

Inspection report for Keir Hardie Children's Centre

Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	366912
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Kubiak HMI

Centre governance	The Governing Body of Keir Hardie Primary School
Centre leader	Jean Bond
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
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Linked school if applicable	Keir Hardie Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Clever Cloggs Nursery EY299997

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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 an Early Years inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager and centre staff, the headteacher and deputy headteacher of the school, the designated child protection officer, representatives from the local authority including the head of the early years service, the chairperson of and representatives from the advisory board, and representatives from the health service. They had formal and informal discussions with parents and children and visited 'Gym Tots,' 'Ready Steady Go,' 'Teens and Toddlers,' the 'Singalong' group and the 'Messy Play' group. They also visited an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) course and a crèche session.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation including the performance, achievements and outcomes review, risk assessments, delivery plan, case studies, notes of advisory board meetings and key policies.

Inspection judgements

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

Information about the centre

Keir Hardie Children's Centre was set up and following the closure of the children's centre that had previously served the community. It is governed by Keir Hardie Primary School. The centre is based at the primary school and has access to a number of rooms within the school. Services are also offered in the community at various venues. The centre works closely with neighbouring children's centres to provide services; some services are specific to one centre in order to provide value for money and reduce duplication of services.

The centre’s catchment area is one of the 30% most deprived areas in the country. The centre serves an area which is part of a large regeneration scheme and has recently seen significant changes following the demolition of high rise tower blocks. The local population is mostly Black or Black British African, with smaller percentages of refugees and asylum seekers. Around 37% of children under five in the area are living in workless households, which is significantly higher than the national average. Attainment on entry at nursery age is below average with communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development being the weaker areas.

The centre is open on weekdays from 9.00am to 3.15pm and some evenings. It is open for 47 weeks of the year. Activities are offered during the school term time and during some school holidays. The centre is linked with the local day care provider, Clever Cloggs Nursery, which has been subject to its own inspection, and the report can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk The centre commissions crèche services from the Pre-school Learning Alliance and Community Childcare.

The areas available to the centre within the school include a reception area, portacabin, dance studio, crèche room and office. There is a separate entrance to the centre. Other services are offered at buildings within the local community, run by centre outreach workers.

Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children’s centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

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

3

Main findings

The overall effectiveness of the centre is satisfactory. Users value and enjoy their time at the centre and this is supported by the good care, guidance and support offered by the staff. Users are well supported by centre staff in accessing the services provided directly at the centre and at other children’s centres locally. Parents and users value the safe, secure and welcoming environment at the centre. Risk assessments are undertaken across the activities provided by the centre. These are not always dated, however, or signed and it is unclear when hazards have been identified. Recruitment procedures for staff employed at the centre are rigorous and robust. Commissioned services such as the crèche workers have their own recruitment procedures with the centre maintaining a record of these checks through the single central register which is kept by the school. Some of the policies provided by commissioned services with regards to safeguarding lack detail.

The management team of the centre is experiencing a period of change due to the impending retirement of the current headteacher of the school. The leadership team for the centre does not have a strategic overview of its work. Some priorities have

been identified; however, sometimes the implementation of these is too slow and they fail to meet targets. The advisory board meets on a regular basis and although it sets some targets for the centre to bring about improved outcomes for the centre users, the advisory board does not always monitor the progress of these targets.

Data are available from a number of sources and the centre is starting to use this to shape the service; however, it is not used to record impact. Rigorous monitoring of the data is not yet fully developed to ensure that the services are fully meeting the needs of all users within the reach area.

The centre has established good links with the school and with colleagues from the health authority but links with Clever Cloggs Nursery are not as well developed. Support offered by the outreach workers is making a difference to the families they work with. Parents report that they value the support they receive and the positive changes it brings about to them and their families.

Outcomes for users of the centre are good overall. Parents report that they enjoy attending the centre and this makes them feel less isolated and helps them to build friendships. They value the positive relationships that staff build with them. Parents have the opportunity to sit on the advisory panel. Parents are able to contribute to the work of the centre through satisfaction surveys and results show high satisfaction rates. Informal feedback is not always captured and acted upon and not all parents are aware of with whom to share their views and ideas.

Users have the opportunity to participate in a range of training including English as a second language, information technology (computer) courses and sewing. Courses are well attended although training progression routes to accredited courses have not yet been developed. The centre has links with the Jobcentre Plus and a number of parents have been successful in obtaining employment in the hospitality industry, becoming registered childminders or employment within the school.

Parents and children are able to access some services at Keir Hardie. As space is limited a number of other services are offered at local children's centres and these are well attended. Parents report that courses such as the 'Triple P' parenting classes make them more confident in their ability to manage their children's behaviour.

The centre staff know the community well and are effective in signposting users to the range of services and support available. The centre has only recently begun to develop a self-evaluation process. A delivery plan is in place but is not sufficiently detailed in identifying measurable targets and where targets have been set there is no effective system of monitoring these. As a result, the centre's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

What does the centre need to do to improve further?

Recommendations for further improvement

- Develop clearer lines of accountability and responsibility for staff involved in the centre, including the advisory board, and ensure that communication is effective.
- Use data more effectively to evaluate the services offered, plan future services and identify impact of improved outcomes on users.
- Ensure that self-evaluation is fully implemented and includes clear areas for improvement which are measurable and are regularly monitored.

How good are outcomes for users?

2

The outcomes for users of the centre are good and improving. Parental satisfaction surveys and discussions with users show that satisfaction rates are high. The centre has limited space within the school and therefore attendance rates for the centre are low. However, parents and users are encouraged to access other local children's centres where often a wider range of resources and facilities are available and overall attendance rates are good and increasing. Groups such as 'Gym Tots' and 'Ready Steady Go' are popular and promote healthy outcomes through exercise. The centre has participated in a healthy lifestyle programme and early indications are that it is successful in improving the lifestyle of users on the programme, including improved eating habits.

The centre is seen as an integral part of the school and the community. The range of services available to users is well publicised and includes information about local children's centres and community resources. Parents report that they find the staff at the centre very friendly and that they feel less isolated by attending the centre. The crèche facilities allow parents to access courses such as aerobics and English classes. Courses run by the centre do not always build on previously taught skills and progression routes to accredited courses and future employment opportunities are not always clear. The centre has been successful in engaging more fathers, for example through holding antenatal sessions at a time that is more convenient for working fathers. Although the centre identified the need to engage even more fathers in the centre as a priority and set itself a target to develop this, the target has not been met.

Sessions such as 'Messy Play' are well attended and parents report that their children enjoy these sessions. Children and parents benefit from the range of resources available. The centre staff build good relationships with the parents, who report that staff are very popular with their children.

The centre staff are knowledgeable about the range of services and provision available. They work hard to ensure that parents are aware of these and offer home visits to discuss any issues with parents. They can also support new parents by meeting them at the centre and introducing them to new people. The centre staff

attend regular Every Child Matters meetings with colleagues from other agencies to discuss individual families and identify appropriate support packages. There is evidence of improved outcomes for families who receive these support packages.

Children benefit from the safe and secure environment offered. Risk assessments are undertaken but they are not sufficiently detailed. Safeguarding policies for commissioned services do not include the need to report any safeguarding concerns to centre staff.

The space is generally well used. The reception area contains literature about a range of services offered although it is not easy to identify the children's centre and signage does not identify where the specific rooms are, for example the crèche. There is limited access to outside play space.

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, and their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	3
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 provides a good range of integrated services and activities, given the limited space. Parents are seen as individuals and systems are in place to support those with the most need. Users are effectively signposted to other centres and community resources.

The centre has begun to review the range of services that it currently offers to ensure that they are targeted at users with the most need. Following a successful computer course aimed specifically at fathers it has identified the importance of engaging fathers more in the centre. Despite this being a priority action for the centre the group has not yet started running.

Courses such as English for speakers of other languages are popular and well attended. The centre is very successful in supporting users back into paid employment. There are limited opportunities for users to progress educationally and the centre's educational plans lack opportunities for users to develop their skills in working towards accredited courses and/or access to employment.

Data and satisfaction survey results are analysed by centre staff but the analysis is not used effectively to assess the needs of individual children, parents and users. Courses and activities are more often than not based on popularity and are not always linked to where they will be of most benefit. When courses are targeted at where there is most need, for example the 'Triple P' parenting programme, the outcomes for users are good.

The centre has been unsuccessful in recruiting a children's centre teacher to work with them and their linked day-care provision, Clever Cloggs Nursery. The local authority has provided a teacher to support the nursery in the absence of the centre teacher. The children's centre has not built up effective links with the nursery in order to work more closely and improve the outcomes for all users within its area.

Good quality information is available through the website and electronic notice boards within the school publicise the services of the centre. Information is also available within the centre, at other centres locally and at other community buildings and resources such as the local library.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	3
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?

3

The centre's leaders and advisory board set targets and work with the centre in contributing to wider area planning. Systems for monitoring to ensure that targets are met are not yet in place. Furthermore, a lack of effective communication means that the advisory board and the centre's leadership team are not always clear about how well the centre is reaching targets identified within its delivery plan.

The centre has only recently begun working on its self-evaluation and currently it contains too much information relating to the school's policy and insufficient detail specifically relating to the children's centre. The centre has an up-to-date delivery plan in place. Both the self-evaluation and the delivery plan include targets which are not specific or measurable and this limits the centre's capacity to develop and improve outcomes for children.

The centre receives data on a quarterly basis and centre staff are developing skills in

analysing it. There are opportunities to share data and discuss it in detail with other centres. Systems for rigorous monitoring of data are not yet fully embedded, for example the centre is aware that a large number of users access services at other centres. However, it has not analysed what services they offer or their frequency. Furthermore, the data are not yet sufficiently detailed to be able to demonstrate the overall effectiveness on individual families or of the whole centre at improving outcomes for children.

The advisory board meets on a quarterly basis. Parents are well represented on the advisory board. The advisory group is supportive of the work of the centre and is beginning to set some targets that will improve outcomes for users. However, systems for monitoring the progress of these targets are not effective.

The centre's leaders and staff work well together and management arrangements are secure. The headteacher of the school supervises the centre manager who in turn manages the centre staff. Outreach workers also have access to additional professional supervision. Centre staff have the opportunity to access training opportunities alongside colleagues within the school.

All required policies and procedures are in place and meet requirements. Safeguarding employment practices for staff employed directly through the centre are rigorous and follow the local authority procedures. The centre has not ensured that the safeguarding policies of its commissioned services are robust, for example they do not include the need for crèche staff to inform the centre staff of any safeguarding concerns which they may observe during the sessions they have been commissioned to run by the centre.

Equality and diversity are promoted well at the centre. Courses such as English for speakers of other languages support families, developing their confidence and skills alongside building up a network of friends. Translation and interpreter services are provided as appropriate and bilingual support is also available. Specific groups such as the 'Women's Aerobics' have been established following feedback from parents about the need for a women's only session. Users come from a range of cultures and backgrounds and they feel that they are welcomed and part of the centre. The centre has identified the need to build stronger links with fathers. However, this is still at the planning stage. The building is wheelchair accessible. Provision for children and parents with special educational needs and/or disabilities is offered at a neighbouring children's centre but any child or parent regardless of their needs can attend Keir Hardie Children's Centre.

<p>The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day-to-day management arrangements are clear and understood</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</p>	<p>3</p>

The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	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	3
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	3

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Summary for centre users

We inspected the Keir Hardie Children's Centre on 13 and 14 January 2011. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

The centre, which is based within Keir Hardie Primary School, provides you and your children with a safe and secure environment where you feel valued and well cared for. The centre has limited space but it is well used and staff effectively signpost you to the services of other nearby children's centres and other community resources.

The centre staff work hard to engage you with the range of activities and support you when you have difficulty accessing the centre such as meeting you there to introduce you to other users. The staff know the community well and are committed to supporting both your children's development and your own skills. Centre staff have built up good links with other professionals and they work well together as a team to best meet the needs of the community they serve. When you may need extra support, for example at times of difficulty, the staff are able to offer you guidance and signpost you to a range of services. They meet regularly with other professionals and this ensures that you receive support from the most appropriate person.

Staff work well with the leadership team and the advisory board and they meet and share ideas. It is not always clear who is responsible for different aspects of the centre, for example ensuring that groups such as the fathers' group is established

and we have asked the centre to improve this and for everyone involved within the children's centre to be more aware of what the centre is doing.

The centre receives data on a quarterly basis about how many of you have visited Keir Hardie and other local children's centres and they are beginning to look at this data to see how well they are doing. Services available to you could be more effective and improved if the centre made better use of available data to evaluate the services offered to you and to plan future services and look at how it would make your lives better.

The centre has begun to evaluate the services it offers. It has involved you in the process through the satisfaction surveys and feedback it obtains from you, both formally and informally. We have asked the centre to strengthen its self-evaluation, set clear targets and make sure that it regularly monitors how well it is meeting these targets.

There is a mutual respect between staff and you. You report that your children very much enjoy attending the centre and that the staff are very popular with your children.

You report that you enjoy courses such as the English for speakers of other languages and the computer courses. You find that the crèche allows your children to be well cared for while you concentrate on your studies.

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