

# Inspection report for Wycombe (Terriers and Amersham Hill) Children's Centre

---

<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	384233
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 March 2012
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Wendy Ratcliff HMI

<b>Centre leader</b>	Tahir Aziz
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>Centre address</b>	2 Hamilton Road High Wycombe HP13 5BW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 510830
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	taziz@buckscc.gov.uk

<b>Linked school if applicable</b>	Not applicable
<b>Linked early years and childcare, if applicable</b>	Not applicable

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100080).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

No.100080

© Crown copyright 2012



## 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 children's centre coordinator, representatives for the local authority, members of staff, partner agencies, including representatives from health, members of the advisory board and families using the centre's services. They held informal discussions with parents and children.

They observed the centre's work and looked at a range of relevant documentation, including key policies, the centre's self-evaluation documents, its action plan and data about people who use the centre.

## Information about the centre

This is a phase two children's centre that was designated in March 2008 and is run directly by the local authority. The centre offered services in the community prior to moving into their current premises in April 2010. The centre coordinator also manages the Wycombe West Children's Centre and has been in post for just over a year. There are two full-time family support workers. The advisory board contributes to the management of the centre and includes representatives from a number of community and statutory partners. The centre has a parent forum, which meets monthly. The centre is open from 9.00am to 5.30pm, Monday to Thursday, and from 9.00am to 5.00pm on a Friday for 52 weeks of the year. The centre holds the Smile Award certificate.

Overall, the centre serves one of the 70% most deprived areas nationally. There are pockets of higher need and deprivation within the area, including areas that are among the top 40% most deprived areas in England. Around 75% of the local population is White British. There are smaller percentages of other minority ethnic groups, including Pakistani families and a growing Eastern European community.

There are 515 children aged under five years in the area and around 11% have been identified as living in households dependent on workless benefits.

The children's centre offers a range of services for families and children under five years. These include midwife services, family support, including outreach and support for those seeking employment. The majority of services are delivered from the Terriers and Amersham Hill centre.

There is no registered early years provision. The centre works with local schools and early years providers in supporting children and families as they prepare for transition to nursery and school. The levels of skills shown by children when they start school are slightly below local authority averages, with communication, language and literacy being the weakest area.

## 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**

**3**

## Main findings

Since opening in April 2010, Terriers and Amersham Hill Children's Centre has become the hub of the community. It gives families a sense of belonging, a place to be heard and feel safe, and an environment that is welcoming, supportive and understanding. Friendly and approachable staff have built high levels of trust with families who feel nurtured and well supported, particularly when they are experiencing difficulty in their lives. Families are extremely positive about the activities and support they receive and the way this helps to improve their lives. One parent reported, 'They saved me.' Families who have been helped by the centre to make changes in their lives want to give something back and feature in the centre's DVD, and two have become volunteers.

Families respond well to courses and activities, such as Preparing for School, New Beginnings and Action Kids. Parents recognise how their children learn and develop. Children and families are respectful to one another and feel the centre is inclusive and they do not feel judged. One parent reported, 'There is a good mix of parents and it is good to learn about diversity and celebrate where everyone is from.' Case

studies show how some families have improved their economic stability. Parents looking to return to work are signposted to courses in the community run by adult learning and provided with information about childcare. However, there are not enough opportunities at present for parents to develop their skills for the future.

Keeping families safe lies at the heart of the centre's work. The centre has developed some strong partnerships to ensure families receive the right level of support and reduce the risk of harm. Family support workers provide individual support packages for families in most need and there is evidence of improved outcomes for children on child protection plans or identified as children in need. Five children in the reach currently receive two-year-old funding places at local early years provision. They make good strides in their development.

The centre uses the data that is made available by the local authority, along with their local knowledge, to plan a range of services which meet the needs of an increasing number of families, including families from the Pakistani community. However, the centre recognises there is still work to be done in order to target services to increase the numbers of families accessing services from their identified vulnerable groups and the most deprived areas of the community. The commitment of staff to improve services and reach these families is in no doubt.

The centre has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. The advisory board are embedding in their role providing challenge and direction for the centre. They and leaders know the centre's major strengths and priorities for development. They conduct a range of monitoring activities, which includes seeking the views of families. However, systems are not fully developed and information, including that held by partners, is not reviewed collectively to track the impact services are having on outcomes for families. An action plan is in place identifying the key priorities for development. However, targets are not sufficiently measurable to show if outcomes are improving and whether targets have been met.

The centre actively seeks the views of children and families to help them evaluate activities and how these can be improved. An established and enthusiastic parent forum is in place that is actively helping to shape services. For example, the group successfully helped to organise a family fun day so fathers could access the centre with their families in order to become familiar with the building and staff, and gain confidence to attend the Dad's Group with their children.

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

### **Recommendations for further improvement**

- Together with the local authority and partners, improve the quality of data available in order to:
  - more precisely assess the needs of the community to target services for specific groups, particularly the most vulnerable
  - identify more precisely what outcomes the centre aims to achieve in

- improving the life chances of children and families when planning new services and setting targets
- track the impact that services have on outcomes for families.
- Develop the work to support parents in improving their education, learning and development and provide more opportunities to prepare for employment.

## How good are outcomes for families?

3
---

The centre is at an early stage of evaluating the impact of its work. The evidence available demonstrates the positive contribution the centre makes to improve the outcomes for its families through good-quality activities.

The centre receives limited health data. It has developed effective partnerships with the community midwife and health visitor so it can support families' emotional well-being. Staff introduce families to centre activities in order for them not to become isolated. Sessions, such as baby massage, have been introduced and provide opportunities for parents to bond with their baby. Mothers receive support for breastfeeding and data provided by the local doctors' surgeries confirm breastfeeding rates at six to eight weeks are high. Parents, including fathers, appreciate the Action Kids sessions and understand the benefits of physical exercise. These sessions and Cook and Eat courses help families to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

New parents attending the postnatal group are provided with home-safety packs and have a good understanding of how to keep their families safe as their baby moves to the next stage in their development. Children develop a good understanding of road safety as they practise crossing the road safely during Safety Weeks. Parents who attend the Holding Hands course gain confidence in their parenting skills, such as safe ways to manage their children's behaviour. Outcomes for those families most in need of intervention show improvement in their confidence and parenting skills.

Families show high levels of respect for one another. Children and their parents actively engage in a range of well-planned activities, which help them to prepare for the transition to nursery or school. Staff receive the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile scores and work with local nurseries and schools to identify where to focus activities, for example communication, language and literacy. The percentage of children scoring at least 78 points across the profile is below the local authority average. The gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the rest is closing from 35% in 2010 to 29% in 2011. There is anecdotal evidence that children make progress because of coming to the centre and staff are now developing systems to track the progress children make in their learning.

An emphasis on developing parents' skills to support their child's learning are provided through short courses, such as Lets Enjoy Books. Parents enjoy such courses and feel it has helped them to enjoy books with their children. It is difficult for the centre to track the longer-term impact from such courses, as they do not gain information on the numbers who go onto further courses. The centre provides a range of information on job vacancies in the area, adult learning courses and

childcare. They now work with adult learning to offer more opportunities for families to gain skills that will help them improve their education and prepare them for employment. For example, an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) play and language course is planned for the summer term in response to the Pakistani families who want to gain skills for themselves as well as enjoy their children's play and learning.

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>3</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>3</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>3</b>

## How good is the provision?

**3**

There is an appropriate range of services matched to the needs of the current families. Staff work with the data they have available and with partners to ensure services are matched appropriately and targeted in the right areas. Families spoken to confirm they appreciate the good-quality opportunities for their children to learn. A recent parent consultation confirms 82% of families say they feel more informed about their child's development and 94% say their child mixes better with other children. The centre celebrates children's achievements through effectively displaying their artwork, and parents contribute to their children's voice by recording what they have learnt on the Learning Tree.

In the last year, the centre has begun to focus on reaching families from specific groups and those considered more vulnerable. As a result, the number of families accessing services from the target groups, including minority-ethnic groups, children living in workless households, and lone parents, has steadily increased. The centre has plans in place to continue to target specific groups through advertising their services and working closely with partners. For example, the centre in partnership with the interpreter has produced a DVD to demonstrate its services and to reach the wider community. This is available in the main languages spoken in the area, including Urdu and Punjabi and, as a result, there is an increase in the number of families accessing services from the Pakistani community.

The family support workers skilfully assess the needs of individual families using a pre Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in order to provide the right level of support and signpost to services, including children with additional needs. Tailored one-to-one support makes a difference to a small numbers of families. Families speak extremely highly of the support they receive from the family support workers. For example, one parent reported, 'The centre has been a constant support to us.'

Partners appreciate the work and welcoming atmosphere at the centre. For example, key partners appreciate the availability of space to offer the Freedom programme for families experiencing domestic violence. The centre also works with the charity One Can Trust who provides valuable food parcels for families in crisis.

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>3</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>3</b>

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

**3**

Day-to-day management arrangements are clear and activities run smoothly. Professional supervision is conducted regularly and staff have clear targets for their work. Staff at the centre are highly motivated and passionate about their work and, together with the steer from the centre coordinator, they are now focused on increasing the reach of those from target groups and have already seen some success. However, the information the centre receives about the reach area does not support them in extending their reach into the wider community. It is difficult for them to target its support to the families in greatest need based on this information. Therefore, the centre is working with partners on the advisory board to use their professional knowledge of the community in order to target specific areas, such as the Pakistani community and the pockets of deprivation.

The advisory board is developing its role with a new chair in place and partners taking responsibility to oversee each of the Every Child Matters outcomes. The centre's self-evaluation is accurate and identifies strengths and areas for development. The centre's action plan is a list and lacks clear targets by which success can be measured in terms of outcomes for families. There are systems in place for monitoring and quality assuring the centre's services, for example the local authority carries out a range of checks to ensure safeguarding practices are followed. Systems to show the impact services are having on the outcomes for families are underdeveloped. However, staff have attended training in readiness for 'payment by



results', which commences from April 2012, and the local authority is developing systems to support centres to demonstrate their impact on outcomes.

The centre has a commitment to providing an inclusive environment and removing barriers. The staff celebrate diversity and different festivals during activity sessions, such as Chinese New Year and decorating prayer mats during Eid. Programmes, such as Holding Hands, helps parents who find it difficult to play and engage with their children. There is evidence of narrowing the achievement gap and the centre is developing systems to show the impact they have on preparing children for school or nursery. The centre invites partner organisations such as the Priory Day Nursery to specific events, for example sessions run by the London Sinfonia Orchestra, which promotes community cohesion.

Family support workers work well to cover the range of services provided. They have a wide range of skills in order to cover the various aspects of children's centre work providing satisfactory value for money. Safeguarding practices are effective and staff show a clear understanding of the action they would take if they have a concern. Volunteers and the chair of the advisory board have attended child protection training in order to support the centre's work. Protocols are in place to ensure the safeguarding of users and there is good evidence of improvement for children on child protection plans.

Families are seen as important partners and are actively engaged in the parent forum and shaping services. They meet monthly and provide their views on services offered, such as session times and the need for a parasol in the outdoor area.

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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of evaluation and its use in setting ambitious targets which secure improvement in outcomes</b>	<b>3</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>3</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>3</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>2</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>3</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**

None

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**

We inspected the Terriers and Amersham Hill Children's Centre on 28 and 29 March 2012. We judged the centre as satisfactory overall.

Your children's centre has some key strengths. Since opening in April 2010, it has become the hub of the community. It provides you with a sense of belonging and an inclusive environment where you and your children feel safe, valued and respected. Those of you we spoke to told us that you fully appreciate the care, guidance and support you receive from the family support workers, particularly when you experience a difficulty or change in circumstance. This is because they are friendly and approachable and you have built trusting relationships. We found out that you are happy and extremely positive about the support the centre provides. Some of you told us how the centre had been a real 'life saver'. Some of you are now keen to give something back and feature in the centre's DVD and have become volunteers.

We saw how well you are responding to courses and activities, such as Preparing for School, New Beginnings and Action Kids. You told us how these sessions help you to recognise how your children learn and develop. Children and families are respectful to one another and feel the centre is inclusive. You told us how you do not feel judged. One parent told us, 'There is a good mix of parents and it is good to learn about diversity and celebrate where everyone is from.' Case studies show how some of you have improved your economic stability. Those of you who are looking to return to work are signposted to courses in the community run by adult learning and provided with information about childcare. However, there are not enough opportunities at present for you to develop skills for the future and prepare for employment.

Keeping families safe lies at the heart of the centre's work. The family support workers provide individual support packages for those families in most need of support and there is evidence of improved outcomes for children on child protection plans or identified as children in need. Five children in the reach are currently receive

two-year-old funding places at local early years provision. They make good strides in their development.

The centre uses the data that are made available by the local authority, along with their local knowledge, to plan a range of services which are meeting the needs of an increasing number of families, including families from the Pakistani community. However, the staff recognise there is still work to be done in order to target services to increase the numbers of families in the community in greatest need to access services. The commitment of staff to improve services and reach these families is in no doubt.

Those in charge know the centre's major strengths and priorities for development. They conduct a range of monitoring activities, which includes seeking your views. However, systems are not fully developed and information, including that held by partners, is not reviewed collectively to track the impact services have on outcomes for families. The staff have an action plan in place, which identifies the key areas for development. However, targets are not sufficiently measurable to show if outcomes are improving and whether targets have been met.

The centre seeks your views and those of your children to help them evaluate activities and how these can be improved. It was good to speak with some of you who are involved in the parent forum. It is clear that you are enthusiastic and keen to help shape services. It was good to hear how you helped to organise a family fun day so fathers could access the centre with their families in order to become familiar with the building and staff, and gain confidence to attend the Dad's Group with their children.

We were pleased to talk to some of you during the inspection and were grateful for your views and comments. Thank you for contributing to the inspection at Terriers and Amersham Hill Children's Centre.

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