

# Oak Farm Children's Centre

Windsor Avenue, Hillingdon, UB10 9PD

<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 July 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 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.

- This centre is very well led by a highly capable leader. As a result, it is improving strongly.
- Leaders, managers and members of the governing body of Oak Farm Infant School have an accurate view about the centre's performance. Together they demonstrate excellent capacity and clear plans for further improvement.
- Leaders have developed their own systems to record and track the families they know, and whether or not they attend services regularly. They use this information well to ensure that priority families access services.
- Most children living in the reach area are registered with the centre and the large majority access services at least four times. Many priority families sustain their contact for much longer.
- Partnership working with health visitors and midwives is good. This helps the centre to provide early help to those families who need extra support, including those experiencing poor mental health.
- The quality of services delivered is good, and often better. As a result, outcomes for children and families living in the local area are improving rapidly.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Although the large majority of eligible two-year-olds access the children's centre regularly, not enough take up their entitlement to free early education. Tracking arrangements are not yet used fully to show the impact of the centre's work on the progress of all targeted children.
- The local authority is not providing the centre with enough reliable information, particularly about the children and families who need support the most. Other partners are not sharing information readily enough, such as local new births or where there is social care involvement.
- The locality advisory board is relatively new. Although members are supportive, they are not yet well enough equipped with information about the centre's impact on groups who need most support to challenge the centre effectively. There are too few parent representatives on the board.

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

- Increase the take-up of free early education places by eligible two-year-olds, so that most get off to the best start.
- Strengthen tracking arrangements to show more clearly the progress made by all priority children, and to narrow inequalities between girls and boys further, so that more children are well prepared for school.
- The local authority should improve:
  - the quality, accuracy and timeliness of data made available to establish how many children and families from key priority groups live locally, and to identify their specific needs. Ensure that information about young children in the local area who are subject to any form of supervision from social care, plus new birth information, is shared regularly.
  - levels of support for members of the locality advisory board so they are better equipped with information about the centre's impact on groups needing the most support. This will enable them to challenge the centre more effectively. Parent representation on the board should be increased.

## 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. It was carried out at the same time as Uxbridge Children's Centre.

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the children's centre manager, staff, local authority officers and members of the advisory board and governing body of the school. They also spoke to several partners, including those from health and adult education. They took into account the views of parents from discussions during the inspection and also from surveys and evaluations.

The inspectors visited a number of activities taking place at the centre including Daisy Chains, Mighty Oaks, a parenting class and the linked crèche. The Mighty Oaks session was observed jointly with the centre manager.

A wide range of documentation was looked at, including the centre's action plan and local authority reviews. Safeguarding policies, procedures and practice, as well as case studies, were examined in depth.

The centre managers from both centres, the headteacher of Oak Farm Infant School, as well as a local authority officer, attended all team meetings which were held jointly with lead and team inspectors.

## Inspection team

Michael Blakey, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Graham Saltmarsh

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Oak Farm Children's Centre is a stand-alone centre. It is managed by the governing body of Oak Farm Infant School on behalf of the local authority, as part of the borough's South West locality of six children's centres.

Uxbridge Children's Centre, part of the South West collaboration but managed separately and directly by the local authority, was inspected at the same time as this centre. Its report, as well as those of the other centres, can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

The centre provides early years experiences, family support, adult learning and health services through partnership work. There is a shared locality advisory board in place to assist governance. The centre is co-located on the site of Oak Farm Infant School.

There are 1,867 children under the age of five years living in the area served by the centre. About three quarters of children who use the centre are of a minority ethnic background. The remaining quarter is of White British heritage.

Approximately one in ten young children in the area is living in a home where no one is in paid work and over a quarter of children are considered to be living in poverty. Children enter early education provision at levels slightly below those typical for their age.

Target groups identified by the centre are: two-year-old children eligible for free education; young children living in the most deprived localities; and children who have additional needs.

## Inspection judgements

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

- The number of families accessing the centre has improved strongly as a result of very effective leadership and management.
- The large majority of children living in the area, including those in priority groups, regularly attend the centre, which makes a positive contribution to their well-being.
- Most families with young children and those expecting children are known to the centre as a result of good partnership working with midwives and health visitors. This has had a positive impact on the number of families who know about and access the centre. However, systems to pass on information about new births in the local area are not fully effective and this is preventing registrations from being even higher.
- Almost three quarters of children with additional needs sustain their contact with the centre and are very well supported through a range of specialist services including 'early bird' and 'attention Hillingdon'.
- The local authority's information management system is under developed. The centre manager has, therefore, developed an in-house sophisticated process to record the attendance of families, particularly those from the centre's priority groups. This process enables leaders to accurately record which families are known to the centre and to follow up any of those who do not attend.
- The uptake of free early education by three- and four-year-olds is high. However, although the proportion of two-year-olds accessing their entitlement is not yet good, the large majority of eligible children sustain their engagement with early years services.

**The quality of practice and services**

Good

- The centre manager holds an accurate view about the quality of practice and services, which are consistently good and often better. Activities are well planned to meet the needs of priority families and some services are appropriately only open to these families. The centre's wider programme of activities open to all is well balanced, and encourages families to attend services regularly. More importantly, families who may need additional help are identified early and know where to turn.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2014 was higher than the level seen nationally. The achievement gap between children eligible for free school meals and their peers has narrowed considerably. However, boys do not achieve as well as girls and this rightly remains a priority for the centre.
- Health outcomes are improving strongly. The proportion of children who are obese is falling and now below levels seen nationally. The proportion of mothers who sustain breastfeeding at six to eight weeks is higher than the average seen nationally.
- An analysis of children's progress at the end of Reception year shows that priority children, who have attended the Little Oaks and Mighty Oaks sessions at the centre, make good progress. However, the day-to-day tracking of children's progress does not show clearly enough the links to early years outcomes in the centre's learning journeys.
- Support to help adults develop their parenting skills is very good. Typically, parents say, 'It helped me immensely, I'm now more relaxed with my children and the course was excellent.'
- Case files are of high quality and clearly show the discernible difference that the centre makes to families who are in most need of support. Discussions with parents confirm that the centre is quite simply a 'life saver', and that without the dedication of the centre's staff the lives of some families would be very different.
- Support for children subject to child protection plans and those in need is very good. Staff contribute very well to ensuring that families are very well supported so that when the time is appropriate they no longer need to be supervised by children's social care.
- There is a wide range of opportunities for adults to develop their skills and knowledge, particularly those for whom English is an additional language. The centre tracks the progress of adults effectively and many parents complete programmes and move on to further study or employment.
- Opportunities for parents to volunteer and contribute meaningfully to the day-to-day running of the centre are good. However, parents are not yet well represented on the locality advisory board.

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

Good

- The centre manager provides the solid foundations for this good, and strongly improving, centre. She is ably supported by a small, but highly skilled, team, and the headteacher of Oak Farm Infant School who oversees the work of the centre. Parents and staff alike speak highly of her dedication and her 'above and beyond' approach to supporting families who need the most help.
- The governors of Oak Farm Infant School have an accurate view of the centre's performance. They have rightly challenged the local authority to further strengthen arrangements for receiving information from health and social care.
- The centre's good quality resources are used very well to engage a good proportion of families living in the local area and, as a result, outcomes for families are improving well.
- The local authority has identified that this centre is one of the highest performing in the borough, awarding it the highest rating in its own quality assurance processes. However, records of the quarterly monitoring meetings do not clearly record how these judgements are made or specifically set clear targets to further improve the work of the centre.
- The local authority's information system, in place to support leaders and managers, is under developed. As a result, leaders have developed their own effective systems to track the attendance of all families, including those they prioritise. However, reporting and checking information in this way are a significant drain on leaders' time and resources, and require improvement by the local

authority.

- Safeguarding is given the highest priority in the work of all those involved at the centre. Checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children are carried out rigorously. Staff receive regular training to help protect children and families. They have a very good understanding of the issues surrounding domestic abuse and female genital mutilation. This is underpinned by sound practical experience of working with families experiencing these serious issues.
- The locality advisory board is relatively new in its current form. Members are enthusiastic and supportive, but do not have a clear enough understanding of the data to measure the centre's impact on groups who need most support. Consequently, their ability to challenge the centre effectively is compromised. Parent representation on the locality advisory board is not yet wide enough.
- The centre's safeguarding policies are all up to date; practices and procedures are robust. Staff are well trained and are quick to act on any concerns. The centre provides effective support for children subject to child protection plans, those who are children in need or who are looked after, when it knows who they are.

**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>	22216
<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Hillingdon
<b>Inspection number</b>	455094
<b>Managed by</b>	The Governing Body of Oak Farm Infant School, on behalf of the local authority.

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,867
<b>Centre leader</b>	Zoe Chinery
<b>Telephone number</b>	01895 250111
<b>Email address</b>	zchinery@hgfl.org.uk

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