

Inspection report for Edith Kerrison Children's Centre

Local authority	Newham
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Linked school if applicable	Edith Kerrison Nursery School, URN 102700
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Edith Kerrison Children Centre, EY 422990

The inspection of this Sure Start children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

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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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, senior leadership team, members of the governing body, staff, and representatives from the local authority. They also spoke with partner agencies, including those from the health service, parents, carers and other users of the centre. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

Edith Kerrison Children's Centre is in an area of regeneration in east London which has seen much demographic change over the past few years. There are a high number of families seeking refugee and asylum. It serves an ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse community. Approximately one third of the families in its reach area are from White British heritage. The other largest groups are of Black African and Eastern European heritage. There are high levels of social and economic deprivation in the locality. The centre is in one of the top 5% most deprived wards in the country. The proportions of workless households and residents in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance are high. Incomes amongst those who are in employment are lower than the London average. The knowledge, skills and understanding of children entering the early years provision in the nursery are generally well below those expected for their age.

The centre shares a site with Edith Kerrison Maintained Nursery School and Rosetta Primary School. It was designated in March 2008 and implemented the full core offer in March 2010. Services are provided at the centre's purpose-built facility and other venues in the locality. The centre manager, who took up post in November 2010, is also the headteacher of the nursery school. She is supported in the day-to-day running of the centre by the children's centre coordinator. The centre is managed by the governing body of the nursery school. Advice and assistance is provided by the

children’s centre committee which includes partners and users. Ofsted registration of the centre’s childcare for 2–3-year-olds was completed in February 2011.

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

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

Users are rightly proud of their children’s centre. They value the varied, practical programme of activities, good quality resources and ‘friendly staff who always engage so well with the children’. They unanimously say that the centre understands and meets their diverse needs well, listens to their views and ensures everyone has equal opportunities to participate. For example, crèche facilities are provided during adult learning courses and a good range of activities are available on Saturdays for those who cannot participate during the week. Those with specific needs, in particular, families of children with physical development delay and adults who speak little or no English, are provided with good-quality specialist support. This carefully planned provision makes a significant contribution to improving the skills, knowledge and enjoyment of children and their families. Consequently, outcomes are good.

A welcoming, attractive environment, well-advertised services and effective outreach work in the community have increased the number of users who are benefiting from what the centre has to offer. There has been notable success in reaching those who are hard to engage. One parent said, ‘It’s a lovely place to meet up.’ Good advice, guidance and support contribute to the trusting relationships that the centre team successfully establish with users, including those who are vulnerable or feel isolated. For example, one user who was new to the area described the centre as a ‘real life-line’.

Strong, integrated teamwork and common procedures between the children’s centre and nursery school ensure continuity and a smooth transition for parents, carers and children. A high priority is given to ensuring the centre’s users are well cared for and understand how to keep themselves and their families safe. Robust procedures to safeguard them are implemented effectively by well-trained staff. Good multi-agency working and strong partnerships, for example with health professionals and housing, provide a cohesive service that is helping to protect parents, carers and children,

including those at risk of harm.

The leadership of the centre is good. Members of the new leadership team work well together and have a detailed understanding of the local community. They use this knowledge to good effect when shaping services. For example, targeted activity, in partnership with a community childcare charity, to increase the number of childminders in the area has been successful. Childminder skills have been enhanced and a strong childminder network established. This has contributed to improving the quality of childcare available to parents, particularly those in employment or seeking to return to work.

Senior leaders regularly seek feedback from users which has given them an accurate understanding of what works well and what is less effective. From this, they have identified appropriate next steps for improvement. They receive an abundance of data from the local authority and other partners, such as health. However, leaders at all levels, including governors, have not yet established a manageable system to bring all the information together. As a result, their evaluation of the impact of services on outcomes for all groups of users, including over time, is not yet robust. Consequently, although the centre's development plan is linked to the local authority strategic priorities, it lacks ambitious, centre-specific targets and does not include quantifiable measures of success. Nor does it identify who is responsible for implementing, monitoring and evaluating actions. Leaders recognise that these areas need to be developed. However, this, and the limited challenge currently provided by the local authority and governors, means that, although the overall effectiveness of the centre is good, its demonstrable capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory rather than good.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Strengthen leadership capacity at all levels to improve further by:
 - senior leaders establishing a manageable system to bring together information from different sources to support robust analysis and evaluation
 - using this to set ambitious targets and develop a plan for improvement which identifies how the impact on outcomes for users will be measured
 - governors ensuring the plan identifies who is responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing actions
 - the local authority and governors using the plan and performance data to challenge leaders to demonstrate the impact of services on outcomes for all groups of users.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

Discussions with users, their evaluations of activities and case studies show that satisfaction levels are very high and the centre is making a good contribution to improving outcomes for its users.

Parents and carers report that they have a better understanding of the importance of exercise and a balanced diet so now provide healthy snacks for their children. One parent explained, 'I am buying less unhealthy food for my family, giving them more fruit, vegetables and dried fruit instead of crisps.' Another noted how their child's fitness levels had increased by attending gym activities and street dance. This raised awareness is contributing to reducing high levels of obesity in young children in the area. Parents and carers are increasingly knowledgeable about how to develop good oral hygiene habits. One parent said that the visiting speakers at the baby club had raised her awareness of starting oral hygiene early, for example by using a finger brush on her baby's gums. With the help of the centre, she has also now found a dentist for herself and her family. Parental confidence, for example when weaning their babies, has increased as a result of the centre's services.

Users are secure in the knowledge that their children are safe and well cared for in the centre. They have a better understanding of how to keep themselves and their families safe in the home, for example through the home safety equipment scheme. Parents, including teenage mothers, are increasingly confident about how to manage their child's behaviour. This is contributing to improving their emotional well-being and helping them to develop positive relationships with their children and other adults. Staff have a good understanding of the Common Assessment Framework and the centre is able to demonstrate clearly, through case study examples, that timely and early multi-agency work is helping to keep vulnerable children and families safe.

Children, parents and carers are happy, confident and socialise well when participating in activities. They enjoy learning and playing together, making choices and developing their independence so are well prepared for learning in the nursery and achieve well. Parents say that activities such as Signalong give them more ideas to create fun activities at home and this has helped them to bond more closely with their children. Those parents who have children with physical development delay learn about a variety of techniques and resources which will stimulate their child and meet their specific needs well. One parents said, 'It makes such a difference to my child, who has really come on since attending, and is now talking and more confident.'

Users make a positive contribution to the centre's provision and the wider community by becoming volunteers. This has given some the confidence to then move into employment. Users regularly contribute their views, for example through a suggestion box, questionnaires and at coffee mornings, which help the centre's leaders to ensure activities and services meet their needs effectively. They acquire a good range of new skills and qualifications which contribute effectively to improving their economic well-being. For example, childcare qualifications have led to employment for some as childminders. Well-developed tailoring skills have enabled

other users to develop their enterprise skills and save money by making their own clothes. Those users who are new to the country have also enhanced their English language skills. Although reducing worklessness remains a priority, users seeking employment have a better understanding of how to complete application forms and write a CV.

These are the grades for the outcomes for users

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	2
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 governance of the centre	2
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment	2

How good is the provision?

2

The centre has a good understanding of the community it serves and the diverse needs of different groups of users, such as those who are hard to reach and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Effective systems are in place to register families through links with health visitors and follow-up calls are made if families are not accessing services. The centre works closely with a range of partners, including health practitioners and voluntary providers, to share information and ensure cohesive services are provided that are well matched to users' needs. As a result, three quarters of young children identified with a disability in the reach area access the good-quality support provided by specialist staff from health and learning support services.

A good range of varied activities are well advertised through leaflets distributed at GP surgeries, other children's centres, the library and local schools. Information is also easily accessible on the centre's website. The programme is reviewed regularly and changed as a result of feedback from users. Good-quality crèche facilities are readily available and activities are provided on Saturdays, such as a parent and toddler group, as well as in the evenings for those who have other commitments during the working week. Family trips and activities during the school holidays are also available. The well-planned provision makes a significant contribution to the good participation rates and high levels of enjoyment.

Outreach work effectively promotes the centre in the community and activities are delivered in local venues to ease accessibility for users. Book gifting and a toy library

help to provide families with good-quality, age-appropriate resources that they can use at home. Family support workers provide effective one-to-one assistance for those in most need or at times of family crisis, for example by helping users to attend appointments, pay bills and access benefits. Visits are also made to users' homes if they are unable to attend the centre, for example as a result of a medical condition.

Good guidance and support are available through leaflets, drop-in sessions, targeted support and signposting to a wide range of specialist services. Advice is readily available on a variety of issues which are relevant to users, including employment, childcare, legal advice and housing.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	2
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	2
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?

2

Leadership of the centre is good and integrated effectively with that of the nursery school. Parents and children benefit from the resulting continuity of provision as they move from one setting to the other. Senior leaders and centre staff understand their roles and responsibilities and work effectively together as a team. Promoting the inclusion of all groups in the community, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable, underpins all their work. The rich diversity of the community is reflected in the centre and celebrated well. This makes a particular contribution to the positive relationships users build with each other as well as the centre staff.

Resources are varied, of high quality and matched carefully to the programme of activities. For example, users in the sewing class have ready access to a large number of good-quality sewing machines. Staff skills are developed and used well both in the centre and outreach. The centre provides good value for money by providing good services and securing good outcomes for its increasing number of users.

Detailed attention is paid to implementing robust safeguarding procedures and adopting effective practices. All necessary checks are carried out to keep staff and users safe. Well-trained staff work in close partnership with other agencies to provide

early interventions and support for the most vulnerable, including children and families at risk of harm.

The centre runs smoothly on a day-to day basis. Professional supervision arrangements are in place for the centre’s staff and senior leaders so lines of accountability at this level are understood, but they are unclear between the governing body and the local authority. As a consequence, although governors and the local authority are supportive of the centre, their role in challenging and holding leaders to account for the impact of services on improving outcomes for users is not yet developed. This is compounded by the lack of a manageable system for using the range of available data and information to support robust evaluation and more detailed planning for improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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 effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	2
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	2
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	2

Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

The outcomes of the Ofsted inspection for Edith Kerrison Nursery School conducted in November 2009 were taken into account. The overall effectiveness was judged to be outstanding and the capacity to improve was judged to be good.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected Edith Kerrison Children's Centre on 23 and 24 March 2011. We judged the centre as good overall.

Those of you we spoke to said how much you enjoy attending your children's centre and value what it has to offer. You told us that the staff are very helpful, friendly and welcoming. You said how much you and your children look forward to going to the different activities. In fact, the number of families and children who are now taking part in its activities is increasing, which is good. This is partly because the programme of activities is so interesting and clearly advertised. It also changes regularly so there is plenty of variety.

The centre has made a difference to you and your children. You explained that the centre has made you feel more confident and helped you to make new friends. This was particularly important for some of you who were new to the area or who did not speak very much English. You also feel that your children have been able to learn how to socialise and share with other children by attending activities.

All the correct checks have been carried out by the centre's leaders to make sure it is a safe place for you and your children to be. You are confident that your children are safe and well cared for, for example when they are in the crèche. Lots of the activities, support and advice that are available help you to learn about how to keep your children healthy and free from harm. For example, you have learnt a lot about the importance of exercise, providing your families with healthy snacks and balanced meals. You have also learnt a lot about how to wean your babies and look after their teeth, even before they start to come through.

You said that you have a lot of fun learning about different ways you can play with your children and help them to learn, particularly those of you whose children have special needs and attend the Rocking and Rolling sessions. The book gifting and toy library is also very useful.

The centre gives you a chance to learn new skills which will be helpful for those of you who are looking for employment, now or in the future. You have had the opportunity to learn how to write your CV and complete a job application form. A good number of you have successfully completed childcare courses and have become local childminders. The centre celebrated this achievement with you. There is a good childminder network which continues to give you a lot of support and guidance in this work. Some of you have become very skilful at sewing and are able to make your own clothes.

You do not always have to go to the centre's building. Activities are also arranged for you at other places in the area. For some of you who have having particular problems, it can be difficult at times to get to the centre. If possible, the centre tries to make other arrangements to help. This might include coming to your home or putting you in touch with someone else who can help. If the staff at the centre cannot help or advise you themselves, you are confident that they will do their best to find someone who can.

The centre is well led. All the staff work together as a team so that everything runs as smoothly as possible for you. Leaders are determined to do the best that they can for all of you. They regularly ask you about what the centre does well and what it could do better. Many of you have made suggestions that the leaders have acted on. The centre's leaders regularly look at how effectively your different needs are being met and what can be improved. They also get lots of other information, in addition to what you tell them, but have not yet got a clear way of organising it all so that it can be as useful to them as possible. They have a plan to help them improve their services further but this plan is not yet as detailed as it should be. We have asked the governors and the local authority to help them with these things.

Thank you for contributing to the inspection by talking to us and sharing your views.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.