

Inspection report for Yvonne Carr Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Wandsworth
Inspection number	404545
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2013
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Centre leader	Nikki Gray
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Tinies Daycare EY454921

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: February 2013



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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 locality and centre staff and met representatives of partner agencies, including those from health, social care and early years education. They also met partner agencies from charity organisations and the private sector and held meetings with parents.

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

Information about the centre

Yvonne Carr Children's Centre was designated in 2010 as a phase two centre. It is located in Battersea in the London Borough of Wandsworth, right on the border with the London Borough of Lambeth. The majority of children and families in the area live in social housing on the surrounding estates. The centre is part of the Battersea locality comprising seven children's centres. The centre is managed by a centre manager who reports to a locality manager. Governance of the centre is through the advisory board. Accommodation at the centre is shared with the locality multi-agency team for the Battersea locality.

There are 980 children under five years living within the reach area. Around 22% of parents benefit from the childcare element of Working Tax Credit and 31% of children under five years live in households dependent on out-of-work benefits. The area is culturally and ethnically diverse. Around 55% of children are from Black or other minority ethnic families and 46% of children speak English as an additional language.

The centre meets its core purpose through the range of services provided, which includes health services, adult education, employability training and family support. Crèche provision is provided by Tinies Daycare service and is commissioned directly by the centre. Tinies Daycare will be the subject of a separate inspection.

Children’s knowledge, skills and ability on entry to early years education are below those typically seen 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

Yvonne Carr is a good children’s centre which serves its community well. It offers a warm and welcoming environment to families and visitors. From the first point of contact in reception, through to more intensive interaction with staff, families, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, all receive a good service which is responsive to their needs. The centre works effectively with a range of partner organisations that are actively involved in planning and reviewing services. They speak highly of their productive working relationship with centre staff.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Health and safety matters are actively promoted through visible posters around the centre and, most importantly, safeguarding is an integral part of the work of staff. The centre’s multi-agency work is effective, and productive work with social care teams ensures safeguarding remains a high priority.

Overall outcomes for families are good. Activities are well planned and purposeful and ensure that families achieve positive outcomes. Children are progressing well in their education and make a successful transition to school. The centre has productive links with health professionals and this contributes effectively to improving families’ health. The centre’s accurate assessment of families’ needs and use of data to identify wider needs are effective in assisting the general well-being of the community.

Families are well supported by the centre and receive good quality guidance and information. They build self-confidence, resilience and effective coping skills as a result of the care they receive. However, the way in which the centre records the detail of the support it provides for vulnerable families lacks precision and this makes

it difficult for leaders to make fully effective checks on the impact of the actions being taken.

Parents are highly valued as partners. As a result, user engagement and the positive contribution made by parents are both outstanding. Parents from a range of target groups are well represented on the advisory board. They are articulate and confident in representing the views of parents. Through the advisory board training they receive, they are exceptionally well prepared to be active participants in all aspects of the work of the advisory board and play a key role in reviewing provision and driving improvements. They also demonstrate enterprising behaviour and, for example, are taking responsibility for operating a new coffee shop service at the centre.

The promotion of equality and celebration of diversity are key strengths because the centre responds extremely well to the interests and needs of its multicultural community. Activities such as music sessions and healthy eating events are planned to reflect the cultural interests of the community. Data are routinely scrutinised by centre staff to ensure the inclusion of families from all backgrounds and who live, in some cases, with challenging circumstances. The centre's success in helping partners to narrow the gap between the achievement of children from minority ethnic groups and their peers is reflected in the most recent data.

A majority of local families have regular contact with the centre. However, because of its location on the border with Lambeth, some families from this borough also access the centre's services. The centre closely monitors the use of services by these families but has yet to explore how best to manage the level of demand.

The quality of leadership and management is good at all levels. Staff are well qualified for their roles and, as a result, the quality of services provided to families is good. Effective performance management arrangements hold staff to account and support their professional development. The centre's self-evaluation process is rigorous, well informed by data and leads to a detailed action plan for improvement which reflects both centre and local priorities. As a result, the centre's capacity for improvement is good.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Streamline the methods used for recording the support given to families so that leaders can make fully effective checks on the impact of the actions being taken.
- Work with the local authority to explore a way forward in effectively managing the demand for services by families who live outside the borough.

How good are outcomes for families?

2

Families who attend the centre benefit well from their good participation in a range of health activities. Activities such as Toddler Boost combine good learning about nutrition with physical exercise. Other services offered by a wide range of health professionals, such as nurses, mental health specialists and health visitors, help families improve their emotional health. Breastfeeding rates at six to eight weeks are good and, at 76%, are higher than both borough and national rates. The centre is working productively with its health partners to tackle obesity rates for Reception-age children which are higher than the national average. Through educating parents about nutrition and healthy eating, the centre's work is beginning to have a positive impact on obesity rates. Data already indicate that obesity rates for boys are falling.

The percentage of children living in the reach area who now achieve 78+ scale points across the Early Years Foundation Stage profile shows a year-on-year increase and has improved significantly over time. At 63%, the proportion reaching a good level of development in 2012 was only 1% below the national average. Analysis of trends shows that the gap between the lowest achieving 20% of children and the rest is narrowing quickly and especially for children from Black backgrounds. Targeted activities such as ABC Boys workshops are just one example of the strategies the centre uses to promote good educational achievement.

Children behave well at the centre, build good skills for the future and make a smooth transition to school. As a result of their participation in a range of centre activities, parents also progress well in improving their education and their personal skills. Many parents have achieved qualifications and improved their language skills through participating in courses such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). This helps them to become better equipped to support the development of their children's language and communication skills.

Parents' economic well-being is actively promoted through activities such as money management workshops which improve their budgeting skills. Their economic well-being is effectively promoted as a result of the good quality advice and guidance they receive about debt management and welfare support. Through partnership work with a charity, some parents benefit from effective training in employability skills.

Community days have been successfully used to educate families about different aspects of safety. For example, one of these events was used well to promote awareness about road safety and home safety. Outcomes for families with children subject to a child protection plan are good as a result of the effective work of centre staff with social care professionals. 'I feel a better parent and a better person.' This was the comment from one participant on a parenting course. The comment reflects the views of many others who have benefited well from attending parenting courses. Centre staff and other professionals are satisfactorily implementing a new Signs of Well-being tool, which the local authority has designated as a replacement to the Common Assessment Framework.

Through their involvement in both the advisory board and the parents' forum, parents across target groups make an exceptional contribution to governance and key decision making at the centre. In addition, they actively use the parents' forum to contribute to the way the centre operates, to make proposals for improvement and to discuss issues that affect the centre's operation. Key decisions about the organisation of courses and about facilities at the centre have been directly influenced by parents' highly effective input.

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	1
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

Centre staff routinely and effectively use data to assess needs and to monitor the impact of services. Staff meticulously analyse data to identify trends and to monitor participation rates by different target groups, such as young parents and those from different minority ethnic groups. This information is then used strategically to plan outreach work and to target services at specific groups as required. As a result of a good match between provision and need, the majority of families within the reach area are now accessing centre services. There is a good balance between universal and targeted provision. In addition, the needs of different target groups living in the reach area, such as lone parents, families who speak English as an additional language and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are well met. In going forward, the centre is aware of the importance of managing the demand for services by families who live outside the borough.

The centre provides a good range of learning opportunities for children and adults. Learning resources are of a high quality and these include the centre's well-equipped training rooms for adults and toys and equipment for children. Crèche provision provides a stimulating environment for children and observed sessions show that children benefit well from the good planning of activities by well qualified staff.

Activities for children are well linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes. Courses for adults, such as ESOL, are also well planned to promote both their personal development and educational achievement.

'This centre has been a rock.' 'It's a little haven that I can come to.' These are just two comments that reflect parents' highly positive views about the quality of support received. In times of crises, families from all target groups receive sensitive and highly effective support. Case study evidence and personal testimonies from parents confirm that they receive effective care and support to help them overcome problems with housing, debts, social isolation and other pressing concerns. Good quality information and guidance are readily available and accessible. The centre currently uses different formats to record the detail of its good work to support families. This makes it harder for leaders to assess the full impact of the actions being taken that result in the very best outcomes.

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 manager and her staff are passionate and enthusiastic about their work and are fully committed to improving the lives of families. Leadership, management and governance are good. Systems of accountability are clear and staff have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Morale is high and staff are united in their determination to further improve the centre's good effectiveness.

The centre's meticulous analysis of data contributes well to the self-evaluation process. Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of priorities and these are well reflected in the centre's action plan which incorporates both qualitative and measurable success criteria. All activities are thoroughly evaluated and partner organisations provide quarterly evaluation reports about impact and outcomes. Partnership arrangements are effective and partners from a range of sectors are actively involved in planning and reviewing services. Through their roles on the advisory board, partners also make a good contribution to governance and share the centre's strong commitment to improve outcomes for families.

Resources are used well and are of good quality. Outcomes for families are good and participation rates are high. As a result, the centre provides good value for money. However, the location of the centre on a street which is directly on the border

between Lambeth and Wandsworth means that some families who use the centre live outside the borough. The centre has not yet explored fully how best it can manage the demand for services from outside the borough.

User engagement is first rate as a result of the outstanding involvement of parents in the management of the centre. Parents are highly enthusiastic about their roles on both the parents' forum and the advisory board. They feel a strong sense of ownership of what they view as their centre. They are exceptionally enthusiastic about contributing proposals and ideas to improve the work of the centre. Satisfaction rates from families are high and reflect the exceptionally positive views parents have of the centre.

Statutory safeguarding requirements are well met. Recruitment checks are carried out as appropriate and the centre works in a productive way with other agencies to promote safeguarding. Families affected by domestic violence receive good support to promote their emotional well-being. Signposting and referral systems are used well to ensure families receive the most appropriate support. Centre staff also use a range of mechanisms to ensure early intervention is effective in preventing problems from escalating. Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding procedures.

The centre's promotion of equality and its celebration of diversity are excellent. There is zero tolerance to any form of discrimination. Through careful and rigorous analysis of data, centre staff monitor the achievement and participation of different target groups and take remedial action to respond to any under representation of specific groups. Achievement of children by gender is also closely monitored and data show that the centre is narrowing the gap between the achievement of children from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds and the rest at a faster rate than the borough. The promotion of inclusion is also excellent and, through highly effective work with a charity, the centre makes an effective, yet sensitive, response to the needs of disabled children and their families.

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	1
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	1

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

None.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Yvonne Carr Centre on 6 and 7 February 2013. We judged the centre as good overall.

Many thanks to all of you for contributing to the inspection. We appreciate the time you took to talk to us, particularly about how much you have benefited from the services offered at the centre.

We were particularly impressed with your enthusiasm in contributing ideas to help the centre move forward. You make an excellent contribution to the work of your centre and it was good to hear how many of your ideas have led to improvements. Your contribution to the centre's work as participants on both the advisory board and the parents' forum is highly commendable.

Another one of your centre's key strengths is the way families from all backgrounds are made to feel welcome. You told us how much you appreciate the friendly environment of the centre. We know from talking to you and from our analysis of statistics that staff take equality matters very seriously. They do their best to ensure families from all backgrounds have good opportunities to benefit from services offered at your centre and enjoy harmonious relationships.

Your centre attracts families from other boroughs as well as Wandsworth which is even more evidence of your centre's welcoming environment. However, we have asked the centre to work with the local authority to monitor how the use of services by families from outside the borough can be best managed.

We were pleased to be able to observe some of the learning activities that you and your children enjoy so much. Your children are making good progress in their

education and you are working hard to support their development. Centre staff are also working hard to ensure your children do well in their education. They have supported some of you in your own development by arranging various courses such as ESOL, which are helping those of you who do not speak English as your first language to learn English.

We know you that many of you enjoy and benefit from activities like Zumba and the work of staff to help you and your families live healthy lives is commendable. Their work with health professionals, such as health visitors and mental health specialists, is an important aspect of your centre's work. You told us how supported you feel by staff and this was good to hear. However, we have asked staff to improve the way they record the impact of all the support that is offered to families.

Once again, many thanks for taking the time to talk to us during the inspection. We wish you and your families the very best for the future.

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