

# Masbro Children's Centre

87 Masbro Road, London, W14 0LR

<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 February 2015
<b>Previous inspection date</b>	Not previously inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b> Previous inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
		Not previously inspected	
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 is a centre that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Although the large majority of families in the area are registered with the centre, too few families from some priority groups attend the centre on a regular basis.
- Systems to track children's learning and development are insufficiently robust.
- Leaders have not fully established a rigorous system to assess the impact of services on improving outcomes for children and families from priority groups.
- The way in which the support for families is recorded in case files varies too much. The management oversight of case files is currently not rigorous enough.
- Management links with the Shepherd's Bush Families Project and Children's Centre are under-developed and this limits leaders' ability to gain a full picture of priority families' access to services.
- The local authority has only recently begun to review and embed service level agreements with partners and neighbouring local authorities to enable managers to have a clear picture about where families are accessing services and with what impact.

### This centre has the following strengths:

- There is a very strong commitment shown by staff to serving the needs of all families who visit the centre. The centre offers an 'open door' to families in order to meet their needs.
- There is good involvement of parents and volunteers in supporting centre activities.
- Highly effective services help adults who wish to improve their employability or education to do so.
- Strong, long-standing partnerships with a broad range of organisations help the centre meet community needs increasingly well.
- Highly supportive yet challenging governance is provided by the advisory board.

### What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Use the recently acquired information about access rates at other local children's centres, including in adjoining local authority areas, to ensure that future targets and plans are based on an accurate picture of the needs of local families.
- Increase the engagement of all families but especially from key target groups, including children from lone parent families, young parent families and families living in the most deprived areas so that, as a minimum, the large majority regularly access appropriate services.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the support provided by the centre for children and families from priority groups when they attend centre activities.
- Further embed systems to observe, assess and track children's progress and further develop work in partnership with schools to ensure the centre is able to judge the impact of the work.
- Establish robust case file management, and consistently show the findings when a case is reviewed by a supervisor, to help move practice forward.
- Ensure that service level agreements are developed further and implemented to more effectively manage and monitor the work of the Shepherds Bush Families Project and Children's 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 three additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager and staff; parents and volunteers; partners in health, education, social care and community services; advisory board members; and representatives from the local authority.

The inspectors visited activities held at Masbro Children's Centre, including 'Stay and Play' and adult sewing classes, and all three outreach 'spoke' centres. They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's self-evaluation, action planning, a sample of case files, safeguarding practice, policy and procedures.

### Inspection team

Alan Comerford-Dunbar, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Sarah McDermott	Additional inspector
Jameel Hassan	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

This is a stand-alone centre which opened in 2008 and is managed by the Urban Partnership Group (UPG) on behalf of the local authority (Hammersmith and Fulham). Day-to-day management is the responsibility of the centre manager, who reports directly to the chief executive of UPG. Governance is provided by an advisory board whose members comprise a range of partners, including those from social services, health, education and parents.

Masbro Children's Centre is a 'hub' centre to three other 'spoke' centres: Masbro Brook Green Family Centre, Avonmore Neighbourhood Library Family Centre, and Shepherds Bush Families Project and Children's Centre. The Shepherd's Bush Families Project and Children's Centre is run by its own staff and managers but with an operating protocol in place with Masbro hub for the monitoring of Local Authority contracted Children's Centre services delivered onsite.

The area served by the centre encompasses the central-western area of Hammersmith and Fulham's North Locality area. It serves 18 defined areas, of which 12 are amongst the 30% most deprived seen nationally. Some 20% of children live in workless households. The local community is culturally and ethnically very diverse. Some 40 different languages are spoken – predominantly English, but also Arabic, Polish, French, Spanish, Russian and Somali. Most children in the area enter early years provision with skills in line with those typical for their age.

The centre has identified the following priority groups: teenage and young parents, lone parent families, and children and families living in the most deprived communities.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Although recently improved, including by the acquisition of live birth data, information on children and families from priority groups is not detailed enough to enable leaders to form an accurate picture about access to services. Leaders are unclear about how many are accessing services at neighbouring children's centres in other adjacent authorities. This makes it difficult for leaders to judge the impact of the strategies being implemented to engage with all priority groups.
- Despite most families being registered with the centre, strategies for encouraging families to attend regularly are not fully effective. Too few families, especially children from lone parent families, young parent families and families living in the most deprived areas, attend services on a regular basis.
- The main 'hub' is a large community centre which effectively caters for the needs of people of all ages. Outreach 'spokes' of the main 'hub' are strategically located in the community to help leaders and staff to better engage with priority groups. Within centres, good use is made of wall space and displays to reinforce key messages, celebrate achievement and ensure all visitors are aware of the centre's priority to support families in greatest need.
- The majority of eligible two-year-olds and the large majority of three- and four-year-olds take up their free entitlement to early education, and there are good plans in place to further increase capacity locally. Access to early childhood services is good and highly effective partnership working with health colleagues ensures that antenatal and postnatal classes held locally are well attended and highly valued by parents-to-be and those with new babies.
- Parents who attend the centre receive good advice about housing, workless benefits, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), literacy, numeracy and other adult learning opportunities. Staff are highly skilled and supportive when helping and advising families who come from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages, and this helps break down any barriers to the take-up of

services. Adults appreciate the accessibility of the centre; as one parent said, 'It's so handy to get to and there is always something of worth going on.'

### **The quality of practice and services**

Requires improvement

- The quality and impact of practice and services require improvement because not enough families from the area served by the centre make use of its services. Often, sessions run with almost a third of families attending coming from outside the Masbro reach area. The quality of activities is overwhelmingly good but the low take-up by some priority groups limits the impact they have on fully meeting needs and reducing inequalities.
- The children's centre hub is spacious and well resourced and 'Stay and Play' sessions are well attended because staff are cheery and welcoming. Sessions are planned to ensure activities and resources cover all the required learning areas, but staff in the many open sessions do not always concentrate their support on the particular needs of targeted children and families. When sessions are especially set up for targeted families, support and guidance are of a high quality.
- Within sessions, the centre is beginning to track the development of targeted children who regularly attend. However, the centre is not ensuring that they know how their good work is helping children make a positive start to their learning as they move on to nurseries and schools. Broadly, the proportion of children who attend early years settings in the reach area and attain good levels of development mirrors national figures. Additionally, the achievement gap is reducing more quickly than seen nationally.
- Staff work well with social care and health partners to ensure that all the support provided has a positive impact on family life. As a result, families are well supported by staff at the centre, who consistently provide good support, especially in times of crisis. Highly effective support is provided by staff at the Shepherds Bush Families Project and Children's Centre to help homeless families living in the area.
- Centre staff and colleagues from health are delivering a range of good-quality services that are having a positive impact on reducing obesity rates. Noticeboards are full of helpful information and tips on how to improve the health of families. Breastfeeding rates are good and above national figures.
- The centre provides very good support and guidance for adults who wish to improve their employment or education chances. Links between the centre, adult education providers, benefits advisors and Jobcentre Plus are strong. Every day of the week the centre runs literacy and numeracy classes and other courses such as sewing, which ensures that adults have very good opportunities to improve themselves.
- Parents are fully involved in centre activities. A well-structured volunteer training programme ensures that parents support centre staff well when they become volunteers. Parents clearly have a voice within the centre and are proud of the contribution they make to centre activities.

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

Requires improvement

- The centre and local authority have been slow to identify that more needs to be done to increase the sustained engagement of children and families from some priority groups. Furthermore, information used by leaders has only just started to consider how many families are accessing other local centres in adjacent authorities. This situation has been improved recently with the acquisition of live birth data, which means that managers can look in more details at local needs, access rates, service provision and its impact, but more work remains.
- The Shepherds Bush Families Project and Children's Centre is situated close to some of the most deprived areas. However, management arrangements lack clarity and not enough is being done to monitor how well it is meeting local needs. As a result, leaders have too little knowledge of, and influence over, the work of this 'spoke' centre. In contrast, management oversight of the other two 'spoke' sites, as well as the main 'hub' centre, is effective.

- Families in most need receive good support from centre staff and partner organisations. However, files used to record the support given to families lack consistency of approach, and this makes it difficult to track the impact of actions. While supervision of family support is regular and appropriate, it is not well documented within case files.
- Governance of the centre by the advisory board and the Urban Partnership Group is strong. Parents are fully involved and active in decision-making, as are a broad range of partners, in both supporting and challenging the work of the centre. Parents report that they feel safe and very welcome at all sites used by the centre.
- The centre manager provides good support for well-qualified staff, who come from a range of relevant professional backgrounds. All staff receive training which helps them meet centre-specific targets and enables them to perform their duties with competence and confidence. Centre staff work closely with a wide range of partners to provide effective and timely help for children and families.
- Policies, procedures and the practice of staff ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are robust and effective. All sites used by the centre are safe and secure places which children and families enjoy visiting. Centre staff work well with social care colleagues to ensure that children who are looked after, in need or subject to child protection plans, and those families being supported through early help assessments, are well protected.
- The community centre building, which acts as the main 'hub' of the children's centre, is spacious and well resourced. It is very much at the heart of the local community and appreciated by a wide range of families from different heritage backgrounds. The 'spoke' sites are carefully selected as they are close to priority areas and help encourage the participation of families. Resource use is mainly effective despite the areas identified in this report as requiring improvement because staff make the most of available space, and most activities are full to capacity.

**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**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	21956
<b>Local authority</b>	Hammersmith and Fulham
<b>Inspection number</b>	454043
<b>Managed by</b>	The Urban Partnership Group on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,664
<b>Centre leader</b>	Jude Wood
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7605 0800
<b>Email address</b>	jude@upg.org.uk

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