

# Inspection report for Packington Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	383527
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 October 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Comerford-Dunbar

<b>Centre leader</b>	Ana Maria Sevilla
<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>	Packington Children's Centre: EY364230

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 staff and senior leaders, parents and members of the advisory board. They met with a range of partners, observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Packington Children's Centre is a phase 2 centre which opened in 2008. It is situated in the Canonbury area of Islington and covers St Peter's Ward, an area of London with high levels of disadvantage. Packington Children's Centre works in partnership with two other children's centres in a cluster model, New River Green Children's Centre and The Factory Children's Centre. The centres share a joint cluster timetable which is distributed across all three centre reach areas; there are also joint commissioning arrangements for external services. The other two centres making up the cluster will be inspected separately.

The centre provides the full core offer and a range of supporting services including health support, adult courses and workshops. A range of services is delivered directly from the main centre; however, some services are delivered at other locations off site and in association with various other providers.

Families living in the reach area come from a wide range of backgrounds. Sixty one per cent of families are of White British heritage; 39% of families are from a wide range of Black and other minority ethnic heritages, including Bangladeshi, Somali, Turkish, Kurdish, Black Caribbean, Black African and Chinese. Thirty four per cent of primary school children in the reach area speak English as an additional language. The centre is in one of the most deprived top 20% of areas nationally. Many children enter early years provision with a range of skills and knowledge below those typically expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy.

Approximately, 884 children under the age of five live in the centre's reach area. The proportion of workless families is 30%. Eighty per cent of lone parents registered at the centre are in receipt of benefits. Currently, 19.3% of families in Islington benefit from the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. The area has a mixture of types of housing, with some privately owned, a significant proportion is privately rented and a high number of families lives in social housing.

The local authority is responsible for governance of the centre. The centre has an advisory board made up of representatives from the local community, professional agencies and parents. The advisory board is responsible for the three centres in the Islington area cluster.

## 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

Packington Children's Centre is a good centre with some outstanding features. The centre manager, senior leaders and staff are passionate about improving life chances for families within the reach area and this results in good outcomes. There is a clear vision, accurate self-evaluation and outstanding accountability and governance arrangements. The care, guidance and support available for families, especially when they most need it, are excellent. The ready availability of inter-agency working ensures all family needs are met well. These features underpin the centre's good capacity to sustain improvement. As one parent said, 'I genuinely believe that he is the child he is because of the all round support we have received at the children's centre.'

Good provision meets the needs of most families well, including the most vulnerable. Centre staff constantly strive to improve the education of children and parents through a variety of activities. The Early Years Foundation Stage profiles show an improving trend, with the proportion of children reaching a good level of development rising. The centre has identified that some boys from Somali and Turkish families are not achieving as well as their peers and recognise this as an area for improvement.

Outcomes for families are good. A range of strategies ensures that the health and well-being of all families improve. The support for the emotional health of parents is exceptionally well managed. As one parent said, 'I wouldn't be where I am today without the help and support of the children's centre.'

Partnership working is outstanding. Packington Square is the most deprived neighbourhood within the centre's reach area. A seven-year multi-million pound project to demolish several high-rise housing units and re-house hundreds of families has been the catalyst for excellent multi-agency partnership working. The children's centre has been at the heart of coordinating support for families working closely with other agencies, in particular housing organisations, the health authority and the voluntary and community sector. This support has significantly improved the lives of numerous local families.

The centre effectively engages with 75% of the families in its reach area. Despite, the excellent partnership arrangements, the centre recognises that it would significantly improve its ability to engage with families at an earlier stage if it had access to accurate, current data relating to new births within the reach area. Senior managers have therefore instigated requests for the release of information from other organisations, for example the local health authority; however, to date this has been problematic.

Safeguarding arrangements are good, with careful attention to risk assessment for every activity. Children and other users are kept safe in the centre. Families from different backgrounds get along well together and say how much they enjoy the centre's warm, friendly and inclusive ethos.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Increase the centre's engagement with Somali and Turkish families so that the centre can support the early learning of boys in particular and work to maximise their achievement in readiness for school.
- Work with key partners to improve the accuracy and currency of reach area data, specifically data linked to new births provided by the local health authority, so that the centre can further improve the shaping of provision to meet all local needs.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

<b>2</b>
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Most families engage well with the services provided at the centre and benefit from the clear advice on a range of health-related matters they are given. The centre actively encourages breastfeeding and data show that the proportion of mothers

sustaining breastfeeding after six weeks improved from 64% in 2010/11 to 69% in 2011/12; this is significantly above the national average. Healthy eating initiatives have been successful in raising parents' awareness of the benefits of healthy eating. The percentage of children in their reception year who are obese is reducing.

All parents say that they feel safe attending centre activities. Children who are subject to a child protection plan are well protected through appropriate protocols and effective safeguarding arrangements. All partners are keen to ensure that families need only inform one agency in order to access appropriate services. Staff are confident using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as they see it as an effective tool to acquire greater levels of support for families in crisis. Records are satisfactorily maintained and stored. Centre staff use home visits to offer good practical advice about potential dangers in the home and inform parents of how to minimise these. In addition, good use is made of centre activities such as Stay and Play groups to reinforce a range of safety messages.

Good transition arrangements ensure most children are well prepared for their next stage of learning. Centre staff demonstrate careful assessment and planning when working with families. A wide variety of activities ensures most children develop their speech and language effectively. As one parent said, 'My child has come on leaps and bounds since attending the centre.' The percentage of children gaining at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage profile scales, with at least six points in each of the scales for personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy, has risen significantly from 54.4% in 2009/10 to 58.5% in 2011/12. Whilst the percentage gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and the rest has reduced significantly from 37.3% in 2009/10 to 29.7% in 2011/12, the centre is aware that some boys, and in particular those from Somali and Turkish backgrounds, are not yet achieving as well as their peers.

Adults regularly access good quality learning opportunities that improve their skills. Feedback from parents is positive, and there are many individual success stories as a result of the good work done by the centre to enhance adults' future economic well-being. For example, the centre worked closely with a group of parents who were keen to return to work. The group created a very effective programme to assist them and future adults in creating curriculum vitae and preparing for job interviews. Several people involved in the project found work, including one individual who obtained an apprenticeship in a top London restaurant. Another parent will soon start work as a receptionist at the children's centre.

Families develop strong relationships within the centre and show respect and concern for others. There are good opportunities for families to make a positive contribution to the running of the centre. For example, parents suggested running a late afternoon Stay and Play session which is now running and is extremely well attended and very popular with families. Adults regularly express their views about the centre through post-activity evaluations and the active parents' forum. Parents are very effectively involved in the work of the advisory board and support and challenge the centre well.

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**

Support, advice and guidance given to all families are outstanding. All staff, including managers and staff from partner organisations, are wonderful role models for centre users. It is obvious to all that families matter and that the centre is there to help, especially those most in need of support. Clear planning between agencies and early intervention, effectively ensure that all families receive excellent support, especially when they most need it.

Senior managers have thought very carefully about the location of the centre and, in particular, its outreach activities. As a result, the centre operates at the heart of its most deprived area. Activities are divided across several locations including the local school, community centre and also in a block of flats. Over 75% of families within the reach area access centre activities. However, the centre recognises that its ability to shape provision to meet all future local needs as effectively as possible is curtailed by the lack of new birth data.

The integration of professionals from other agencies visiting the centre is encouraged by centre staff. This enables professionals to observe and assess families' needs during naturally occurring activities. As a result, parents feel comfortable approaching professionals and asking advice about their child's development. As one mother stated, 'I was very shy when I first came here, now if I have a question I will ask someone.'

Parents and children clearly enjoy the activities offered by the centre. Activities, such as Chatterpillars, are very effectively used by staff to empower parents to help improve the speech and language skills of their children. 'It all seems so natural,' one parent reported. The learning and development opportunities provided for children are well planned and most children make good progress. Activities are well

organised, with all staff clearly committed to helping families succeed. Parents are discreetly encouraged to become their child's first educator. As one parent said, 'I never knew that learning can be fun.'

Participation rates and attendance levels on all courses are good. The centre's outreach workers are very effective in working with specific groups such as teenage mothers and families affected by disabilities. However, the centre recognises it needs to improve the effectiveness of its engagement with minority ethnic communities such as Somali and Turkish families.

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>1</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

**2**

Leadership and management are good with some outstanding aspects. Governance and accountability are outstanding. The chair of the advisory board is extremely well informed and guides the other members of the board very effectively in challenging and supporting the centre. Furthermore, the local authority rigorously reviews the performance of the centre through the work of a centre improvement partner, who is also an experienced part-time Ofsted inspector, as well as conducting a highly-supportive annual conversation. This ensures that everyone involved in the centre is exceptionally clear about the challenges the centre faces. The centre sets clear targets in order to improve services and build successfully for the future.

Partnership working is outstanding; services are fully integrated and relationships between key partners are firmly established. A proactive steering group, comprised of all key agencies operating in the reach area, has been highly effective in supporting families. A large part of the most deprived estate in the reach area looks like a gigantic building site and has been like this for several years; the centre, along with partners, has vigorously supported the families during a time of great upheaval and uncertainty for them. Positive relationships at a strategic and operational level between organisations have enabled decisions to be made and action taken to improve living conditions for many families who use the centre.

The centre manager is highly qualified and experienced. She is clearly focused and enthusiastic about the work of the centre. Managers are very effective at maintaining morale among staff and supporting them to perform well in their various roles. All staff benefit from good continuous professional development. Staff and partners are



clear about the centre's strengths, weaknesses and future priorities, which are actively pursued, and result in good and improving outcomes. This demonstrates the centre's good capacity to improve.

Very good use is made of the wide range of resources available. Great thought has gone into obtaining premises for the delivery of services. For example, the centre successfully converted three flats due for demolition and transformed them into an effective outreach centre at the heart of the community. The cluster model, aligning the centre with two other centres, allows resources to be shared for the benefit of users. Also, shared use of the community centre ensures that value for money is good.

Safeguarding is good. Families who are most in need receive good support during their time of crisis through the effective use of the Common Assessment Framework. Staff's knowledge of safeguarding ensures that families receive the support they need at the time they need it most. All legal requirements in relation to safeguarding are adhered to. Detailed risk assessments ensure all activities conducted are run safely. Staff vetting arrangements are thorough. Staff training is very effective in ensuring children subject to a child protection plan are extremely well supported. Families affected by domestic violence receive high-quality sensitively-provided intervention by a very effective multi-agency support team.

Diversity is celebrated well at the centre. All visitors are treated with the utmost respect. Managers are clear about the most vulnerable groups and are taking positive steps to narrow the gap for the most disadvantaged. Engagement with families is good. Staff are keen to receive feedback about activities from users. The use of volunteers is particularly effective. The accessibility of services for children and adults with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. As one deaf mother informed inspectors, 'Without the help of centre staff my son and I would be isolated within the community.'

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>1</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>1</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**

The recent inspection findings at Packington Children's Centre: EY364230 were used to inform this inspection.

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## **Summary for centre users**

We inspected the Packington Children's Centre on 16 and 17 October 2012. We judged the centre as good overall.

As part of the inspection, we visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's documentation, and talked with a range of children and adults, including parents, staff, and partners. We were pleased to speak to some of you about the centre's work and to listen to your views. We really enjoyed talking to you around the centre and in the various activity sessions you were engaged in. You expressed your views very clearly and we appreciated your 'straight talking' in telling us how things really are.

Outcomes at the centre are good. The centre provides a good service to you and your families through the range of good quality activities it has on offer. Careful attention is given to ensure you and your children stay safe. The way the centre offers you excellent care, guidance and support during times of crisis is particularly noteworthy.

The centre is very effective at helping you increase your knowledge about play and how children learn through the many play activities and parenting sessions. Many of you are gaining confidence when cooking and are using new ideas to ensure your families are benefiting from a healthy diet. There have been improving results in the work the centre is doing to tackle obesity in young children.

We also recognise that partnership working with other agencies, especially housing and health services, is outstanding. We are pleased that the centre has been able to help so many of you, especially during the redevelopment of Packington Square.

We judged that the centre manager is a wonderful leader who is passionate about the work of the centre. She is extremely well supported by senior managers from the local authority and also members of the advisory board. Centre staff are well qualified and work very hard to make the centre as good as it can be. Centre staff are effective at finding out what the centre's strengths are and have innovative ideas to improve what they do so even more families can benefit from its activities.

The centre sets clear targets in order to improve services to you and makes good use of resources. It was also good to hear about those of you who have undertaken training to increase your confidence and develop your skills, which may help you secure employment in the future. Safeguarding of families is good and the centre celebrates the cultural diversity of users very well and this results in happy and harmonious relationships.

We have recommended that the centre improves the effectiveness of its outreach work with families of Somali and Turkish heritage so that boys from these families can have the best start in school life. We have also recommended that the centre's partners from the local health authority provide it with accurate, current information about new births within the community. This should enable centre staff to plan and deliver services for local families at the earliest possible stage in a child's life.

We know that you love your centre and the work that it does and we agree with the centre that it is a good centre with some outstanding aspects. Thank you once again for your welcome and your willingness to share your views with us. We can see why the staff enjoy working with you so much and wish you every success in the future.

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