

Harefield Children's Centre

Harefield Infant School, High Street, Harefield, Uxbridge, UB9 6BT

Inspection dates	30 April–2 May 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
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 large majority of families with children under five years of age make regular use of the centre's services.
- The centre has met most of its priorities well so that the vast majority of families who need support receive it. Staff work effectively with health and social care colleagues to give good individual support to those families most in need.
- Leaders, managers, the infant school governing body and the Harefield Children's Centre Delivery Support Group have good local information about the needs of families who live in the area. They use this knowledge well to identify where and how to plan services.
- Staff in the centre and the infant school work seamlessly together. As a consequence, children are well prepared for school.
- The systems used to check the centre's work are good; leaders have an accurate view of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. They ensure all services are effective in helping to improve children's learning and welfare.
- There is a good range and quality of services available to help adults who are looking for further education and employment.
- Parents and the local community contribute effectively to the way the centre is run.

It is not outstanding because:

- The local authority has not ensured that the centre gets the right amount and type of information it needs. This hinders the ability of the centre to plan and measure more robustly the effectiveness of its services.
- There is no National Health dentist provision in Harefield Village. Families find it difficult to access National Health dental services out of the area when they have to use a bus to get to them.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- So that centre leaders can further improve the planning of services and measure the impact of the centre more robustly, the local authority should ensure that:
 - there are more effective protocols in place for the sharing of information between appropriate agencies in the voluntary, private and public sectors
 - all of the appropriate information from social care, health and police services, housing and schools is given promptly to the centre staff
 - the borough-wide advisory board provides the centre with sufficient support and challenge.
- The centre should work with the local authority and partners in order to seek ways to provide easier access to National Health dentistry services.

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with leaders, managers, staff and representatives from partner organisations and the local authority. The inspectors also spoke with parents, centre volunteers and outreach workers.

The inspectors looked at a range of relevant documentation. The inspectors observed a range of the centre's work, including play, health and adult education sessions

Inspection team

Steffi Penny Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ann Janssen

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

In July 2013, Hillingdon reorganised its children's centre services. Harefield Children's Centre became the 'Lead Locality Centre' for Locality 1 North Hillingdon. This collaborative group comprises four children's centres. These are Coteford, Harefield, Hillside and South Ruislip Children's Centres. They collaborate through a 'Strategic Locality Advisory Group'. Following the restructuring, the centres' individual advisory boards were replaced with a locality-wide advisory board, managed by the centres. The three other centres in the locality are subject to separate inspections. Their reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Harefield Children's Centre reach area includes Harefield village, south into Ickenham and West Ruislip, stretching north-east into Eastcote and Northwood. Children in these areas attend any one of eight local infant schools including Harefield Infants which is co-located with the centre. The Harefield Infant School governing body is responsible for the local governance of the Harefield Children's Centre. The children's centre manager is an associate governor on the Harefield Infant and Harefield Junior Schools' full governing bodies. There is a voluntary 'Harefield Children's Centre Delivery Support Group' and 'Parent Voice Group' that monitor and assist the centre's work. The services offered include family support, family play and learning sessions, access to childcare and early education, antenatal and post-natal midwife support, children's health services and support to adults to find jobs and training. In 2011, Harefield Children's Centre became the first children's centre to be awarded a Family Partnership Award.

Harefield is a relatively isolated, tight-knit, stable community of extended families. There is no National Health dentist provision in Harefield Village. There are around 474 children under five years of age, 24% of whom are living in poverty. Harefield is defined as being in the 30% most economically deprived nationally. Most families are of White British heritage; the next biggest proportions, at 7%, are from South Indian and Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritages. Levels of unemployment are about 4% while about 12% of families with dependent children are in receipt of workless or low-income benefits. Children's skills and abilities on entry to early education are typically around the levels expected for their age.

The centre has identified the families that are under-represented and/or who require targeted support as being: young parents; lone parents; children and parents with a disability; Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families; and families of South Indian heritage.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The large majority of families with children under the age of five make regular use of the centre's services. Most families with a child subject to a child protection plan have sustained involvement with staff and services, which helps to improve their lives and keep them safe. Registrations have increased year-on-year, through word of mouth and targeted marketing. Strong links have been made with those families of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritages. The centre is aware that more needs to be done to encourage those of South Indian heritage to engage more frequently with its services. Initiatives to do this are already in motion, though it is too early to judge their impact.
- The information about the local area provided by the local authority does not sufficiently help the centre to pinpoint families who are in most need of support. Nevertheless, leaders and staff know the catchment area very well through their own local knowledge and strong informal networks. Consultations and discussions with families, referrals from partners, and staff observations are effectively used to identify family needs. Consequently, a large majority of families identified by the centre as priority families receive the help they need, including specialist services, in good time.
- There is a good balance of universal and targeted services that are demonstrating good secure improvements to families' personal development and well-being. Local partnership working through useful home visits and individual work with families are major strengths. The centre leaders are not complacent and willingly embrace trying out new initiatives, for example the Hillingdon Action Group for Addiction Management (HAGAM) pilot.
- The centre provides effective support, advice and training which continues to improve the quality of linked early years provision in the area. Access to good-quality early years provision for those in the centre's target groups and for two-year-old children eligible for free places is good. Most two- and three-year-old children take up their funded early years places, which supports improved learning and development.
- There has been a steady increase in the number of good-quality childminders in the area. Training and support provided by the centre has encouraged more childminders to provide services for disabled children and those with special educational needs. This care is greatly appreciated by the children's parents as a form of respite as well as enabling them to be in paid employment.
- Take-up of health services by families involved with the centre is good, although some families are reluctant to travel out to services in other parts of the borough. The centre provides good opportunities for families to appreciate and learn about good dental health. Nevertheless, centre staff and local families are concerned about the need to improve dental health in the locality and for families to have easier access to National Health dentistry services.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- Individual families identified through the referral or checking process engage well with staff and services. Close partnership working with other agencies helps these families live safer and healthier lives.
- Good-quality evaluative evidence provided by the centre clearly demonstrates that the large majority of children in the target groups make good progress from their individual starting points. Most of the children who use the crèche achieve their individual goals. On the odd occasion where they have not been met, further specialist support is provided.
- Infant school information shows that children who had accessed the centre's services were generally achieving good levels of development in speaking, listening, reading and writing. The attainment gaps for children of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritage have significantly narrowed over the last few years. Their attainment is just below that of their classmates in reading and writing but is higher for mathematics. In all cases, it is significantly better than seen nationally.
- The close partnership working within the centre helps the staff to build a folder of evidence for the early identification of children who may have special educational needs or a disability. The joint planning has improved the educational outcomes for these children. This is because school staff are aware of the children's needs before they join the Nursery, and make any necessary alterations that

are needed in advance.

- The centre and the school staff ensure that children settle quickly into school. Families are helped to understand the changes from pre-school to Nursery through dedicated 'transition sessions', before the start of each school term. By attending workshops, parents get to share their experiences with each other and learn about the next stages in their children's development. At the same time, their children are getting to know their future classmates, teachers and school routines.
- Care, guidance and support for young parents, lone parents and families with someone with a learning difficulty and/or a disability are personalised so that completion rates for parenting and health courses are high. In particular, parents' confidence in managing challenging behaviour exhibited by children with special educational needs increases because of the consistently good role modelling provided by staff.
- Parents' self-esteem is raised through a broad range of good-quality adult learning and welfare advice opportunities that help families improve their own circumstances. Parents completing the Just For You course are encouraged and supported to progress into employment or volunteering, either in the centre or in a local school.
- Activities and initiatives set up by the centre are sustained in the local community when families are no longer eligible to access them through the centre. For example, a group of women from a range of backgrounds and ethnicities completed an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) course at the centre. They continue to meet in each other's homes and at the local library on a weekly basis to continue to practise their English and to celebrate each other's cultures.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre's governance, leadership and management at the local level are good. For example, the school's governing body ensures that arrangements for setting targets for staff and professional supervision are in place to help staff deliver good-quality services and support.
- The infant school's governing body, the 'Harefield Children's Centre Delivery Support Group' and the 'Parent Voice Group' ensure that resources are used effectively to meet local priorities and the needs of the identified target groups. The borough-wide advisory board is relatively new. It has not done enough to improve the quality or flow of information into the centre to enable it to sufficiently support and challenge the work of the centre.
- The centre collaborates closely with its partners, such as health, to ensure that families get access to the services they need in a timely manner. However, the lack of strategic protocols within the local authority for sharing information does not help the centre's leaders to demonstrate the impact of initiatives, such as the recent 'No smoking Day'.
- The centre's local arrangements for safeguarding and welfare are robust. Staff are well trained and procedures prioritise the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults. As a result, children known by the centre to have child protection plans, those who are looked after, and those in need make good progress and are helped to stay safe. Early intervention is successful at limiting risks to children, and assessment processes ensure required services are put in place.
- The senior Early Years Practitioner from the centre and the Nursery Leader regularly meet to discuss planning and resources. They ensure that activities are mutually cost-effective and that the centre's Stay and Play sessions reflect the broad themes being taught in the school. This helps families to share their learning experiences and for parents to be better able to support their children in the centre and when at school.
- Good use is made of resources in the centre. The centre's rooms and, in particular, the very attractive outdoor area provide an excellent space for children to learn through play. Here, fruit and vegetables are grown all year round, with the support of the gardening club. Families have reported an increase in their understanding and motivation to grow their own food at home.
- Parents and other members of the local community are very supportive of the work of the centre. They are proud of its accomplishments and feel their views are listened to and that staff respond to their needs. In particular, they appreciate the good-quality free crèche for children when parents are attending sessions at the centre and the toy library with a good range of interesting toys and

books that parents can borrow.

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.

Centre Group details

Unique reference number	21376
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	444765
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	474
Centre leader	Lucy Stanton
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