

# Inspection report for Grange Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Ealing
<b>Inspection number</b>	387959
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20 - 21 June 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jackie Krafft HMI

<b>Centre leader</b>	Sally Cave, Centre strategic lead Anita Jokun, Centre manager
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20–21 July 2011
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Grange Primary School
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Grange Pre-School Aktiva Breakfast and After School Club

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's leadership team, members of the advisory board, management committee, staff, and representatives from the local authority. They also spoke with partner agencies, including those from the health service, parents and other users of the centre. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Grange Children's Centre serves a culturally and economically diverse community across two wards of the London Borough of Ealing. Over half of its users are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Just under one in five children in the area are living in households experiencing economic hardships, living on benefits or low incomes. This rises to just under half of children in some parts of the reach area. A high proportion of families experiences difficulties with housing affordability, overcrowding or homelessness.

The centre is located in three buildings on the site of Grange Primary School. It opened as a phase two centre in September 2010 and offers family learning, health and support services. It is open daily for 48 weeks a year. Childcare is commissioned from Grange Pre-School and provided in one of the centre's buildings. The knowledge, skills and understanding of children entering early years provision are below that expected for their age.

The centre is managed on behalf of the local authority by the governing body of Grange Primary School. A part-time strategic leader who was appointed in January 2012, a full time centre manager and a centre coordinator are responsible for its day-to-day running and report to the centre's management committee. Advice and assistance are provided by an advisory board which includes representatives from partner agencies.

When the centre was inspected in July 2011, its overall effectiveness and capacity to improve were judged to be inadequate. This was because of weaknesses in its leadership and management and the lack of involvement of users in the centre’s decision making and governance. Since then there has been some sickness absence and changes to the centre’s leadership arrangements.

## 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 families**

3
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### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3
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## Main findings

Grange Children’s Centre has come a long way since the previous inspection and its overall effectiveness is now satisfactory. Significantly increased numbers of children and families in the area, including those in most need or who are hard to reach, are benefiting from improved, good quality provision that is matched well to their needs and interests. Those accessing services reflect the diverse local community. Relationships are positive and those who use the centre say that they feel very welcome and safe in the happy, harmonious centre environment. They value the good care, advice and support they receive from attentive, friendly staff. This is captured in the comments of one parent who noted, ‘The centre has taken the time to get to know me and my son.’

Overall, outcomes have improved and are good. Parents and children enjoy learning and playing together. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Children reach good levels of development and adults gain new skills. Outcomes to secure the future economic well-being of families experiencing financial, employment and housing difficulties are not improving as strongly. The centre’s partnerships with services to support these families, including childminders in the area, are not as well established as those with education, health and outreach providers.

There has been a clear focus on addressing the weaknesses that were identified in leadership and management at the last inspection and efforts have been made to engage families in the centre’s governance and decision making. These have

improved and are satisfactory.

There is now a family representative on the advisory board. Parents' views are sought regularly through questionnaires, evaluations and discussions with centre staff and their suggestions are contributing to the development of provision. Leaders recognise that with more families using services there is scope to include more from a wider range of target groups in the centre's decision making.

The centre's capacity to improve is satisfactory and has been strengthened by the recruitment of the strategic leader who has been the driving force behind the improvements. The leadership structure has been reorganised, roles and responsibilities are defined and data are being used more effectively to identify priorities and evaluate the impact of services on outcomes for families. The work of the management committee and advisory board is being developed but is not yet well established enough to provide the centre with robust support, challenge and advice.

The development plan includes appropriate priorities which are shared with partners and linked to individual staff work plans. However, the development plan and work plans lack quantifiable targets and success measures to hold staff and providers to account with rigour.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Strengthen leadership at all levels to build the capacity for sustained improvement by:
  - developing the role of the advisory board and management committee in providing robust advice, support and challenge
  - broadening the involvement of parents in the centre's governance and decision making
  - including quantifiable targets and success measures in the centre's development plan and staff work plans to hold staff and providers to account.
  
- Improve the economic well-being of families by:
  - building partnerships with employment and housing services
  - identifying and supporting the needs of childminders in the area.

## **How good are outcomes for families?**

<b>2</b>
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Health outcomes in the centre's reach area are improving. Immunisation rates have increased, most breastfeeding mothers have sustained this at six to eight weeks, and the previous rising trend of obesity in children in the Reception year has fallen. Mothers feel confident about breastfeeding and weaning through the support and information they receive. Children benefit from healthy snacks such as fruit which

their parents are encouraged to bring and share. Mothers and babies develop increased emotional attachment and bonding through baby massage. They say their babies are more settled, sleep better and that they have an increased understanding of their babies' development.

Parents report that they and their children are very safe at the centre and that they have a greater awareness of potential hazards, for example those linked to allergies when using massage oils. Children use toys and equipment such as scissors carefully and learn how to keep themselves safe, for example when crossing the road and taking part in fire evacuation procedures. First-time parents and those who are new to the area feel less isolated, make new friends and say that their children learn how to socialise with others. One parent's view summed up that of many with the comment, 'I feel much more emotionally happy coming here.' Parents are well supported to develop their parenting skills. They gain confidence in managing their children's behaviour, feel better able to cope and are less anxious. As a consequence, they report that their children are calmer and concentrate better. Vulnerable children and families in crisis, including those in need of protection and those who have experienced domestic violence, are kept safe through the use of the Common Assessment Framework process and coordinated multi-agency working. They feel listened to and supported, for example through counselling in the centre's secure, calm environment.

Most children in the area attain a good level of development by the end of the Reception year, and this is particularly evident for those who have accessed the centre's linked pre-school. Children are content, curious and behave well. Adults and children have fun together and enjoy shared play and learning experiences. They were observed having fun exploring different textures when playing with water and foam in Stay and Play and looking at books together at baby clinic. In Talk Time, parents learn how to support the development of their children's language and communication skills. One parent wrote, 'I have learnt when you talk to children you should face them.' Speech and language therapy has improved the communication skills of children with specific needs.

Parents who speak little or no English make friends with other users who speak the same language. They benefit from English language courses and explain that learning how to sing songs in English helps at home too. Some have successfully completed accredited courses, for example in mathematics and English. However, there is limited information about progress into further learning and employment or improved economic stability and independence. Where information is available numbers are small. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to the centre's development and governance through their regular responses to evaluations and questionnaires. There has been an increase in the number of volunteers.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for families*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which all children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and parents, including those from target groups, contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents, including those from target groups, are developing economic stability and independence including access to training and employment</b>	<b>3</b>

## **How good is the provision?**

<b>2</b>
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The centre has a good understanding of the needs of families in its reach area. Effective use is made of a wide range of data and information shared between key partners to identify target groups and plan provision to meet needs. Approximately three quarters of families with children under five are now accessing services and there has been an increase in the numbers from target groups, including workless families, lone parents, teenage parents and pregnant women. Voluntary organisations and specialist services, including those from health and social care, attend universal activities such as Stay and Play to provide families with good advice and targeted support where needed. Children identified with communication needs have received specialist speech and language support, and those with greatest need have been enabled to access further levels of intervention.

Satisfaction levels are high amongst those who use the centre. Purposeful learning and play activities are carefully planned and well organised. Parents particularly value the increased number of well attended Stay and Play sessions. These have been enhanced with the support of the school's skilled nursery nurses. Parents comment, 'There is a fantastic array of sensory and messy play,' and, 'There is always something new and the staff explain what children get out of each experience.' Activities are carefully considered to extend children's individual learning and development as well as supporting adults in their understanding and care of children. For example, outdoor play using cars built on children's interests and promoted an awareness of road safety. Records have been recently introduced to capture children's learning and development over time. This is not yet established for those participating in adult learning.

A good range of easily accessible information, advice and guidance leaflets are displayed about a range of services available at the centre, other children's centres

and in the wider community. Translations and advice are provided by staff who speak a range of languages found in the local community. Well targeted outreach provides tailored, sensitive support, including in the home, particularly for vulnerable families and those experiencing difficulties. Families have been helped with housing issues and accessing benefits, but more widely accessible information about employment and housing is limited.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>

### **How effective are the leadership and management?**

<b>3</b>
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The recruitment of the strategic leader, commissioned by the local authority, and the development of the role of the centre coordinator have accelerated the rate of improvement since January. There are clearer lines of accountability to the centre's management committee and the advisory board has agreed terms of reference. Families are now involved in the centre's governance. Self-evaluation is accurately informed by centre-specific data provided by the local authority and partners, as well as the centre's own information. Priorities are clear and shared. They are being appropriately addressed through a satisfactory development plan which is reviewed regularly. The strategic leader is providing a clear direction for the centre's work and building a better capacity for improvement through regular monitoring, reviews, staff training and support. However, much is still new so is not sufficiently developed across all levels of leadership to demonstrate that the capacity for sustained improvement is good. Key partners, particularly the school, pre-school, health and outreach are working together increasingly effectively to deliver good quality, cohesive services, but partnerships with others such as housing and employment are not established.

A high priority is given to safeguarding children and families. The centre's policies, recruitment procedures and staff checks are thorough. Risks are assessed regularly and action taken where necessary. Vigilant staff are all well trained and all clearly understand their duties and responsibilities to protect children and promote their safety and well-being. They cooperate well with other agencies and families to provide early intervention and reduce the risk of harm where concerns are identified.

The centre promotes equality and diversity well. The clear understanding of the local community is fully reflected in the socio-economic, gender, cultural and ethnic diversity of those who use the centre. Community cohesion is evident in the respect



and consideration everyone shows towards each other, service providers and centre staff. A good range of activities and services has increased the inclusion of hard-to-reach groups, including fathers and lone parents. Crèche facilities enable parents to attend adult learning courses and volunteers include Polish and Somali speakers. Diverse home languages are valued and families are encouraged to share them with others. The centre is accessible for disabled children and adults and those with special educational needs, although numbers in the area are small. Resources are of good quality and promote positive images, although disability is not reflected as strongly. The centre provides good value for money. This is evident in the good, and improving, outcomes for the high numbers accessing its good provision.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre supports and encourages families in the reach area to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision</b>	<b>3</b>

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

None.

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Grange Children's Centre on 20 and 21 June 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

When it was previously inspected it was judged to be inadequate. It has come a long way since then and improvements have been made. Many more children and families in the area are attending activities at the centre and accessing its good quality services. Baby clinic and Stay and Play are particularly popular. Those of you we spoke to told us how much you value what the centre offers and how it is helping you to learn more about keeping your families healthy and safe. You also told us how much enjoyment you and your children get out of learning and playing together. We read about that too in the evaluations that you write for the centre and saw it for ourselves at Stay and Play. You particularly value the varied, interesting and messy activities that you might not be able to have at home, such as the foam and water play. The centre helps you to learn a lot about child development and supports you when weaning your baby.

Some of you have also had the opportunity to gain extra skills and qualifications by attending adult learning courses and volunteering at the centre. The centre has helped some of you to attend courses by providing a crèche. One of the things that many of you told us you really like is how helpful and friendly everyone at the centre is. This makes you feel very welcome and safe. Some of you explained how the centre has helped you feel more confident and less isolated, especially those of you who are new to the area. You recognise that your children learn how to socialise with each other too.

The centre wants to make sure that it is able to offer you the things you want and need most. It looks carefully at your evaluations and questionnaire responses, listens to what you have to say and changes things where possible. For example, there are now more Stay and Play sessions in response to your suggestions. We have asked the centre to try getting you even more involved in making decisions about its services so that it can continue to improve.

The centre runs very smoothly and is an attractive, calm place for you and your children to be. Some changes have been made to how it is led and managed to make sure everyone who works at the centre understands their role clearly. There are plans to help improve how the centre works and meets the needs of even more families and children in the area. We have asked the leaders to include more detail in these plans about exactly what they are aiming to achieve and how they will know they have achieved it. Much of what has been put in place to improve the centre's leadership and management is still fairly new. So it is important that those responsible for the centre continue to help everyone on the management committee, advisory board and staff develop the skills they need to keep the centre improving. You could help too by sharing your ideas even more with them and having more involvement in the centre's decision making. We have also asked the centre to work

more closely with childminders in the area and develop partnerships with employment and housing services to help some of you more.

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