



Fawood Children's Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101490
LEA Brent LEA
Inspection number 276523
Inspection dates 15 June 2006 to 15 June 2006
Reporting inspector Jane Wotherspoon HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery	School address	35 Fawood Avenue
School category	Community		London
Age range of pupils	3 to 5		NW10 8DX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02089659334
Number on roll	42	Fax number	02084536549
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Pat Turner
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Ms Sarah Neno

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. A Childcare Inspector carried out a separate inspection of the day care at the same time. Her report is appended.

Description of the school

The centre serves an area of high social deprivation and wide ethnic and cultural diversity. It was set up by the local authority, in place of an existing nursery school, as part of a regeneration programme and was partially funded by the local housing trust. Its unusual building won design awards and was opened in October 2004. The high rise blocks around it are due for demolition and many flats are empty. Half the centre's children are learning English as an additional language. Three quarters are eligible for free school meals, a very high proportion. The number identified as having learning difficulties is high. The centre houses a unit with 10 places for children with autism and the unit's staff provide support to schools across the local authority.

Additional services for the community are still developing but include family learning, child-minding groups and adult classes. The centre provides day care for 12 children aged two or three. Its facility to offer additional care for the nursery children is not used widely by parents. The centre has undergone significant staff changes since its designation as a children's centre in March 2005, including changes at senior leadership level and a large increase in the number of staff.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors' view of the centre's effectiveness matches that of the staff: it is satisfactory and gives satisfactory value for money. It has the potential to be good but is not there yet. This is because there is more to do to gain consistency in practice and to sharpen systems for assessing what children know, and for using that information in planning activities. To a great extent, the inconsistencies reflect the relative newness of the provision and the staff changes that have taken place over the last 15 months.

Children are making good progress in their personal development and satisfactory progress in other areas of learning. They enjoy coming to the centre and develop positive attitudes to learning. Children behave well. They are developing the skills of independence and confidence that will help them as they move on to school. Teaching is satisfactory with good practice to share more widely. There is scope to improve the precision in the planning of the broad range of activities on offer. Staff care effectively for the children, supported by close liaison with external partners such as health services.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher gives a good lead for developing the centre to meet the needs of the community and to strengthen community links. Systems for monitoring the quality of the provision are secure and identify accurately what is effective and what needs to improve. The role of other staff in evaluating the centre's effectiveness is still developing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of planning, for both adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves, to ensure that there is always a clear focus for learning
- Rationalise the procedures for observing what children know and can do to ensure that observations identify the next steps in their learning and make better use of this information when planning activities
- Develop the roles of curriculum leaders in monitoring and evaluating provision and the progress children make.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The majority of children start at the centre with skills that are well below those expected for their age. Their personal, social and emotional development and their language skills are particularly weak. Despite making good progress in their personal development and satisfactory progress in other areas of learning, many have skills that are below expectations. Children in the early stages of learning English make good progress in developing a simple vocabulary to be able to make themselves understood and to be able to follow instructions. All children learn to listen to others and gain confidence in speaking although some have speech that is not clear. The centre's assessment

information shows that children make less progress in learning about the world around them and in exploring different materials creatively. As a result, staff are planning more activities to help children develop these skills and knowledge. Children with learning difficulties make at least satisfactory progress. Those who have additional specialist support in the unit make good progress given their complex needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Their attitudes to learning are generally positive and they enjoy coming to the centre. Many concentrate for a long time, given their age. They get engrossed, for example, in a puzzle or in building a tower from blocks. Relationships with each other and with adults are secure. Children settle well to routines and their confidence grows, though a few are a little more wary of talking to visitors. Children behave well and are learning to share and take turns. They are encouraged to be independent in choosing activities for themselves and in deciding when to take their healthy snack. Children are aware of how to stay safe on their regular outings and, for example, use tools with care. They know that they have to take responsibility for helping to tidy up spillages, such as the green spaghetti, and learn to put away the equipment when they have finished with it. Attendance is satisfactory; some persistent latecomers and children whose attendance is poor are monitored carefully by the centre. Children are developing an awareness of themselves, of others, and of the world around them through, for example, watering the plants they are growing and through well chosen stories read to them by the adults. As one child said after story time, 'I like all the creatures in the world'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory with examples of good practice, especially in the unit. There are strengths in the way staff support children to gain confidence, boost their self esteem and foster positive attitudes to learning. They deal sensitively with children who are upset or distressed. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and create a calm, productive atmosphere.

Some variability in the quality of planning by the adults stems from their different levels of expertise and knowledge. Although staff plan in teams to share their expertise, not all plans are uniformly clear about the purpose of each activity. Nor do plans show how activities can be adapted for children's different learning needs, based on what they already know and can do. In practice, some staff are adept at modifying activities depending on the children's response. However, this level of skill is not widespread and some staff need more direction about how activities can be simplified or extended. Occasionally, activities are over-directed by the adults, who miss opportunities to

develop children's learning through asking them a range of questions. These areas for development have already been recognised and are being tackled through staff training and support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Staff plan a broad range of activities, including regular outings, with children's interests at heart. They also plan themes and activities that make effective links across the areas of learning. However, staff do not monitor closely enough what activities children choose, to ensure that they experience the wide range on offer. The strong emphasis on language development, through activities such as circle time and story time, is successful. Staff readily engage children in conversation and foster an enjoyment of stories. However, few children choose writing and drawing activities and these do not receive enough emphasis.

Staff have worked hard to get to grips with the design of the building. They are still experimenting with placing activities in the most appropriate location to make the best use of the space. They are yet to meet fully the challenge of finding ways to display children's work on the metal surfaces, to soften the hard lines of the building's interior and to create smaller spaces for quiet activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Although care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, there are many strengths in this aspect of the centre's work. Staff have created a caring atmosphere which helps children to develop positive relationships. Systems to help children settle into the centre are good. Home visits give staff important information about the children before they start, and encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning. Many parents take advantage of the centre's services.

The centre consults outside agencies regularly and uses the on-site expertise of the unit staff very effectively. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties across the centre is satisfactory. Specialist provision in the unit is good because of the very thorough diagnosis of the children's specific needs. Close liaison with health services promotes children's wellbeing. Their welfare is safeguarded by the clear procedures in place for child protection. All staff are carefully checked for their suitability to work with children. Children are helped to keep safe and healthy choices are encouraged. Behaviour management is effective in ensuring children show respect for each other.

Staff make very careful and regular observations of children as they settle into centre life. However, observations of their academic achievements and progress are not sufficiently frequent and do not identify clearly enough the next steps in children's learning. The children's records of achievement are potentially helpful. However, not all are up-to-date as a result of staff absences and observations do not cover the breadth of the curriculum. This limits their usefulness in planning and tracking children's progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and has been instrumental in ensuring the success of the centre in the early stages of its planning and development. She has effectively overseen the huge changes involved in extending the provision with a clear determination to develop an integrated service for the community. In this, she has been supported well by governors, the local authority and, latterly, a new deputy.

The vision for the development of the centre is set out clearly in the improvement plan and based firmly on an accurate analysis of what is working effectively and what needs further improvement. Parents' views are surveyed and incorporated in the plan. Community links are growing stronger through the additional services. The scope and variety of these is developing well though few have been in place long enough for the impact on the children's learning to be measured.

The staff team work together effectively. Curriculum leaders are not yet playing a major part in monitoring the quality of provision and in identifying what needs improving next. These roles are new and still evolving. The centre is well placed to move forward into the next phase of development in which procedures and systems become embedded fully in practice.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Children

It was lovely to see you all enjoying yourselves at the centre. You have some fun things to do.

These things are good and made us smile.:) All the adults look after you well.:) You all play together and behave sensibly.:) You are good at sharing and taking turns with things.:) You are good at clearing up when the green spaghetti goes on the floor. :) You like listening to stories.:) There are lots of activities for the grown-ups to do at your centre.

We have asked the adults to do these things better* The way they plan your activities* The way they watch what you are learning while you play* The way they check up what you have learnt.

Best wishes from your visitors,

Jane Wotherspoon

Her Majesty's Inspector