

# Inspection report for Curzon Crescent Children's Centre

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<b>Local authority</b>	London Borough of Brent
<b>Inspection number</b>	376305
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 February 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Davies HMI

<b>Centre leader</b>	Mark Cole
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Curzon Crescent Nursery School 101489 Fawood Nursery School 101490
<b>Linked early years and childcare</b>	Fawood Children's Centre EY297967

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 an early years inspector. The inspectors held meetings with governors, managers, staff, parents and representatives of the local authority and partner organisations. They talked informally to parents. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Information about the centre

Curzon Crescent Children's Centre is located in the Harlesden area of north-west London. The centre was designated as a phase one Sure Start Children's Centre in 2006 within a maintained nursery school of the same name. Since September 2011 maintained reception education has been provided by the school. Locality services and children's centre family support and learning activities are based in a purpose-built extension to the building. A range of health and advice services operate regularly in the centre.

In September 2011 the centre formed a partnership under a single governing body for Fawood and Curzon Crescent Nursery Schools, which is accountable to the London Borough of Brent. The work is led by the partnership's executive headteacher and is coordinated by the extended services manager. The centre shares administrative staff, a business manager, teaching staff, outreach, family learning and support staff within the partnership. Parents and service partners advise the centre through a parents' and community committee and a wider locality-based advisory board.

The population served is ethnically and linguistically diverse. The main groups are Black African (27%, of whom two thirds are Somali) and Caribbean (16%). Over three quarters of users speak English as an additional language. The area is among the 20% most deprived in the country. The population of children under five years of age in the area has increased by 9.2% in the last two years. Approximately 40% of the children registered with the centre are from workless households and a similar

percentage live in a family headed by a lone parent. A very small minority have no recourse to public funds. The great majority of families live in social or private rented housing and many of these are in temporary or overcrowded conditions. Mobility is high. Violent crime rates are high. The majority of children start in the nursery with skills and experiences that are below the levels of expectation for their age and are at a very early stage of speaking English.

## 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**

**2**

### Capacity for sustained improvement

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

**1**

## Main findings

Curzon Crescent Children’s Centre provides good support to families in the area. After a two-year period of continual changes in the leadership and management, and changes to the area served, clear priorities, governance and management structures are now in place. Outcomes and provision are good and improving strongly. In particular, children make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development, often from low starting points. Leaders and managers in the new partnership are pursuing excellence relentlessly and the centre’s capacity to achieve further improvement is outstanding. Through rigorous evaluation of every aspect of performance the managers identify and draw on the outstanding elements of two successful centres. Professional development and recruitment strategies have a notable impact so that the centre has exceeded and reset even more ambitious targets for contact and participation.

The strategy of making a wide range of services available, particularly for disabled children, including those with autism, at both centres in the partnership is popular among families. Staff expertise is shared so that families see familiar faces at both centres. No matter what their background and circumstances, families feel welcome and well known. The centre is increasingly at the heart of the community. Parents new to the area say they develop a sense of belonging, safety and well-being as they meet acquaintances when walking from one centre to the other. One parent said, ‘You know the reputation of this area – but I feel safe when I see someone I know.’ Importantly in an area of such rich cultural and linguistic diversity, parents spread the word about activities and are helping to drive up initial contact numbers and attendance past the centre’s own targets.

Most parents who have attended the centre over a number of years approve of the new arrangements. They see improvements in their self-confidence and ability to help their children to learn. One parent's remark that 'the changes are all for the better' was typical. Good numbers succeed in accredited basic education and information and communication technology courses. Few have local opportunities to progress beyond this level, as they would like to. Some volunteers make a significant contribution, for example proposing innovative ideas for working with young parents. Employment and training, and financial and legal advice and guidance are well matched to the preferences and needs of the community so that families' economic stability improves.

The health and well-being of the majority of families improve through participation in activities and regular contact with health professionals at both centres in the partnership. Families feel safe and secure. Parents are learning to keep their families safe in their homes and the community. In an area with a high incidence of violence and family breakdown, the centre's safeguarding procedures and practice are outstanding. The absolute focus on safeguarding shown by staff at all levels means that no child or parent known to them is likely to slip through a protective net.

Staff keep careful track of the children's progress in play provision and in the school. Their progress from low starting points is good and the achievement gap for children in the area at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is closing at a good rate. The centre understands the difficulties for families moving their children on to school because of the complex pattern of local provision, and effective support is given.

The centre is showing great flexibility to sustain services and meet the pressing needs of the community. Some partners have not, until recently, been fully engaged and have provided limited data that is specific to the area. The centre builds on sound operational joint working with key partners at the local level to secure the data it needs. Consequently, the centre knows well where its strengths lie and where to improve.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- With the support of the local authority and partner agencies, gather information, particularly relating to health and economic well-being, that is specific to the area.
- With the support of the local authority and local partner agencies, assist a wider range of families to improve their economic well-being by providing more continuity in courses, or access to further courses, beyond basic levels.

## How good are outcomes for families?

2

Children are encouraged to eat well. Children staying for school lunches enjoy choosing large portions of fresh salad with their meals. Parents' emotional well-being improves noticeably as they make friends and take up more active lifestyles. Access to midwives, health visitors, speech therapists and counsellors is good so that parents feel well supported. The great majority of families in the area take up health checks. Professionals working at the centre identify development and health needs early for families and make immediate referrals to specialists, such as paediatricians or adult mental health services.

Parents' learning and development is strong across a number of aspects of their lives. The great majority of parents increase their knowledge about healthy diets at snack-time and in cook-and-eat sessions. Those with English as an additional language improve their skills alongside their children in popular story and rhyme sessions. Parents give many practical examples of the skills and knowledge gained in first aid and home and community health and safety courses. The well-being of the few children who are looked after and of families assessed under the Common Assessment Framework is reviewed regularly by the range of professionals working with each family, and support is adjusted. Increasingly, children in the area are staying on child protection plans for shorter periods of time as continuing support is offered to parents, for example to manage children's behaviour, through parenting and family nurturing courses. Their confidence improves measurably.

Children behave well and quickly become independent learners in the centre's spacious and well-equipped environment. Children in the area have low attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, with 51% reaching the expected levels for their age. However, the great majority of children using the centre, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points. One in five children attending the centre has a recognised disability and their progress from their starting points is good. When identified early, children are allocated nursery places. Children, including those with a disability, develop personal, social and emotional skills very rapidly in nursery and reception and throughout their time in crèches or Stay and Play groups. Most parents become involved in their children's learning and in getting them ready for school. As one parent said, 'We learn a lot just by watching how staff do it – we learn what to say to get our child's attention.'

The centre encourages parents to support each other in giving their views through using their diverse language skills. The centre recognises and makes the most of parents' aspirations to devote their time to their children while they are young. Increasing numbers successfully build up work experience through formal volunteering. Over a third of parents take up accredited courses and the great majority complete entry-level English as a second language and English and mathematics courses at levels 1 and 2. Access to courses beyond this level locally is limited.

*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>2</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>2</b>

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

<b>2</b>
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The centre gets to know each of the families attending well through initial home visiting and through information shared by agencies when they refer families to the centre. Staff running the play and family learning sessions carry out sensitive observations of children's progress and parents' achievements which is used well to plan future sessions. The range of play activities and courses with a crèche cover a wide range of family health and learning topics to capture different interests. Most activities are running at full capacity. The timing of provision is adapted, for example with additional play, singing and rhyme sessions put on in school holidays.

Good use is made of outdoor provision to extend learning and meet families' health needs for increased physical activity. Skilled practitioners broaden experiences for children and parents at every opportunity so that, as one parent said, 'We go on learning in every session.' Practitioners set up exciting and relevant activities for adults, for example by setting real hazards on the home safety courses. Displays of children's work and parents' qualifications are constantly refreshed to celebrate achievements. Services for those identified with autism are fully integrated at the partner children's centre and outcomes for these children are good.

The integrated care and education for children is of high quality. Parents' evaluations show that they greatly appreciate the wide range of guidance on offer. Advice and support on health, family safety, personal development and learning and on a range of employment and financial issues are available to all. Services are well advertised and promoted by staff so that families know how to access help in times of crisis. Families new to the area benefit from the depth of information available. Through weekly surgeries, the Citizens Advice Bureau has had real success in helping local families secure £300,000 in unclaimed benefits in the past year.

*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>2</b>
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Change has been managed exceptionally well. Throughout the period of change the centre has sustained its core services, such as for children with disabilities, to ensure inclusion. It has improved performance against priority targets so that provision and outcomes are consistently good. Outcomes are monitored and evaluated closely by the centre and partners. Good governance and advisory arrangements are now in place. The single governing body for the Fawood and Curzon Crescent Partnership is beginning to function well in the short space of time since it was established. Capitalising on the excellent participation of families at the partner-centre before joining together, leaders and managers ensured that families had a say in shaping the new partnership. The parents and community board, parents' forum and advisory board all have clear remits. User satisfaction remains high.

Leaders and managers have a clear overview of the needs of the area, which helps shape provision to promote inclusion. The contribution of strategic and local partners to evaluation is good overall and the centre has been pro-active in engaging partners more fully to support the new arrangements. The centre's evaluation of its effectiveness is rigorous and accurate in all major respects. There is good awareness of the mobility of the population and the centre adjusts its targets accordingly. Gaps in local data are identified and taken into account. The centre has exceeded its original inclusion target for the number of children it expected to see this year. Now the centre is pursuing a higher target that emerged from new demographic data. The centre has commissioned private and voluntary agencies to provide careers training and work with fathers.

Partnerships enable the centre to provide its well-targeted range of services. Day-to-day management arrangements ensure good quality provision and effective use of resources so that value for money is good. Sharing expertise across the two centres in the partnership is having a positive impact on the professional development of staff. This is seen, for example, in the improved planning for children with speech and language needs.

Excellence in safeguarding procedures goes beyond having a full range of staff and volunteer vetting, training and risk assessment procedures in place. The centre has recruited with safeguarding in mind at each new opportunity, for example by

recruiting a qualified social worker to a family engagement worker post. This enables the centre to identify new individuals at risk in the community and to use the Common Assessment Framework procedures effectively. The centre has reviewed and improved door security in response to parental concerns.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>2</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>1</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>2</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>2</b>

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

The Fawood Children's Centre (unique reference number 21147) was inspected in February 2011 and was judged to be good overall. The Nursery School and Early Years Foundation Stage provision at Fawood Children's Centre were inspected together under pilot arrangements for the inspection of maintained schools and were found to be good. Curzon Crescent Nursery School was inspected in February 2010 and was judged to be good. The full reports for these settings can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Curzon Crescent Children's Centre on 22 and 23 February 2012. We judged the centre to be good overall.

We thank you very much for making us so welcome during the visit. Thank you for giving up your time to tell us about the work of the centre. Here is a summary of what we found.

The centre has been through a few years of changes in governing arrangements and management. We were pleased to see that the centre asked parents who were attending during this time for their views. This has had a great effect on getting more parents, from all communities and backgrounds, to be more involved in the running of the centre.

Most parents are very happy with the services and activities provided now. One parent told us, in a typical comment, that 'the changes are all for the better'.

The centre does as much as possible to keep you and your children safe from harm. We think the centre does an excellent job to safeguard you. You find the home safety courses very enjoyable and they are helpful to you in keeping children safe.

You told us that your self-confidence and well-being improve through coming to the enjoyable stay-and-play sessions and being able to talk to health and education specialists. You told us that you feel much more able to help your children learn.

You and your children are enthusiastic learners in the singing, story and rhyme sessions that help to improve the use of English. Children catch up quickly with what is expected of their age group in the nursery school. Families with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities can contact specialists easily through either of the centres, and lives improve for these families.

The centre helps you and your children take up healthy lifestyles with the good examples of healthy snacks and encouragement to take more exercise.

Most parents are satisfied with the courses available for them but find there are not many courses available locally beyond a basic level to go on. We have asked the centre and partners to improve access to further courses for adults locally.

You like to see familiar faces of staff and get a warm welcome at both of the centres in the partnership. One parent said, 'You know the reputation of this area – but I feel safe when I see someone I know.' You told us that this is really important and helpful for many of you who are new to the area.

You told us about good ideas for parents to spread the word about activities by word of mouth. This helps the centre to reach out to even more families than they first

thought possible and attendance is very good. You put forward great ideas for working with young parents and women, which will help more families.

Managers and staff are very ambitious for all families to improve their lives. They form good partnerships with other organisations. They arrange for rightly valued services like the Citizens' Advice Bureau and midwives to be on hand to advise you.

We have asked the centre and its partners to find even more detailed local information, especially about health in the community and the employment you take up, so that the centre always knows how well it is doing.

Based on what it has achieved so far under in the new partnership, we think the centre has outstanding capacity to improve further.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).