

Flora Gardens Children's Centre

Dalling Road, London, W6 0UD

Inspection dates	2–3 July 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Most of the children aged under five in the area served by the centre are registered there and the large majority access services. Excellent links with Flora Gardens Primary School and strong partnerships with other schools, health professionals and key agencies have been instrumental in promoting the centre.
- An in-depth understanding of the local community has enabled staff to identify priority groups who need support most. The centre has been very successful in ensuring most of those groups are registered and that the large majority of teenage parents and children from minority ethnic groups access services.
- Children who use the centre make very good progress when they are there and when they move on to school. This is due to the sharing of staff expertise with the school and sessions such as 'Rising 3s' preparing children very well for the next stage in their education. Tracking of children's progress and highlighting gaps in achievement are extremely effective in reducing inequalities.
- The head of centre has been highly effective in ensuring that the many changes that have taken place since the centre opened, including altering the size of the area it serves, have not impacted adversely on the service provided for families. The use of the school's resources and expertise as well as strong partnerships have ensured that although children centre staff numbers are small, families have access to a wide range of high quality sessions and activities.
- The local authority and governing body are fully involved in supporting and challenging the centre. As a result, the centre has a good capacity to continue to improve.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Not enough families from the least advantaged areas are engaging effectively with the centre.
- Services to improve adults' education and key skills are not always pitched at the right level. Tracking of adults' longer-term progress and the impact of the centre's work is not systematic.
- Not enough key agencies and families who access services are involved in running the centre.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more families who are living in the least advantaged areas engage well with the centre so that the large majority do so by:
 - establishing why some families are reluctant to use the centre after they register
 - working with partner agencies to analyse the specific needs of those families and shaping services to meet their needs.
- Enable adults, especially those from priority groups, to reach their full potential by:
 - working with adult education partners to ensure that sessions to develop skills such as English language are appropriately challenging and take account of differing needs
 - tracking the longer-term impact of contact with the centre or its partners in a more thorough and consistent way.
- Widen the representation of key partners and families who use the centre on its management committee to ensure they have full involvement in shaping services and monitoring the work of the centre.

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 the head and deputy head of centre, the senior leadership team of Flora Gardens Primary School, the Chair of Governors and representatives from the local authority. They also spoke to several partners such as those from health services and adult education providers as well as parents and others who use the centre.

The inspectors visited sessions and activities taking place during the inspection such as the 'Rising 3s', a music group and adult English language class.

They looked at a range of relevant documentation including the centre's business plan, self-evaluation, a sample of case studies and safeguarding policies and procedures. The head of centre and deputy headteacher attended all meetings of the inspection team.

Inspection team

Joan Lindsay, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philida Schellekens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Flora Gardens Children's Centre is a stand-alone centre that was first designated in 2008. The centre is managed by the governing body of Flora Gardens Primary School on behalf of the local authority. The school is subject to a separate inspection. The report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The local authority runs its 16 children's centres on a 'hub and spoke' model. Flora Gardens Children's Centre is one of five hubs in the North locality of the borough covering the Ravenscourt Park and Hammersmith Broadway wards. The centre offers a wide range of services for families with young children, including health services as well as providing or facilitating access to services for adults via the other children's centres in the borough and various key partners.

In 2013, the local authority undertook a review of all the children's centres' areas. As a result, the number of children under five in the area served by this centre decreased from 2496 to 1444 from December 2013. The area includes 15 separate defined localities, three of which are considered to be in the top 10% least advantaged, compared to the rest of the country. The majority of children are from White British heritage families. Minority ethnic families account for a third of the local population. The percentage of children under five living in workless households is 34% which is well above national averages, but similar to that found locally. Almost two thirds of children in the area are living in poverty. Children's skills and abilities on entry to early education are below the levels expected for their age.

The centre has identified priority groups needing most support as: families living in the three least advantaged areas located around Ravenscourt Park and Hammersmith Broadway, families of ethnic backgrounds, and teenage parents.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The recent location of midwifery services in the centre has had a positive impact on the number of families expecting children accessing and benefiting from centre services. For example, since antenatal clinics started there in November 2013, 279 mothers have attended, and 151 new registrations have been received, via midwives.
- Although the centre no longer gets new birth data, strong links with health visitors and midwives who promote the centre means that most children under five in the area and from the identified priority groups are registered and the large majority access services.
- Close links with other key agencies ensure that families who need specific support such as teenage parents access services regularly that best meet their needs.
- Staff have been particularly successful in encouraging minority ethnic families to attend the centre regularly. For example, 66% of all children coming to 'Stay and Play' sessions over the last 12 months were from this priority group. This is almost twice the estimated number of minority ethnic families in the local community.
- The percentage of children living in the centre's least advantaged areas who visit regularly, is relatively low. However, centre leaders have already identified this as an area for improvement.
- Almost all children aged three and four take up the offer of free early education. However, the percentage of eligible two year olds who take up free early education is lower, at 79%. At present, the centre is not provided with the names of families who are eligible for, but not accessing, free early education. As a result, this restricts the support the centre is able to give this group.

The quality of practice and services**Good**

- The centre generally offers high quality, wide ranging and relevant services for families despite having relatively small premises and only four permanent members of staff. They are able to do so because of very well-established ties with the school, other children's centres and key services. For example, teenage parents can access the 'Young Parents' Group', at Masboro Children's Centre and there are close links with the midwife for families in most need.
- The impact of the centre in getting children ready to start school has been highly effective. Twice-weekly sessions over a 13 week period where children stay on their own, the 'Rising 3s' group, have a high staff ratio using school expertise. This has ensured that all children are very well prepared when they move on. Parents talk enthusiastically about how the centre 'nurtures' their children.
- Detailed tracking of children from priority groups when they are at the centre and when they move on to local schools shows that children make very good progress. Family learning sessions and a wide range of parenting classes support parents well in helping their children. Consequently, the Early Years Foundation Stage results for children in 2013 showed that 58% achieved a good level of development, which is above the national average. Most children at Flora Gardens Primary School, nearly all of whom had attended the children's centre, reached this goal. The gap between the lowest 20% and the rest was considerably narrower than that seen nationally.
- Health outcomes are only available for the borough overall so are difficult to use as measures of the centre's impact. However, at 76%, the proportion of mothers who breastfeed at six to eight weeks is well above the national average. The local immunisation rates are relatively low, however, compared to the average for England as a whole.
- The quality of care, guidance and support that individual families receive is good. Key partners are fully involved through area teams and the effective use of the Common Assessment Framework. Families speak very positively about the dedication of staff who will 'go that extra mile' for them.
- The centre provides several opportunities each week for families to 'drop in' for advice on housing, employment and benefits. However, it is not tracking the longer-term impact for those families in a consistent way.
- The needs of the minority ethnic priority group and adults who wish to extend their skills are addressed through links with local adult education providers. The range of courses is good and includes developing practical skills such as sewing. However, the individual needs of some adults are not assessed carefully enough, especially those in the English language class. This means that occasionally work is either too difficult or too easy for the participants. Also, the progression that those families make is not always tracked carefully enough.

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

- The centre is managed very effectively and efficiently because the head of centre and others in the school leadership team are fully involved in running it. This means that resources, especially staffing, are shared effectively. Despite the centre experiencing several staff changes and budget cuts, the services families receive are of high quality. As a result, inequalities are being reduced.
- Centre staff are all well trained and have a wide range of experience, as evidenced through a clear training programme and supervision notes. They are dedicated to bettering families' lives and helping the centre continue to improve.
- The governing body plays a strong role in managing the centre. It provides a good level of challenge as well as support using data and self-evaluation documents to measure the centre's performance. However, there are not enough key partners or local families, especially from priority groups, actively involved in running the centre.
- A recently established parents' forum ensures families' voices are heard, however; parents feel their views are acted on, such as changing the timing of sessions.
- The local authority monitors the centre's performance regularly. It works cooperatively and productively with the centre to reach an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for development and to set relevant, challenging targets.

- The centre is beginning to get more detailed information about children in most need. This includes those families subject to a child protection plan, children who are looked after or who are children in need. This enables the centre to ensure these children are safeguarded effectively. Safeguarding policies and procedures are very strong. Staff are well trained and act swiftly to address any concerns.
- Those who use the centre are very positive about it and feel it plays a very strong part in their lives and that of the community as a whole. A common view voiced by parents is 'I would recommend this place to everyone.'

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 details

Unique reference number	21187
Local authority	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	446286
Managed by	The governing body of Flora Gardens Primary School on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1444
Head of centre	Sonia Birch-Woodcock
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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