre; activity plans include targets that are not specific enough or easily measurable. Self-evaluation clearly highlights these difficulties and the centre manager is working hard to focus on these issues and improve the centre's baseline assessments. Partnerships are very effective in widening opportunities for families and in ensuring those most in need are helped. The views of users obtained through informal and formal methods, including the annual satisfaction survey, clearly show that parents highly value the centre. The centre manager, advisory board members and school headteacher and governors have a clear, collective vision for the development of the centre and are committed to the cluster model recently introduced. The local authority data have helped identify the centre's priorities and the centre manager is clear about actions needed to improve outcomes for the children's centre's families. The strong partnerships and clear leadership ably demonstrate the centre's good capacity to improve.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Make better use of health data to establish specific and measurable plans for a range of activities to reduce obesity rates and improve children's physical development.
- Develop systems for the assessment of all children who use the centre to enable progress and achievement to be measured and monitored into their next phase of education.
- Present information in an accessible form to enable parents and children for whom English is an additional language. or those with reading difficulties, to access and understand.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Health outcomes for families, including target groups, are good. The majority of families in the area are engaging with services. The take up and continuation rates for breastfeeding are good. Families living in the reach area access borough-wide commissioned services including counselling. Useful drop-in sessions for speech and language therapy have successfully enabled a speedier response to addressing

children's language development needs. Zumba and dance promote physical development and exercise well. The introduction of the outside play space has been a great success and enabled opportunities for more physical development. The centre has promoted the Change4life initiative, looking at ways to change to a healthier lifestyle. The centre manager is trained to offer Change4life, targeting those families with children at risk of becoming obese. Obesity rates are slowly improving. However, measurement of health outcomes to indicate the impact of these initiatives has yet to be developed fully.

The children's centre is a safe environment for both parents and children and they are safe and protected well. Security arrangements at the centre are rigorous. Responses to identified welfare concerns are effective and referrals made appropriately. The reach area has the lowest rate of children subject to a child protection plan in the borough. Emergency admissions to hospital of children and young people are lower than the London and national rates. Parents report feeling safe and they feel their children are safe. The strong relationships between parents attending the centre have led to trust in each other. Resources are safe.

Tottenham Children's Centre has the highest proportion of foundation stage children with English additional language needs. The English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) class, held at the centre, has achieved good accredited outcomes and is helping improve English language development. Good case studies demonstrate the effectiveness of support from the children's centre manager, enabling children and parents to engage in play and educational activities. Stay and play activities provide good opportunities to learn and have fun together. Good support from the early years library outreach worker, as a commissioned service, also supports the childminding group attending the centre. However, there are no baseline assessments of children and insufficient specific and measurable targets are set to demonstrate clearly children's and parents' progress towards achieving their aims.

The views of parents are actively sought. Particularly good parenting support through evidence-based courses, such as strengthening families, helps parents develop strategies to improve behaviour management at home and strengthen communication and relationships. Children behave very well in the children's centre, they are aware of general routines and adult expectations, for example helping to tidy up at the end of a session. Good positive relationships between centre staff, parents and children reinforce self-esteem and demonstrate respect for cultural and religious backgrounds. Parents feel confident in expressing their views and staff and management are approachable and flexible in responding to their needs. A recently recruited volunteer helps with children's centre activities.

Events and activities held at the centre to help develop economic and social well-being are satisfactory. Provision for ESOL is good, supporting parents in language learning and improving employability skills, with good attendance and participation rates. The centre provides well signposted options to support employment and skills development, for example the internet café at Trinity at Bowes centre. External agencies are developing services in the area; however, the take up of such services

has yet to be measured.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families

The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
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 knows its children and families well. Good data are provided to identify those families most in need of targeted support and most targeted groups are well represented in using the centre. An extensive range of activities available over the year, including the school holidays, meets the core offer well. Success is celebrated well, for example parents who attend courses and events receive in-house certificates. The helpful reconfiguration of services into cluster groups with outreach provision gives staff further opportunities to work with vulnerable families within the reach area even where major roads and borough boundaries are physical barriers to engagement. The centre keeps clear records of families and their participation in activities and events at the centre. The centre manager works closely with the families to encourage positive interaction and engagement in activities.

Provision to help children to learn and develop is satisfactory. High obesity rates and low physical development rates are being addressed through summer holiday activities that include cooking healthy food for parents and children, which results in whole-group picnics in the parks. Purposeful learning and development of parents with children, for example through age-appropriate play sessions where parents learn how to maximise learning opportunities, are good. The standard and quality of on-site learning opportunities are good. Good pro-social modelling by staff encourages parents to interact positively with peers and with their children. However, insufficiently specific and measurable targets to illustrate children's and parents' progress towards achieving their aims are set and there is no assessment of prior learning used to plan new learning opportunities.

Good care, guidance and support are in place for children and parents. Those

children who are subject to a child protection plan are well supported. Team around the child meetings enable concerns to be effectively addressed by a range of professionals. Parents are positive about what they have achieved and the impact this has had on immediate and wider family relationships. One parent said, 'The centre empowers families and enables you to move on.' Very effective signposting to support services, such as the domestic violence team, drug and alcohol support, Citizens Advice Bureau and counselling services, ensures local families can access a wide range of support 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	3
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 arrangements helpfully enable all partners to work together to help target groups participate in the children's centre and improve their outcomes. Lines of accountability are clear. Helpful professional supervision for the centre manager ensures appropriate performance management. Good, clear and relevant data are available to identify trends and highlight target groups in the children's centre reach area. Benchmarking data are used well to make comparisons in service delivery across the borough. However, these have yet to be fully used to measure accurately the impact of services on outcomes. Resources are well managed, creating a welcoming environment. The use of time and staffing to maximise learning and development opportunities at the centre are very effective. External providers are used well to ensure the full core offer is available. Indoor and outdoor space is maximised, taking full advantage of the small spaces available for the children's centre use. The centre offers good value for money.

The very ethnically and culturally diverse population is reflected well in the children's centre's participants. The engagement of fathers is good, well supported by the commissioned fathers service. The promotion of diversity in displays and posters, reflecting a wide range of ethnicities, is good as is the range of toys and materials for disabled children and those with special educational needs.

The Tottenham Children's Centre safeguarding policy is clear and comprehensive. However, there is no reference to the protection of vulnerable adults. The centre promotes safeguarding as part of its services and activities well and introduces key elements of child protection into the programme to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, contributing to their emotional health and

well-being. There is a strong emphasis on children building resilience and an ability to develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe. Appropriate Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed. A single record of outcomes is stored securely on site. Safeguarding training, provided through the local authority, helpfully prepares staff to keep children safe. Staff adhere to safe working practices and risks are routinely assessed.

Partnerships with external providers of services to broaden the core offer and meet the needs of targeted groups are very effective. The engagement by centre users who readily give their views on the services provided for them is good. However, there are insufficient methods to fully capture the views of children to help shape services.

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	2
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	2

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

None.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Tottenham Children's Centre on 27 and 28 June 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

The centre manager and staff have created a warm, friendly and safe place for you and your children, where you feel particularly well supported.

Many of you strive to live healthy lifestyles and encourage your children to do so too. Despite the centre's good work in promoting this, too many children are overweight for their age. We have asked the centre to use the information provided by the health service and to keep records itself of the work done to encourage healthy eating and exercise, and accurately track its success.

You told us that your children are doing very well at the centre and the arrangements to encourage their learning have helped them prepare for school. The centre plans its work carefully, but we have asked that when planning activities it sets more specific targets for your children's progress that make it easier to monitor and measure how successful they are.

You clearly demonstrated that you have gained confidence through attending the centre and are willing to give your views about the services you receive including being part of the centre's management arrangements.

The centre helps you develop skills for life and work. For example, many of you attending the ESOL courses are very successful and gain qualifications that will be helpful to you for example when talking to your local doctor, using the local shops or looking for work.

The range of activities and events available for you and your children to do at the centre is good and means you are able to enjoy a wide range of experiences together.

The way the centre is managed is good and staff are well supported to do the right things to help you and your children make the most of the centre, particularly those of you who need extra support and help in bringing up your children.

The arrangements to safeguard your children are good and the staff at the centre take every step they can to keep your children safe when they are attending the centre and help you protect your children when outside of the centre.

Information about activities and services you would find helpful are displayed, but much of this information is in writing and is difficult for users who speak English as an additional language, or those who have difficulty reading, to understand. We have asked the centre to produce more information in a form which makes it easier for everyone to understand.

Thank you to those of you who took the time to come and talk to us. We wish you and your children all the best for the future.

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