

# Lower Edmonton Children's Centre

Eldon Road, Edmonton, Enfield, N9 8LG

<b>Inspection date</b>	7–8 May 2015	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Access to services by young children and families	Good	<b>2</b>
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 very large majority of children and their families are registered for services and have regular contact with the centre and early childhood services.
- Most children and families from priority groups engage well with centre and partner services.
- Particularly effective work with the co-located infant school and other early education settings helps to develop children's readiness for school and to reduce inequalities.
- Children, especially those from Somali backgrounds, who access children's centre services make good progress and achieve well by the time they are five years old.
- Care, guidance and support are good. One-to-one support for families who are most in need has a beneficial impact in helping them to overcome the very complex problems they face.
- Successful volunteering opportunities enable parents, including those from priority groups, to enhance their confidence and employability skills.
- Good leadership and management have made the centre the hub of its community, and parents are rightly very satisfied with the quality of services they receive. All those who spoke to inspectors identified the warm, friendly and inclusive approach of staff as being key reasons for the centre's good and improving effectiveness in meeting families' needs.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Only half the children and families living in Barrowfield, an assessed priority area, visit the centre regularly.
- Although the quality of the opportunities provided for parents to build their personal skills, English language skills and qualifications is good, there are insufficient of these offered to meet the needs of the high number of parents who speak English as an additional language or are workless.
- The absence of a specific strategy to enhance positive parenting skills is a shortcoming in otherwise good provision to support families in ensuring their children's health and well-being.

- The terms of reference of the advisory board have not been revised for some time. Minutes do not record members' checks or challenges concerning the centre's performance. Currently, too few parents are represented on the board.

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

- Increase the access of children and families from Barrowfield so that at least the large majority use the centre's services regularly.
- Develop the on-going work with colleges and other partners such as Jobcentre Plus to ensure that parents, particularly those assessed as requiring support to learn the English language, and those with further education or employability needs, have timely opportunities to extend their qualifications and skills.
- With the local authority, move quickly to establish and implement a comprehensive parenting strategy. Widen parents' access to relevant evidence-based programmes that will enhance their positive parenting skills and their understanding about how to keep their children safe and healthy.
- Review the terms of reference of the advisory board to ensure they are fit for purpose, sharpen minutes to reflect the board's challenge, and support and extend its membership so that more parents can play a full role in strategic decision-making.

### 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 executive headteacher of Eldon Junior School, the centre manager, children, centre staff, Eldon Infant School senior leaders, local authority officers, partners, volunteers, adult learning tutors, parents and members of the governing body and advisory board.

The inspectors observed activities held in the centre including Play and Stay, Movers and Shakers and the breastfeeding support group. Inspectors also visited the Terrific Two group in the co-located infant school, and St Demetrious playgroup to track two-year-olds eligible for free early education. A sample of case files were sampled with outreach workers. The centre manager and executive headteacher attended all team meetings.

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 documentation, data and other information.

### Inspection team

Christine Field, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Debbie Farley	Additional Inspector
Graham Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Lower Edmonton Children's Centre opened in 2007; it is currently one of 12 children's centres in Enfield. It is managed by the governing body of Eldon Junior School on behalf of the local authority. An advisory board is in place to assist governance. The children's centre forms part of The Eldon Federation, which consists of Lower Edmonton Children's Centre, Eldon Infant School and Eldon Junior School. The infant and junior schools are inspected under separate arrangements and their reports can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

The executive headteacher of the federation line-manages the work of the centre manager, who leads the small team of three full-time and one part-time staff. Services provided include activities to promote early learning, family support, child and family health, careers, adult learning and volunteering.

There are 1,651 children under the age of five years living in the area served by the centre. Families are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The main groups are Turkish and Somali. Most families live within the Lower Edmonton and Edmonton Green communities which are amongst the most deprived in Enfield and seen nationally. Many families are in temporary accommodation and mobility levels at 16.8% are high. The causes of this are identified as being immigration, re-housing and the search for employment. Approximately 16% of children live in homes where no one is in paid work, and 34% of families are in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Most children start nursery with skills and abilities below those typical for their age.

Priority target groups identified by the centre are: children and families living in two of the most deprived communities (Barrowfield and the Montagu estate); two-year-old children eligible for free education; Turkish children and families; and Somali children and families.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families Good

- At 84%, most families are signed up for services and know what the centre has to offer. Overall, over two thirds of priority families engage well with centre services. However, at just under 50%, the proportion of families who live in Barrowfield (one of the most disadvantaged communities) who sustain regular contact is not high enough.
- Good links with midwifery services have resulted in clinics being held four times a week in the centre since September. Very clear impact is seen in the high number of expectant and new parents now in regular contact with centre services. For example, immunisation levels, which were worryingly low, have increased substantially because of the centre's effective actions to promote the benefits to parents. Similarly, regular oral hygiene sessions, promoted in partnership with the dental health team, are proving effective in reducing tooth decay in children.
- Effective partnerships with the co-located unit for two-year-olds, infant school and other local private and voluntary settings support centre staff in working with parents to make sure their children benefit from good quality early learning. Two thirds of Turkish and Somali children and families have sustained their engagement with the centre during the last year.
- Staff have worked very hard to win the trust of families from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and have built mutually respectful relationships. Parents of two-year-olds accessing Terrific Twos told inspectors how much more independent and confident their children are as a result of the experiences they have. They say they are not anxious about being separated from their children because 'they are looked after so well and learn so much'.
- At 78%, the take up of free education by eligible two-year-olds is better than the London average. Virtually all three- and four-year-olds access their free education place at good or better quality settings.

- The strong partnership forged with Jobcentre Plus and the Citizens Advice Bureau has resulted in their services for parents being provided in the centre every week. Useful interpretation and translation services are provided by centre volunteers; these are especially beneficial to Somali families who might otherwise find it difficult to attend the centre's services.

### The quality of practice and services

Good

- The wide range of good quality centre and partner services results in good engagement with most priority groups. Parents hold the centre in high regard and appreciate the supportive ethos created by the staff, who work effectively to make the centre the focal point of its diverse, multicultural community.
- Children are well prepared for school, because of the centre's effective work with early years partners to ensure that they make a smooth and trouble-free transfer to their new nursery. Tracking information shows that most make good progress from low starting points and benefit from well-planned activities such as Growing Together. There is a clear focus given to the level of communication skills in assessing target children's needs and in the planning of sessions. Children with particular speech and language difficulties are given specialist support, which they clearly benefit from.
- Information shows that the gap in the achievement between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and others has narrowed considerably. Outcomes are improving over time due to the effectiveness of early help and support and the centre's good work to reduce inequalities.
- Last year, some 60% of children living in the area served by the centre achieved a good level of development; 71% of Somali children achieved this level from typically low starting points. Overall, children who had accessed the centre's services regularly, including those from Turkish backgrounds, achieved better than those who had not. The indications are that outcomes will continue to show improvement this year.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Parents have ready access to information to show them where to go for specialist help and advice on a range of issues, including domestic abuse. Those who receive one-to-one support from centre staff identify how much this helps them to overcome major challenges caused by poor housing, being in debt, experiencing relationship breakdown or having significant health problems.
- Parenting skills, including positive behaviour management techniques, are well promoted by staff during all the activities they run, such as Play and Stay. For example, some parents are referred to baby massage sessions to build confidence and help them to bond with their newborn baby, whilst others participate in a scheme to support their children's learning at home. However, records of the take up of such opportunities are patchy, and there is no clear strategy for supporting parenting skills and raising parents' awareness about their responsibilities for children's health and well-being.
- With partners such as Jobcentre Plus and Citizen's Advice Bureau, the centre offers a range of services to support parents' economic well-being. Volunteering is well promoted and has led to many moving into paid work following their experiences at the centre. However, the amount of provision currently being made available is presently insufficient to help all the workless families in the area to enhance their prospects for paid work.
- The enjoyment, retention and success rates of parents who attend college courses to improve their English are all good. However, courses are not offered frequently enough to meet the assessed demand for English language learning. The centre recognises this as an issue and is working pro-actively to fund more courses and find appropriate venues.

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

Good

- Good leadership and management are clearly reflected in the significantly improving achievement of children over time. The strong focus given by leaders to reducing inequalities and securing community cohesion is proving successful in breaking down barriers to services, as shown in the rising level of engagement of priority groups. Staff work with dedication and commitment to ensure that the centre is welcoming and provides a safe environment that appeals to all visitors.
- The local authority keeps the centre's performance under close review. A range of increasingly useful information is provided to leaders to help them allocate resources to where they are needed most. Targets to support improvement, which were set at the most recent annual review three months ago, have mostly been met. In going forward, officers recognise the need to inject more challenge into the targets being set to assist the centre's drive to become highly effective.
- The advisory board is very effective in holding the centre to account, and members have a deep understanding of the community served by the centre. They are very active in using their particular expertise to guide the centre's improvement, as seen for example in the partnership with the Bountagu Centre and work to improve families' health.
- The minutes of advisory board meetings do not record the findings of members' monitoring activities or the specific checks made on performance. This is a missed opportunity to keep parents and partners who might miss a meeting up to speed. Additionally, terms of reference have not been revised for some time and do not set out the board's role and responsibilities or relationship with the school's governing body clearly enough.
- All available resources are used well to meet needs and improve the outcomes for priority families. The centre has successfully secured additional funding to develop a community garden and allotment. This has proved to be a very valuable asset, welcomed by the many parents who live in maisonettes and do not have access to a garden in which their children can learn and play.
- The centre places children's well-being and safety at the core of its work. Policies, procedures and practice all ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding children and families are robust and effective. The strong partnership between the centre staff, health and social care ensures that children who are subject to child protection plans or child in need plans, and those families being helped through the single point of entry referral system, are well supported.
- Partnership working is a particular strength of the centre. Staff work successfully with a very wide range of partners to provide good quality and effective support for families. There is potential for these partnerships to be capitalised on further to ensure all parents are confident in their parenting abilities and to ensure their children's health and well-being.
- Parents who were spoken to during the inspection, and the results of post-session evaluations and the annual survey, show that there are high levels of satisfaction and that the staff are much appreciated. One parent summed up the views of others about the centre by stating, 'It has taken me from nowhere to the good place I am in today.' However, not enough parents are formally involved with the running and development of the centre, for example by serving on the advisory board.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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>	21870
<b>Local authority</b>	Enfield
<b>Inspection number</b>	455042
<b>Managed by</b>	The governing body of Eldon Junior School on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,651
<b>Centre manager</b>	Gill Newbury
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 807 6426
<b>Email address</b>	lecc@eldon-jun.enfield.sch.uk

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