

# Inspection report for Mapledene and Queensbridge Children's Centre

Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	366541
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Marion Wallace

Centre governance	The Governing Body of Queensbridge Primary School
Centre leader	Sarah Bailey
Date of previous inspection	15 June 2010
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Linked school if applicable	Queensbridge Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Mapledene and Queensbridge Nursery

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.

## 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 Learning Trust' and a copy is sent to the children's centre. 'The Learning Trust' 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 two additional inspectors. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the acting centre manager, senior leaders, governors, representatives of 'The Learning Trust', a range of providers, parents, teachers and other staff, members of the Multi Agency Team (MAT) and users. They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including the centre's operational plans, evaluations, key policies and safeguarding procedures. They visited the Ann Taylor Strategic Children's Centre and Queensbridge Primary School.

## Information about the centre

Mapledene and Queensbridge Children's Centre is a designated integrated centre which combines full day care alongside maintained early years education. The centre is led and managed by the governing body of Queensbridge Primary School. Mapledene and Queensbridge has been under the governance of Queensbridge Primary school since 2009 and prior to that it was a designated centre of excellence for early years education. The headteacher leads the school and the centre, working in partnership with the acting centre manager. There are close operational links between the school's Early Years Foundation Stage and the centre's nursery and childcare provision. Childcare is provided through the centre's nursery, day care, crèche and stay and play sessions. Centre staff also provide a breakfast club. Various services are run on the site and there is also outreach provision and links with other children's and family centres in the Hackney cluster group. The centre works in partnership with a range of social care and health agencies.

Mapledene and Queensbridge is a Phase 1 children's centre funded by 'The Learning Trust' and children's centre monies. 'The Learning Trust' has statutory responsibility for the centre and is the centre's accountable body in legal and financial matters. The centre opens from 8.00am to 6.00pm each weekday for 49 weeks a year. The average number of users per week is 75 adults and 500 children. Levels of deprivation in the area range from the bottom 30% nationally to families who are

not deprived. Many of the users come from homes with some level of social disadvantage. There are a few lone parents and a few mothers of nursery children in their early 20's. Most families in the area are of White British heritage and a minority are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The majority of parents in the area are in work but many parents using the centre come from households where no one is currently in work and the family is in receipt of benefits. Children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is below that expected for their age. Five children currently have 'in need' places in the nursery and have a child protection plan.

### 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 users and the wider community**

**1**

**Capacity for sustained improvement**

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

**1**

### Main findings

This outstanding children's centre achieves its aim to provide users with 'A place to maintain and expand the excellent standards of care, education and extended services in a very disadvantaged area'. As a result, children achieve exceptionally well in all areas of learning and rise to adults' high expectations of them. The high quality provision is delivered in an extremely safe environment where caring and trusting relationships are nurtured very effectively. The warm and welcoming environment and friendliness of staff create a harmonious atmosphere that benefits all users. Adult users grow in confidence as a result of attending the excellent range of activities at the centre. Parents and other users are extremely positive about the benefits. As one said, 'Brilliant! I do not know how I would have coped without the excellent support from the centre. It has changed my life. The staff at the centre are so friendly, nothing is too much trouble.'

A strength of the centre is the inspirational leadership provided by the headteacher, acting centre manager and senior leaders, in strong partnership with the school and 'The Learning Trust.' Leaders make excellent use of clear data provided by 'The Learning Trust' to monitor, evaluate and measure the centre's impact. This ensures that decisions are made which are effective in improving provision. The centre's excellent capacity to improve is evident in the way leadership and governance continually expand the centre's influence across its reach area in tackling disadvantage and narrowing the achievement gap.

Excellent communication with users directs them to help and advice from those who work in the centre and also from other agencies. Staff signpost parents to other providers so that they can gain further qualifications. The centre also has excellent links with Jobcentre Plus. Communication with potentially vulnerable members of the community, such as lone parents and those who do not speak English as their first language, is superb. The centre works extremely successfully with its partners in health, education and housing to offer dedicated care and support, tailored to the individual needs of these groups. The impact of this is that these families are now engaging more frequently with the centre in higher numbers and there is clear evidence of greater community cohesion.

Parents appreciate greatly the high quality of the childcare and the support and knowledge they have gained. Users are fully involved in evaluating the centre's activities and contribute well informally to its development. The parents' forum provides a more formal opportunity for parents to contribute but at present they can only do this online. The centre has rightly identified the need to increase the range of ways for parents to participate more formally, such as face-to-face meetings and opportunities to contribute when visiting the centre.

The outcomes for children and adults within the centre's reach are excellent. The early years education was judged outstanding in a recent inspection. Courses at the centre are popular and well attended. Many parents commented that they had learnt new skills, such as how to use a sewing machine and how to cook healthy food. Children thoroughly enjoy the many activities provided by the centre. They make excellent progress in developing skills and competencies. The centre is leading Hackney in the use of the 'Learning Journeys,' for all children who attend. These provide an excellent record of each child's progress in all areas of learning. Parents value the opportunity to contribute to the 'Learning Journeys'.

Service providers work exceptionally well as a team to make a real difference to parents and families, particularly those from vulnerable groups and those who are experiencing difficulties at home. The centre works very effectively to ensure equality of access for all. It celebrates diversity extremely well; for example, parents, carers and children thoroughly enjoy celebrating festivals such as Black History Month, Divali, Chinese New Year, Eid, Christmas and Easter. Parents spoke enthusiastically about memorable experiences, such as sports day and 'Toddle Waddle', where everyone was involved. Families with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported. The centre identifies needs early and liaises closely with the primary school to ensure continuity of support. Centre leaders are constantly striving to identify groups who are not yet making full use of the services it provides.

There are excellent procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of everyone who uses the centre. The centre's procedures for ensuring safety and child protection are exemplary. All legally required policies and procedures are in place, up to date and regularly reviewed. Staff have an excellent understanding of child

protection procedures and training is regular and up to date.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Enhance the centre's excellent informal strategies for involving its users in decision making by completing the establishment of the Parent Forum so that parents have access to a wider range of ways to become fully involved in planning activities and influencing the centre's development.

## **How good are outcomes for users?**

**1**

The centre successfully promotes healthy lifestyles through a wide range of activities, support and guidance that make a positive impact on the physical, mental and emotional health of its users. Parents talk appreciatively about how they were helped to breast feed and wean their babies. They develop an excellent understanding of how to provide a healthy lifestyle and diet for their children. The breakfast club offers a nutritious start to the day and encourages children to make healthy choices, such as fruit and porridge. The centre successfully involves whole families in physical activities, such as sports day in the local park. Children develop their physical skills exceptionally well in the excellent outdoor play and soft play facilities. Parents learn about what constitutes a healthy diet in cookery classes. Data show that the number of users who give up smoking is increasing.

High levels of security on the site ensure a safe and secure environment for all users. Vulnerable groups receive both practical and emotional support and users feel safe enough to openly share their concerns with staff. One said, 'There are always plenty of shoulders to cry on, nothing is ever too much trouble for the staff.' Children are safeguarded extremely well. Those who have a child protection plan are very effectively supported. The support for children subject to Common Assessment Framework processes is excellent. Help for lone parents is effective and these groups say that they have been well supported with excellent advice on domestic issues, income support and in coping with their lives. One grateful parent commented, 'Staff help to sort things out and it helps us onto the next steps.' First aid courses run at the centre are very popular and extremely well attended and support parents' understanding well.

The development of all areas of learning, including children's personal and social skills, is excellent. This equips them exceptionally well for the future. Parents report great improvement in their children's behaviour as a result of the help and support they receive from staff. Children thoroughly enjoy and learn through messy play and things that are more difficult to organise at home. Parents commented on the friendliness of the centre and the way it enables them to meet up with other parents. Courses provided for adults, for example to improve their grasp of English, are greatly appreciated and enjoyed and are often oversubscribed. Adults access a wide range of activities and opportunities for learning, gaining confidence and qualifications which support them to prepare for future employment. The confidence

of users is further enhanced by volunteering to help in the school and the centre. Adults are helped to prepare for job interviews and they are supported and encouraged to develop skills in literacy and numeracy. One grateful user, who now works as a teaching assistant in the primary school, said, 'I feel I am flying up and it is all down to the help and support I received from the centre and the school.'

Children in the Nursery are provided with a stimulating environment. Well-qualified staff who know the children extremely well provide a range of carefully planned activities that support all areas of learning and, as a result, children make excellent progress. Children make outstanding gains in their skills and understanding, developing an interest in exploring, investigating and learning through play in the 'stay and play' sessions. All areas of learning are supported by the access to speech therapy which increases children's communication skills. As a result of this outstanding provision, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is steadily increasing.

*These are the grades for the outcomes for users*

<b>The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training</b>	<b>1</b>

**How good is the provision?**

<b>1</b>
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The centre knows its users well and has established excellent assessment procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of the day care and nursery. The centre supplements 'The Learning Trust's' data with its own. For example, it collects data about the progress made by children and adults, the take-up of services and the increasing reach. This is used effectively to plan activities that are effectively focused on users' needs. Health visitors and other health and education professionals work very effectively with cluster provision to assess and review the welfare needs of users. There are excellent links with other agencies that effectively inform assessments to meet learners' individual needs well. The provision to help children learn and achieve is excellent. Activities, trips and sessions to help children prepare for school are outstanding.

The Citizen's Advice Bureau is accessed from the centre and users find this most helpful. Sessions for dads are successfully helping them to cope with looking after their children. The quality of care and support for vulnerable families is outstanding, as is the care and guidance of children who attend the Nursery and childcare. All workers at the centre, including administrative staff, show a passion for their work and awareness of the management strategies needed to overcome day-to-day problems. Hence, when they see parents they step up and offer support and encouragement. Parents say this has played a major part in their success.

Parents of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high levels of support to help them cope on a practical basis with the stresses of managing the extra work and emotional impact of their situation. One parent said that the support that she received from the centre was a lifeline and she would not have been able to cope without it. Many parents expressed the positive impact of the speech and language professionals. They were able to receive guidance and support for their child at the earliest stage to alleviate concerns. One parent who was helped by the centre to speak English more confidently is now running her own coffee mornings and courses to encourage 'stay at home mums,' to learn English.

Excellent parenting support enhances the knowledge, confidence and abilities of parents in raising their children. There is a wide range of literature and guidance available for parents to help them make choices about issues such as immunisation and to clarify their understanding of how they can keep their children safe and support their learning. At times of crisis parents are extremely well supported. This is largely due to the relationships between staff and users. Users see the centre as an extremely safe place where they can share their problems and can feel confident that swift and effective solutions or support will be provided. The quality of information, advice and guidance for parents seeking work is exemplary.

<b>The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are the leadership and management?**

**1**

The dynamic and incisive leadership is pivotal in driving improvement and promoting ambition so that staff are extremely reflective practitioners who are clearly focused on providing high quality services. All work together superbly to ensure that the work of the external agencies is integrated very effectively into the centre's day-to-day activities. The flexible deployment of staff and resources ensures excellent value for money. The bursar rigorously ensures that income targets are reached and the centre is never in arrears. Leaders' excellent knowledge of the centre's strengths and areas to be improved underpins their passionate commitment to continuous improvement.

Outstanding governance ensures rigorous accountability. The advisory board provides high levels of challenge to the centre and is influential in driving improvements to ensure consistently high quality provision. All staff working at the centre have been subject to an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. There are rigorous recruitment checks and arrangements for professional supervision. The centre ensures all partners are fully trained and that procedures are known to all. Policies are clear and implemented fully and risk assessments are rigorous and monitored to a high standard.

Early intervention to support those who are vulnerable is a priority. This is supported extremely well by excellent and regular partnership working with the Multi Agency Team. This provides a seamless service for parents and children. Partners now feel more able to utilise the resources at the centre than they did in the past. This, in turn, results in the centre engaging with more users from its locality. Links with parents, local schools and other children's centres in the Hackney cluster are excellent. The centre has made excellent progress in extending its provision to different ethnic and socio-economic groups so that it is now more diverse.

Users' evaluations of activities and courses and their responses to questionnaires are extremely positive. The views of parents and users are constantly sought and acted upon. For example, parents identified the need for a larger notice board to help users locate the centre. Both the primary school and the centre now have a large banner outside each building. The centre's development plan shows that staff have listened to users and taken steps to address their concerns.

The centre promotes the inclusion of all families within the reach area and celebrates diversity exceptionally well. It gathers valuable information about the different groups of users and evaluates their engagement. For example, case study evidence indicates that the centre has been effective in working with children and parents who are experiencing difficulties at home and those from minority ethnic groups. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well provided for, both in the physical accessibility of the building and through access to appropriate professional support.



*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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community</b>	<b>1</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>1</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 evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>1</b>

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

Mapledene Centre Nursery inspection report, June 2010.

Queensbridge Primary School inspection report, May 2008.

Discussion with parents of children attending the primary school who had previously attended the centre.

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](http://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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Summary for centre users

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

We inspected the Mapledene and Queensbridge Children's Centre on 11 and 12 January 2011. We judged the centre as outstanding.

We would like to thank those of you we met and who spoke to us about the centre and its work. It was a great help to us. We agree with you that the centre is an excellent place for you and your children to attend and that all the staff involved in the centre's work do a superb job to help you and your children. You told us how friendly and approachable everyone is and how happy your children are when they are in the centre. We could see that those of you who use the centre regularly enjoy and benefit from all it has to offer, such as the 'Stay and play'.

We think the wide range of things that the centre plans for you is excellent. We were particularly pleased to see how you were all involved in creating your children's 'Learning journeys'.

The centre helps you in so many ways, for example the support it provides for lone parents and those of you who are experiencing domestic difficulties. It also provides valuable support with legal papers, housing advice and practical help to make your homes safer for your children and useful guidance to help you with their learning. We know the staff are eager for more of you to contribute to decision making about the centre. We have asked them to provide different ways for you to contribute to the Parent's Forum as we know you do not all have access to the internet at home.

Your children make excellent progress in their learning and behave extremely well because they thoroughly enjoy all the activities offered. The smooth transition from the centre to Queensbridge School is excellent. The 'Stay and play' activities are outstanding. The children thoroughly enjoyed the day-care session that we visited as they explored the messy things and discovered that things moved slowly in the cornflower paste. They also enjoyed making patterns with the paint and exploring the long tunnel.

All of the people who work at the centre do an excellent job. There is an outstanding sense of teamwork, especially among the leaders, school governors and the advisory board. The work that they do to assess what is needed and to put plans in place to make things even better is excellent. They are extremely well supported by 'The Learning Trust' which has ultimate responsibility for the centre.

The centre ensures that children and users are extremely safe and well protected. Staff are all very experienced, well trained and regularly update their training in safety aspects. Your children's security and safety are of the highest priority and excellent records are kept to ensure that all who work at the centre are properly qualified and meticulously checked.

It was a pleasure to meet you during the inspection and to hear your views. We hope that you and your children and many more families who live in and around the Queensbridge and Mapledene area will continue to enjoy and benefit from the many activities and services the centre offers. Thank you again for contributing to the inspection by sharing your comments and thoughts so openly.