

Lubavitch Children's Centre

1 Northfield Road, Stamford Hill, Hackney, London, N16 5RL

Inspection dates	30–31 July 2014
Not previously inspected	

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
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 works well to meet the needs of the children and families comprising its predominantly Orthodox Jewish community, and take up of services is high.
- Some services, such as those related to family health, are open to everyone living locally. This makes a very positive contribution to breaking down cultural barriers and forging strong partnerships amongst different community groups.
- Health outcomes are good and improving. Breastfeeding rates are significantly higher than seen nationally. Strategies to increase immunisation rates and reduce obesity are proving successful.
- Good quality activities help children and parents to enjoy learning together. Staff take every opportunity to promote the children's purposeful talk in English, and sometimes in their mother tongue, such as Yiddish or Russian, to help their understanding.
- Parents routinely have their say about centre services and hold the centre in extremely high regard.
- Safeguarding is central to the work of the centre and practice is good. Multi-agency team meetings provide an effective forum for regular information sharing about the families most in need.
- Collaborative work with other centres in the cluster adds value to the way in which resources are used to meet priorities, such as by supporting children with additional needs.
- The head of centre is a highly effective and innovative leader who is the driving force behind the centre's good effectiveness and good capacity for sustaining improvement.

It is not outstanding because:

- Information provided by the local authority focuses on the cluster and is not sufficiently detailed about the area the centre serves. This inhibits the ability of leaders and advisory board members to check fully on the centre's performance.
- Links between the centre's priorities, staff training and targets for staff are not strong enough.
- Not all children's needs and next steps in learning are being flagged clearly enough in

otherwise good quality planning. This limits progress checks.

- The take up of free education places by eligible two-year-olds is below that seen nationally.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Ensure information on children and families from target groups is up to date and regularly checked, so that leaders and the advisory board are able to check the centre's effectiveness.
- Devise a system for setting staff performance targets that link together the centre's priorities with the training and development needs of staff. Use the effective supervision arrangements to review progress towards meeting personal targets and centre priorities.
- Ensure that sessions such as Stay and Play are planned so that staff are clear what target children will be learning and to check progress.
- Work with the local authority to increase the take up of free education by eligible two-year-olds so that most, if not all, benefit from a good quality start to their education.

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 of centre, the headteacher of the co-located school, centre staff, local authority and Hackney Learning Trust staff, partners, parents, governors and members of the advisory board. The inspectors visited a number of activities held in the centre, some jointly with centre staff. They also attended a Multi-Agency Team panel meeting at The Children's Centre at Tyssen.

Inspectors took into account parents' views as expressed directly to them during the inspection, as well as through their recorded evaluations about the centre's work. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Christine Field, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Heather Hartmann

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

The Lubavitch Children's Centre (LCC), opened in 2009 and works closely with The Children's centre at Tyssen to serve families who live in the Hackney Cluster B area. The centres are accountable to the Hackney Learning Trust, which is part of Hackney Borough Council. The LCC is next door to the Lubavitch Ruth Lunzer Girl's Primary School. Childcare is also provided on site. The school governing body has overall responsibility for the centre. It is supported by an advisory board which includes parents and representatives from health, local voluntary organisations, the local authority and The Children's Centre at Tyssen.. The Tyssen Children's centre is subject to its own inspection and the school and childcare services are inspected under separate arrangements. Reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Around 900 children under five years of age live in the centre's reach area. Across the cluster, about one in four families is Orthodox Jewish, a third is White British and the next largest group is from Muslim backgrounds. The centre serves predominantly the Orthodox Jewish community and some of the most socially and economically deprived areas in the country. There is a mix of owner-occupied and social housing; most families are identified as renting their accommodation, with some experiencing cramped living conditions.

The centre offers a range of services, including commissioned family support, health services, adult learning, parenting courses and a range of children's activity sessions. On entry to early years provision, children's skills and knowledge vary, but overall are below the level expected.

The centre has identified its target groups as young children and families who form part of the Orthodox Jewish community of Hackney, workless families, children with disabilities and families living with mental health problems.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families Good

- The centre has registered most children and families living in its area, including those from target groups. Seven in ten families have meaningful contact with the centre. Parents identify that LCC is at the heart of the community and 'goes the extra mile for everyone'.
- The centre enables all families, especially those with high numbers of children, to drop in to the centre at a time to suit them. By holding clinics and health services during the day, in the evening and at weekends, the number of families, including expectant mothers accessing services early on, is rising.
- The centre is pro-active in finding out which families are not using its services, and is tenacious in following up why this is. Staff use a range of means to do this, such as by sending postcards inviting families to the centre. They also use the frequently updated Jewish telephone directory to verify where families are living.
- Strong partnerships with local training providers result in a good number of adults, including unemployed parents, taking up work-linked training and other education opportunities. Some 734 parents have accessed adult learning, education and skills training in the last eighteen months.
- Virtually all eligible three- and four-year-olds take up their free education places. In contrast, however, only 69% of two-year-olds use their entitlement. The centre and local authority recognise that, as numbers increase, the shortfall of good or better quality places

is a potential barrier to supporting children's good early achievement.

- Information is provided about the area the cluster serves and about how well families are engaging. However, it does not include specific enough information about the LCC community. As a result, leaders and those responsible for governance do not have the fullest picture about the access to services by young children and families.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- There is a good range of services which are well located to enable children living locally to access them easily. The centre works successfully to target those in most need at the same time as providing health services that are open to everyone.
- LCC provides a friendly atmosphere which is non-judgemental and inclusive. This results in the large majority of families, from different cultural backgrounds, taking full advantage of what is on offer.
- A number of places at the co-located childcare are reserved for children with disabilities. Parents told inspectors how much their children benefit from the good quality care and nurturing environment provided. Partnership with organisations such as Step by Step enable children with additional needs to experience activities that include ice skating and horse riding which help build their confidence, skills and personal achievements.
- Commissioned family support services for Orthodox Jewish families ensure activities are sensitive to religious and cultural practices. All cases are kept under review by the Multi-Agency Team (MAT) which meets regularly, comprises a range of partners and is chaired by a social worker. Partners discuss cases and agree shared actions, with helpful challenge amongst the team, ensuring that families get back on track quickly and safely.
- Exceptionally high levels of care, guidance and support are provided by the centre to families in contact with them. Case file records show that the protection of children is paramount.
- Cooking classes and exercise sessions are run for fathers, mothers and children. Leading a healthy lifestyle is encouraged by inviting expert speakers to share their experience with parents. Childhood obesity is reducing and is currently similar to that seen nationally. At over 80%, sustained breastfeeding rates are very high. The centre is working effectively to increase immunisations rates, in recognition that, at 72%, although rising, they are not yet high enough.
- First aid courses are well attended and raise parents' awareness about how to ensure their children's well-being. Fathers told inspectors how much knowledge they gained, for example about what to do if a child is choking, and which they now use to ensure safe practices in their homes.
- Staff are very positive role models and, at sessions such as Messy Play and Sensory Play, take every opportunity to promote English language and literacy. A framework for ensuring children have quality experiences at Stay and Play sessions is being implemented.
- Children are encouraged to share their ideas during activities, read books which they take home regularly, and parents complete 'My Journeys' which help them to see what stage their child is at. Staff recognise that the next step is to ensure that they target children's specific learning and development needs are planned for and tracked carefully.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The head of centre has worked with drive and commitment to establish LCC as the hub of

the community and to win families' trust and respect. Staff are appropriately qualified and have many skills. They share in the head of centre's aspiration to make LCC the best it can be. As a result, children and families feel welcome and valued when they come to the centre.

- The local authority keeps the centre's performance under close review and sets clear targets and actions following the annual conversation meeting. The quality improvement partner, funded by Hackney Learning Trust, provides good support to staff for the centre's on-going development.
- The advisory board is developing its role following the federation of local schools and changes to governance. It has broad community and partner membership, but is not yet fully up to speed with challenging the centre's performance.
- Supervision arrangements work well, but there is no formal system for setting staff targets to improve their performance and help meet centre priorities. The centre training plan reflects the centre's clear focus on developing staff and 'home-growing talent'.
- Safeguarding is central to the work of the centre. Procedures and policy, including staff vetting, meet current requirements. Effective use of agreed early help procedures reduces the risk to hard to reach children, including those subject to a child protection plan, in need or in care. Integrated, multi-agency working and timely information sharing are positive features of safeguarding practice.
- Partners hold the centre in high regard for the way in which it reaches out to the community and encourages their good engagement in a range of services. Partners told inspectors that they are proud to work in cooperation with LCC. Evaluations show good impact from services in terms of improving family life and enhancing choices.
- Children's readiness for school is a strong feature of the centre's work, not least because for many children English is not their home language. Last year, weaker communication, language and literacy was the main reason why a much lower than average proportion of Reception-age children than seen nationally reached a good level of development (GLD). The unvalidated assessments for 2014, show that a large majority of children living in the centre's area have achieved GLD. This significant improvement reflects the centre's and early years partner's effective work to reduce inequalities.
- The effective partnership between the children's centres in the cluster enhances the services available. For example, parenting programmes are a joint collaboration that respond well to local needs. The partnership also adds to efficiencies in terms of resource allocation by agreeing a few priorities each year that arise from shared evaluations of the cluster's effectiveness as a whole.
- Parents are very happy with the services they receive. The parents' forum helps shape services, and representation on the advisory board ensures that parents have an input to strategic decision making.

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	21876
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	444719
Managed by	The governing body of Lubavitch Ruth Lunzer Girl's Primary School on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	900
Centre leader	Devorah Leah Sudak
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