

# North Islington Nursery School and Children's Centre

110–112 Tollington Park, London N4 3RB

<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2015
<b>Previous inspection date</b>	Not previously inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not applicable	
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.

- The centre has formed highly productive relationships with a wide range of partners in the Tollington ward. As a result, information is shared effectively so that families get the right help when they need it most.
- More than nine out of ten families with young children in the area are known to the centre. The large majority are taking advantage of its services, including those from the groups it has identified as needing most support.
- The strong levels of staff expertise in the nursery support the centre to provide a range of good quality services to help parents support their children's early learning and to prepare them for school.
- The effective partnerships with health ensure that a range of highly effective support is provided for families expecting children, and those with young children, to improve their health and well-being.
- The leadership team, supported by the advisory board and local authority, have high aspirations for families living in the local area.. They work effectively together to ensure that services continue to improve and meet the needs of increasing numbers of families in the area.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Not enough families entitled to free education funding for their two-year-olds are taking up places in good and outstanding early years settings.
- The centre is not yet systematically checking the long-term impact of its adult learning and parenting programmes on improving the economic stability of families and the well-being of children.
- The outreach committee of the governing body does not meet frequently enough to enable it to check that leaders are doing the right things to bring about improvements.

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

- Ensure that most families entitled to free education funding for their two-year-olds take up places in good and outstanding early years settings.
- Systematically track the long-term impact of its work in adult learning and parenting programmes on improving the economic stability of families and the well-being of children.
- The local authority should ensure that the governing body, through its outreach and community committee, fulfils its obligations to check that leaders are doing the right things to bring about improvements to the centre on its behalf.

## 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 headteacher, the family support worker outreach manager, other leaders and family support workers. They also met with key partners, including those from health, social care and adult education. Inspectors met with members of the governing body and the advisory board. Inspectors also spoke to a number of the parents who use the centre.

The inspectors observed a range of sessions at the centre and also visited services at the Hanley Road Community Centre and the Hanley Road Health Centre.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including case files, policies and procedures in relation to the safeguarding of children, information about families in the area and those attending the centre, and minutes of the meetings of the governing body and the advisory board.

## Inspection team

Graham Lee, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
David Scott	Additional inspector
Lesley Talbot-Strettle	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

North Islington Nursery School and Children's Centre provides integrated education for children and support for families. It provides early years childcare and maintained nursery education. The schools and day care were not part of this inspection and their reports are available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

The children's centre offers support for parents with children's early learning and development. It also provides family support and outreach work, help for parents to enter training and employment, child and family health services and parent information services. The governing body of North Islington School is responsible for the management of the centre on behalf of the local authority, through its outreach and community committee. On a day-to-day basis the provision is led by the long-established headteacher. The centre works in close collaboration with Hornsey Road Children's Centre. The two centres share an advisory board, consisting of key partners. The family support outreach area manager works across both centres. Services are delivered from the main site and also from Hanley Crouch Community Centre and Hanley Road Health Centre.

The centre serves the Tollington ward of Islington. This is a very densely populated area with little green space. There are currently estimated to be 1,019 families with children under five living in the area. Tollington is ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse and the population is highly mobile. About a third of families are of White British origin, with the rest from a very wide range of backgrounds. The area is also very mixed economically, with many well-off families in the ward. By contrast, 45% of children live in low-income households and 35% are from families where no adult is working. About 25% of children live with a lone parent. Children's skills and understanding on entry to early years provision is often well below what is typically the case, especially in language, communication and number.

The centre has identified lone parents, low-income households, families where no adult is working, those living in social housing and children from minority ethnic groups as being in need of particular support. Most families in the ward fall into one or more of these groups.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

**Good**

- The centre has established excellent relationships with its local authority partners, for example in health and social services, and charitable organisations such as the Hanley Church Community Centre. As a result of the very effective sharing of information, more than nine out of ten families are known to, and registered with, the centre, including those expecting children.
- Most of the families in the ward are in one or more of the groups identified by the centre for particular support. The large majority of lone parents, low-income households, families where no adult is working and those living in social housing are taking advantage of the services of the centre and its partners on a sustained basis. This figure is improving year-on-year.
- This is also the case for families from the wide range of minority ethnic groups. The centre is very welcoming and staff speak a range of community languages. As a result, all groups are well represented in the centre's work. There has been an especially successful focus on working with Turkish and Somali families where outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage have been particularly low.
- Too many families are not yet taking up their free entitlement to early education. The centre has 12 reserved places in its own nursery for these families and has worked diligently to help other families find places in good and outstanding settings. As a result, the proportion taking up the places has risen from 39% to 58% in the current year. However, a significant minority are not taking

advantage of the funding, partly because of limited places in the area.

- While the Tollington ward is compact, the centre takes its services into the community. For example, some of the health-related activities are delivered at the Hanley Road Health centre. A number of services, such as 'Stay and Play' and the toy library, are also provided at the Hanley Crouch Community Centre, which is larger and more accessible for parents at the other end of the ward.
- The centre also works closely with the Hornsey South Children's Centre to support families in the area and to avoid any duplication of services. For example, different levels of the English for Speakers of Other Languages courses are held at each centre to help adults to progress from one to the other.
- The centre is a very busy place and provides a wide range of services both for all families in the area and for those it has identified as needing the most help. These activities extend into the weekends and school holiday periods, providing opportunities for families to participate when they might not be able to during the normal working week.

### The quality of practice and services

**Good**

- In partnership with health high quality services are provided for families to support their children's health and well-being. A variety of services and clinics are delivered, both at the centre and the Hanley Road Health Centre. Staff work effectively with health professionals on a number of levels. For example, at a 'New Kids on the Block' session, parents had access to a family support worker, health visitor, child psychologist and speech and language therapist to offer support and advice.
- A range of good quality services are provided to develop children's early learning, supported very effectively by the nursery's early years staff. The centre also works closely with other early years settings and childminders in the area, providing support, advice and opportunities for shared training.
- Activities such as 'Stay and Play' help parents to develop different aspects of their children's learning. This made a significant contribution to the much improved outcomes at the end of the Reception year in the area in 2014, which were close to the national average. This represents good progress from children's starting points in the area.
- The centre provides a range of programmes to help parents, especially those from the most vulnerable families, to develop skills to improve their children's well-being. Courses such as 'Incredible Years' are well attended and appreciated by parents.
- The centre provides a number of opportunities for parents to volunteer at the centre and in the community to improve their confidence and opportunity to secure employment. It also has productive partnerships with providers of adult education to provide courses such as English for Speakers of Other Languages and access to a range of courses to meet the needs of families.
- The centre is developing very effective systems to track the impact of its work on children's learning and development in conjunction with the nursery provision. This initiative is also involving parents so that they develop a good understanding of their children's development. However, the centre is not yet tracking the long-term impact of its parenting courses and adult learning on the well-being and economic stability of families.
- The centre's outreach work with families most in need of support in their own homes is successful in improving family life and reducing any potential risk of harm to children. Case files show demonstrable improvements for these families.
- The centre also provides support for families to get advice about issues such as benefits, training and employment. It also supports a local woman's refuge and facilitates a contact centre on Saturdays for parents who have been separated from their families. All of these services contribute to improving the circumstances of children in the area.

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

- The long-serving headteacher and family support worker outreach manager, working very closely with other members of the leadership team, have high aspirations for families in the area. They have increased the number of families benefitting from the services of the centre and ensured that the centre and its partners provide a range of good quality services to families.
- Staff are highly committed and well trained and qualified. Arrangements for their professional supervision and performance management are robust and ensure that they play an important part in the centre's work and improvement.
- There are effective service level agreements in place with statutory partners to ensure that their contribution to the centre's work is effective, and regular checking of the centre's provision by leaders ensures that the services provided are of good quality.
- The governing body of the nursery is very committed to the centre. The chair of its outreach and family support committee knows what is happening in the centre and the targets for reducing inequalities in the area. However, the committee has only met once in the past calendar year. While the local authority knows the centre well and checks its work regularly, it has not ensured that the committee meets regularly enough to fulfil its function of holding leaders to account on its behalf.
- Parents are well represented on the advisory board and have good opportunities to contribute to the centre's services through its work and through regular feedback on the services they attend. They express high levels of satisfaction with the centre's work.
- The advisory board is also made up of key partners. The partnership work in the community is also considerably enhanced by the monthly meeting of all partners, which regularly reviews how services might be improved to meet the needs of the community.
- The centre's policies and procedures related to keeping children safe are robust and evident in the everyday life of the centre. Its work, with key partners, to keep children safe through the Common Assessment Framework and in relation to children subject to child protection plans or identified as being in need is effective. This contributes to reducing the risk of harm to children through effective early help.
- The centre is well resourced to support children's early learning and development. It also makes very effective use of its outreach venues, such as Hanley Crouch Community Centre, to take services into the community. It also works closely with Hornsey Road Community Centre to meet the needs of families in the area.

**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>	22179
<b>Local authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	453960
<b>Managed by</b>	The governing body on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,019
<b>Centre leader</b>	Ian Senior
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7527 4844
<b>Email address</b>	northislington.eyc@islington.gov.uk

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