

Lavender, Chase Side and Radiomathon Children's Centre

c/o Lavender Children's Centre, Lavender School, Lavender Road, Enfield EN2 0SX

Inspection dates	18–19 December 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Requires improvement	3
The quality of practice and services		Inadequate	4
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for children and families

This is a centre that is inadequate.

- Family case files and records of meetings do not demonstrate that the centre always provides the timely help that vulnerable families need and, as a result, this may leave them at risk. This is particularly so for those families experiencing domestic violence, who are referred to the centre from the multi-agency safeguarding hub, known locally as the Single Point of Entry (SPOE).
- Leaders and managers do not know what good-quality family records look like and do not evaluate the quality of these. Too often, assessments of need are not completed and plans for support are not in place. Some families are supported for long periods without a review of the work.
- Safeguarding policies have not been updated to reflect important changes to national guidance.
- Systems and processes to track and monitor the progress that targeted children make when attending children's centre services are not effective. As a result, leaders cannot convincingly demonstrate the impact of their services on narrowing inequalities.
- Services are not sufficiently focused on ensuring children are ready for school. The achievement gap between boys and girls, and children who are eligible for free school meals and their peers, at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is too wide in some areas.
- Senior leaders and the centre manager do not take enough interest in the quality of services delivered by the children's centre or its partners. They do not, for example, undertake regular observations of activities and services to help drive improvements in the quality of practice. Some information they need to plan services, including that relating to health outcomes, is not provided.
- Less than half of the two-year-old children who are eligible for free early education take up their place. The centre has not identified the 20% of children living in workless households as a priority.

This centre has the following strengths:

- The 'rapid turnaround group', which was established following an independent review of the centre in September 2014, has made a positive impact on improving access to services for families.

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

- Improve access to services by:
 - undertaking a thorough needs analysis to identify other potential priority groups who live in the area and who may need support from the children's centre, including children living in workless households
 - working with the local authority to ensure most eligible two-year-olds take up their entitlement to free early education
 - ensuring that the large majority of families from priority groups, including those referred from SPOE, engage with services until their needs are met, including those living in the three top 30% most deprived areas identified by the centre.
- Improve the quality of practice and impact by:
 - ensuring all families who receive targeted family support have their needs assessed and that plans are put in place and reviewed to improve their well-being
 - reviewing the quality of case files and the impact of family support work for the most vulnerable families and implementing a process to demonstrate the difference that this work makes to families
 - implementing effective processes to track the progress that targeted children make as a result of attending services. Ensure that activities are more closely aligned to their individual needs and that, as a result, they make good progress and achieve well at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders are trained to manage and quality assure family case work effectively, including referrals from the SPOE (Single Point Of Entry)
 - ensuring that leaders have an accurate oversight of all aspects of provision through regular observations and effective monitoring of the quality of provision
 - using data, including those relating to achievement, breastfeeding and obesity rates, to develop services which are balanced and focused on improving identified outcomes for target children and families
 - updating the safeguarding policy and procedures to reflect current changes, including those found in statutory guidance
 - ensuring the advisory board has an independent chair so that it is able to provide effective challenge to leaders and managers.

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, outreach worker and early years workers. They also met with four representatives of the local authority and spoke to the social worker, who had been brought in to support improvements in family support work. Inspectors met with a range of partners, including health and adult learning, childminders, the two headteachers and an assistant headteacher of the co-located schools, governors and advisory board members. In addition, they met with or spoke on the telephone with several parents.

The inspectors visited a range of 'Stay and Play' activities at Lavender and Chase Side. On the days of the inspection, the Radiomathon site was not open. They also visited a 'Playing and Moving' group at Cheviots Children's Centre, specialist provision for disabled children from across Enfield.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Michael Blakey, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Anthony Mundy	Additional inspector
Peter Towner	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Lavender, Chase Side, Radiomathon and Cheviots children's centres were clustered in January 2012 following the restructuring of children's centre services in Enfield. Until late December 2014 they were one stand-alone centre. However, prior to the inspection, the local authority separated Cheviots Children's Centre, the specialist service for disabled children and their families across the borough. As a result, this was a stand-alone inspection of Lavender, Chase Side and Radiomathon Children's Centre. None of these three centres has been previously inspected.

The centre is managed by Lavender and Chase Side Primary schools on behalf of the local authority. Lavender Children's Centre is on the site of Lavender Primary School (URN: 102015), which was inspected in 2012. Primrose Nursery School (URN: EY481127) opened on the site of Lavender Primary in November 2014. Chase Side is on the site of Chase Side Primary School (URN: 101984). The inspection reports of the schools are available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

The children's centre covers a large area in the north-west quarter of the London Borough of Enfield. It covers the following wards: Chase, Highlands, Winchmore Hill, Grange, Cockfosters and Enfield Town. There are 3,378 under-fives living in the area reach area based on 2013 mid-year data. This area includes one district in the 10% most deprived in England, one in the 20% most deprived, and one in the 30% most deprived.

Families living in the area are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest group in the area is English or other White British, which together at 37% is higher than the borough average. Turkish children represent about 5% of the children in local schools.

The percentage of Foundation Stage pupils eligible for free school meals in the cluster area is 12%, which is much lower than the local authority average of 17%. However, approximately 20% of children are thought to live in workless households. Children's levels of skills, knowledge and understanding are broadly in line with those expected for their age when they start school.

The centre has identified the following priority groups: children living in the three top 30% most deprived areas (Four Hills Estate, Meyer Green Estate and Manor Farm Estate); Turkish families; and families who are referred through the Enfield Single Point of Entry (a local version of a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Over the past few months the local authority has worked with the centre to improve the systems and processes for registering families, including those expecting children, and monitoring whether they access services. As a result, leaders have a more accurate view about this aspect of their work and rightly established a 'rapid turnaround group' in mid-September to increase the number of families accessing services from an extremely low base.
- These improved information systems, and a concerted effort by the advisory board, staff and partners, now show that the large majority of children living in the reach area are known to the centre, and the majority have accessed a service at least once in the last 12 months. In the three most deprived areas, the majority of children now access services at least three times. However, systems are not yet sophisticated enough to track the attendance of all priority groups.
- The wide range of activities open to all, including 'Stay and Play', are delivered by the small team of early years workers across the wider reach area and help to ensure that families have access near to where they live. These activities are well liked and well attended by families.
- Turkish families are identified by the centre as possibly requiring additional support. Although their attendance is not robustly tracked, registers and observations of sessions by inspectors suggest that they are well engaged, particularly at the English for Speakers of Other Language courses for adults.
- The centre prioritises those families who are referred from the local Single Point Of Access. However, the number of referrals is relatively low and leaders do not track the families' access to services sufficiently well to demonstrate the impact of the centre's work.
- Less than half of the two-year-olds eligible for free early education are accessing their entitlement in the reach area. However, the co-located Lavender Primary school has recently opened two-year-old provision to help to improve access and the centre actively supports families to apply for funding. Approximately 30 families were invited to a 'Terrific for Twos' drop-in session to promote the free early education offer during the inspection, but unfortunately no families attended. At about 86%, most three- and four-year-olds access their entitlement.
- Approximately 20% of families living in the reach area are believed to be living in workless households. However, although the centre is targeting the three top 30% most deprived areas, many of these families are living elsewhere and the centre does not track their engagement.

The quality of practice and services

Inadequate

- The range of services and activities on offer for priority families is not well balanced with those services which are open to all. As a result, staff spend much of their time delivering activities like 'Stay and Play' and groups for childminders and twins, for example. Although these activities are often of good quality, they are not sufficiently well targeted at the needs of the priority groups identified by the centre.
- Records show that the outreach worker and manager are working with approximately 21 families. Some of these families have been accessing services for over two years without a plan of support and some very vulnerable families are not engaged, including those who have been referred for specialist support because they have experienced domestic abuse. As a result, the impact of this family support work overall is too limited.
- Although 'family matters' meetings take place regularly, the recording of actions to ensure vulnerable families receive the timely support they need does not always demonstrate that this work is completed in a timely manner or makes a significant contribution to their well-being. Likewise, the impact of family support work is not clear in family files because needs are not fully assessed and clear outcomes for the work are not usually set. There are no systems in place to show the difference this work makes.
- Leaders and managers do not effectively monitor or quality assure their services, or those delivered by their partners. As a result, they do not have an accurate view of quality over time. This failure to monitor the centre's work has allowed serious weaknesses in the quality of family case recording to

go unchecked.

- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception is broadly in line with national levels. However, this overall picture masks inequalities in achievement, particularly for boys and children eligible for free school meals in the Lavender area. Activities and services are not sufficiently focused on improving this aspect because data are not used fully to inform the centre's timetable, and because the progress of target children is not tracked to inform planning at an individual level.
- Breastfeeding rates at six to eight weeks are not known to the centre because data are provided at a whole Enfield level rather than by the area covered by the centre. The data on the proportion of children who are a healthy weight have not been made available since 2012. As a result, the centre does not know whether there are any health inequalities in the large area which it serves.
- A good range of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses are well attended and make a good contribution to development. However, the centre is not working well with adult learning providers to ensure parents have good access to literacy or numeracy courses, for example.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Inadequate

- Processes to self-evaluate are not effective as leaders and managers at all levels do not effectively check their provision or track the impact of their work sufficiently well. As a result, self-evaluation is overly generous and lacks precise information to support the judgements made. This has not been helpful in ensuring that services are rightly focused on narrowing inequalities for priority families.
- The oversight of safeguarding policies and related procedures is weak and has not been updated in a timely manner to reflect changes in statutory guidance. However, staff and volunteers are safely recruited and receive adequate safeguarding training to meet statutory requirements.
- The centre's leadership, at the time of the last performance review, rightly identified that they needed training to manage referrals from the Single Point Of Entry so that these families were effectively supported. This important aspect of the centre's work was not previously given the priority it needed. However, in December 2014, the local authority rightly appointed a social worker to support centres across Enfield. It is too early to see the impact of this work.
- Partnership working with children's social care is not well embedded. Until December 2014, the centre did not know all of the children subject to child protection plans or those in need in the area. Although this information is now provided, as a result of the local authority's work, leaders have not yet had the chance to use this information to ensure they are aware of these vulnerable families.
- Additional resources have recently been provided by the local authority to help the centre to address previously very poor access to services. However, day-to-day staffing resources are limited and have not been used sufficiently well to identify and narrow inequalities over time. A significant amount of resource is used to deliver activities which are open to all rather than balancing these with effective targeted support for priority families.
- Senior managers within the local authority correctly identified that this centre required 'urgent support' to address serious underperformance in September 2014. Those responsible for day-to-day governance, including governors, advisory board members and the headteachers of the co-located schools, have responded well to this challenge and set about making improvements in access to services. However, too little focus has been placed on thinking about what to deliver and why, and improving the quality and impact of practice.
- The advisory board does not have an independent chairperson and is not therefore able to provide effective challenge to leaders and managers.
- Changes in the local authority team responsible for children's centres are bringing about improvements. They have a realistic view about the centre and have made good progress in improving the quality and availability of information that leaders require to do their job. They demonstrate good capacity to support the centre to improve.

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.

Children's centre

Unique reference number	21753
Local authority	London Borough of Enfield
Inspection number	451818
Managed by	Lavender and Chase Side Primary Schools on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	3,378
Centre leader	Jane Chappell
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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