

Inspection report for John Perryn Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Ealing
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Reporting inspector	Joan Lindsay

Head of centre	Beverley Joseph
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Long Drive Acton London W3 8EW
Telephone number	0208 743 5648
Fax number	0208 743 9071
Email address	head@johnperryn.ealing.sch.uk

Linked school if applicable	John Perryn Primary School and Children's Centre, 101889
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Hungry Caterpillars Day Nursery and Kids Club, EY 397985

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
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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 the head of centre and other senior managers, staff, representatives from the local authority, and the governing and advisory boards. They also spoke to partner representatives from health and voluntary organisations, parents and other users of the centre.

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

Information about the centre

This phase two centre was designated in February 2008 and formally opened in March 2011. It fulfils the full core purpose through the delivery of a range of services. It is located in the new school building that was designed to include the children's centre and other integrated services that are accessed directly from John Perryn Primary School. The interim headteacher of the school is the head of centre, the assistant headteacher is the deputy strategic leader and there is also an interim centre manager. The governing board of the school manages the centre on behalf of the local authority. There is also an advisory board in place. Services are available from 8.00am until 6.00pm, Monday to Friday, for 48 weeks of the year. Coram, a voluntary sector organisation, is commissioned by the local authority to run a range of universal and targeted services in the centre as well as providing one-to-one support for families.

The centre is located in East Acton ward. The reach area is characterised by medium to high levels of multiple deprivation. Of the five Super Output Areas in the reach area, three are ranked in the top 20% to 30% most deprived in the England. The area is very ethnically diverse with 88% of families from different minority ethnic groups, the largest group are Black or Black British families. White British heritage families account for 12% of the population. There is a Travellers' site located within

the centre's reach area. There are high levels of mobility in the area overall at over 50%.

Some 37% of children aged from birth to four years live in households dependent on workless benefits, which is well above the national average. The proportion of eligible families from the East Acton ward benefiting from the childcare element of Working Tax Credit is 14%, which is slightly higher than the Ealing average but below the national average.

There are 675 children aged under five years old living in the reach area. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to early years provision are typically below the level 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

John Perryn Children's Centre provides a good service to families. It has been particularly successful in the way it works with other partners such as health visitors, Coram and the link school, to improve health outcomes and to ensure that children and adults achieve well. For example, many families say their children eat healthier and they have become much more confident and independent as a result of coming to the centre. Families feel safe there and have high levels of confidence in staff, seeing it as a one-stop-shop of advice and support. The majority of families have been helped in some way to improve their skills or their economic or social well-being, leading to comments such as, 'This is a very empowering place, it has really helped me.' 'I see a much better future for myself now I am in education.'

The work staff have done to ensure that some of the hardest to engage groups come to the centre has been very successful, especially in relation to the Traveller community, and Somali families. However, although 63% of children under five years and 77% of local families access services, the number of fathers and lone parents who do so is relatively low. In the case of lone parents, this is largely due to difficulties identifying who is in that category at registration. At present, although

fathers are made welcome and do access the centre, there are no specific groups for them and the centre is not open at weekends or evenings to enable those who work to benefit from services.

Leadership and management at all levels are good and the centre benefits significantly from the expertise and strong leadership of the deputy strategic leader. There is a very strong team ethos despite the interim nature of some of the posts. Everyone has a clear understanding of the centre's strengths and priority areas for development. Those key priorities are highlighted in the centre's development plan. However, targets are not always based on available data, or measurable, nor do they consistently identify a timescale by which they should be achieved. Nevertheless, there is a palpable sense of commitment from all staff and partners to see the centre progress even further. The good outcomes reflect this and, combined with a very clear understanding of the specific needs of the most vulnerable groups, show there is a good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Increase the number of fathers and lone parents who access the centre by:
 - ensuring registration information is as accurate as possible in relation to parents' status
 - developing a range of services and activities to meet the specific needs of fathers and those who work.
- Enable the centre's impact to be measured more accurately by ensuring the centre's development plan sets targets that are measurable by using available data and laying down a time frame by which they should be met.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Health outcomes are good and improving. Immunisation rates at 93% and sustained breastfeeding rates at 73% have increased significantly in the last 12 months. Well-attended, twice-monthly baby clinics held in the centre have done much to improve families' engagement with health services and hence influence both of those measures. Childhood obesity levels have dropped from a very high 19% in 2011 to 13% in 2012, a substantial fall, although levels are still above the borough and national figures. This is a strong focus of the centre's work. Through courses focusing on healthy eating and exercise, including a weekly football session, good advice and guidance on weaning and children's eating problems, a large majority of parents say they have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives. Specialist services are effective in helping children's speech and language development or to support families where there is mental health or emotional needs such as postnatal depression.

Families feel very safe at the centre not only because of the secure building but more importantly because they have high levels of confidence in staff. Structured

parenting programmes help them understand and cope with children's behaviour issues and enhance family relations. Advice and kits to improve home safety are available. Children know how to be safe in cooking groups, for example, being taught how to use knives safely, and with parents reminded about the dangers of choking. Centre and Coram staff are fully involved in instigating and managing the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). They also work effectively alongside agencies such as Supportive Action for Families in Ealing (SAFE) to support families where children are subject to child protection plans or are looked after. This leads to good outcomes for the majority of children who require additional support.

Families thoroughly enjoy all the groups such as the Stay and Play and Song and Rhyme Time sessions, where opportunities to extend counting and language skills are maximised. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile results have improved over the past three years by 7% to 56%, although this is still below the national and borough average. Although the achievement gap has widened over the same period by 4% to 34.8%, analysis of the figures reveals that this was affected by a number of children who accessed neither the children's centre nor reach area schools. The school's tracking of children and anecdotal evidence from parents show clearly that children who have accessed the centre's services make better progress than those who have not. Children settle quickly when they move to other early years settings because they are confident and independent.

Numerous workshops for parents including phonics, literacy and numeracy as well as English language classes have done much to help parents enhance their skills in supporting their children as well as improve their own achievements. Typical comments reflecting this are, 'It has opened so many doors for me.' 'I've gained a lot of confidence.' Well over a third of parents have been involved in bettering their education or training. There have been significant improvements in outcomes for some families, such as being supported to gain employment in the daycare setting or to set up their own business in running English language classes. Readily available benefits advice, help with applying for jobs and support with housing issues have all contributed to the majority of families improving their economic and social well-being.

Families know that their views are listened to through the feedback board in the community room. This shows that, where the centre can, it takes on board their views such as putting on specific courses. Reasons are given for requests that cannot be met, such as allowing hot drinks in activities where children are present. The involvement of parent governors in shaping centre activities is very good. The centre is rightly proud of the appointment of a parent governor from the Traveller community who has done much to enhance links and shape services to meet this group's specific needs. 'They really understand our community,' summed up a commonly held view. Centre and Coram volunteers also make a positive contribution as well as develop their own confidence and skills. The centre has recently responded to low numbers attending parents' forum meetings by re-launching it as weekly Coffee and Chat sessions in an effort to include more families who may be reluctant to contribute in a more formal way.

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 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	2

How good is the provision?

2

Staff have a very good understanding of the needs of the local area and particularly of the most vulnerable and hard to engage groups. This has led to good outcomes across all aspects and good levels of engagement from minority ethnic groups in particular, with 85% represented at centre activities. A community garden project in conjunction with a local housing association has been established to coincide with a Stay and Play session in the Westcott Park community hall, to encourage even more families to access services. The local authority provides excellent regularly updated data in relation to most target groups, although no baseline information is available for fathers. A satisfactory number of fathers access the centre and several speak very highly of the individual support they receive, but there are no specific activities for them at present. Lone parents are under represented, although the centre is aware that many do not wish to disclose this at registration.

Achievements are celebrated well with children and adults proud of their certificates, sometimes given at award evenings with a guest speaker. Children's early learning is promoted well through strong links with the school and the private daycare on site, ensuring a good flow of information and expertise. Adults are encouraged to aspire to greater achievements through being given the confidence to volunteer or serve as governors, for example. Most target groups engage well in the high quality activities. Consequently, outcomes for the large majority, including the most vulnerable, are good.

'All staff are really nice here, it is like my home.' This summed up how families who use the centre feel well supported through good levels of care and guidance provided by staff and other agencies. They have confidence to turn to the centre in times of crisis or where there are complex or highly personal issues such as domestic violence. Tailor-made support packages, enhanced by the strong partnerships with

health services, Coram and SAFE, ensure that families have access to high quality and effective advice and guidance. Story Catching case studies and anecdotal evidence from partners and families show that outcomes are good for those supported 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 interim centre manager works very effectively with the head of centre and deputy strategic leader to ensure smooth day-to-day management. There are clear lines of responsibility between the governing and advisory boards. Both bodies provide good levels of support and challenge and partners and parents are active participants. Self-evaluation is accurate and used well to set priorities. The local authority provides good levels of monitoring and support for the centre especially in relation to clear, regular and useful data. However, the development plan does not consistently make best use of this data, nor set specific time frames in relation to achieving goals, so that outcomes can be more easily measured.

Good use is made of the limited space in the children's centre through a full timetable of events, baby clinics and the use by Hungry Caterpillars for breakfast and after-school clubs. This means that the majority of families, including the most vulnerable, engage well. The meeting room is used to host regular Traveller family meetings including a youth education project in conjunction with the secondary school. Staff resources are used well with expertise utilised across different areas, for example the administrator also supports the Song and Rhyme sessions. Value for money is therefore good.

The reach area is one of high mobility and wide ethnic diversity; 40 languages are spoken in the link school. The warm, welcoming and secure environment of the children's centre ensures that everyone feels welcome, and those who use it reflect the community it serves. Families are supported through interpreters, dual-language books and help in developing literacy and English language skills. The facilities are all accessible to the disabled. The needs of children or parents with a disability or specific educational needs are fully met through good links with the school special educational needs coordinator and other partners. There are high levels of respect amongst all those working in and using the centre because equality, diversity and inclusivity are central to its work.

Safeguarding training for staff and volunteers is good. Staff are confident to recognise signs of abuse and act quickly if there are concerns. They participate fully in multi-agency CAF meetings. Although the centre is currently not automatically given the names of children subject to a child protection plan or looked after children, recent decisions taken at a strategic level will ensure this information is shared in future. Policies and procedures are clear and comprehensive. All appropriate Criminal Records Bureau checks are carried out or verified on those working in the centre.

Strong and wide-ranging partnerships are key to good outcomes for families. Especially effective are those with Coram who provides targeted support to over a third of registered families, as well as with the link school and daycare. Links with health services, including specialists such as speech and language therapists, ensure that any early developmental problems are identified quickly. Very effective relationships with specific community groups, such as Traveller and Somali families, have led to good outcomes and high levels of mutual respect and understanding. Although partnerships are good overall, they are less well developed with the other early years settings in the reach area.

Families using the centre feel fully involved in evaluating and shaping services through regular opportunities to do so. 'I've never heard anyone not praise it,' reflects surveys showing 100% satisfaction levels with the centre. Parent representation from a wide range of target groups on the governing and advisory boards also ensures that their voice is heard. However, the parents' forum has been less successful in engaging families, although this is something the centre has already addressed. Children's views are taken into account through staff asking the children their preferences and observing their choices.

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	2
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

The findings of the last inspection for John Perryn Primary School, which took place on 17 and 18 June 2010, and for the Hungry Caterpillar Day Nursery and Kids Club on 21 January 2010, were taken into account in relation to attainment on entry, safeguarding, and the leadership and management judgements.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the John Perryn Children's Centre on 23 and 24 January 2013. We judged the centre as good overall.

Thank you for your participation in the inspection and for taking the time to tell us about the centre's work and how staff have helped you and your children. It was very helpful to visit the activities taking place, such as the Stay and Play and healthy cooking session, and thank you for welcoming us into your groups. Here is a summary of what we found.

Outcomes are good overall because the centre knows the families in the local area well and makes good provision for their needs. You told us that you have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and how some of the healthy eating and exercise courses have made a difference to you and your children's diet. Many of you appreciate being able to come to the baby clinic at the centre and to make use of some of the specialist services such as getting advice on breastfeeding and speech and language development. You feel very safe in the centre and have built up high levels of trust in staff, knowing that if they cannot help you personally, they will find the right source of support and guidance for you. These are typical statements given during the inspection. 'All the staff are really nice, it is like my home.' 'I see a much better future for myself now I am in education.'

Children who come to the centre make good progress in their early development such as their confidence and independence. This helps them settle quickly when they go to school. You are also given a lot of help to improve your own parenting skills as

well as literacy, numeracy and also in learning English. This not only helps you support your children to learn and behave well but also gives you a good stepping stone to go back to work or training. As a result, a large majority of you have improved aspects of your life such as your education or your home or financial circumstances.

You all feel that your views are listened to as one person summed up by saying, 'They try to accommodate and implement any ideas.' Those who are parent governors or represent families on the advisory board play an important and effective role in ensuring parents' views and those of, for example, Traveller families, are taken into account to shape services according to your needs. 'They really understand our community,' was a commonly held view. The parents' forum has been renamed as Coffee and Chat sessions as numbers who were attending were dropping.

It is clear that the centre is highly inclusive in a community that is very mixed and where families move in and out of a lot. More and more families are using the services but there are relatively lower numbers of fathers and lone parents who do. This is partly to do with there being no specific activities for fathers at present and because the centre is only open on weekdays. Also, some people are reluctant to put down that they are lone parents when they register at the centre so the information is not always accurate. You can help the centre by ensuring they have the correct information and also by supporting future events for dads and male carers.

The way the centre works with other partners to ensure you have the best support is good. Strong links with John Perryn Primary School and with Hungry Caterpillars daycare, making use of staff expertise and some of the facilities, mean that children are well supported to learn and develop well. The more specific one-to-one support, from Coram staff and the Supportive Action for Families in Ealing team, ensures that where families need more help and supervision this is effective and so outcomes are generally good. Information about housing and benefits and help with applying for jobs have meant that many of you have improved your lives through contact with the centre.

The leadership and management of the centre are good overall and staff have done a good job to encourage families from all backgrounds and cultures to come to the centre described by many of you as a 'nice, warm, friendly building'. It is great that you have a governor from the Traveller community and that so many Polish and Somali families feel comfortable coming to activities. Everyone mixes very well together and shows each other high levels of respect.

The centre's development plan does not always link the priorities to targets that can be measured to show how successful the centre is. This is because, even though the local authority provides good information for them, they are not always using it in the development plan or laying down a time frame for the targets to be achieved. This is something we have asked the centre to improve. Nevertheless, everyone involved with the centre is committed to continue to improve outcomes for the

families in the local area. They have a clear and accurate understanding of everything the centre does well and where it needs to improve. They have been successful in creating good partnerships and in making significant improvements to the lives of many families. As a result, the centre is well placed to continue to improve.

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