

North Isleworth Children's Centre

c/o West Thames College, Grove Road, Isleworth, TW7 4JT

Inspection dates	15–16 July 2015
Previous inspection date	9–10 June 2010

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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:

- Too few two year old children take up their free early years entitlement and not enough places are available within the area.
- Not enough families are registered with the centre and benefit from its services. This is partly due to the centre not being provided with information about new births in the area.
- Staff do not carry out enough analysis of attendance registers so cannot always be sure that priority families participate in activities that are best matched to their needs.
- The quality and content of case files are not good enough to ensure that outcomes and progress from families with priority needs are monitored with sufficient rigour.
- The supervision of staff is not effective enough because the work of those who provide support to families with the most needs is not checked regularly and thoroughly to ensure that it is making a difference.

This centre has the following strengths:

- Families are highly satisfied with the centre's work and are enthusiastic about using services. Despite significant difficulties with staffing, the centre has continued to maintain effective services for parents and children.
- Governance arrangements are clear and effective. Leaders know the centre's key strengths well. The success of their action plans for improvement is evident in the increased number of families who now use the centre.
- Most families from the centre's priority groups engage well in activities offered by the centre.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

- Persist in work with the local authority so that most two-year-old children entitled to free early years education are able to take up places in good quality early years settings.
- With the support of the local authority, obtain new birth data from health partners and use it to help increase the number of families who register with the centre.
- Make better use of existing information to systematically monitor the attendance of families who attend activities and to ensure their needs are well matched to services.
- Improve the quality and organisation of case files to ensure they accurately reflect the impact and outcomes of all support and interventions provided to families, and that they are regularly audited.
- Strengthen supervision arrangements so that the work of staff who provide support for the families most in need of help is checked thoroughly and regularly to ensure it is making a difference.

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 centre staff, local authority managers and staff, parents, representatives from partner organisations such as health, adult learning, schools, nurseries and charities. They also met members of the advisory board.

The inspectors visited activities at the centre such as 'Little Stars Stay and Play' and also activities at the Syon Children's Centre.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the self-evaluation plan, action plans, case files, centre policies and procedures.

Inspection team

Priscilla McGuire, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anthony Mundy	Additional Inspector
Barbara Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about the centre

North Isleworth Children's Centre is part of the East locality of centres in the London Borough of Hounslow. The centre is based in the grounds of West Thames College which is separately inspected. The college nursery is also located in the grounds of the college. Reports for both the college and the nursery can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Services offered by the centre include health clinics, adult learning, family support and activities to promote children's early learning and development. The centre works closely with Syon Children's Centre which is within the same locality. The centre is directly managed and led by the local authority which is supported by a locality advisory board. The children's centre area coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day management of the centre but at the time of inspection, the current coordinator was in an interim role. The previous coordinator was in a seconded role and returned to her substantive post in June 2015. At the time of the inspection, the local authority had not yet recruited a permanent replacement.

There are approximately 1040 children under the age of five years living in the area served by the centre. There are no schools within the centre's catchment area.

The majority of families are of White British heritage but families of Asian heritage are the next largest ethnic group. The area is mostly affluent with small pockets of deprivation. Unemployment rates are low in the area. Most families live in privately owned homes.

Priority target groups identified by the centre are: families with two year old children, particularly those eligible for free early years education, and families living in the most deprived area.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Requires improvement

- Access to services requires improvement because not enough families are registered with the centre and too few two year olds take up their free entitlement to early years education.
- Due to the combined efforts of staff and health professionals, a large majority of families in the area are registered. However, the pace of registering most families is slower than it could be as the local authority's efforts to obtain new birth data have not yet been successful.
- The centre provides a good range of information and guidance for families and those expecting children. For example a 'labour information pack' is provided to expectant families to guide them through pregnancy and birth. The pack also includes practical items such as nappies and soap. In addition, through the services of midwives, those expecting children receive good support. A young mothers ante-natal group offers specialist support to teenage and young expectant mothers.
- The centre has worked hard in conjunction with the local authority to identify accurately which families, within an area that is largely affluent, has the most needs. Feedback from partners, outcomes and comments from parents confirm that the centre has got it right and has accurately identified these families.
- As a result of a lack of sufficiency of free two year old places in the area, take up rates are too low. They are lower than rates for the borough. The local authority has implemented an action plan to create more places. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of the plans on the priority families who could most benefit from free early years places.
- Although information on attendance and participation is routinely collected, no systematic monitoring of attendance takes place. As a result, the centre is not able to check that families from the priority groups, such as those living in the most deprived area and families with two year olds, engage in services and activities that are most relevant to their needs.
- The centre makes appropriate use of other centres within the locality such as Syon Children's

Centre, of community venues and of home visits. As a result, families who may face a range of barriers to access the centre can still benefit from its services.

The quality of practice and services

Requires improvement

- Quality and impact have been judged to require improvement because of the significance and impact of case files not being of a high enough quality and not being audited.
- Case files are not organised well enough to ensure effective tracking of the progress of families with priority needs or those whose circumstances suggest they may need social care intervention. Specific actions taken in response to families' needs and outcomes of those actions are not recorded with sufficient detail and clarity to identify the impact of interventions or support.
- Strong testimony from parents and evaluations confirm the positive impact of the centre's work on families' quality of life and general well-being. 'I have no friends that have babies so the groups are a saviour for me', 'I love the fact that children can make as much mess as they want': these were typical comments from parents about the positive impact of the centre's work on their lives.
- Planning of adult learning courses is effective: 'The centre is quick to identify needs' was the comment from one of the adult learning organisations that works with the centre. As a result of effective planning of courses such as 'Keeping up with the Children', take up rates are high and achievement rates on courses are also good.
- Activities to help children develop their knowledge and skills such as language development are good. Children enjoy a range of indoor and outdoor activities such as 'Little Stars Stay and Play' and 'Crawling Babies'. Staff provide good role models which have a positive impact on the way parents interact with their own children. As a result, data and tracking of children who attend the centre show that more reach a good level of development at the end of Reception than children who have not used the centre.
- Obesity rates are low in the area. Nevertheless, healthy eating is promoted through, for example, 'Stay and Play' sessions. In one observed session, 'fruit kebabs' were introduced to families as a way of promoting healthy eating. Local breastfeeding rates are not available but sustained rates for the borough are higher than national rates.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the centre has not made progress at a fast enough rate, largely due to frequent changes of staff and difficulties in recruiting a permanent centre coordinator. Effective action plans to drive improvement at a swift pace have, therefore, been hampered by a lack of stability at management level.
- Performance monitoring of the centre is generally effective. Leaders know the centre's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to bring about improvement. The local authority's annual review of the centre's work is also robust and sets clear objectives for improvement.
- Governance arrangements through the local authority and supported by the advisory board are effective. Managers and leaders rightly focus their energies on supporting and challenging the centre to do its best to reduce inequalities. This is particularly significant for the centre's catchment where there is a huge gap between those identified as affluent and those who live in the most deprived part of the community.
- Safeguarding and safer recruitment policies are comprehensive and meet requirements. However, as a result of the time gap between the departure and appointment of a new named social worker for the centre, supervision of staff who work on family support cases has been delayed. As a result, supervision arrangements for all staff are not as thorough or carried out as swiftly as they should be.
- The centre works adequately with social care staff and uses the Early Help Assessment process to support families with children subject to child protection plans, children in need or those looked after. The Early Help Assessment process is used appropriately to provide support or intervention as

required to meet families' needs.

- Parents' views are highly valued. They contribute to decision making through their roles on the parents' forum, the advisory board and satisfaction surveys. The centre's 'wish tree' is also used creatively to collect useful feedback from parents.
- As a result of the centre's effective partnership work with a range of agencies such as health, nurseries, charities and the local college, resources for families are appropriate to their needs. Accommodation and resources within the centre for parents and children to use are of a high quality.

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	22178
Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	464714
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	1040
Centre leader	Jennie Ramsey
Date of previous inspection	June 2010
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