

# Inspection report for North Isleworth Children's Centre

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Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	22178
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Reporting inspector	Philip Mann HMI

Centre governance	Local Authority
Centre leader	Alison Collins
Date of previous inspection	n/a
Centre address	West Thames College. Heath House, London Road, Isleworth, TW7 4HS
Telephone number	0208 3266380
Fax number	n/a
Email address	alison.collins@west-thames.ac.uk

Linked school if applicable	n/a
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	West Thames College Nursery

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
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## Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Early Years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with centre staff, representatives from the West Thames College, local authority, health services and parents.

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

## Information about the centre

North Isleworth children's centre is 70% stand alone children's centre designated in March 2007. It is managed by the local authority in partnership with the West Thames College. It is located in an urban area with pockets of significant deprivation. The local population is very mixed with well above average numbers of families where English is not the first language.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

### Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

3

### Capacity for sustained improvement

The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management

2

## Main findings

Overall effectiveness is satisfactory. However, the centre is quickly becoming a hub for the improvement of outcomes within the local area. This is because the children's centre manager demonstrates a clear vision for the overall improvement of provision and this is fully shared with staff and some key stakeholders. A strong sense of teamwork exists among newly appointed, well qualified and active staff who are keen to provide the best possible provision for users within the reach area and beyond. There has been a concerted effort to identify weaknesses in provision and recent changes are already mirrored in improving outcomes for all users. Clear structures and procedures are now in place to support future development. As a result, capacity to improve further is good because there is clear evidence of positive impact on the quality of provision and development of teamwork.

Outcomes for all users are satisfactory overall. Health outcomes for users are good and improving. Families appropriately use universal services such as health visitor clinics and specialist services such speech and language therapy. Parents overwhelmingly say how well the provision helps them improve the health of themselves and their children, particularly for young parents and those with English as an additional language. Parents attending the 'Stay and Play report that they feel safe while attending the centre and that their children are happy to be there.

The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development is good. Comments and feedback from parents confirm that levels of satisfaction are high. Those fathers that have recently taken part in courses such as the 'Baby Talk and Play Group' and mothers taking the baby massage course speak very highly about the impact they have had on their babies' development and their own well-being. Children behave well in centre-based sessions and activities. They respond well to adult support and happily interact with other children. For instance, very young children display a sense of awe and wonder in catching bubbles during the 'Musical Steps' session for parents and toddlers. Parents and carers are starting to contribute positively to the future development of the children's centre activities and sessions. However, few parents from some identified vulnerable groups and parents and/or children with special educational needs and/or

disabilities attend sessions and the overall numbers of children attending from the reach area are relatively small.

Staff actively promote purposeful learning and enjoyment for all users. The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Experienced and well trained staff provide good role models in managing children's behaviour, improving exercise and setting high ambitions for all users of the centre. Good links exist with external agencies to provide information informally about their most vulnerable groups and information relating to the local area. However, assessment information is not used effectively to ensure the most vulnerable groups are identified and provision made to support better outcomes for children. The overall range of services is currently satisfactory. Attendance is high but there is not enough provision to meet demand and few new facilities for established users to move on to. However, further sessions are planned in readiness for the newly acquired outreach worker to carefully target the most vulnerable and hard to reach families.

The quality of care for young children, parents and carers is good. Safeguarding procedures are robust and applied effectively. Staff at the centre know the users very well. Parents, including fathers and isolated new parents, say that they are treated as individuals. Secure partnerships exist with other agencies and clear protocols regarding working practices, such as general information sharing, safeguarding procedures and effective signposting to each other's services are established.

The centre is inclusive. Health services have clear systems in place to ensure users who do not speak English as their first language can access information. These users state that they feel welcome at the setting and that staff help them to complete registration forms, taking the time to inform them about activities and events. Positive images of people in the community are displayed to promote a welcoming environment for all users. Fathers report that they feel welcome and benefit from attending the sessions planned for them.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. Strategic planning is detailed but self-evaluation is at an early stage of development. Data are yet to be used systematically to identify the most vulnerable users and families in the reach area. Furthermore, leaders are yet to use a full range evaluative data and information to support future improvement planning. However, the centre increasingly seeks the views of users about the quality of provision and involves them in planning through informal and formal evaluations.

## What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

To improve the outcomes for all users the centre should;

- make better use of data to both increase the quantity and variety of provision in

order to meet the needs of a wider range of users

- ensure self-evaluation is systematic and used effectively to inform future planning.

## How good are outcomes for users?

3

Parents appreciate the access to health support from the 'Stay and Play' groups. They say their children now eat and sleep better following the guidance they receive from the exceptionally positive and caring health visitor and play workers. Parents say their children enjoy eating an ever increasing range of fruits at snack time giving them more healthy options to try at home. The vulnerable families in the new communities group benefit from well integrated health services with play and guidance at the centre. However, services are not developed enough for adults or children with specific health needs and despite good support to young parents the rate of teenage conceptions is recognised locally as rising again.

Children's understanding of safety is enhanced through participation in regular fire drills and events arranged by the centre, such as road safety awareness. High regard is given to promoting safety at the setting. Staff undertake annual risk assessments and daily safety checks of the environment and resources prior to users attending. The use of the common assessment framework is yet to be fully established. Staff are yet to attend common assessment framework training but are supported by the early intervention team and the social worker who work within this system.

Children who participate in centre based activities display a sense of happiness and enjoyment within a well resourced environment, enabling them to make good progress in all areas of learning. Furthermore, the centre provides a catalyst for the development of childminding skills within the local area with positive impact on outcomes for other young children evident. Relationships are good and staff model positive behaviour very well to all users. The parent forum and representation on the advisory board is providing opportunities for increased participation in decision making and governance. However, systematic methods for gathering views from all groups of users within the reach area about future improvements to the quality and range of provision are at an early stage of development. The development of children's skills for the future and parents' economic well-being is satisfactory.

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	3
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and	3

governance of the centre	
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	3

### How good is the provision?

3

The overall quality of provision is satisfactory with some good features. Appropriate use is made of assessment procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of current services and activities for parents and children. As a result, services have been extended, such as the nutritionist now running short courses for parents and the 'Musical Steps' session now a regular activity. The children's centre has made a good start at assessing the needs of users through both written and verbal suggestions or evaluations of services linked to the centre's activity rationale and outcome summary. Centre leaders are now in a position to use 'estart' data effectively to locate users in the most deprived areas.

The quality of planned activities is good. Recent staff appointments are facilitating the rapid development of sessions to promote purposeful learning, particularly around speech development. Well designed planning folders for sessions celebrate the achievement of children and parents through photographs and written comments. The quality of adult input into sessions is good or better with some outstanding practice evident. Activities are tailored to the needs of individual children and adults, including fathers and vulnerable groups such as refugees. The new communities group gives high quality health promotion services that are integrated to social care, safeguarding, education, community cohesion and economic well-being provision to meet the needs of the borough. The New Communities group is a good provision contributing to an adequate timetable of provision overall. However, the promotion of activities through outreach work is at an early stage of development and guidance on smoking, drugs and sexual health is quite limited.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	2
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	2

### How effective are the leadership and management?

3

Leadership and management of the children's centre are satisfactory and improving rapidly. Through the dedication of the centre manager performance has been consolidated and a trend of improvement established. The advisory board is clear about its roles and responsibilities and the partnership agreement clearly identifies lines of accountability between key partners. Day to day management is good. Policies and procedures are clearly understood by centre staff and staff from outside agencies. The local authority recognises the potential of the centre in raising the quality of child care within the local area.

Clear links exist between strategic planning and service provision, but as yet these are not closely linked to financial resources. Formal quality assurance procedures are yet to be implemented in order to provide a solid foundation for the accurate diagnosis of strengths and areas for future development. Comprehensive data supplied by the local authority provide a useful baseline about the reach area. Combined with the children's centre's own initial needs analysis this provides a suitable starting point for further improvement. However, centre leadership is yet to fully analyse this data to identify the more vulnerable users and tailor activities to meet their needs.

Generally good use is made of high quality accommodation that is clean and safe. Some activities for small groups take place in excellent surroundings of the sensory room in the partner West Thames College Nursery. Staff deployment is effective within the current programme of activities. Centre leadership recognises that even better use can be made of available time to reduce waiting lists and target more vulnerable users. Parents state that they feel good partnerships have been established with other professionals to support their needs. However, some key partners such as Jobcentre Plus, faith groups, schools and local business are yet to play an active role in promoting high quality provision responsive to local needs.

Secure procedures exist to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Clear protocols are implemented by staff and other agencies that work in the centre regarding reporting any concerns relating to children's welfare or possible abuse. Staff are able to identify the designated person and clear policies and procedures are in place which include procedures to be followed if an allegation made against staff. Case notes confirm staff take prompt action when concerned about any potential child abuse or if parents discuss concerns regarding their children's development or health, helping to safeguard their welfare and well-being.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	3
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	3
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and	3



effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	3
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	2
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	3

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## Summary for centre users

Dear Parents

We inspected the North Isleworth Children's Centre on 9–10 June 2010. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Under the good guidance of Mrs Collins the staff work as team to provide good levels of care, guidance, and support for all of you who use the centre. We were impressed with their keenness to support both your children's development and your own skills and confidence. They give good guidance on how to be healthy and safe.

North Isleworth Children's Centre is a safe place for you to bring your child. The rooms are welcoming and allow your children to play happily while they learn indoors or outside in the lovely garden area. All of the children are making good progress in several areas of their development.

The centre provides a good place for you to meet other parents and people who can help you and your families. The staff are starting to use information to plan more activities for you and your children to get involved with. In the future they are going to use this information to plan more activities and make sure more parents and children use the centre.

We would like to thank all of you who found time to talk to us and we wish you and your families the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann

Her Majesty's Inspector

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).