

Wembley Locality Team 2

Children's Centre Group

Wembley Primary School, East Lane, Wembley, HA9 7NW

Inspection dates 14–15 October 2014

	This inspection:	Good	2
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	The group has not previously been 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 children's centre group is good.

- The group has registered the large majority of children aged under five in the area through strong partnerships with health services and early years settings. Recent work by the registration worker has led to the large majority of families with children most in need of support being contacted, registering and engaging with services.
- Sessions for families, delivered in bright, well-resourced buildings by centre staff or partner agencies, are of high quality. Staff are very good role models. The support they provide to develop children's speech and language is particularly strong. Consequently children, especially those who need support the most, make good progress.
- Well-established lines of communication with health services, social care and the family solutions team mean that families are provided with excellent levels of care, guidance and support. Although several staff are new to the group, they have established families' trust and are tenacious in supporting families to make positive changes to their lives.
- The local authority provides good support to the group, including timely and useful information. The interim team leader provides strong day-to-day management; the locality advisory board holds the group to account well. Parents are particularly active and involved in the centre. As a result of good governance and leadership at all levels, the group is well placed to continue to improve.

It is not outstanding because:

- There are some sections of the community, for example those living furthest from the centres, that have relatively low rates of engagement with services. The group's activity timetable is not written in a way that helps all families to access services.
- Although increasing, the percentage of eligible two-year-olds who take up free early education is relatively low.
- Services are not finely tuned enough to fully meet adults' needs to ensure most participants complete courses and more adults improve their education and English language skills and secure employment. Following up the longer-term outcomes for adults is not well established.

What does the group need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more children living in the areas furthest from the centres use services regularly after they have registered by:
 - identifying the specific needs of those families and establishing why more are not using the services
 - developing links with community groups in the area
 - adapting services to meet the needs of families in that community
 - ensuring the group's activity timetable is more easily understood by those who have English as an additional language or limited literacy skills.
- Increase the number of two-year-olds taking up free early education by analysing why some families are reluctant to take up their child's free place.
- Support more adults to develop their English language, literacy and numeracy skills and those wishing to train or return to employment by:
 - working with the local authority and partner agencies to provide more opportunities for families
 - ensuring courses are more closely matched to need, to encourage more participants to complete them
 - following up outcomes for families in the longer term to ensure more progress on to higher levels of education, employment or training.

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 interim team manager, the chair of the locality advisory board and representatives from the local authority. They also spoke to staff and several partners including those from health services and the Citizens Advice Bureau, as well as parents and volunteers.

The inspection covered the following centres: Wembley Primary School Children's Centre and Preston Park Children's Centre. Activities and sessions were visited at both sites, including 'Time for Rhymes' at Preston Park and 'Messy Play' and 'Baby Club' at the Wembley Primary School centre.

Inspectors looked at a range of relevant documentation including the group's self-evaluation and action plan, a sample of case studies and safeguarding practice, policies and procedures. The interim team manager attended all meetings of the inspection team.

Inspection team

Joan Lindsay, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Ann Janssen	Additional inspector
Graham Saltmarsh	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about the group

Wembley Locality Team 2 Children's Centre Group was established in 2011. The group comprises the hub centre, which started operating in 2008, situated in Wembley Primary School, where most of the activities take place, and Preston Park Children's Centre. This centre opened in 2011 and is located in a purpose-built property adjacent to Preston Park Primary School. It is open only on Mondays and Tuesdays and one Saturday each month for a 'Dads' Group'. Wembley Primary School Children's Centre was previously inspected in July 2011 but the group as a whole has not been inspected. Both schools are subject to separate inspections; their reports can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

The centres provide family support, adult learning and health services. Both centres are managed directly by the local authority. A locality advisory board is in place. The team manager has day-to-day responsibility for running the centres. An interim team manager has been in post for several months to cover extended absence. There have been several staff changes over the past 12 months.

There are 2,396 children aged under five in the area served by the centres. This includes the wards of Toykington, Preston and part of Northwick Park. Of the 20 separate defined localities in the area, two are considered to be in the top 30% least advantaged in the country. The area is very ethnically diverse with approximately 60% of the population comprising families from East European, Sri Lankan Tamil, Pakistani and African heritage. White British heritage families account for 3.3% of the population. The percentage of children under five living in workless households is 11% overall, which is well below the national average. There are 225 families claiming Working Tax Credit in the area served by the group. Children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at levels in line with those expected for their age, although this varies across the locality.

The centre has identified priority groups needing most support as: households with young children where no adult is working; disabled children; two-year-old children eligible for free early education; those being supported through the Troubled Families initiative; and children who are under social care supervision.

Inspection judgements

Access to services by young children and families

Good

- The group receives new-birth information; health visitors and other partners are proactive in registering families with the centres. Consequently, registration figures are increasing rapidly and families in most of the area served by the centres engage well with early childhood services.
- Over the last two months the registration worker has ensured that all the families identified as priority groups who were not registered have been contacted, with most receiving a home visit. This has led to a significant number of the families now engaging with services. Families where children are under social care supervision have particularly high levels of engagement as do disabled children and families supported through the Troubled Families initiative. However, families living in the southern part of the locality, where transport links to the centres are poor, are not using services as frequently.
- Both centres have relatively small rooms, given the number of children in the area the group serves, and Preston Park centre is only open two days each week. This can limit the opportunities for larger numbers of families to access services. Consequently, a booking system has been established to ensure a higher number of families can be guaranteed a place at the very popular sessions. Several places at each session are now reserved for families who need most support.
- It is not easy to understand the group's timetable as the booking system is not fully explained and it

is not clear who each session is aimed at. This is especially so for families who may have limited English or literacy skills.

- Links with the midwifery team are still developing due to reasons outside the group's control. Consequently, families expecting children have to access antenatal services mainly at the local hospital. There are, however, good links with the Family Nurse Partnership to support teenage mothers living locally.
- A central team at the local authority has recently been tasked to improve the borough-wide take-up of free early education by two-year-olds. This has had a significant impact, raising the proportion taking up places in the group's specific region from 24% to 59% over the past few months. However, the group recognises that there are still families who need support to understand the benefits to their children and that more need to be encouraged to take up places.

The quality of practice and services

Good

- There is a good balance of services open to all and those that are more focused on providing support for priority families. The 'Time for Rhymes' sessions held at both centres each week are particularly effective in supporting children's speech and language development.
- Sessions are of high quality. Staff are well trained in early learning, are good role models and support parents well. For example, a useful, clear handout provided at the 'Baby Group', where the week's theme was heuristic play, helped parents understand how to observe their babies and what they may be learning.
- Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes for the group's area show that there was a higher percentage of children, who are registered at the children's centres, achieving a good level of development (68%) than those not registered (56%). This was also well above the national figure of 52%. The local authority provides the centres with very detailed analysis of the results for each child but this is not yet available for 2014.
- Health outcomes are generally good with an exceptionally high percentage of mothers breastfeeding at six-to-eight weeks (77%), far greater than the national figure. Immunisation rates are also good and there are very low rates of smoking in pregnancy. Childhood obesity is higher than the national figure which the group is trying to counteract with healthy cooking sessions and encouraging healthy eating in the centres. Dental-health specialists attend sessions in response to high levels of childhood cavities.
- Families who receive one-to-one support from the family support worker and assistant get excellent levels of care, guidance and support. This leads to good outcomes because of the clear lines of responsibility and exchange of information with social care and the family solutions team particularly for priority families such as those supported through the Troubled Families initiative and where children have a disability.
- Partners, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, have a significant impact on families' well-being. For example, during the last 12 months, the 283 families who have attended the weekly sessions held at both centres have been supported to access a total of well over £180,000 of benefits.
- A number of sessions are aimed at developing adults' skills and education, such as mathematics courses and an accredited sewing class. Crèches support families to access these groups. However, families' individual needs are not always met, especially for those accessing English language groups and returning to employment. Adults who undertake courses at the centres or elsewhere are not being consistently followed up to measure the impact or to support them on to the next level.
- There is a well-structured volunteer programme and several participants have gone on to employment.

The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Significant staff changes and the relatively small staff team have not affected the level of services

for local families because the interim team manager has provided strong day-to-day leadership and staff are committed to providing high-quality services for families.

- The local authority provides regular and useful monitoring and support. Good quality, detailed and timely information is provided for the group although this is not always used well enough to set measurable targets in the group's action plan.
- The advisory board is challenging and has a good understanding of the group's strengths and areas for development, especially in relation to the priority groups. Partnership representation, while adequate, is relatively narrow. However, parents play a very strong and valuable role on the board; their views are put across well, highly valued and acted on where possible.
- Resources are of high quality in both centres. Staff, though limited in number, are used very well to support families, especially those in priority groups. Although there is only a limited amount of information available in other languages, due to budget constraints, staff work hard to ensure all families are made welcome, using staff or parent 'champions' to translate where possible. Consequently, the centres are inclusive and are reducing inequalities and improving life chances for families in the community.
- Staff are well trained, especially in aspects of safeguarding. This ensures that children are protected well. Policies and procedures are clear and adhered to well. Children who are subject to a child protection plan and those who are looked after or considered to be a child in need receive high levels of support due to the full involvement of staff in any meetings involving other agencies. Common Assessment Framework processes are used well to provide early help to families who need it.
- Parents have generally very positive views of the centres, typically describing them as 'simply excellent' and 'a fantastic place'. They play a full part in developing services through the regular and very well-attended 'Parents' Voice' meetings. Detailed discussions about different activities take place and parents can vote for the content of certain groups such as the accredited sewing class.

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 well-being 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.

Group details

Unique reference number	80268
Local authority	London Borough of Brent
Inspection number	447585
Managed by	The local authority

Approximate number of children under five in the reach area	2396
Interim Team Manager	Peter Firkin
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8937 5590
Email address	Peter.firkin@brent.gov.uk

This group consists of the following children's centres:

- Wembley Primary School Children's Centre
- Preston Park Children's Centre

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