

EPP1 Hazelwood Children's Centre

c/o Hillhouse Primary School, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 3EL

Inspection dates	25–26 February 2015
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 families are registered and a large majority regularly attend the centre's good quality activities.
- Parents who take up services have excellent knowledge and understanding of how to support their children's learning and development. This is due to the high quality care and guidance centre staff provide in groups and through one-to-one support in the home.
- Staff keep detailed and comprehensive information about all contact, support and the actions taken to help families most in need. They evaluate constantly the difference that their actions are making to families' lives and revise and adjust support to improve this when necessary.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Staff pick up safeguarding issues quickly and take immediate action to ensure children's safety and well-being.
- Children's progress shown in learning journeys and the assessments made at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage inform the good quality planning of centre activities.
- Parents are regularly asked what they like about the centre and are able to suggest additional activities and events. The centre always responds by making changes or explaining why it has not.
- Support for parents with mental health issues is excellent. Drop-in sessions enable individuals to talk about their feelings. Effective group sessions provide strategies for overcoming problems.
- Well-planned supervision and training result in staff's high quality practice. Volunteers are given excellent support to enable them to build work-place skills and add value to the centre's work.
- The local authority, lead agency and centre services manager have high expectations for the centre's performance. Successful actions have resulted in continuous improvement to the centre's work, including good quality services and positive outcomes for all families who come to the centre.

It is not outstanding because:

- The centre does not know the exact number of workless families including lone parents who are currently living in the area and accessing services. It is therefore not able to plan and provide opportunities for all of these families to develop the skills and expertise they need to prepare them for or find work.
- The centre does not receive precise information about local immunisation rates or about the number of mothers who breastfeed their babies. This limits leaders' ability to drive improvement.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Accurately identify the number of workless families, including lone parents who live in the reach area and use the centre's services. Give more focus to helping workless and lone parent families develop the skills they need, including English and mathematics, to help them prepare for and return to work when ready.
- Work with the local authority to improve information sharing protocols with partners so that the centre is able to check that services, support and guidance are fully relevant to all children and families by working with:
 - Jobcentre Plus to identify and provide up to date information about the number of workless and lone parent families living in the area
 - health partners to ensure that breastfeeding and immunisation data is made available at centre level.

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 staff, parents, volunteers, the regional director and volunteer coordinator from Spurgeons, partners from social care, health, school, pre-schools and adult education providers, representatives from the local authority, and members of the centre community group. They held telephone conversations with two local health visitors, the local midwife, representatives from Safer Places and Jobcentre Plus and the chair of the district advisory board.

The inspectors visited the well-baby clinic, 'Stay and Play', 'Brilliant Books', 'Parenting Puzzle' and the crèche.

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

Inspection team

Lead inspector, Georgina Beasley	Additional inspector
Maggie Fobister	Additional inspector
Ann Taylor	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

Hazelwood Children's Centre is one of 36 children's centres in Essex. It offers a range of services that include: adult learning, health and family support from three delivery sites – Hazelwood Children's Centre and Abbeywood and Buckhurst Hill libraries. The centre uses an additional eight community venues across the area to deliver other outreach services. The onsite nursery and primary schools are inspected under separate arrangements. Their inspection reports can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

There are currently 2,595 children under the age of five years living in the area that the centre serves. An estimated 78% of families are from White British backgrounds with the remainder from a number of different minority ethnic groups. A very small number of children speak English as an additional language.

Most of the housing in Hazelwood's area is social housing. Approximately 34% of children are living in poverty and historical information indicates about 23.5% live in workless households in Hazelwood, 14.4% in Abbeywood and 7.8% in Buckhurst Hill. Many local children start school with skills, knowledge and abilities below typical levels for their age.

The centre is managed by Spurgeons on behalf of the local authority. The centre services manager takes responsibility for the day-to-day management of the centre. A district advisory board made up of representatives from staff, parents, the local authority, education, employment, health and social care professionals provides governance. The district advisory board is supported in its work by a local centre community group made up of staff, parents, health, social care, education and community partners.

The centre has identified its target groups as: families experiencing mental health difficulties, children with additional needs including speech and language delay, families experiencing domestic violence, workless households, lone parents who are out of work and children subject to a child protection or children in need plan.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families Good

- The number families registering and using centre services has increased each year since the centre opened in 2008. Most children and families who live in the area are registered. The large majority regularly attend the centre's groups and activities. Managers are quick to make changes to the services provided if attendance of target children and families falls off or if additional needs emerge.
- A very large majority of families identified as needing specific support regularly use centre services. This includes families experiencing mental health difficulties, children with a child protection or child in need plan, children with additional needs including speech and language difficulties and adults experiencing domestic violence. Staff attend the ante-natal and well-baby clinics to meet all new and expectant mothers and let them know what services the centre offers.
- The centre works closely with pre-schools, schools, health and social care partners to identify and meet the needs of families who are experiencing major difficulties. Robust assessments, speedy actions and positive interventions assist children's safety and well-being. Most families continue to attend centre activities independently once their needs have been met by specific one-to-one support.
- The centre meets regularly with health and social care partners and the police to discuss families experiencing domestic violence. Nearly all families who are known subsequently attend specific

groups such as 'Safer Places' and the 'Freedom' programs. As a result, they develop successful strategies to take control that significantly improve their own and their children's lives.

- The large majority of two year olds and most three year olds have taken up a free pre-school place this year. The centre works closely with early years' partners to check that two year olds are making good progress. Those who have attended centre activities are confident learners when they start pre-school.
- The centre does not receive up to date information from the local authority or Jobcentre Plus about the numbers of workless families, including lone parents living in the area. As a result, it does not know whether all of these parents are registered or how many of them are making the most of the adult training services offered by the centre.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The centre offers a wide range of good quality and relevant services for most target groups, including outreach support for parents and children most in need. As a result, those who use the centre's services improve their well-being. Excellent support for adults experiencing mental health difficulties at individual counselling and group therapy sessions provides effective strategies to understand and manage their feelings
- Due to the comprehensive staff guidance, the knowledge and understanding that parents are gaining helps their children learn through play extremely well. Staff fully involve parents in how their child is progressing, for example during 'Brilliant Books' sessions and as a result, parents are confident in talking about what their child can do, and what they need to move onto next. Parents help to assess how well their child is doing and add meaningful comments to learning journals which are treasured documents.
- The planning of sessions, evaluations of how well they have gone and what could be improved are all of high quality. Centre staff track children's progress, including those with additional needs and speech and language delays, during groups and use the information to plan what the children need to learn next. Because of the centre's effective work to reduce inequalities and track progress over time the gaps in the learning between different groups of children are closing.
- The centre's support for children and families most in need is excellent. Case file record keeping is extremely detailed and provides a clear trail of the high quality of care, guidance and support provided. Nearly all families receiving one-to-one support continue to engage with the centre's universal services after their specific needs are met.
- The centre has an exemplary volunteering programme that helps some parents to develop their employability skills. Volunteers' skills and aspirations are matched very well to placements and the majority of volunteers go on to further training and employment.
- Effective parenting courses, some of which are delivered on an individual basis, help parents develop self-confidence and parenting skills. Paediatric first aid, healthy eating and bespoke parenting courses are well attended and success rates are high. This includes workless families known to the centre.
- The centre runs a range of groups to promote healthy eating including breastfeeding support groups, introducing solids, and cooking healthy meals. Levels of obesity among young children are reducing and currently in line with the national average.

- The centre receives information from health partners and the local authority about immunisation and breast feeding rates across West Essex. It does not receive the information at centre level and so does not know how successful its developmental work is in increasing the rates locally or whether further improvement strategies are required.
- The centre does not know precisely how many workless families including lone parents are living in the area. As a result, it cannot be sure whether the skills and expertise that all of these families need to help them find or return to work are being identified and addressed by appropriate services.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- The centre services manager gives clear and decisive direction to the work of staff and engages parents' and partners' involvement in the centre's continuous improvement. Decisions about which services to run and where are the result of the accurate analysis of a range of information about children's progress and the difference services make to improving target families' lives. All resources, including staffing and outreach venues, are used efficiently and effectively to meet priority needs.
- Exemplary procedures for supervising staff performance and the planning of training successfully extend and build the individual skills and expertise necessary to provide high quality services and activities for parents who come to the centre. Every member of staff plays an important role in supporting the centre's good and improving effectiveness.
- Governance is good. The district advisory board is well organised. Members discuss all aspects of the centre's work at regularly held meetings and keep the centre's performance under review. The board is well supported by the local community group whose members bring a great deal of local knowledge about the area to their meetings. Members of both the board and group are fully involved in self-review and development planning processes and so are clear about what is going well and what needs to be improved.
- Parents feel fully involved in not only informing decisions about the services and activities that the centre offers but also in evaluating their effectiveness. The involvement of parents on the local community group ensures that parents' views are shared at a governance level.
- The centre services manager and all family support workers have excellent oversight of all families receiving outreach support. Assessments made using the Common Assessment Framework procedures ensure all those with a special educational need or a disability have their needs met quickly.
- Robust safeguarding policies and procedures underpin all of the centre's work. The centre is quick to act if any concerns about children's safety are raised including those subject to a child protection or child in need plan. Spurgeons as the lead agency monitors all risks closely and ensure all partners such as health and social care work together effectively to help protect children and families. The centre runs e-safety workshops for parents and partners lead training during group activities to provide centre users with helpful information about how to keep their families safe. Checks on the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with young children are securely in place.
- The local authority meets with the lead agency and centre services manager every three months to check the centre's progress towards reaching challenging performance targets. It has recently agreed protocols with some of its partners to share information about families living in the area. This is helping the centre to target its support even more effectively. It has not yet agreed protocols

with Jobcentre Plus for sharing up-to-date information about workless families or with health partners to share centre-level information about breastfeeding and immunisation rates. This impedes leader's otherwise effective work to move the centre forward at a good pace.

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 details

Unique reference number	21098
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	454031
Managed by	Spurgeons on behalf of the local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2,595
Centre manager	Philippa Hyams
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01992 809059
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