

# Curzon Crescent Children's Centre

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101489
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brent
<b>Inspection number</b>	286080
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6-7 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jane Wotherspoon HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	0-5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	102
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Abbey Odunsi
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs A R Foord
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 March 2002
<b>School address</b>	Curzon Crescent London NW10 9SD
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8459 6813
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8459 6903

---

<b>Age group</b>	0-5
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6-7 June 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	286080

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The provision for day care was not inspected at this time.

## Description of the school

Curzon Crescent Children's Centre serves an area of high deprivation. Over half the children are eligible for free school meals. Children come from a wide range of cultural and minority ethnic backgrounds. Black African and Black Caribbean are the largest groups. Half the children are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language with 23 different languages spoken in all. About a third of children have been identified as having initial learning difficulties; roughly half have problems socialising with others and half have speech and language difficulties.

The change of status from a nursery school to a children's centre occurred in March 2006. Sure Start services, previously operating elsewhere in the local authority, came to the centre in May 2006. Childcare provision for children under three years old was established at the site in summer 2005 and operates from 8am-6pm for 48 weeks per year. The centre also offers wraparound care for nursery children and crand;egrave;che facilities for the children of parents taking one of the many adult classes and parenting courses available at the centre. The wide range of health professionals and family support services currently operating from the centre includes speech and language support and, until recently, antenatal support. Some of these services are being cut back as a result of decisions being made by the local authority and the Primary Care Trust. Central commissioning of some services will start in July although it is not yet clear what will be available at the centre.

The headteacher of the nursery school became the acting head of centre until the appointment was made permanent in February 2007. The governing body was re-constituted and extended in November 2006; many governors are new. In preparation for becoming a centre, the site has undergone major building work that impinged on the space for three to four-year-olds. The number of staff working at the centre has grown considerably. The centre's extended services have been overseen by a temporary part-time manager and the nursery's deputy headteacher retired last Christmas. As a result, the senior leadership team has been seriously depleted. Two new senior staff will join the centre in September. The provision has not been inspected since its designation as a children's centre.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Curzon Crescent Children's Centre is accurate in judging itself as satisfactory with good features. The last two years have been a time of huge change and development from a nursery school into a children's centre that provides education, care and a range of community services. Families who use the additional services and parenting courses recognise the value of the support they receive. The head has worked tirelessly, and almost single-handedly, to develop the centre by bringing together a broad range of services. Despite a severely depleted leadership team, the leadership and management of the centre are satisfactory and testament to the dedication and determination of the head and the commitment of staff and the new governing body to see the development through. The appointment of two new staff to strengthen the senior leadership team from September means that the centre is poised to move forward rapidly. There is more to do to bring the services together and to devise systems for monitoring the quality of the whole provision and to evaluate the impact of the additional services on outcomes for children and their families.

Staff in the nursery have continued to work together to maintain a satisfactory level of teaching and curriculum provision during the changes. The quality of care for children is good. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the care and support that staff provide and the progress their children make. Given that over half responded to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection, parents' favourable views are all the more meaningful. Children make good progress in their personal development because staff set up a range of activities that foster their independence and social skills effectively. Children's behaviour is good and positive relationships contribute much to their well-being.

Given their starting points, children make satisfactory progress in developing their language and mathematical skills and good progress in physical and creative skills. Staff plan a broad range of learning opportunities that children greatly enjoy but do not monitor their choices carefully enough to ensure they have a balance of activities. Planning, assessment and record keeping systems are kept under regular review. Planning systems are unwieldy and time consuming to complete and lack clarity and detail about the purpose of the activities children choose. Training for staff to improve the quality of interventions to extend children's learning is meeting with some success but there is scope to improve these further. Variation in the quality and regularity of the observations staff make on children's learning result in an incomplete picture of children's progress over time.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen planning so that it is clear what children are expected to learn from the activities they choose themselves and so that adults know how to intervene to extend children's learning.
- Strengthen systems for assessing what children learn and for tracking their progress over time.
- Develop the leadership and management roles of the new team, including the strategic role of governors, in strengthening the services and in monitoring the impact of the whole provision.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Initial assessments of children show that many join the centre with skills and knowledge below that expected of most three-year-olds. A number of children find it difficult to make relationships with others and several have speech and language difficulties. A high proportion speak little English. As a result, developing children's language is a high priority for staff. By this stage of the year, many children, including those learning English as an additional language, are gaining confidence to engage in conversation with adults and each other, though some remain quiet. Children enjoy stories. They retell favourites, such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', and learn good habits by regularly taking home library books and story sacks. They have fewer opportunities to learn about sounds and letters and to play at early writing activities.

Mathematical development is a current focus for staff and children's counting skills are developing soundly. However, mathematics does not have a high profile in the general activities that children choose. All children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Children's creative and physical skills are good. Many take meticulous care when choosing different materials to make collages, for example, and in using small tools such as scissors and knives carefully. They enjoy exploring their environment and examining things they find in the garden, and are especially adept at using computers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enjoy coming to the centre and attend regularly. They get much pleasure from learning that is fun, such as throwing cotton reels into a bucket or watching bubbles floating through the air. Their attitudes to learning are positive and they initiate their own activities as well as participating readily in those that are available. They run outside in the fresh air with a sense of freedom to clamber on the new equipment and to explore the garden. The activities are physically challenging so the children learn to experiment, to be adventurous and to find their own physical limitations. This teaches them to take responsibility for using equipment safely as well as about being healthy. Regular snacks of fruit and water taken at will and healthy food at lunchtime combine with a growing understanding about personal hygiene.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Children's behaviour is good. They sustain a high level of concentration for their age and are not reliant on close adult supervision. They get along together well and are learning to take turns and share equipment. Children readily take responsibility for tidying up resources. Staff listen to their views and children are encouraged to think about the things they like doing and to make decisions for themselves. They demonstrate a good level of independence in following the well established routines and making choices. These are all skills that will help them as they move on to school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers create a calm atmosphere for learning where positive relationships help children feel confident and secure. Resources are organised so that children exercise choice and independence. Children's behaviour is managed effectively and those that have difficulty following instructions and socialising with others are managed very sensitively.

Planning for focused, adult-led activities is thorough and detailed but it is not always clear what children are intended to learn from the activities they choose for themselves. As a result, adults do not always intervene appropriately in these activities to extend the children's learning. At times, for example, adults miss opportunities to show children how they should role play. Staff are being trained to ask open questions but not all are fully confident in this approach. The short sessions when children are in large groups, for example for a story, are not always successful in meeting the range of children's needs. Centre staff are aware that some more able children could be challenged more.

Systems for observing children are continuing to evolve. Records show that not all children are observed and assessed regularly in all areas of learning. Some variability in the quality of the assessment notes means that children's targets are not always directly linked to the assessments. Focused tasks are not always thoroughly evaluated to identify the next steps in learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Staff give children a wide range of interesting things to do that encourages their independence and contributes much to their personal development. Opportunities to explore the immediate environment add greatly to their enjoyment of learning, as do visits to places of interest and walks around the local area. Celebrating the wide range of cultural events and festivals is central to the centre's philosophy and support's children's understanding of the wider world. Planned activities cover all the areas of learning with a strong focus on creative and physical development. The outside facilities are used particularly well to promote social development and a healthy, active lifestyle. There is scope to provide further opportunities to experience activities that promote literacy and mathematical knowledge, especially for those children who may be capable of doing more. Systems for tracking what children choose are not rigorous enough to ensure that all take good advantage of the broad curriculum on offer.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents are right to be confident that their children are looked after well by staff. Procedures for vetting staff and safeguarding children meet requirements. Children's health, safety and well-being are supported effectively by the good relationships shared by adults and children. Home visits get children and families off to a good start. Children settle quickly. Their social, emotional and learning needs are diagnosed early to ensure that staff can provide appropriate support and intervention. The good support for children learning English as an additional language is complemented by the very effective support and guidance from the speech and language therapist based at the centre. Staff draw effectively on the professionals based at the centre to promote children's health and well being, and to provide support and guidance to their families. Although parents make good use of the extended services, it is too early to evaluate the impact that such support has had on the outcomes for children.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The head has worked very hard to get the centre's services established and to bring together staff from different services, with different expectations, qualifications and terms and conditions

of employment. With a weakened leadership team due to staff vacancies, this has resulted in a heavy workload. She has a strong determination and clear vision for the development of the centre. The improvement plan contains the right priorities to develop the centre into a focus for the community.

While the head's time and energy has been focused on developing the centre she has been diverted from the previously well established and rigorous monitoring of the nursery provision. Staff in the nursery have continued to work together to sustain a satisfactory level of provision while supporting some new staff, but the provision has not moved forward. The head uses information from children's assessments to identify strengths and areas for improvement. She recognises the scope to develop further the systems for tracking children progress over time and following this through by monitoring the whole provision.

The re-constituted governing body is supportive and keen to see the centre become a successful focus for the community. Many are attending training for their new roles. Governors' role in holding the nursery to account for the quality of provision has not been a priority while much of the recent business has focused on developing the centre's services. In particular, unravelling the complex financial situation associated with the variety of sources of funding has been time consuming.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Curzon Crescent Children's Centre, London, NW10 9SD

We enjoyed meeting you when we came to visit the centre. We had a lovely time. We think you are lucky to have such a wonderful space outside.

We think that these things are good:

:) you look after your friends:) the adults look after you well:) your behaviour is good :) you enjoy nursery and try new things:) you are happy at nursery:) you run around to stay healthy

We have asked the adults to:

- plan things to help you learn even more
- watch how well you do things
- check that things are good for everyone

With best wishes

Jane Wotherspoon HMI