

# Redbridge North Group 2 Children's Centre Group

114 Huntsman Road, Hainault, Essex IG6 3SY

<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 January 2015
Previous inspection date	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 children's centre group is good.

- Most families are registered with the group and use its services until their needs are met. The large majority of families from priority target groups benefit well from the services provided by all three children's centres that form the group.
- The quality of information sharing between the centre group and its partners is highly effective. As a result, the needs of families are accurately and swiftly identified before being matched to the most appropriate service for support.
- Partnership working is productive and enables the group to promote a wide range of good quality services and support that benefits families, particularly those with the most needs.
- Most eligible two-year-old children access free early education places. Staff effectively monitor the children's progress and provide any additional support that is needed in the settings to ensure these children achieve well.
- The safeguarding of families is a high priority. Staff work conscientiously with a range of partner organisations, particularly those from health and social care, to reduce the risk of harm to children and families.
- Leaders, managers and those responsible for governance are highly effective. With the backing of a strong advisory board, leaders and managers implement effective strategies to ensure the group continually improves the impact of its work and ensures positive outcomes for families.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Not enough parents access adult learning courses or develop work-related skills through volunteering. This limits the opportunities parents have to improve their economic circumstances and life chances.
- The monitoring of children's progress during activities at the centre is not precise enough to ensure children's learning and development are supported as effectively as possible.

**What does the centre group need to do to improve further?**

- Increase the proportion of parents who participate in adult learning courses or training and access volunteering opportunities so that at least the large majority improve their economic well-being and life chances.
- Ensure children's learning and development progress at a good rate by improving the quality of record keeping and extending the use of learning journals, so that they reflect precisely what children can do and what they need to do next.

**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 local authority leaders and managers, managers and staff from the children's centre group, and representatives from partner organisations such as health, education, employment support and social care. They also met parents and members of the advisory board.

The inspectors visited all centres in the group and observed activities such as aerobics and 'Stay and Play' which was jointly observed with the deputy manager.

The inspection covered the following children's centres: Hainault, Forest and Fulwell Cross.

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

Parents views were taken into account from discussions with them, from evaluations they completed, from analysis of the 'You Said We Did' board and from satisfaction surveys.

**Inspection team**

Priscilla McGuire, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Anthony Mundy	Additional inspector
Rob Mottram	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about the group

Redbridge North Group 2 consists of three children's centres: Hainault, Fulwell and Forest. Hainault Children's Centre is the main 'hub' for the group. It shares its site with Hainault Children's Centre nursery (URN 287285) which is separately managed and subject to a separate inspection. The report for the nursery can be found at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

The group is managed directly by the local authority which is supported by the advisory board. Most activities are delivered from Hainault Children's Centre where most staff are also based. The group manager has responsibility for day-to-day operations and is supported by the deputy manager. Staff work across all three children's centres.

Hainault is located in a deprived ward which has one of the highest number of workless households in the borough. Around a third of children live in households dependent on workless benefits. Fulwell is located in Fulwell Cross library and Forest is based in an offsite centre in a Scouts' building. The area is ethnically diverse but the largest single ethnic group are families of White British heritage.

Services offered by the group include early years activities, family support, health services, employment support, adult learning and welfare advice. Most services are provided at the centres but some are provided in schools and libraries.

There are 2,595 children under five years of age living in the area served by the group. On entry to early years education, children's skills, knowledge and abilities are generally typical for their age.

The centres' main priority target groups are children and families who live in workless or low income households, and lone parents with young children.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

**Good**

- As a result of the determined efforts of staff, registration rates have improved significantly and doubled over the last year. Most families are now known and are registered with the centre group. The large majority of children and families from priority target groups such as lone parents and those from low income and workless households make good use of services until their needs are met.
- Families expecting children also have good opportunities to access relevant services that meet their needs. For example, many increase their understanding of how to improve their health and that of their babies by attending sessions such as pre-natal yoga.
- Centre staff are aware that a small minority of families choose to use a centre in another borough that is nearer to their homes, rather than any of the centres in the locality. However, as part of the highly effective strategies to closely monitor participation rates of all families, the centre manager shares data with the 'external' centre, sits on its advisory board and regularly liaises with its staff.
- Communication between the group and its partners is highly effective. Through the locality partnership forum, case discussions and multi-agency meetings the centres share information and data exceptionally well with a range of partners from different organisations, such as those representing health, education, social care, charities and the community.
- The marketing and promotion of services are well planned and effective. With the support of the manager of the local authority's Family Information Direct Service (FIND), and through the provision of services and information available in schools and clinics, the group successfully reaches families who may otherwise be reluctant to use its services.

- All eligible three- and four-year-olds access free early years provision and most eligible two-year-olds access places. The centre works effectively with early years partners and closely monitors the progress of two-year-old children. Staff provide settings with support to ensure any barriers to the children's development are minimised.

### The quality of practice and services

**Good**

- The group offers a good range and balance of high quality activities. Some such as 'stay and play' are open to all families and others such as 'the young parent café' are targeted at specific families. Activities provided contribute well to the continually increasing number of families whose well-being and lives improve as a direct result of their engagement with the centre.
- Staff and the partners they work with, such as those from health, schools and social care, thoroughly and accurately assess families' needs. As a result of these effective assessments, families are well matched to the most appropriate service, and outcomes for them are good.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year is in line with that seen nationally. Staff work well with schools to help children prepare for the transition from the centres to nursery or primary school. For example, in response to specific needs identified by schools, the group provides effective potty-training workshop sessions both within centres and also at schools.
- Breastfeeding cafes, healthy-eating sessions and exercise classes offered by the group help families learn how to live healthy lives. As a result, the group contributes well to declining obesity rates and the high breastfeeding rate, which is above the national average.
- Systems to monitor and track children's progress during centre group activities are not yet rigorous enough. For example, learning journeys are used well to describe children's participation in activities. However, not enough is recorded in journals about the 'next steps' individual children need to take to assist their good learning and development.
- Through effective liaison with the local authority's Early Intervention Team and Common Assessment Framework Team, staff play a key role in minimising risks to the safety of families. They use the Common Assessment Framework procedures well to ensure families, particularly those with the most needs, receive early and appropriate support from a wide range of external agencies.
- Case files are maintained to a high standard and are well organised. Files include 'planned outcomes' for families, which are frequently monitored to assess families' progress against these outcomes. Files are regularly audited and areas for improvement clearly identified and acted on.
- Although partnership links with appropriate education and employment support partners are in place, not enough parents participate in formal adult learning courses or benefit from volunteering. This limits the opportunities parents have to improve their employability and increase their life chances.

### The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

**Good**

- Leadership, management and governance of the group are highly effective. Senior managers within the local authority, the group's manager and deputy manager are all equally aspirational and they strive for excellence. This is reflected in the way they invest well in staff's continuous professional development and training to ensure staff remain highly competent and well focused on improving the outcomes for local families.
- Governance is strong. Through effective performance management arrangements and scrutiny of data, senior managers and advisory board members ensure the group is held to account. The local authority sets measureable targets for improvement which are well met and in some cases exceeded by the group. Comparison of data shows, for example, that the group is doing better than the borough in helping to narrow the educational achievement gap for children and reducing inequalities.
- Checks on the group's performance through activities such as the 'annual conversation' are thorough and provide an accurate overview of the group's effectiveness. They identify the strengths

of the group and the steps staff need to take to bring improvement. Performance reviews are enhanced by the role of a 'critical friend' who is a member of the advisory board. She periodically visits the centres to review and report back to the board on the quality and impact of activities.

- The group's partnership work is highly effective. Staff constantly seek out opportunities to build relationships with new partners who can contribute to the group's aims. As a result of productive links with partners such as those from health, education and housing, families have good access to a wide range of services and support.
- Through the lead role of the deputy manager on a domestic violence panel and the group's exemplary links with social care staff, safeguarding is very much at the heart of the group's work. Safeguarding requirements are well met. Appropriate policies have been developed and are regularly reviewed through an annual 'safeguarding and welfare' audit. Families whose children are subject to child protection plans or whose children have been identified as in need also receive good support.
- Managers work hard to maximise the use of resources to ensure positive outcomes for families. For example, by obtaining specialist support from early years outdoor play specialists, staff have developed the outdoor play area at Hainault into themed areas. These link play with different aspects of learning and enhance the quality of children's development. In addition, when appropriate, staff work collaboratively with partners to obtain additional funding that is used to enhance services. For example, aerobics sessions are being provided as a result of a joint bid with the leisure department within the local authority.

**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.

**Group details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	80137
<b>Local authority</b>	Redbridge
<b>Inspection number</b>	454070
<b>Managed by</b>	The local authority
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	2,595
<b>Centre leader</b>	Neetu Chahil
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8708 9286
<b>Email address</b>	Neetu.chahil@redbridge.gov.uk

**This group consists of the following children's centres:**

- 21342 Hainault Children's Centre
- 21225 Forest Children's Centre
- 21225 Fulwell Children's Centre

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