

# B4 Longfield Children's Centre

**Flamstead End Primary & Nursery School, Longfield Lane, Cheshunt, EN7 6AG**

**Inspection date** 6–7 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Good	2
The quality of practice and services		Good	2
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is a good centre.

- The centre manager gives clear and purposeful leadership. Registrations have increased to the current good levels and attendance at groups and activities is good.
- The take up of free nursery places by three-year-old children is good. Take up by eligible two-year-old children is high.
- Centre staff have a positive approach to problem solving and great tenacity for improvement. As a result, anyone who asks for help gets the targeted support that they need to make their lives better.
- Families and children who attend groups take part in a varied range of well-organised and good quality activities that are targeted to meet their needs. Outcomes for families and children have improved well since the centre opened.
- Relationships are positive and so parents support each other too. Parents who attend groups and families say, 'The centre is very much like a big family and everyone feels valued.'
- Parents and children are fully involved in helping the centre to decide what kind of activities to run and where and so attendance at groups and activities is good.
- Partnerships with preschools, schools and other centres are particularly strong and result in good provision for children under five.
- The advisory board knows how well the centre is meeting the needs of its community and what it needs to do to improve because of the regular quality information it receives.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Staff do not always plan for or record in enough detail the learning of adults who attend centre groups and activities to help them support their children's learning at home especially boys. The centre does not always check that those who attend college courses go on to further develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Despite the centre's efforts, the number of children classified as obese is higher than the national and local average, and while increasing, breastfeeding rates remain below national levels.
- The centre uses the information it has about children and adults to plan relevant services and activities. However, it does not set detailed enough targets against which to measure precisely how successful centre services have been.

## Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with groups of parents, the centre manager, staff, partners, representatives of the advisory board and the local authority. The centre manager attended all team meetings.

The inspectors visited activities at three sites. They observed the centre's work and visited groups including Stay and Play held at the centre and at Flamstead End community hall. They also visited a health clinic for babies and toddlers held at a local health centre, all jointly with the centre manager.

They looked at a range of relevant documentation including information about attendance, safeguarding, planning and recording progress and surveys of parents' views and satisfaction.

Georgina Beasley, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Peter Towner, Team inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Longfield Children's Centre is a phase two centre which opened in 2008. It provides a range of services and groups for children and their parents and carers. The centre is managed by Flamstead End Primary and Nursery School (URN: 139545) on behalf of the local authority. Longfield Children's Centre Preschool operates onsite. The advisory board includes two parent representatives and members from its health, social care, adult education and community partners. Children start early education with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age.

There are approximately 889 children under five years of age living within the area that the centre serves. One of the eight super output areas covered by the centre is ranked in the top 30% most deprived areas in the country. The proportion of young children living in households where no one is working and who receive benefits is around levels seen nationally. The area consists mainly of White British families with a very small number of families from a number of different minority ethnic groups. The centre's target groups include children who are obese, families who live in the most deprived super output area and two year olds eligible for a free funded place.

The centre's partners include health, social care, adult education, schools and preschool providers. None of the schools and settings were inspected as part of this inspection, their reports are available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

### What does the centre/group need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of planning for and comments about learning at groups by:
  - making reference to adults' as well as the children's planned learning
  - explaining precisely how parents can extend their children's learning at home in next steps comments.
  
- Improve further groups, advice and services to promote family health by:
  - increasing the number of mothers who breastfeed beyond six weeks to at least levels seen nationally
  - reducing the proportion of five-year-old children classified as obese to at least levels seen nationally.
  
- Strengthen how the centre uses the information from the tracking of children's and adults' learning and progress to:
  - set challenging targets that help leaders measure whether or not services, groups and activities are being fully successful
  - plan activities and support that focus on getting boys ready for school so that they do as well as girls
  - develop closer working partnerships with the local colleges and job centre plus to increase the number of adults taking up vocational learning and so increase their employment prospects.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

**Good**

- The centre works very well with health, social care and housing partners to identify families and as a result most families who live in the area are registered and know about the centre's services and activities. Family support workers attend all local health clinics to ensure that they meet families who attend and to let them know what the centre can do to support them.
- The number of families and children accessing services and attending the centre's groups and activities has increased significantly since it opened. The centre's decision to run 'stay and play' and 'messy play' sessions at the centre and at local community halls and schools has resulted in higher attendance. Almost three quarters of families and children who need the most support attend. The current good registration and attendance have been sustained for the last two years.
- The centre works with all families who they know need support whether they have been referred from other partners or not. It is particularly good at solving problems to prevent social work intervention such as finding support and counselling for those experiencing domestic violence, handing out vouchers for the food bank and ensuring children who should be in preschool or school attend regularly.
- Due to timely support from the centre, all families with a two-year-old child known to be eligible for a free preschool place have taken it up this year. Most three year olds who live in the area attend nursery or preschool.
- All teenage and young parents that the centre knows about from its partnership with midwives and health visitors are registered. They receive good guidance and support to help them care for their children and to return to education or work. The centre has telling examples of young mothers passing GCSEs after their babies have been born.
- Take up of adult education courses is good with an above average number completing the college courses they sign up for. All parents who attend parenting programs complete the course. The centre does not carry out follow up checks to find out how many subsequently go on to attend vocational courses and so help them to find better skilled work.

### The quality of practice and services

**Good**

- Children who have attended centre activities including those with special educational needs make good progress and their readiness for school is good. A higher proportion of children than seen nationally reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning at the end of the Reception year. However, girls do better than boys especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The centre makes a positive contribution to reducing inequalities. Children known to be eligible for free school meals do better than eligible children nationally because the take up of two- and three-year-old funded places at preschools is high.
- Families whose circumstances have made them more vulnerable including those that need support for short periods of time benefit from focused and relevant services tailored to each family's particular need. Family support workers are tenacious in the way that they solve problems and find the support families need to improve their emotional and economic wellbeing.
- A good number of adults gain qualifications in English, mathematics and computer studies, and

many use the qualifications to successfully find work. The centre tracks their progress closely and so knows precisely who has been successful and when. It does not then always work closely with all adult education providers and job centre plus to find out how many go on to attend vocational courses and so help more to find better-qualified work.

- Parents who attend benefit from good quality courses and activities. They value the advice and guidance that they receive about how to manage their children's behaviour, how to keep them safe and the books and toys that they can enjoy with them at home. No one uses their mobile phones when at the centre because they understand the e-safety implications of this.
- Staff keep careful records to show what the children know and can do and use the information to identify additional resources and materials for the following week. They do not always plan learning tasks for parents in groups and activities that show them precisely how they can support and extend their children's learning at home.
- Feedback from parents who have attended the 'Eat Better, Start Better' and courses that promote healthy eating indicates positive impact on their families' health. Comments show that they have all learned a lot about how to prepare healthy food options for their families. Despite this, numbers of obese children in the area remain above average.
- Attendance at breastfeeding support groups have trebled in the last year. As yet, this increase is not ensuring that mothers continue to breastfeed their babies beyond six weeks and the proportion remains below levels seen nationally.

### The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

**Good**

- The centre manager, staff, partners and local authority have a good understanding of the local area. Improvement targets are accurate and based on a secure analysis of need. In close partnership with the adjoining school, the centre has improved the outdoor area so that a range of activities can take place both inside and outside.
- All members of staff and partners review through case study evidence whether services and groups are improving the lives of families and children that they see. Case files are checked regularly to ensure steps to improve families' safety and wellbeing are protecting vulnerable children and parents. Staff assess the needs of all families most in need well and support all children subject to a child protection or child in need plan effectively. Common Assessment Framework processes are used well to coordinate early help for families.
- Flamstead Primary School, local authority and advisory board work closely with the centre manager to carry out regular checks on the quality of services and activities to ensure that concerns and weaknesses are picked up quickly. Resources are managed well to ensure good outcomes from its services and activities. Staff expertise is used effectively to support the most vulnerable families and to provide relevant activities for all families.
- While some targets are set by the local authority, the business plan does not include challenging targets that help the centre's leadership to measure the success of its activities and services against outcomes for all adults and children.
- The centre has set up systems for checking that all two-year-old children who take up free pre-school places are making at least good progress. Systems are too new for the centre to analyse the information to identify precisely when boys are starting to slip behind the girls and so enable it to plan more precisely to meet their needs.

- Supervision and performance management arrangements are secure. All staff have regular meetings with the centre manager and the centre manager with the headteacher of the adjoining primary school and local authority to ensure training gives them the skills they need to plan and deliver effective services and groups.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Staff follow policies and procedures consistently and share expectations with parents so that they have a good knowledge of how to keep their families safe at home. Procedures are robust for ensuring all attendees safety and wellbeing.
- Parents feel able to give their views about centre services and groups, which have resulted in changes to days, times and places that activities take place. There is always at least one parent at advisory board meetings at which activity evaluation questionnaires and parents' views are shared.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	Practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for children and their families and as a result inequalities are reducing rapidly and gaps are closing.
Grade 2	Good	Practice enables most children and their families to access good quality services that improve children's wellbeing and achieve the stated outcomes for families.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	Performance is not as good as it might reasonably be expected to be in one or more key areas.
Grade 4	Inadequate	The needs of children and families in its area are not being met and/or the leaders and managers are not providing sufficient challenge to bring about improvement to the quality of services.

**Children's Centre**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	20160
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427447
<b>Managed by</b>	Flamstead End Primary and Nursery School on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	889
<b>Centre leader</b>	Maggie Mobley
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 901610
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