

Inspection report for Woodside Children's Centre

Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	384229
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2012
Reporting inspector	Christine Field

Centre leader	Renata Bailey
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Not applicable
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Woodside Early Years Provision (EY140476) inspected 2010

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 leader, other staff, early years, health, social service, family support and outreach workers, cluster advisory board members, local authority representatives and parents. They also observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

Information about the centre

The centre was designated in 2005 as a phase one centre and has delivered integrated care, early learning, information and advice to parents, family support, health services and signposting to training and employment advice since 2006. The centre shares a building with Woodside Nursery and is open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm for 48 weeks a year.

The centre's reach area comprises eight super output areas with one serving the needs of the 10% most disadvantaged in Haringey and the others serving the 30% most deprived. Data show above-average proportions of all target groups living in the reach area. For example, 25% of children live in workless households, a similar proportion is in receipt of work-related benefits and 19% live with a lone parent. The majority of families living within the reach area are of White British or White other heritage, with increasing numbers from Turkish, Bulgarian and Romanian heritages. A high proportion of families are learning to speak English as an additional language. Currently there are 1,207 children under five living in the reach area. Children's skills and knowledge when the children enter early education are generally well below the level expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy.

The local authority's major ongoing re-organisation proposals involve the near future merger of this centre with Noel Park Children's Centre which was inspected in December 2011. Noel Park's leader was appointed the leader of Woodside two months ago and both centres have begun to run a joint programme of activities,

share staff and a cluster advisory board comprising partner and parent representatives. The local authority is the accountable body.

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

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

2

Main findings

The centre makes satisfactory provision for the majority of children and families living in its area. The overall proportion of children in direct contact with the centre has decreased slightly during the last few months, but the number of families most in need of support has increased. The recently-appointed centre leader is working very effectively with staff to target resources more precisely at vulnerable families living in the most deprived neighbourhood. This has necessitated a re-scoping of services which, together with new staffing arrangements, is helping the centre to better meet its core purpose.

Partnerships with social and family support services, including health, enable prompt intervention that helps families to live healthier lives, keep safe and achieve good outcomes. Good use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) promotes strongly the good well-being of those most in need of support. The high number of children subject to a child protection plan benefit from the centre's close monitoring of their situation and strong focus on personal needs, resulting in both their good safety and on-going learning and development.

The centre's work to support families from a wide range of ethnic minority backgrounds, including English as a second language courses, has a positive impact on building confidence skills. Other adults benefit from work experience such as the well-established volunteering programme. However, not enough is being done to support their further academic achievement and assist their economic well-being. Unemployment is high and the withdrawal of Jobcentre Plus support has left a gap in helping adults back into work. The referrals to Citizens Advice Bureau are increasing significantly, particularly for debt counselling. Insufficient evaluation of the needs of families from workless homes including lone parents in the past means that these groups are not as well served by the centre as are some other groups.

There is good participation in parenting courses which raises both confidence and self-esteem. The centre's early learning experiences are having a good impact in assisting young children's achievements and school readiness. Data show that children from the centre who are in receipt of the funded two-year-old nursery places are achieving better outcomes than their peers by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The gap in achievement between those at most risk of the lowest outcomes and others of the same age is narrowing over time, albeit slowly.

The centre has a very strong commitment to promoting equality and diversity. Survey feedback and inspectors' interviews with parents show that they highly value the warm welcome they are given, the respect for cultural differences and inclusive ethos. They feel that their views are listened to and acted upon, and through the Parents and Volunteers Group their views are informing the centre's decision making. Parents with children with complex special educational needs hold the centre in very high regard and identify how sensitively the staff assist their children to work and play with other children.

The leader and senior team have set the centre on an improving course with determination and shared ambition. Self-evaluation is accurate and the right priorities have been set to move all outcomes to the good grade as those for keeping safe and being healthy. Effective action has been taken to overcome weaknesses in provision that are resulting in better engagement of target groups, as reflected in the rising number of children from families most in need of support. These features, together with the strong focus on establishing robust evaluation systems, underpin the centre's good capacity to improve. The cluster advisory board, comprising partner and parent representatives, has a well-defined strategic role but it is early days in its development and it has yet to look critically at the centre's performance.

Conversations with the local authority have pinpointed the importance of having more efficient systems in place to ensure the data provided assist rigorous evaluation of the impact of services. A useful start has been made with improving use of E-start data to enable live births to be followed up closely with home visits, viewed positively by young parents in particular. The centre's overall effectiveness is satisfactory.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Work with the local authority to sharpen needs analysis of all groups within the community, and set precise measures of progress towards achieving key priorities so that timely checks on the impact of services can be made and used to inform target setting.
- Extend the reach and participation of families from workless homes, especially lone families, by increasing the impact of services that develop basic skills so as to support their achievement, extend employability and secure their future economic well-being.

- Develop the work of the cluster advisory board in looking critically at the centre's work and challenging its performance.

How good are outcomes for families?

3

The centre works effectively to assist families in being healthy, for example through running cookery courses and making sure that fresh fruit is available daily for children. As a result, health outcomes are improving with child obesity rates in the area below those in many other parts of the borough. The high take up of immunisation, at 85%, results in the vast majority of young children completing the full programme by the time they are five-years-old. Anti-smoking work is successful with those supported by the centre's trainers all ceasing at the end of the programme. The centre supports new mothers who want to breastfeed their babies through initiatives such as the organisation of breastfeeding cafés. At 63%, the level of sustained breastfeeding is above the local average, although it is higher for mothers from White non-British backgrounds than for Black Caribbean mothers.

The centre is very alert to the welfare needs of families and works effectively to keep them safe and protected. The well-being of young children, including those subject to a child protection plan, shows good impact from well-targeted interventions and multi-agency work. Those who are most vulnerable are helped to build positive behaviour and nurturing family relationships through experiences such as the programme that gives parents the opportunities to learn a range of parenting skills. Parents strongly identify that they feel free from any form of discrimination. Feedback from activities informs the centre's plans, for example in making changes to the contents of children's learning journeys. Parents' involvement in helping to shape services is growing through their representation on the cluster advisory board.

Children who attend the centre are enabled to enjoy activities and achieve successfully and this assists their future economic well-being. The centre's tracking of their progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage shows boys and girls achieving well from their starting points. The gap in achievement between the lowest 20% and the rest is reducing, but not as quickly as elsewhere in the borough. Signposting to training for adults is clear and steps have been taken to increase employability, for example through the well-established volunteer programme that currently provides work experience for ten parents. However, the centre has not yet assessed finely enough the needs of workless families in the area or lone parents. As a result these target groups are not as well served as some others by the centre's provision, and their enjoyment in achieving and economic well-being, although satisfactory, could be better.

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	2
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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 children and parents, including those from target groups, enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	3
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	3
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	3

How good is the provision?

3

The quality and range of services meet the needs of most families satisfactorily and are improving. Regular meetings between service partners enable the sharing of information to inform the integration of service delivery. The children's centre staff work closely with health and social care professionals to assess and support the needs of families and refer for one-to-one support. This enables the development of dovetailed services to most target groups. Parents identify how valuable the services are in helping them through times of acute crisis. For example, a mother with a young child identified how well the centre had supported her through postnatal depression and, through her involvement in centre-based sessions, removed feelings of isolation and failure to cope. A parent's comment reflects the very positive views expressed, 'The centre's been a lifeline for my family.' The well-planned Time to Play sessions, up and running since January, have attracted 45 new target families. The more effective use of E-start data is now ensuring earlier registration of new births. The 'team around the child' work to keep children safe is highly effective in keeping children well protected, including looked after children.

Case studies highlight the positive difference centre services make to the learning and development of the increasing number of families in most need, including children and adults with disabilities, teenage parents, families from minority ethnic backgrounds and families with children under four-years-old who are experiencing problems. There is more limited evidence about the impact of services on families from workless homes or lone parents. Referrals to Citizens Advice Bureau are increasing significantly, particularly for debt counselling, and child poverty is of major concern in the area. Since the loss of Jobcentre Plus, the centre leader has worked hard to secure the services of Reid employment who have won the government contract to support job readiness, but this has yet to start.

'Stories and more stories' sessions involve parents sharing stories in their mother tongue and are a pre-cursor to their participation in a range of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. Participation is good in courses at level 1 and 2 which are run in cooperation with the adult learning service. However, some parents told inspectors that they would like the opportunity to progress to a higher level of

accreditation and others want to hone their numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Good-quality care, guidance and support help families from different backgrounds that use the centre to feel free from harm and bullying. The strong focus on supporting parents and carers in building confidence improves family relationships. The clear signposting of services, to help with sexual health, drugs misuse and mental health problems, assists families in knowing how and where to access services. The centre's renewed focus on helping the most vulnerable families to overcome barriers and get back on their feet quickly is at the heart of the current re-scoping of services.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all families, including those in target groups	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to families, including those in target groups	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

The robust and accurate evaluation of the centre's effectiveness, together with the well-prioritised action plan, underpin the centre's improvement towards meeting its core purpose. Staff are weathering the changes brought about by the clustering arrangements and there is strong determination to play a full part in taking the centre forward. The words of one staff member sum up the impact of the centre leader's systematic drive for change, 'Everyone is clear about their new roles and keen to step up a notch to ensure we focus our efforts on meeting community needs.' Day-to-day administration runs smoothly and resources have been re-aligned to secure best value. The centre's outcomes are improving for most target groups and its capacity for improvement is good.

Equality and inclusion are central strands of the centre's work. The multi-ethnic staff make centre families feel very welcome, whilst informative displays highlight some of the activities being enjoyed, such as the picnic where everyone brings their national dish to share. There is zero tolerance of any form of discrimination and strong promotion of harmonious relationships and personal respect. Safeguarding arrangements including child protection matters are very thorough and, together with early intervention, ensure that families are well protected. For example, women who are suffering domestic abuse are able to put stickers on sample bottles so as to alert the team to their situation when handed in. Health and safety matters are closely supervised and supported by robust risk assessments. The systems for staff vetting and recruitment fully meet requirements.

The cluster advisory board is representative of the community it serves and includes parental involvement. It is usefully contributing to service development but has yet to inject the level of challenge required in decision making. Further data are actively being sought from the local authority, for example on workless and lone parents, to enhance the information gathered and enable even more precision in the targeting of resources.

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 effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes	2
The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of families, including those in target groups	3
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 partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services provided by the centre to meet its core purpose	3
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	3

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

Woodside Children's Centre Nursery (EY419755) report published June 2011 and Noel Park Children's Centre report published December 2011 were used to inform the judgements made at this inspection.

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Woodside Children's Centre on 29 and 30 March 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

We talked with some of you, your children, staff, and a wide range of partners and members of the local authority linked to the centre. We observed the centre's work and looked at a range of documents.

We found that the centre makes satisfactory provision for the young children and families who use it and this make a positive difference to your lives. You told us that when you join in the activities at the centre, the centre leader and her team staff make everyone feel valued and that relationships are racially harmonious. We agree that these features help the centre meet the diverse needs of local children and families, including those with disabilities, mental health problems and particularly in times of crisis. The centre's work to help you keep safe and healthy is good.

The centre and its partners are doing really well in helping young learners enjoy achieving and be well prepared for starting school, with the links with schools helping to keep track of your children's progress. English language courses for those of you who have a different mother tongue are a successful part of the centre's work and help those who undertake them to achieve new skills and move towards better financial well-being. The volunteering programme helps some of you re-build your skills and it is great to see a few of you finding paid work as a consequence. However, we have asked the centre to look more closely at helping those who are ready to achieve more academically to do so and to work more effectively with those who are ready to get back into work, especially lone parents.

The centre makes sure that you are well looked after when you visit. The good safeguarding arrangements help you feel safe and free from harm. You told us that you put forward your views through chats with staff or by completing activity feedback forms. The Parents and Volunteer Group is well attended and through your representative on the cluster advisory board you contribute to decision making.

The centre leader and cluster advisory board are working together to get to grips with ensuring that services are provided which you can all benefit from, particularly those of you who are experiencing the most problems. They draw on a lot of information to help plan ahead and see how well things are going. However, the data are not yet sufficient to enable full assessment of everyone's needs or to secure good value for money. We have asked the centre to set out exactly what information will be most useful to help it keep track of how well services lead to better outcomes and to work with the local authority to bring further improvement.

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