

Norwood Green and Heston Cluster

Berkeley Primary School, Cranford Lane, Heston, Middlesex, TW5 9HQ

Inspection dates	24–25 September 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
		Not applicable	
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	3
The quality of practice and services		Requires improvement	3
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for children and families

This children's centre group requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Not enough priority families are regularly using early childhood services until their needs are met.
- A minority of eligible two-year-olds, and a majority of three- and four-year-olds do not take up their free education place. As a result, the centre is not effectively helping to reduce inequalities for these children.
- The proportion of Reception-aged children who are at a healthy weight is too low; health outcomes and impact in this area have been limited.
- Systems for tracking, checking and information on the progress of children, and adults accessing further education or employment are not sufficiently developed.
- Information on priority families is not always up to date and regularly checked. As a result, leaders and the advisory board are unable to see what impact services have on children and families.

This children's centre group has the following strengths:

- Leaders have successfully increased the number of families who register, access and engage with the centre. They have good knowledge of the local community.
- Improving partnership work helps to remove barriers and ensure equality of access for everyone.
- Families enjoy the warm and friendly atmosphere of the centres. They particularly appreciate the many opportunities to meet and learn about families from different cultures.
- Procedures for ensuring children and families are safe are much improved through the early help assessment initiative.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Increase the sustained engagement of priority groups so that at least the large majority benefit from appropriate services.
- Ensure that most two-, three- and four-year-old children, who are eligible for free early education, take up their place.
- Improve health outcomes by increasing the proportion of children who are at a healthy weight, so that it is closer to those levels seen nationally.
- Improve participation rates in adult learning programmes in order to help parents back into work. Also, develop systems for measuring the long-term impact for this aspect of the centres' work.
- Develop existing systems to track and monitor how well children are learning and to what extent families' lives are improved by the services the centres provide.
- Ensure information on priority groups is up to date and regularly used to inform service planning and to improve outcomes for families, particularly in relation to health.

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 interim area coordinator, strategic lead for the local authority, partners from health, education, and members of the local community. They also met parents, representatives from the advisory board and parents' forum. The interim area coordinator and the strategic lead for the local authority attended all meetings of the inspection team.

Visits to activities, such as stay and play, baby clinics and Firm Foundations in Speaking and Listening were undertaken. The inspectors looked at the centre's self-evaluation, action planning, a sample of case files, safeguarding practice, policy and procedures and a range of other relevant documentation.

Inspection team

David Scott, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Clive Blanchette	Additional Inspector
Shagufta Shahin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the group

The Norwood Green and Heston Cluster consists of two centres that were formed as a children's centre group in June 2012. This was as a result of the local authority's reorganisation of children centres in the borough, following public consultation.

Currently, the cluster is based on the site of Berkeley Primary School (URN 102522). The inspection report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Services and activities are delivered from a variety community venues. The cluster delivers a range of services including health, parenting classes, stay and play sessions, adult learning and family support.

The centre is managed by the local authority. There is also an advisory board and parents' forum, comprising of key partners and parents.

The centre serves a community that is socially and culturally diverse. The surrounding area is mixed, with a range of rented and privately-owned housing. Just over a half of all children live in an area ranked as being one of the poorest in the country. Information shows that one in four children lives in a household where no one is working, with a third living in social housing.

Just under a half of families are from minority ethnic groups, which is above average. The largest group is from Asian and Somalian backgrounds. Children's skills and abilities on entry to early education are below the levels expected for their age.

The centre has identified children living in the least advantaged areas, lone parents, and two-year-old children as its main priority groups.

The centre leader has been absent since September 2013. Currently, the centre leader is on a phased return to work. During this time the local authority has supported the work of the centre by employing a part-time interim area coordinator. Other members of staff have also been absent.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Registrations stand at 65%, and are rising. However, not enough children and families, especially those from priority groups, use the centre's services until their needs are met.
- The majority of lone parents, and children from families who live in the least advantaged areas, engage increasingly well with the centre.
- Just over half of eligible two-year-old children and a minority of three- and four-year-olds access their funded early education places. However, the centre's information does not show what proportion from priority groups, take up a funded place. This means that leaders do not know the impact of their work on priority families, eligible for this support.
- Attendance at sessions varies, but overall it is not high enough, particularly for priority groups. Numbers attending parenting courses are not high enough, this reduces the

potential impact on priority families, especially those with two-year-old children. The lack of timely and routine checks on information mean that the centre does not always know which of its families from priority groups have accessed services or continue to do so.

- Staff who provide support and advice in the community have a good knowledge of the local area. They have been particularly successful in helping families who are experiencing isolation and financial crisis. These, together with improving partnerships with outside agencies, to provide services for expectant parents, have resulted in increasing registrations and engagement. However, due to staff absence, the speed of improvements has been reduced.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- The centre is working effectively to take services into the community. However, leaders have yet to ensure that the large majority of children and families from priority groups use them regularly.
- The impact of practice and services in improving children's well-being and improving the lives of families requires improvement because tracking processes are not effective. As a result, the centre struggles to demonstrate the difference it makes.
- The centre delivers an appropriate range of services and there is a good balance between activities open to all and those aimed at specific groups.
- Parents benefit from effective activities, such as Firm Foundations in Speaking and Listening, which are specially designed to improve parenting skills. In addition, activities also promote strategies for improving children's behaviour and language skills.
- Referrals for employment advice, such as Jobcentre Plus, are at an early stage of development. The centre holds some information in the form of case studies about the short-term achievements of adults. However, systems to track the longer term impact of these adult learning and employment opportunities are not yet fully in place. As a result, this restricts the centre helping adults to progress more quickly in developing their skills or to gain access to employment. Currently, there are no volunteers in the cluster.
- Although improving, a much lower percentage of children achieved a good level of development than that found nationally over the last three years. This means that children are not sufficiently ready for school and learning. As a result, the centre is not effectively helping to reduce inequalities for these children.
- Health outcomes for the majority of families accessing services are improving. Breastfeeding rates have continued to rise and are significantly above the national average.
- Various sessions give families practical tips and advice on how to lead a healthy lifestyle. However, centre staff acknowledge that they have had only a limited impact in increasing the healthy weight of Reception-age children.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- Although priorities for improvement are set, not all targets are precise and measurable, and this restricts their usefulness in driving improvements.
- Also, information provided by the local authority is not always up to date, timely and checked in sufficient detail. As a result, the ability of those responsible for leadership and the advisory board are not able to effectively measure the impact of services on priority families.
- Information provided to the centre does not always relate directly to the community the

centre serves. Also, the sharing of health information with the centre has been an issue, with some information being out of date. High level discussions with health partners are currently ongoing to improve this situation.

- The arrangements for governance are still evolving following the formation of the cluster. Although advisory board members receive some performance information, they have a limited understanding of it. As a result, they have too little involvement in self-evaluation processes and are not in a position to challenge and hold centre leaders to account. Also, in the past some partners have not attended meetings regularly enough. Parents' views are collected and concerns are raised through the parents' forum.
- Safeguarding children and families has a high priority and policies and procedures meet current requirements. Any concerns are acted on immediately by centre staff. Children who are looked after, subject to child protection plans, and those deemed to be children in need, are well supported. Through the local authority's early help assessment initiative, procedures for ensuring children and families are safe have significantly improved. As a result, the centre has been instrumental in reducing the risk of harm to some of these children and their families.
- The centre runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, but staff absence has been an ongoing challenge. This has impeded the speed with which routine tasks, such as the inputting of family information on to tracking systems, have been completed.
- The centre is highly regarded by parents. Typical comments include, 'Previously I felt very isolated and the centre staff welcomed me and helped me make friends.' Parents also appreciate the high quality of resources used in sessions such as stay and play. Resources across the cluster are of good quality, in particular the outdoor areas where young children and their families enjoy physical activities.

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.

Group details

Unique reference number	80162
Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	451239
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1,960
Centre leader	Karen Wye
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0208 583 5812
Email address	hestoncc@hounslow.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- Norwood Green Children's Centre (URN 22213)
- Heston Children's Centre (URN 21465)

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