

Fawood Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101490
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	323466
Inspection dates	15 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Kath Beck

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act. The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	45
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to under 3 years	4
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pat Turner
Headteacher	Mr Mark Cole
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2006
Date of previous childcare inspection	15 June 2006
School address	35 Fawood Avenue London NW10 8DX
Telephone number	020 8965 9334
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Age group	3–5
Inspection date	15 May 2009
Inspection number	323446

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors over one day. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, staff and the chair of governors. They observed the Centre's work, and looked at documentation including the school improvement plan, safeguarding, health and safety policies, assessment records and data, as well as analysing 45 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the Centre's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the work done to raise the quality of leadership and management, and its impact on outcomes for children
- the ways in which staff talk to children so that they make good progress in their learning and acquisition of spoken English
- the quality of provision for children with autism
- the use of data and assessment to plan work to meet individual needs.

Information about the school

Fawood Children's Centre opened in 2004. It provides 35 places for children aged three to four. It also provides the equivalent of 10 full-time places for children aged two to four years with a diagnosis of autism. Some of the children attend all day, but others attend part-time. Four children aged two to three attend the provision for registered day care managed by the Centre. This is being phased out. The Centre covers an area of wide ethnic and cultural diversity. The area is undergoing the last phase of regeneration with the demolition of high-rise flats. Over three quarters of the children are eligible for free school meals, which is a very high proportion. Many come from minority ethnic groups; some are refugees and are seeking asylum. Half of the children are at an early stage of learning English. The headteacher has been in post since September 2008 and a new Centre manager (services) took up the role in March 2009.

The Centre also provides a wide range of community services that include 'Pop in and Play', specialist advice and support, 'Family Learning', and 'Teens and Toddlers'. It houses the Brent Outreach Autism service for children of all ages up to 19. These specific aspects were not inspected.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Fawood Children's Centre provides a good standard of education. Parents, including those with children in the unit for autistic children, are overwhelmingly supportive of all that the Centre provides. They are right to say, 'Our community should be proud of this Centre', 'Happy children, having lots of fun. A strong emphasis on playing and learning through playing', and 'My son is lucky to be in such a supportive educational environment.'

The Centre is extremely successful in placing the promotion of equal opportunities at the heart of its work and in ensuring that it is a highly cohesive community. The unique needs of each child and their families are taken into account. The Centre aspires to be excellent in all aspects of its work and this is underpinned by drive, ambition, determination and action to reach these goals. Senior leaders and governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the Centre and what it needs to do to move forward. The responsibilities of leadership and management have, rightly, been shared out to have greater impact. Senior staff and middle managers have taken on their duties with enthusiasm, apply the skills acquired in training well and accept accountability for their areas of responsibility. They have seen the success of their work in the improvement of the quality of many aspects of the Centre from satisfactory, at the time of the last inspection, to good. By developing the skills and authority of leaders and managers across the board, the Centre is building a good capacity to sustain improvement and achieve its goals.

Much of the teaching is good, and some is outstanding. Together, with the children's good behaviour plus a lively, practical, engaging and fun curriculum, teaching is helping children to make good or better progress regardless of ability or background. That said, there is work to do to ensure that all staff make the most of the learning opportunities provided for the children. The Centre has begun to implement its plans to build on the advances made so far by involving all staff in the monitoring of the impact of their work on the outcomes for the children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Involve all staff in the evaluation of planned improvements, so that they are fully aware of the impact of their work on the outcomes for children.
- Enable all adults to become good teachers, so that they make the best use of spontaneous learning opportunities and offer greater challenge to the children.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Many children achieve well across all the areas of learning from low starting points. Up-to-date data show that when they move to their primary school, many children are reaching or exceeding the expectations for their age. To confirm this, the inspectors took keen interest in the effectiveness of a recent initiative in which adults are more involved in children's play, ask thought-provoking questions, and model language clearly. These strategies are proving successful and are reflected in the good progress made by the children. The outcomes of the initiative are good, rather than outstanding, because not all staff are confident to engage the children in this way. Successful exchanges are enabling children, especially those at an early stage of learning English, to acquire the vocabulary they need to communicate effectively and progress well in their learning. The provision of pictures and 'signing' in the unit for autism helps these children to make really positive steps in their ability to communicate clearly with others. Signing and talking through pictures are also taught, very effectively, through the use of persona dolls, to the other children in the Centre. This allows the children with particular needs to be integrated successfully into all aspects of the Centre's provision. The younger children within the registered provision are viewed as full members of the Centre and make a really good start to their education. Older children respect and care for them, involving them in their play. These factors underpin children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and are the explanation for the rapid progress in their personal and social development. Staff build really positive relationships with families who are seeking asylum and support them, so that these children also make good progress.

Many lively and engaging activities capture children's attention ensuring their good behaviour. Children play happily together or on their own and love being able to make decisions about what they are to do next. In one session, children devised the obstacle course they were to complete, choosing the objects and the way they were set out. They then tackled the course with enthusiasm. The accommodation is unusual, with a lot of open space in the main area. Children settle quickly and are confident about moving around freely and safely from activity to activity, knowing that someone is on hand if needed. The development of their early collaborative, problem-solving, decision-making, literacy and numeracy skills, in tasks such as 'going shopping' in the supermarket, sets them on a successful path for their future life. Balanced nutritious snacks and lunches, frequent walks, and many opportunities for physical activities throughout the day make an important contribution to children's knowledge and experience of a healthy lifestyle. The aspect that is disappointing, in comparison to the other areas of the provision, is that not all children attend as often as they should. The Centre is doing everything it can to raise the level of attendance, with success. It is also taking determined action to work with

parents who are harder to reach and whose children would really benefit from regular attendance.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Children's attainment ¹	2
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do children achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do children feel safe?	2
How well do children behave?	2
To what extent do children adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do children contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Children's attendance ¹	3
How well do children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

The Centre views teaching overall as good, and this was confirmed during the inspection. Some teaching is outstanding, particularly when children are presented with challenges such as 'Go shopping and choose 10 items for your shopping basket.' Once this task was completed, the number of items was checked by the 'cashier' and then children 'wrote' their shopping list. The interactions between the children and teacher added a great deal to children's learning in literacy, numeracy, and knowledge and understanding of the world. They learned new vocabulary and realised the importance of literacy, numeracy and general conversation in their lives. Other observations of the adult-led activities show that teachers really know the children well. Frequent rigorous assessments identify the next small step that each child needs to make in his or her learning. These are included in teachers' planning so that the unique needs and interests of each individual are provided for. Key workers play an important role in gathering and sharing this information with parents and gaining further details to help teachers plan for changing interests. Some staff in the unit for the autistic children are particularly skilled in working with these children, and share their knowledge with colleagues to benefit all the children. Children's learning diaries and thorough assessments mean that staff identify underachievement and take action to overcome it quickly.

Observations of child-led activities showed that some support staff really enjoyed playing with the children and made the most of the children's experience. For

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

instance, an adult joined in when children were playing with shaving foam, exploring and developing their vocabulary linked to the senses. This activity provoked much fun and laughter, while children learned to cooperate with one another, share, and acquire the words needed to express their ideas. On other occasions, support staff stood back and watched the children at play and did not offer sufficient challenges nor make the most of spontaneous learning opportunities. For example, children choosing to roll cars and lorries down a slope were not encouraged to test which ones went faster or slower and to think about why this might be the case.

Teaching staff have very good knowledge of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. A rich curriculum is enlivened by regular walks in the locality and visits to places of interest. Resources and equipment are of high quality and allow the children to flourish and progress well. There is a very good balance between indoor and outdoor play. The strong focus on children's personal development includes, at this time of year, preparation for transfer to primary school. A very effective teacher-led session provoked discussion and understanding about this move through the use of a doll called Princess.

The Centre has well-organised arrangements for the care of its children. It helps many children to overcome the barriers to their learning. The Centre works very closely with parents and carers to support and guide the children. The Centre draws fully on other partnerships for the children's benefit. It uses other services, some of which are housed in the building, to enable parents to gain expertise to meet their child's needs at home. Parents with very young children 'pop in and play' and gain an understanding of how children can learn through play. For some children it eases the transfer from home to school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Good leadership and management ensure that all required policies and procedures are in place for the Centre, the registered provision and the unit for children with autism to safeguard the children. The leaders and managers also ensure that there is a strong focus on enabling all children to do as well as they can. The vision and determination to make this setting outstanding is providing a common sense of purpose and drive among the governors, senior and middle leaders. Action taken since the appointment of the new headteacher has already brought about improvements in children's progress, leadership and management skills, assessment and tracking of children's progress and attendance. Self-evaluation is rigorous and honest. Strengths that can be built on are being developed as staff take on greater

responsibilities and become even more accountable for their actions. The key areas for development identified by the Centre are confirmed by the inspection and reflected in the key issues. Action is underway to enhance the teaching skills, especially of support staff, through training, monitoring and evaluation. Middle managers have seen the successful impact of their work. This now needs to be shared more with others so that everyone working in the Centre understands fully their role in enabling children to make outstanding progress. Governors are involved in the Centre's work and offer challenge and support, especially as the provision is changing. They are not afraid to make difficult decisions, such as phasing out the registered provision for financial reasons.

The Centre's promotion of equality of opportunity and community cohesion is highly effective. Its analysis of the needs of the community is incisive and it is striving to meet those needs in the best way possible. The promotion of equality of opportunity is central to the Centre's purpose. Data show that the gaps between the progress of different groups are monitored carefully, gaps are reducing and attainment is rising. Assessment records indicate that the progress of all groups has been faster in recent months, so that outcomes are above those normally expected. Children are taught to respect each other and understand their differences. This is why the children attending the registered provision and those with autism are successfully integrated. Consequently, all children attending the Centre enjoy their learning. This is illustrated by a parent who says that her child is unhappy at weekends and holidays, preferring to be at the Centre.

The Centre has a very successful relationship with other providers and the parents. Their views are sought and taken into account. Key workers meet frequently with parents to exchange information about the children or to deal with issues of concern. The Centre deploys its resources well and provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

All parents returned the questionnaire they were asked to complete and were really positive about the Centre and its provision. Some questionnaires included written comments that praised the leadership and management, the provision for the children with autism, the way the staff look after the children and help them to become independent, and the many interesting things there are for children to do. Parents are also pleased that staff are happy to meet with them to talk about their children and their progress. Several expressed their heartfelt gratitude for all that their children have learned. Three parents expressed concern that the accommodation is cold. Two other comments were personal to the individual parent.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Fawood Children's Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 45 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 45 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	6	0	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its children's needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the children's work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children's attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a child in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the child; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



1 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Fawood Children's Centre, London, NW10 8DX

Thank you for being really helpful and for showing us all the lovely things you do in the Centre when we came to visit recently. We really enjoyed watching you having great fun playing with the shaving cream, doing your shopping and racing the cars and lorries down the slopes you had made. We were really impressed with the way you listen to the grown-ups when they read you a story and help you to count. You all behave very well and are very kind to one another, especially to your friends who are shy and cannot talk very much.

Your Centre is a good Centre. All the grown-ups help you to learn a lot, but they agree that they want it to be the best. We have asked them to make sure that:

- all grown-ups help to make the Centre as good as it can possibly be
- everyone who works with you becomes extremely good at teaching, you so that you learn even more that will help you when you go on to your next school.

You can help by coming to the Centre every day and trying your best all the time.

Yours faithfully

Kath Beck
Lead Inspector

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