

Inspection report for Danson Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Bexley
Inspection number	404407
Inspection dates	27—28 June 2012
Reporting inspector	Jon Bowman HMI

Centre leader	Joy Toghill
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Centre address	Danson Youth Centre Brampton Road Bexleyheath Kent DA7 4EZ
Telephone number	020 8303 6052
Fax number	020 8304 6172
Email address	dansonyc@btconnect.com

Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Danson Aunties pre-school

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.

Report published: July 2012



Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer communication

361

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

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

No.100080

© Crown copyright 2012



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 chief executive, representatives of the local authority, trustees of the Danson Youth Trust, partners, parents, frontline staff and volunteers. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

The Danson Children's Centre is a phase two children's centre which was designated in 2007 and delivers the full core offer. The Danson Aunties pre-school, managed independently, is located on the same site, alongside the Danson Youth Centre, skate park, games area and football pitch. The centre is run by the Danson Youth Trust on behalf of the local authority.

The centre is managed by the centre manager and in her absence the chief executive of the Trust takes responsibility for the day-to-day running of the centre. The centre now works in a cluster arrangement with two other children's centres in the locality. Some services are commissioned across the borough including the outreach and Positive Steps teams.

The children's centre has 1,338 children aged from birth to five in its reach area. It is situated in the centre of the London Borough of Bexley serving the Danson and Brampton wards. The area is relatively affluent with typical property prices above average. However, there are pockets of deprivation including a small proportion of social housing. Levels of employment are higher than in other parts of the borough. The area is largely populated by a White British community with a growing population of residents from Eastern Europe and of Asian and Black African heritage. There are a smaller numbers of teenage mothers, lone parents and children living in poverty in comparison to other centres in the locality. Children's skills, knowledge

and abilities on entry to early years provision are generally at those levels 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

The Danson Children's Centre is a good centre where families participate in a wide range of activities and can access a good range of services in their local community, in particular health services. Provision on the campus includes services for the whole community. As such the provision provides a continuum of good quality care and informal learning for local families as their children grow and develop.

The centre is well established in the community and provides a safe, vibrant and enjoyable environment for the community. The centre is very well used. Over time families accrue a range of benefits from attending sessions, groups and accessing services. Parents see their children develop new skills and abilities, develop socially and try new activities with great enthusiasm. The range of activities on offer for children is good as highlighted by one parent who said, 'It's a great place for children to try new things.' When families need additional help or experience crisis they are supported effectively by the centre's staff, outreach workers and specialist services. The care, guidance and support offered to users are of good quality.

The centre is managed effectively. The reach of the centre and numbers of families are increasing. Those who live in more disadvantaged areas are increasingly being engaged in the life of the centre. The good facilities on site are successfully utilised for the benefit of families. This and the additional revenue raised by the centre are used effectively to enhance the provision. The centre demonstrates good capacity to make further improvements. Strategic oversight of the centre is satisfactory. However, although the board of trustees incorporates the work of the advisory board into their role the lack of a specific advisory board inhibits the centre and partners in having a sufficiently critical overview of the centre. While there are examples of the service responding well to the views of families and adapting how the centre operates to better meet their needs they are not always routinely engaged in the

development of the centre at a sufficiently senior level. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of what the centre needs to do to improve further but evaluation of the impact of services is underdeveloped. This has led the centre to overstate its effectiveness in some areas of the self-evaluation.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Sharpen the approach to evaluating the impact of the centre on families, so that the centre is able to prove that it is making a difference across all outcome areas.
- Develop an advisory board so that sufficient oversight and challenge are provided to improve the provision further.
- Involve families more effectively in the governance and development of the centre so that services meet their needs more fully.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Families access a good range of targeted and universal health services that support their health and well-being effectively. The physical development of children is particularly well promoted through a wide range of popular groups such as trampolining, dance and mini judo. Ante- and post-natal midwifery clinics provide specialist support and guidance that enables parents to better care for their children and gain valuable support to help their with children's development with, for example, sleeping patterns, diet and oral hygiene. As one parent said, 'I get lots of advice; it's good to know everything is ok with my child.' In the area as a whole, breastfeeding rates have increased from 48% in 2008 to 51% in 2011. A recent local survey of mothers using the centre shows that the proportion who initiate and sustain breastfeeding locally is good.

The centre provides a safe and welcoming environment for the community. Families feel safe at the centre and the majority report that the centre has helped them stay safe and provide a stable home environment. Outreach work with families whose circumstances make them vulnerable is effective in keeping them and their children safe and accessing them to specialist help and support that meets their individual needs well. Outreach work effectively involves other agencies to come together to meet the needs of families. Families are supported effectively to access universal, targeted and specialist services resulting in reducing the isolation that some adults feel and encouraging children to mix with their peers. The centre provides a contact venue for looked after children and their parents who value the facilities and services available. Parents of disabled children spoken to by inspectors had their individual needs met successfully. There are no children in the area who are subject to a child protection plan.

Children and parents very much enjoy their time at the centre and benefit from

purposeful and fun activities. Children are enthused and excited to attend the centre. As one parent said, 'My child can't wait to come.' Young children develop their coordination skills well and improve their knowledge of numbers, shapes and colours. They grow in self-confidence and learn to play independently, cooperate with each other and to listen to and follow instructions. Parents develop a better understanding of their children's behaviour and develop strategies to manage it with greater effectiveness. In sessions all children receive good encouragement and their progress and achievement are recognised by staff to good effect.

The percentage of children in the area achieving the national average point scores across the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scale is improving, and is above the local authority and national figures. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% and their peers is closing incrementally. The centre recognises that more needs to be done to build relationships with schools and early years providers to strengthen transitions between providers and improve children's early learning. Consequently a new member of staff has been employed to undertake this work.

Children, parents and staff have good relationships and children behave well during sessions and in and around the centre. Some sessions, for example mini judo, promote respect particularly effectively. Typically parents feel that, 'The staff are brilliant and very helpful.' There are examples where the centre has responded to the needs and views of parents effectively to develop the services on offer. For example, the number of drop-in sessions has been extended to match demand. However, the mechanisms for involving users fully in the ongoing development of the centre are more limited and do not always ensure the views of all parents are sought.

The economic prospects of families are satisfactorily promoted. Local 'Back to Work' sessions have supported a small number of adults to plan their next steps into employment and learning. Some volunteers provide support in day-to-day activities, for example, in promoting the centre to new families. The 'Discover Me,' course successfully supports the personal development of adults, helping them to identify their aspirations and take action to achieve these. Discretionary financial support helps some adults to attend sessions.

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	2
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop	3

positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	
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 good knowledge of the community that leaders have is used effectively to shape programmes and services. Provision has been extended to school holidays and after-school sessions in response to the needs of the community. The 'All About Boys' course responded to parents' expressed difficulties in managing their children's behaviour. The centre is successfully promoted in the local area. It is well attended and the annual play day attracts over 2,000 parents and their children. Most target groups are effectively engaged by the centre. There are examples where data have been used effectively to identify gaps in provision. For example, in response to a lack of engagement by young parents, a weekly support group has been established. The centre reaches over 74% of families in the area. As a result of good support from the centre and the local authority, provision on site for young children has been extended well through the location of Danson Aunties pre-school adjacent to the children's centre.

There is a strong ethos on the learning and development of families. As a result children's development and achievement are good. In some groups children's achievements and progress are recognised through badges and personal achievement charts. The care, guidance and support for families are good. Families have a high level of trust in staff and value their support highly. Staff are skilled at identifying the immediate needs of families and work with them sensitively and carefully in responding to these. Information on a wide range of topics is readily available and distributed regularly to families.

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

The centre is led and managed effectively on a day-to-day basis, staff are supported effectively and the centre runs smoothly. The centre provides good value for money. The campus provides an excellent range of facilities for children, parents and the wider community. Resources are shared across the site to good effect and additional

income generated from the facilities is used well to extend the provision.

As a result of effective targeting the centre is increasingly successful in engaging greater numbers of families from the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the area. Activities that enhance usage are provided at a low cost; some are free. A good proportion of families are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the centre promotes equality and cultural diversity successfully through posters and displays and celebrating cultural events such as Diwali and Black History Month.

Governance arrangements are satisfactory. The absence of a specific advisory board has been mitigated by the oversight of the centre provided by the board of trustees who include the role of the advisory board in their work and the local authority. The board receives regular reports on the performance of the children's centre and new developments. The local authority provides regular data on performance to the chief executive and these are used satisfactorily to review and develop provision. In addition to reviewing the centre each year through the 'Annual Conversation' the local authority has adopted a recent and welcome focus on directly observing the quality of services delivered. Parents report a high level of satisfaction with the centre but their engagement and contribution to governance and strategy are not fully developed.

The centre's self-evaluation is largely accurate. However, some grades awarded by the centre were higher than those awarded by inspectors. The centre does not consistently gather evidence on or track the outcomes for families. Some sessions lack sufficient evaluation and evaluations are not always fully utilised. Consequently judgements on the effectiveness of the centre are not always accurate. However, leaders and managers know well the strengths and weaknesses of the centre. The business plan for the centre largely captures the key areas for improvement but targets within it are not always sufficiently measurable.

The safety of families is rightly prioritised by centre leaders and staff. Routine risk assessments are undertaken on all activities and safe practice was observed by inspectors. Recruitment and selection procedures ensure that all necessary pre-employment checks are undertaken on staff and that all those who have unsupervised access to children undergo an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. The centre follows good practice and updates these checks every three years. Partner agencies delivering services from the site confirm that the suitability of their staff has been similarly scrutinised. All centre staff undergo training in safeguarding children and demonstrate sound judgement where they have concerns about a child's welfare.

Partners are involved effectively in delivering services from the centre. They enhance and extend the services available locally. Their presence on site improves the oversight of more vulnerable families and improves the ease with which children and parents and carers gain access to services, for example to speech and language therapists who are based at the centre.

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	3
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	3

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

The inspection outcomes of the inspection of Danson Aunties pre-school, which was judged good, contributed to The Danson Children's Centre inspection and report.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Complaining about inspections*, which is available from our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

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

We very much enjoyed our visit to your children's centre and would like to thank all of you who gave your time to speak to us and tell us your experiences of using the centre. Your views have helped inform us of how well the centre is doing and we have mentioned some of your comments in the report.

The centre provides a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment for all. It is used well and the facilities available are maximised to good effect. It is long established in the local community and provides a good range of services with the help of its partners including providers of health services. Staff provide good care, guidance and support, including when families need additional help. Safe practices are followed. Children enjoy attending sessions and successfully develop their skills and confidence.

The management of the centre is good, and based on previous achievements the centre has the capacity to make further gains. However, although the centre's board of trustees provides support, guidance and challenge to the centre it does not have a group of professionals, stakeholders and parents who act specifically as the advisory board and oversee the work and development of the centre. Furthermore the impact of the centre on families is not evaluated consistently. In these areas we have made recommendations for further improvement.

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