

Inspection report for The Lloyd Park Children's Centre

Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	366545
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Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	The Lloyd Park Centre EY283352

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 an additional inspector and an early years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager and staff, representatives from the local authority, the management committee and the advisory board. They also spoke to partner agencies, for example health services and those delivering adult education, parents and other users of the centre.

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

Information about the centre

This phase one centre was designated in June 2005 and fulfils the full core purpose of services. It is managed by The Lloyd Park Centre, a charitable organisation, on behalf of the local authority. Services are available from Monday to Saturday, 50 weeks of the year. The centre formally became part of a cluster with two other centres, Higham Hill and Chapel End Children's Centres, in April 2012.

The centre is located in the London Borough of Waltham Forest, and encompasses seven super output areas, two of which are in the top 28% most deprived in England.

There are 1,151 children under five in the reach area. The area is multicultural with a relatively high level of families of different ethnicities moving into the area in 2011. The largest single ethnic group is made up of Asian families (30%). White British heritage families account for 16% of families in the reach area. Unemployment in the area is high with 27% of children aged from birth to four years living in workless households. Data on the number of families eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit is not available. Children's skills, knowledge and abilities on entry to early years provision across the reach area are well below expected levels for their age.

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

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

1

Main findings

The centre makes outstanding provision for the large majority of families in its area. This is because the excellent depth of understanding of local needs, which is based on sophisticated analysis of data, is combined with highly effective outreach work. The centre's approach results in outstanding individual care and attention especially for the most vulnerable families. As a consequence, outcomes across almost all areas are outstanding and families talk about their whole lives changing because of the centre. 'I have always felt they have done their very best by us', is a common view.

Where children who have accessed centre services have been tracked, it is evident that they go on to make excellent progress. However the centre has been hampered in supporting local schools in narrowing the achievement gap and improving outcomes further, because as a charitable organisation rather than a maintained facility, it has not had ready access to detailed Early Years Foundation Stage data for separate schools and individual children.

Safeguarding families is core to all of the centre's work and innovative systems have built up several different layers of highly effective support where there are causes for concern. The excellent partnerships that the centre has fostered across a very wide range of organisations mean that rapid and effective, well-targeted interventions are provided with a very positive impact on provision and subsequently outcomes for families using the centre.

The centre is highly inclusive with substantial and growing numbers from all target groups. All families feel extremely welcome, safe and secure. A common statement was, 'It's like my second home.' The management committee, made up largely of families who use the centre, plays a key role in decision making and shaping services.

There is an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement because of the team ethos, with everyone rising to new challenges and working effectively despite

financial constraints, a very transient population and getting to grips with the new cluster organisation. Additionally, management systems and staff development and deployment are excellent and have already secured outstanding outcomes for a great many families. Those who use the centre, partners, the advisory board and the management committee are fully involved in the centre's self-evaluation and are confident to challenge the centre, resulting in the ongoing pursuit of excellence.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Work with the local authority to widen access to more detailed Early Years Foundation Stage data from schools in the ward and reach area to enable the children's centre to better support schools in narrowing the achievement gap, particularly for the most vulnerable children.

How good are outcomes for families?

1

The centre has worked very effectively to improve families' understanding of how to lead healthy lives. Focused work on specific target groups has had very positive results, for example, working with health services to take immunisation clinics to the Gypsy Roma Traveller community. Healthy eating is promoted very well at the centre and in 'Roleplay', the six-monthly newsletter. This, plus advocating physical exercise for adults and outdoor play for children, has led to very positive outcomes. For example, childhood obesity rates in the local area are well below the borough average. The very high rates of sustained breastfeeding and immunisation rates indicate that the very large majority of families are fully engaged with health services. Recognising an increasing need for speech and language support, the centre funds a specialist leading to very positive impact on children's communication skills. Emotional health is improved substantially especially for the most vulnerable through the highly effective one-to-one contact via the centre's innovative You and Your Child (Y&YC) project to support families, and excellent links with other organisations, for example health visitors and counsellors.

All families, including those experiencing difficulties, who spoke to inspectors identified that they are confident to share concerns with staff. A very high number of families have attended structured parenting classes or have benefited from personalised support, including home visits, and consequently have an excellent awareness of how to keep children safe. Parents' confidence and parenting skills have been greatly enhanced especially in relation to how to interact with their children and how to deal with, occasionally extreme, behaviour issues. 'Before, I was 5% confident, now I am 90%', described how many felt. The centre works very closely with families where children are subject to child protection plans and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process, including where families have been hard to engage. Because of the level of trust built up and the excellent partnerships, there have been very notable improved outcomes for most children subject to this high level of support.

Early Years Foundation Stage data for the ward show an improving picture with 47.6% achieving 78+ points in 2011, up from 39.5% in 2010, although still below the borough and national average. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest, at 37%, is above the national and the borough average. However, children who have used the centre move on to nine schools in the local area and the average achievement gap for those schools is 28.6%. The centre has had difficulty tracking children's progress when they move on to school because as a charitable organisation, it has not had ready access to the Early Years Foundation Stage data held by the local authority. Nevertheless where a cohort of 50 children was tracked, 98% reached expected levels at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, indicating excellent progress. Highly effective support from the centre's special educational needs coordinator ensures that children with specific needs settle equally as well as others when they move on to school. The centre has been very successful in encouraging adults to learn and develop so that most families using the centre build their skills well. The cluster's training centre was set up to 'home-grow' high quality staff, mainly from the local community, and provides an excellent facility for parents to improve their overall confidence and parenting skills.

Children who attend different activities, for example the soft play session and the parent and toddler group, behave extremely well and copy the positive relationships consistently modelled by adults. Everyone enjoys their time at the centre and treats each other with respect. The management committee is very active not only in decision making but also in fund raising for the charity. Parents, eager to share their new found knowledge and confidence, set up action groups to support others, for example, after parenting programmes or where they have been given specific support such as in coping with domestic violence.

There have been very substantial improvements in the economic and social well-being of many families through, for example, advice surgeries that have led to families across the cluster accessing substantial amounts of benefits they are entitled to. Many other families including the most vulnerable, through engaging in training or adult learning, have improved employability skills with very positive outcomes. Some have gone on to set up their own businesses in cake-making or running exercise classes. 'Every day, you learn something new', was a comment summing up the views of many. A substantial number of families from a wide cross-section of target groups volunteer in the centre, with many going on to further their qualifications and eventually work for the charity or elsewhere.

These are the grades for the outcomes for families.

The extent to which children, including those from target groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	1
The extent to which all children and parents, including those from	2

target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	
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	1
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	1

How good is the provision?

1

The charity managing the centre has worked in the area for 30 years with many staff involved from the start. This gives them an exceptional understanding of the needs of families in the local area. Stringent analysis of data, including monitoring registrations in the most deprived areas and across all target groups, means that the centre is always aware of where to focus services. For example, where the number of Asian families appeared relatively low, an action group was established and a 'women only' exercise class set up in a suitable venue. A weekly Arabic sing-a-long session, run by a volunteer, resulted from families' suggestions. The Doorstep Library and very high quality, flexible outreach work take valuable services to families who are unable to come or have never been to the centre. Specific groups for teenage parents and fathers, and sensitive analysis and support for families with disabled children, mean that a high percentage of all target groups access the centre.

'Graduations' and Oscar-style award ceremonies ensure that adults', children's and staff achievement is celebrated. This greatly encourages high aspirations and many adults use their new found confidence to help others and to support the centre with fund raising events such as the Lloydstock annual music festival. Activities are very well located throughout the cluster, focusing on the most deprived areas and widening access for the most vulnerable groups. This has a very positive impact across all outcome areas.

One key to the centre's success at improving outcomes for families is the outreach work that provides outstanding levels of care, guidance and support. Currently there are 37 agencies that refer families to the centre for support, which is an indication of not only excellent partnerships, but also of the faith those agencies have in the centre's ability to meet local needs and to dovetail services to ensure best impact. Over the past year, there have been over 800 contacts made with families who have required targeted support through the Y&YC project, CAF process or child protection plans. In times of crisis, for example, threat of eviction, serious illness or bereavement, the exceptional level of support, especially for the most vulnerable, has had a very significant impact on outcomes for those families and parents state they 'will never forget the support they received'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision.

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities	1
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meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	1
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	1

How effective are the leadership and management?

1

Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. Despite there being over 100 staff working across the cluster, day-to-day running of the centre is seamless because of the excellent organisation of the senior leadership team. Governance and accountability arrangements are well established with the cluster advisory board and centre management committee very clear about their separate roles. Both groups are very well informed and prepared to challenge as well as support the centre. All partners and families who use the centre are included in identifying the priorities because evaluation and consultation take place regularly and in depth. Different layers of action planning link together very effectively to ensure that targets are ambitious and measurable because excellent use is made of data analysis that highlights specific needs. Consequently, outcomes for the large majority of families using the centre are typically exceptionally high.

The centre has been highly effective in sourcing funding from several areas including the National Lottery and this, plus innovative responses to challenges, for example training courses to meet staffing needs, has had a very positive impact on the range and quality of services offered. As a result, the number of families from across all target groups is increasingly rapidly. The centre is very responsive to families' needs and deploys resources accordingly, providing several parent and toddler sessions with specialist drop-in services from the educational psychologist, speech and language therapist and nutritionist. The extensive outdoor environment includes a 'Grow Wild' area and well-equipped indoor rooms, which are all resources that contribute to the excellent outcomes. However, the centre's most valuable resource is its exceptionally experienced, knowledgeable and highly trained staff.

The centre has been at the heart of its community for many years and this is reflected in the diversity of families who use it. Inclusion is core to the centre's work; discrimination is not tolerated. The most vulnerable groups are fully included so that there is frequently a highly significant impact on their lives from the services they access. The provision of crèches encourage many more participants onto courses and the fact that staff speak more than 30 languages (as well as British Sign Language) ensures that no one is excluded.

Exemplary safeguarding practices include the Named Safeguarding Team (all trained at the highest level), and very wide-ranging training for all staff, meeting the emotional health and well-being exceptionally well. Any concerns such as domestic violence or child neglect are swiftly identified, with staff tenacious in referring and following cases up. Systems for staff vetting and recruitment fully meet

requirements. Very well-established links with a substantial number of partners are also key to outstanding safeguarding and outcomes for families. Links with the Salvation Army, health services and adult education all greatly enhance the opportunities and support available for families.

Families who use the centre are unanimous in their praise, confidence and pride in the centre. They know that their views, routinely sought, are listened to and so they are eager to contribute through volunteering, setting up action groups or serving on the management committee. This, in turn, encourages families from all target groups, including those most in need of support, to engage with the centre.

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	1
The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	1
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	1
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	1
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	1
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	1
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	1

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

None

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance *Complaining about inspections*, which is available from our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Summary for centre users

We inspected The Lloyd Park Children's Centre on 20–21 June 2012. We judged the centre as outstanding overall.

During our visit, we looked at your centre's action plan and numerous other documents. We spoke to a wide range of partner agencies working with the centre as well as staff, members of the management committee and the advisory board, and representatives from the local authority. We also visited all the centre activities taking place during the inspection, for example Soft Play and parent and toddler groups, and spoke to a substantial number of families using the centre.

Thank you for your participation in the inspection. It was very helpful to have your input and to hear how very positive you all feel about the centre, especially the commitment and support of the staff and how well you and your children are cared for and helped to develop. You all feel extremely safe and secure there. Typical comments made to us were, 'My whole life has been changed due to the centre' and 'They are extremely approachable and I have always felt they have done their very best for us.'

You are given a great deal of help and support to lead healthy lives and this is having a positive impact on children's eating habits and on how much exercise families take. Parenting courses and specialist advice mean that you also know how to keep your children safe, manage their behaviour well and help them to learn: 'I have never felt they judge or impose' and 'Every day you learn something new' sum up many comments made during the inspection. As a result of the centre's work, and especially projects such as 'You and Your Child', many of you who have needed support the most have had your lives considerably improved. For many, your confidence and skills have been enhanced so much that you have become volunteers, set up businesses, returned to work or gone on to support others, for example through the Asian Women's Group. Many of you provide valuable support by serving on the management committee and so are fully involved in decision making.

The staff are extremely well trained and knowledgeable about the local area and they are constantly looking at information to see where best to target their work and resources. However, one area where they have had difficulty accessing information is in relation to how well children who have used the centre progress when they move on to school. We have asked the local authority to look at ways to make it easier for the centre to get this information so they can support schools even more in trying to ensure all children progress as well as they can.

The centre is really welcoming and inclusive ('like a second home') and has become very much a part of the local community through events such as Lloydstock, the annual music festival. You are often asked to provide feedback about services and what you would like, and as a result, the centre meets the needs of the community

exceptionally well. Activities such as the Arabic sing-a-long were set up from your suggestions.

The very strong commitment from all those involved with the centre and the huge impact they have already had on outcomes for many families, combined with excellent leadership and management, means that there is an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

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