

# Barnfield Primary School and Children's Centre

Silkstream Road, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 0DA

<b>Inspection date</b>		4–5 December 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 leaders, supported well by the local authority, have created a strong culture of continuous improvement. Staff work very effectively as a team and morale is high.
- The large majority of the families, including those who have the highest levels of need, engage regularly in the wide range of good-quality services. Families are keen to use the centre because it is a warm, welcoming place where they feel at ease.
- The partnership with the link primary school is highly effective, resulting in children who have accessed services at the centre making excellent progress in their Early Years education.
- Sessions are planned very well, with clear objectives and good links to meeting the needs of priority groups.
- Safeguarding children and families is of the highest priority. Effective partnerships with a range of agencies, including social care, ensure that families receive joined-up services which meet their needs well and help to reduce the risk of harm to children.
- Leadership, including governance, is good and the centre is well managed. Careful monitoring and robust target setting mean that the performance of the centre is continually improving.

### It is not outstanding because:

- There are not enough opportunities for adults from workless homes to train or develop skills that will improve their opportunities for gaining employment.
- The centre's action plan is not linked strongly enough to the targets set by the local authority, resulting in the centre's success measures not being precise enough to show the full impact of its work on all priority groups.

## 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 three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, the headteacher of the link primary school, family support and outreach workers, senior officers from the local authority, and partners from health, education, social services and Early Years. They also met parents and representatives of the advisory board.

The inspectors involved the centre leader in all team meetings and in joint observations of two activities. A ‘Stay and Play’ session at one of the outreach venues was also observed.

Inspectors observed the centre’s work and looked at a range of relevant documentation, for example self-evaluation and development planning, a sample of case studies, safeguarding procedures, and parental satisfaction surveys.

### Inspection team

Nasim Butt	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Ann Janssen	Additional Inspector
Crystal Gail Robertson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

This is a stand-alone centre, designated in 2008 as a phase 2 centre, and managed by the Barnfield Primary School's governing body on behalf of the local authority. Day-to-day management is the responsibility of the centre manager (currently interim), who reports directly to the headteacher of the primary school. The centre provides a full range of services, including health, parent and toddler groups, family support and adult learning. Three outreach venues - the local church, Orion school and the Greentops centre - are also used to deliver services. The centre is supported by an advisory board whose chair is a governor of the school. Four parents and a range of providers, including those from health and education, are also members of the advisory board.

The centre is located on the Barnfield Primary School site which is subject to separate inspection arrangements. It serves 13 super output areas, two of which are within the lowest 20% and three more are within the lowest 30% of most deprived areas nationally. The community in the reach area is highly diverse. Barnfield School and Children's Centre has families speaking over 40 languages attending and accessing services: 93% fall within the Black and minority ethnic group (within this, 12% are White Eastern European) and 7% are White British. Around 25% of children live in households dependent on worklessness benefits.

Some 1,976 children under five-years-old live in the area. When they enter Early Years provision, their skills are below what is typical for their age, with communication, language and literacy being the weakest areas.

The main priority groups assessed in need of centre services are children in the Black and minority ethnic communities, boys, and income-deprived families, many of whom are workless homes.

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

- Extend the opportunities for more adults, particularly those from workless homes, to improve their economic well-being by:
  - providing more opportunities for literacy, numeracy and work-related skills development
  - building stronger links with training providers, coupled with tighter arrangements for evaluating the impact of their work on adults' employability
  - establishing a more effective system to monitor how well adults progress as a result of accessing adult learning courses.
- Show the full impact of the centre's work on all its priority groups by creating stronger links between the centre's action plan's measures of success and the local authority's targets as defined in its new performance framework for children's centres.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Good

- This is a vibrant centre where families, including those expecting children, make good use of the wide range of services provided, mainly because the strongly motivated staff go out of their way to meet their needs. The very large majority of families are registered with the centre and access its services. This includes the large majority of those living in the most deprived areas and most lone parents, minority ethnic families, and families with boys under the age of five.
- Universal and targeted activity sessions, delivered by skilled family support and community outreach workers, have a positive impact on the increasing engagement of targeted families, such as those identified as needing parenting support, and help to identify other families' specific needs. For

example, through universal sessions, families have been identified who would benefit from additional targeted services such as the 'Boys Will Be Boys' programme which focuses on narrowing the achievement gap with girls.

- The centre has strong partnerships with Barnfield Primary School with which it shares the site, and also childminders and Early Years providers which enable staff to share information and help identify and support parents, for example those whose children have speech and language difficulties and those who may be suffering from domestic abuse.
- The centre's checks on families' attendance show clearly that, once they see and enjoy what is on offer, their visits are more frequent and they attend more activities. Many of the activities provide families with good opportunities to socialise and to benefit from the advice of qualified and experienced staff, especially about their children's learning and development.
- Staff are successful in encouraging parents to take advantage of available funding for nursery places for the large number of eligible two-year-old children. In addition, most children access their three- and four-year-old entitlement to Early Years education.
- The centre is successfully engaging many male carers, young parents and adults from workless homes through, for example, the 'Men's Morning', young parents' 'Stay and Play', and the 'Work Club'. However, centre leaders have rightly identified that more work is required to improve contact with these groups.

### The quality of practice and services

Good

- Planning for sessions is of good quality and staff pay particular attention to the learning children will experience. The progress of children is carefully checked and data show that those who have sustained contact with the centre go on to achieve really well in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The centre has good links with the Barnet Library Service which runs the excellent 'Bookstart' programme where engaging techniques are used to develop children's early reading skills through rhyme and picture stories. As a result, there has been increased take-up of borrowing from the local library.
- Targeted provision, such as Speech and Language Therapy (SPLAT) and the childminders drop-in, is particularly effective in meeting the specific needs of families. During the inspection, parents gained confidence as they saw their children make good progress on their targets such as 'joining two words together'. Childminders are involved in the planning and evaluation of the 'Soft Play' sessions and say that 'it is so good to come here because staff here value us'.
- Staff use their good experience and training very effectively to ensure that families remain safe. Close working with, for example, children's social care and health staff, ensures that important information is shared quickly and effectively. As one key partner remarked, 'Staff are really good at tapping into specialist expertise.' Case records contain good levels of detail and show the positive impact of support and advice on improving the well-being of the most vulnerable families.
- The child health clinic, coupled with additional targeted sessions, helps to increase families' understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Although some health outcomes are improving fast, for instance breastfeeding rates, reduction in childhood obesity is improving at a slower rate and is currently in line with the average for England.
- The centre has promoted volunteering very effectively and has an action plan to ensure further improvement. There are currently two volunteers who are also members of the advisory board and, as parents, make a strong contribution to decision making.
- Through the 'Conversation café' and 'Work Club', parents have gained useful, transferable skills which have improved their life choices and in some cases led to paid work. However, links with adult-learning providers have not developed quickly enough, resulting in parents from workless homes not having enough access to literacy and numeracy courses. The longer-term progress of adults who do attend education and training courses is not monitored well enough.

**The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management**

Good

- The local authority provides good strategic leadership and supports the development of the centre well. There is a strong focus on improving the performance of the centre through quarterly monitoring against specific targets. As a result, the centre is continuing to improve, and increasing its success in reducing inequalities for local families.
- Governance is well established. The advisory board has made good use of the training it has received, streamlining the board to make it fit for purpose. Board members have a well-developed understanding of the centre's priority groups and an overview of the impact of the centre's work on improving their lives. Minutes of their meetings show good support and challenge often under the heading of 'questions, challenges and contributions'.
- Self-evaluation is thoughtful and accurate. Data are used to help identify need and review the centre's performance. Where it is used well, it helps identify areas of underperformance and plan well-considered strategies to address them. For example, centre leaders' actions have been very effective in closing the achievement gap between boys and girls.
- The performance of staff is checked effectively and the resources available are allocated efficiently and managed well. As a result of purposeful discussions, progress made by staff is agreed and clear action points recorded.
- Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and well organised. Staff are well trained in child protection and have good awareness of how to keep families safe. Children subject to child protection plans are particularly well supported. The Common Assessment Framework is used effectively and a large majority of families identified as being most in need of intervention and support improve their parenting skills. This, coupled with access to paediatric first aid, has made a strong contribution to enhancing the safety of children in their homes.
- Parents' views are highly valued and gathered systematically to help shape services. The centre ensures that parents, including those from its priority groups, contribute formally to the centre's decision making about its development.
- Although the centre's action plan addresses the key priorities, it is not linked strongly enough to the local authority's targets as defined in its new, more robust, performance framework and the measures of success lack precision. As a consequence, the centre is not always able to show the full impact of its work on all priority groups.

**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.

**Select details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	20187
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnet
<b>Inspection number</b>	428577
<b>Managed by</b>	Barnfield Primary School governing body on behalf of the local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,976
<b>Centre leader</b>	Alison Booth (Interim)
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8905 7605
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