

The Curzon Crescent and Fawood Children's Centre Partnership (The Partnership)

Fawood Children's Centre, 35 Fawood Avenue, Brent, London NW10 8DX

Inspection date

12–13 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Select	2
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	Select
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 children's centre group is good.

- Although the Challenge House building only opened recently, it has already significantly improved access to services by target families, with more families receiving direct support from the Family Engagement Worker. Outreach work complements direct access to centre provision and is improving outcomes for families who have difficulties accessing centre buildings.
- Careful and detailed scrutiny and analysis of data, assisted by close work with partners, enables The Partnership to accurately target their work with families most in need of support.
- Detailed tracking through learning journeys in both the nursery provision and crèches show children are making good and better progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Partnership with the speech and language therapist is improving children's communication and language skills. Children's speech and language needs are quickly identified. The recent introduction of welcome sessions is ensuring all parents have an opportunity to discuss any concerns at a very early stage.
- Resources, including staff, are imaginatively and creatively deployed across the reach area, ensuring a seamless service for families who access any of the centres in The Partnership. Parents comment that they feel the centres are integrated, as they regularly see the same staff at each of the centres and there is the same safe and welcoming feeling wherever they go.

It is not outstanding because:

- The local authority is not ensuring The Partnership receives the data and information it needs to target families promptly and to fully demonstrate the impact of services. New birth data and information about claimant households is now received but this has been very recent. Sometimes data is received in a format that requires intensive manual input and tracking to ensure targets can be met and to enable The Partnership to understand where families most in need of support live.
- The Partnership and Citizens Advice Bureau provide valuable opportunities for parents to gain work

experience and develop their skills through volunteering. Their employment prospects are improved through a range of accredited courses, although some parents find participation difficult due to family commitments. However, links with Jobcentre Plus to help parents develop their employability skills and secure jobs are not yet fully developed.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre group was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. The centres that form part of this children's centre group are Curzon Crescent Children's Centre, Fawood Children's Centre and Challenge House Children's Centre.

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with representatives of the Governing Body, health representatives, the local authority, the centre manager, the Executive Head, parents, childminders, children's centre staff, speech and language therapy, Citizens Advice Bureau and the counselling service .

The inspectors visited Curzon Crescent Children's Centre, Fawood Children's Centre and Challenge House Children's Centre.

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

Inspection team

Denise Blackwell	Her Majesty's Inspector, Lead Inspector
Kenneth Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joan Lindsay	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the group

Brent-Harlesden Locality 1 consists of three children's centres: Fawood, Curzon Crescent and Challenge House. Fawood and Curzon Crescent Children's Centres are also maintained nursery schools with registered provision for two-year-olds at Fawood Children's Centre, all of which are subject to separate inspections. The reports of these inspections can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. Challenge House is based in a local authority multi-agency building and is currently running sessions on two days a week to extend to three days a week from January 2014. There are approximately 5000 children under five years of age in the Harlesden locality, however the Brent-Harlesden locality also has another two centres that form Brent-Harlesden Locality 2. Around three quarters of children under five (3935) who live in Harlesden are located within the Locality 1 reach area.

The group of children's centres is known as The Partnership of Curzon Crescent, Fawood and Challenge House Children's Centres (The Partnership). They are located in the top 10% of deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Brent. Around 46% of families are of African and Caribbean heritage, with the second largest group being White British and Irish. There is also a large Somali community within the reach area and increasing numbers of families of Polish and Brazilian heritage. Brent has a transient population with a number of hostels within the reach area. Brent local authority as a whole is within the top 10% most deprived in the country for Barriers to Housing and Services.

Fawood and Curzon Crescent Children's Centres have been previously inspected as single centres and were judged as good. They were formed as a group of centres in 2012 when the two nursery schools were officially federated. The Parent and Community Committee of the Governing Body of The Partnership act as the advisory board and consist of local partners such as health and a number of parents, all of whom have accessed centre services. Parents on the committee facilitate the parents' forum meetings. The Executive Head of The Partnership has a strategic role and oversees the running of the children's centre provision along with the nursery schools and the registered provision. The children's centre manager is responsible for the children's centre services at all three centres in The Partnership and manages the children's centre staff.

The Harlesden Locality has the highest rate of unemployment in the borough with over 25% of adults claiming job seekers allowance. Around 13% of children in Reception are obese, which is above national averages but in line with the rest of Brent. Children start in early years provision with levels of development significantly below those typical for their age.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- The local authority should work closely with The Partnership to:
 - determine the data that is needed to drive improvement
 - establish protocols so that information provided is timely and in a format that is useful to The Partnership.

- The Partnership should maximise opportunities for adult learning by:
 - building on the trust and confidence parents have in the centres, making use of staff's knowledge and skills
 - working with partners to remove barriers to learning
 - strengthening links with Jobcentre Plus to help parents gain employment skills and progress to employment.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The recent sharing of new birth data is helping The Partnership to accurately identify and engage with target groups. They are also responsible for the referral of over 81% of families across the whole of Brent who are accessing two-year-old funding. Services are taken directly to families who live in hostels and find it difficult to engage elsewhere.
- Phone calls to find out why families are no longer accessing centre services found that the majority of children are now in nursery or primary school. This enabled The Partnership to concentrate their resources on families who are still in need of support. They then target services between 3.30 and 6.00pm to families with four-year-olds in 'Getting ready for school'.
- Effective monitoring systems are in place to ensure those most in need are accessing services and receiving support, and centre staff ensure this includes vulnerable and at-risk children. The number of fathers accessing centre services is steadily increasing, with over 70 fathers attending sessions at one of the centres most months. Families from a wide variety of backgrounds take part in services and, as a result, are forming friendships and get on well with each other.
- Although Challenge House is currently open for two days a week, more than 200 attendances have been recorded since it opened, with over 50% of these by target families. The 'Stay and Play' sessions are very popular and are always full, resulting in the partnership extending the provision much sooner than was anticipated. However, issues with IT and phone lines still need to be resolved to enable them to fully exploit the possibilities that Challenge House has to offer to engage even more target families.
- The Partnership is a key partner in borough-wide Autistic Spectrum Disorder allocation meetings. They provide a specialist service for children on the Autistic Spectrum and help parents to understand how this impacts on their children. 'We were both very confused about what was happening,' said one parent 'but with the guidance of the Family Support Worker, I now feel much more able to support my child.'
- Increasingly effective working with health partners ensures parents have convenient access to support services. Clinics are held at children's centres, the local hospital and GP surgeries. Midwives and health visitors encourage parents to register with The Partnership and this has been effective in improving levels of registration to over 83%.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Children's individual learning needs are well known, including those of any who are at risk, such as those with child protection plans. Data show that children who have accessed the nursery have outcomes that are above borough and national averages. This is despite very high numbers of children eligible for free school meals and children with English as an additional language.
- Universal services such as 'stay and play' sessions help to engage families in services. Staff skilfully model how to play with children, resulting in high levels of enjoyment. Parents are well supported to help their children learn and develop through Early Years Foundation Stage workshops, enabling them to provide continuity to their children's learning at home.
- Children are well prepared for school due to excellent well-established links with the nursery schools, familiarity with the buildings, workshops and transition events. High levels of exchange of information support families and help to provide continuity for children. Tracking is detailed, involves parents well and shows that children make good or better progress during their time at the centres and when they move on to the nursery schools.
- Good use is made of counselling services to help parents understand problems and identify issues that are impacting on their lives. 'We will often hide behind the children,' stated one parent, with counselling sessions being particularly effective for supporting parents to recognise this. During follow-up calls to families, they report that they benefit from the sessions, and feel that the service made a difference to them.
- Good working relationships between midwives, health visitors and family support workers are very effective in identifying isolated families and making referrals for support. Thorough action planning

through the Common Assessment Framework process is agreed with the family and other agencies. As a result, irrespective of who works with the family, they receive the support they need.

- The Partnership runs bespoke parenting courses, some of which are targeted at parents and carers who have been experiencing domestic abuse and mental illness. These improve parents' understanding of how to keep their children safe and improve their children's well-being. Achievements are celebrated, with over 80 families attending the graduation ceremony in July to celebrate success in a range of courses attended throughout the year.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Resources are excellent and improved even more through the sharing of staff and expertise. Evaluations are regularly undertaken and findings used to shape services. Regular, robust monitoring by the Governing Body, including parent members, shows high levels of interest in nursery schools and children's centre services.
- Local authority data provides a basis for leaders in setting challenging targets and prioritising their work. The development plan is reviewed each term and progress against targets reported. Data is not always in a format that is helpful; however, the astute and detailed analysis carried out by the manager, a good knowledge of the area and strong partnership working are ensuring that The Partnership is driving continuous improvement and engaging with those who are more difficult to reach.
- The local authority targets are challenging but realistic, as centres now receive clearer information about their reach area and target families, although this is quite recent. The Partnership contributes significantly to borough-wide meetings for children's centres and is valued for leaders' educational input and knowledge of early development and learning.
- Performance management and staff supervision arrangements are exemplary. Senior leaders monitor the work of staff within the centres and nursery schools. Professional supervision is bought in for family support workers, enabling them to discuss their cases and identify their development needs. Poor performance is tackled effectively, resulting in a team of professionals who are dedicated and aspirational for the families with whom they work.
- Governance arrangements are well embedded. The Parent and Community committee interrogates the data provided and reviews the progress reports from the manager, challenging her where issues are still not resolved. A well-prepared parent member attends the annual conversation with the manager and contributes to discussions with the local authority. As a result, governance is demonstrably contributing to The Partnership's continuous improvement.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority, with very robust policies and practices in place. Case allocation meetings are held fortnightly and family support workers receive regular referrals from Brent Family Solutions through step down from social care. Centre staff pay careful attention to families where children's welfare is a cause for concern and is being monitored. However, the partnership is not informed of all families involved with social care; there is no named social worker for the centre and, when asked to identify and contact the social workers for 20 families, they found they would need to contact 17 social workers to take this task forward.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
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 group details

Unique reference number	80091
Local authority	London Borough of Brent
Inspection number	430332
Managed by	The Partnership of Curzon Crescent, Fawood and Challenge House Children's Centres on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	3935
Centre leader	Mark Cole
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	020 8965 9334
Email address	mark@fawoodcc.brent.sch.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- Fawood Children's Centre
- Curzon Crescent Children's Centre
- Challenge House Children's Centre

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