

Euston Children's Centre

Locality

Regents Park Children's Centre, Augustus Street, Regents Park, London NW1 3TJ

Inspection dates	17–18 June 2014
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

Overall effectiveness	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Good	2
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 children's centre group is good.

- Staff know the needs of the area well. They speak a number of community languages, which encourages families that speak little or no English, who otherwise find it difficult to access services, to attend children's centre activities.
- Strong and effective partnerships with health and social care ensures most families are known to the locality. Participation of those in need of additional support is improving year on year because centres have been successful in identifying and supporting their target groups.
- Family support workers make good use of home visits to observe needs and build relationships with families. As a result, assessments of families' needs are thorough and detailed.
- A range of good quality universal and targeted services are offered across the locality that are well matched to the needs of families.
- Information about the locality is used well by leaders and managers to ensure they target their work effectively. Development plans clearly identify the main priorities for the locality and progress is monitored regularly and robustly.
- Management of the performance of staff in the locality is exemplary. Family support workers are extremely well supported and have excellent opportunities to discuss their casework.

It is not outstanding because:

- Although the large majority of adults who attend courses complete them, some courses have low participation. The tracking of adults is not yet robust enough to show how well they make progress in their learning, or whether what they learn improves their chances of employment. The partnership with Jobcentre Plus is underdeveloped.
- Although health outcomes are improving, high obesity rates and poor oral health remain as issues for the locality to tackle.
- The promotion and advertising of centre services does not ensure all parents are fully informed about what is available. For example, the number of eligible two-year-olds accessing funding for free education is improving but is still too low. Currently, there are not enough places for two-year-olds to enable all of them to access their funding entitlement at good quality settings.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- The children's centre locality should improve the tracking and monitoring of the progress of adults and adult learners to:
 - ensure the locality gains a clear understanding of success and progression rates of learners into further learning, volunteering or paid work
 - understand the outcomes and next steps for adults in the locality, especially where provision is delivered by partners
 - enable clear analysis of use of adult learning sessions to make sure that families are accessing appropriate courses as they move across the locality
 - support the developing partnership with Jobcentre Plus, increasing their involvement in locality children's centre initiatives aimed at improving the economic well-being of families.

- The children's centre locality should work effectively with with health service partners to:
 - ensure parents develop a better understanding of what contributes to poor health outcomes for their children
 - improve the percentage of children who have a healthy weight in Reception Year
 - reduce the level of tooth decay and make parents more aware of oral health issues.

- The children's centre locality should continue to improve the advertising of children's centre services within the locality and through different types of media, so that:
 - the number of eligible two-year-olds accessing their entitlement to free education continues to improve, and that more children access a good quality setting, especially as the availability of places increases
 - all parents are aware of the services available in their locality and can independently access information, advice and guidance when they need it
 - information about centre services is readily available to local families in a format they are familiar with, and in venues or parts of the locality they frequently use.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of this children's centre group was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. The centres that form part of this children's centre group are Regents Park Children's Centre, Hampden Children's Centre and Edith Nevill Children's Centre.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional inspectors.

The inspectors held meetings with the locality manager; the three centre heads of the locality children's centres; the senior family support manager; the senior locality manager; local authority representatives; health workers; the head teacher of Edith Nevill primary school; children's social care; adult and community learning representatives; Jobcentre Plus; family support workers; members of the multi-agency locality team; parent advisory board members; representatives from strategic partners including housing, speech and language therapy, midwifery, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, the Early Years Intervention Team, Tavistock and Portman Trust and family services and social work; volunteers and parents.

The inspectors visited the three children's centre sites and the Euston locality office.

They observed the centres' work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Denise Blackwell, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Priscilla McGuire

Additional inspector

Christina Christou

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

There are 14 children's centres in Camden that are arranged into five children's centre localities. The Euston Children's Centre Locality consists of three centres and became a group about a year ago. Edith Neville Children's Centre is located on the site of Edith Neville Primary School. The other two centres are separate buildings located in the Euston locality. There is a memorandum of understanding with the school in relation to the children's centre provision. There is childcare on the same site as Regents Park Children's Centre and Hampden Children's Centres and a nursery class on the Edith Neville Children's Centre site. The school and childcare are inspected under different arrangements. Their reports can be found on the Ofsted website, www.ofsted.gov.uk. All three centres are managed by the local authority locality manager who is part of the Integrated Early Years Service. There is a centre head in each of the centres who is responsible for childcare provision and oversees the running of activities held in the centres, including drop-in play sessions.

Each locality has a multi-agency locality team made up of local authority staff and partners from Housing, Child and Adult Mental Health Service and Speech and Language Support. The family support team is managed centrally and covers the whole of Camden. Family support workers and managers are allocated to a specific locality and are based in each locality team. There is one advisory board for the locality, made up of partners and parents with a parent chair. Each individual centre has a parents' forum. There are individual development plans for each of the three centres and a locality plan for the whole of the reach area. Midwife and health visitor services are delivered in Regents Park Children's Centre and adult learning is delivered in Edith Neville Children's Centre. All three centres offer universal drop-in play sessions and some targeted group activities.

The Euston locality is made up of three wards – Regents Park, St Pancras and Somers Town, and Camden Town and Primrose Hill. There are high numbers of families who live in social housing, mainly made up of blocks of flats. However, a small part of the reach area contains some of the most expensive properties in London. There are around 2,038 children under five years of age living in the locality. Families come from very diverse backgrounds, with high proportions of minority ethnic families, especially from Bangladeshi, Black African and Eastern European backgrounds. There are 136 languages spoken in Camden schools, with 66% of children in the borough's primary schools having English as an additional language. There are high levels of workless families in the locality, with 34% of children aged 0-4 years of age in the St Pancras and Somers Town ward living in workless households. Children's levels on entry to Early Years Foundation Stage provision are generally significantly below those expected for their age.

There are four main target groups for the locality. These include children subject to a child protection plan, children in need, looked after children and children who have been identified as in need following an assessment under the Common Assessment Framework.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families Good

- Strong partnership working ensures that the locality has a good understanding of families and children in the area. Partnership working results in early identification of any children and families who are in target groups, including expectant parents. As a result, most families are registered with children's centres, and are able to access universal and targeted services depending on their needs.
- Family support workers provide good support to vulnerable families to engage with services both at the centres or in their own homes. Staff know the area well and several speak community languages. As a result, they are able to support families who find their lack of English a barrier to engagement and so ensuring they have information, advice and guidance about how to access the

right centre services to meet their needs.

- Regular meetings of the multi-agency team, and attendance at allocation meetings by all significant partners in the locality, ensure the main target groups' and wider families' needs are very effectively identified. The strong links with services such as the Early Years Intervention Team and Child and Adult Mental Health Service means that families are linked to the services they need, including specialist services. Comments from parents such as 'Everything is connected' and 'Camden really cares' shows that integrated working helps those who most need support to access what they need.
- Information from a number of sources is used well to identify two-year-olds who may be eligible for free education funding. Families are sent information about how to apply and the provision children can attend. A recent project to follow up those who did not apply was successful in increasing the number of two-year-olds accessing funding. Although all families with two-year-olds who receive family support are accessing their funding entitlement, families who do not use centre services are not as aware of the support available in centres to help them with their application as others.
- Not enough eligible two-year-olds have accessed their funding, although the local authority knows that many parents who have been allocated funding are waiting to gain a place at a setting of their choice. Parents are referred back to their children's centre for advice and support if their application for funding is unsuccessful. The local authority is aware of sufficiency issues and the lack of available places.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- The tracking and monitoring of children's progress are very effective. They clearly show that children who have been involved in children's centre activities make exceptional progress in their learning when they attend linked early years provision. For example, 21% of children were at expected levels of development on entry to Edith Neville nursery class, with 70% at expected levels when they entered Reception Year. This reflects strongly on the centres' good work to reduce inequalities.
- Assessment of need is robust, including target groups. A strong locality team of family support workers provide tailored support through home visits and in centres. Effective relationships with a range of partners, information sharing, referrals and signposting to a range of professionals ensure families receive early help. As a result, families overcome significant personal and social barriers and achieve positive outcomes, including developing coping skills that enable them to live with circumstances that are unlikely to change in the immediate future.
- There is good support for adults to access parenting courses and volunteering programmes. A range of good quality universal and targeted sessions meets the needs of families in the locality. Welfare rights are embedded in centres and parents feel confident and more able to attend advice sessions held in centre buildings. English for Speakers of Other Languages courses are delivered in the Edith Neville Centre and links with colleges and adult learning providers are developing well.
- Adult learning is not yet monitored and tracked well enough to see the fullest picture in terms of adults' success on courses and whether they progress on to qualifications, volunteering or employment. Attendance at some targeted sessions is quite low. Data about adults is not yet robust enough to ensure sessions are always provided in the parts of the locality that will have the greatest impact on increasing attendance and improving the life chances for learners.
- Jobcentre Plus attend locality steering groups but have little contact with parents or involvement in locality initiatives to improve families' economic well-being. Partnerships are still in the early stages of development and it is too early to see the impact on parents from the locality.
- Health outcomes are moving in the right direction. However, childhood obesity and dental decay are two areas that the centres are not yet working on effectively enough with health partners to have sufficient impact on improving children's well-being.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Strategic partners value their work with children's centres. All partners commented that collaborative working, joint visits and cross-referral have resulted in earlier identification of children's and families needs and ensure the most appropriate support is put in place. Links with family support workers are particularly strong and ensure personalised support for the most vulnerable, which in some cases prevents concerns escalating to social care involvement.
- The leadership and management of the performance of the well-qualified staff team is exemplary. Clear and supportive arrangements are used to identify any performance issues and development needs. Mandatory training is supported by bespoke training based on staff needs and interests. Locality targets are clearly linked to priority groups, take account of additional risk factors, and feed into individual performance targets driving continuous improvement. All staff feel valued and have high aspirations for the families they work with.
- Central management of some functions such as family support and speech and language ensure resources are used effectively to meet changing local needs. For example, the number of days allocated for speech and language support has increased due to good monitoring of priorities identifying this as a growing need in the locality. Although family support workers are linked to a specific locality, there are always workers available to support the most vulnerable families as workers move around the borough to provide cover for unexpected staff absences.
- Safeguarding is embedded in all the locality does. Thorough and robust recruitment checks, policies, procedures and training ensure all staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding issues. Close work with social care and clear targeting of work with children on child protection plans, children in need, looked after children, and families assessed as in need through the Common Assessment Framework puts children's welfare at the forefront of all the locality does.
- Governance is effective. Parents have a good understanding of the role and purpose of the advisory board and parents forums. Advisory board members challenge the locality about its performance, identify issues and put forward ideas for improvements. Ideas are valued and acted on, issues are summarised and responses given about what the locality is doing to resolve them. Many parents said they had seen changes as a result of the ideas they had put forward.
- The local authority checks on the centres' effectiveness are strong and regular. Local authority monitoring considers how well the locality as a whole is doing in meeting its priorities identified in the locality development plan, as well as family support and any issues for individual centres.
- Resources are managed effectively. Regularly updated and comprehensive data are used astutely to challenge locality managers and the senior family support manager about their progress, highlighting successes and challenges for the locality. Leaders have a good understanding about specific issues for Euston as well as borough-wide issues that impact on the locality, such as the sufficiency of two-year-old places.

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 group details

Unique reference number	80276
Local authority	London Borough of Camden
Inspection number	442699
Managed by	The London Borough of Camden local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2038
Locality Manager	Sylvia Gilbert
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 7974 1603
Email address	Sylvia.gilbert@camden.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- 21060 Edith Nevill Children's Centre
- 21356 Hampden Children's Centre
- 22494 Regents Park Children's Centre

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