

# Risborough Children's Centre

c/o Princes Risborough Primary School, Wellington Road, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, HP27 9HY

<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–18 June 2015
Previous inspection date	Not previously inspected

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Good	2
The quality of practice and services		Good	2
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is a good centre.

- Staff work tirelessly to identify the families who are in most need of support. This is highly successful because staff have formed strong partnerships with other agencies to assess local needs. As a result, the vast majority of families are registered at the centre and regularly access services.
- The quality of the centre's work is consistently good. Parents fully appreciate the range of services provided. They report they feel more confident as parents; their health and well-being are promoted well and the relationships they form with their children are more positive.
- Leaders and managers, and those responsible for governance, play a key role in making sure the centre continually improves and provides services that local families need. Despite working on reduced budgets, and through a period of significant change and staffing issues, the management team has continued to support staff in delivering high quality services.
- Throughout the inspection, parents were keen to praise the work of the children's centre. Many described it as a 'lifeline'. One parent, confirmed the view of many, by saying, 'Staff never judge you – they just want to help.'
- Staff feel fully supported by the Barnardo's management team. There are highly effective arrangements in place to ensure staff fully understand their responsibilities and access relevant training to keep their skills and knowledge up to date. This has a very positive impact on the quality of services provided.

### It is not outstanding because:

- Information provided by the local authority is not always provided quickly enough. Some specific detail is not included. This hinders the rate of improvement and means staff are not always made aware of specific needs in the Risborough area.
- Despite the efforts of centre staff, not all primary schools are working with the centre to support children's school readiness and further narrow achievement gaps.

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

- Ensure that local authority data are provided to the centre in a timely manner in order to:
  - assist the centre's planning of services
  - further support the work of the advisory board in holding the centre to account
  - highlight any achievement gaps for particular groups of children.
- Develop partnerships with all local primary schools in order to further support children's school readiness.

**Information about this inspection**

The inspection of this children's centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

The inspectors held meetings with managers from Barnardo's, centre staff, representatives of the advisory board, the headteacher from Princes Risborough Primary School, Royal Air Force (RAF) personnel, health colleagues, adult learning providers, early years consultants, project officers from partner agencies and families who use the centre.

The inspectors visited several group activities taking place within the centre, including baby massage, health clinics, a Holding Hands session, and parenting programmes. Inspectors also visited a Stay and Play session at RAF Wycombe and observed a group session at Saunderton Lodge, a hostel for local homeless families.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

**Inspection team**

Joanne Caswell, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Talbot-Strettle

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about the centre

Risborough Children's Centre has been open since November 2009. It covers the wards of Bledlow and Bradenham, Greater Hughenden, Lacey Green, Speen and the Hampdens, and the Risboroughs, and is based on the site of Princes Risborough Primary School and The Secret Garden Pre-School. Both of these settings are subject to separate inspection arrangements. The reports can be accessed at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted). The centre is managed by Barnardo's on behalf of the local authority. It is one of three centres in the area known locally as the 'red cluster'. The two other centres are Wendover (URN 22509) and Prestwood and Missenden (URN 22028). An independent advisory board provides the governance arrangements.

There are approximately 1,173 children aged under five years living in the local community. The area surrounding the centre is predominantly rural, with very small pockets of less affluent areas. The rural location means some families find accessing services, such as health provision, schools and libraries, difficult. The local community includes small estates with social housing accommodation, a hostel for families waiting for council accommodation, and an RAF base. The employment rate in the Risborough area is slightly lower than the local authority average. In total, 1.4% of adults living in Risborough are unemployed, significantly below rates seen nationally. Almost 97% of families living in the area describe themselves as White British.

The centre provides a range of services including health clinics, Stay and Play sessions, baby massage groups, parenting courses and access to adult learning and professional advice. Children's skills and knowledge on entry to early years provision are generally in line with those expected for their age. The centre's target families include: those being supported by social care and child protection arrangements; homeless families; two-year-old children eligible for funded early years provision; service families; and, those experiencing social isolation.

### Inspection judgements

#### Access to services by young children and families

**Good**

- A good number of families from the most vulnerable areas regularly access services. Staff have formed very strong links with the RAF base and the lodge for homeless families. As a result, the vast majority of these families regularly engage with children's centre services.
- Concerted action has been taken to provide services in venues which are easier for families to access. The rural setting means public transport services are limited. Therefore, many families are at risk of isolation. Barnardo's provides a minibus service ensuring families without transport and those in remote areas regularly access services. This includes taking families to health appointments, or for meetings with other agencies such as for housing or legal advice.
- Although links with the midwifery services are still being developed, expectant parents are signposted to the children's centres through effective links with local doctors' surgeries and through other agencies. A good number of prospective parents have engaged with parentcraft sessions to help them prepare for the birth of their baby. Many of these parents continue to use centre services once the baby is born and form friendships with other new parents, helping to overcome potential isolation.
- At 95%, almost all of two-year-old children eligible for funding for early years education access good or better provision. Effective links with childminders in the area ensure there are sufficient good quality places for children to access.
- Systems are in place to ensure that children who are known to social care, or those receiving early help, including those who are subject to child protection arrangements and looked after children, are known to the centre and regularly access services. At 75%, the vast majority of these children are engaged in children's centre services.
- A good range of groups, such as Stay and Play sessions, means all families can access these. Other

groups are by invitation only and ensure those most in need benefit from the specialist support they need. The well-balanced timetable of activities means services are provided regularly and make a positive impact on local families.

- Although the numbers of children living in workless households is low, staff know these families well and provide relevant support to help parents develop the skills they need to access appropriate training and employment.

### **The quality of practice and services**

**Good**

- The range of services provided by the centre is good. Despite the recent staffing changes, and reductions in budget, staff must be commended for the quantity and quality of services they have continued to deliver. This has enabled parents to attend regularly and has resulted in positive outcomes in family well-being.
- The centre's family support worker and play leader work extremely well together. They build excellent relationships with families and are highly respected by local partners. Their tenacious attitude means the most vulnerable families consistently receive the support they need, especially at times of crisis. For example, when families arrive at Saunderton Lodge, their needs are quickly assessed and relevant support is provided by centre staff.
- Partnership arrangements with early years providers, health visitors, adult learning providers, the RAF and Saunderton Lodge are good and fully contribute to the positive impact of the centre's work on improving life choice and chances.
- Parents confirm they feel far more confident in their role in supporting children's learning, behaviour and development. The Holding Hands group gives parents many practical strategies to help them understand how to manage children's behaviour positively. For example, one parent confirmed that after only one session at the group, she successfully managed to reduce her child's use of a dummy through positive behaviour strategies.
- There are many good systems in place to support children's healthy development and parents' welfare. Cookery sessions encourage parents to become more aware of how to support children's nutritional needs and prepare meals on a budget. Baby massage classes are successful in enhancing both babies' and mothers' well-being.
- The range of information, guidance and support provided for parents, especially at times of crisis, is excellent. Staff have a wealth of expert knowledge and highly effective links with various agencies, including specialist support, to ensure families receive the help they need in a timely manner and so improve their well-being.
- Health outcomes across the Risborough area are good. In total, seven parents have completed the Enough is Enough course to help them understand portion size for adults and children. At 3.7%, obesity levels in children are significantly below the rates seen in other areas of the county or nationwide. Breastfeeding rates are good at 81.2% at birth, and good support provided by the centre through specialist advisers helps mothers to continue.
- Parents develop a good understanding of how to keep their children safe. Over the last year, 35 parents have completed first aid courses and confirm these have given them more confidence in managing accidents, or knowing what to do if their baby chokes when weaning. As part of Child Safety Week, the police visited the centre and helped children and their parents understand about possible dangers and how to keep themselves safe.
- There are good opportunities for parents to volunteer within the centre and develop new skills and build their self-confidence. Two volunteers from the Risborough area have now been successful in gaining employment.
- Although significant work has been done to support children's development, reduce inequalities and help them to prepare for starting school, not all schools are working in partnership with the centre. Data provided by the local authority, with more specific information on how well all children achieve at the end of the Reception year, are not yet available to inform the planning of services. For example, the local authority has not analysed the data sufficiently rigorously to help staff recognise whether more work is needed to improve boys' learning, or whether children from all areas of the community achieve as well as others.

**The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management****Good**

- The leadership and management of the centre are good. Barnardo's invests greatly in its staff and provides many training and development opportunities. As a result, staff remain loyal and there is clear career progression within the organisation. Area managers, coordinators, administrators and centre staff have clear lines of accountability and communication. This results in the smooth and effective organisation of the centre in a period of change.
- The advisory board plays a key role in driving the centre's improvement. Board members represent a breadth of skills, expertise and professional knowledge. They use self-evaluation effectively to identify areas to improve. Information provided by the local authority is not yet reliable enough to help to accelerate the improvements being seen, and the ways in which leaders and managers currently measure their performance.
- The local authority sets relevant targets to challenge the centre to improve. Effective performance means these targets are consistently met. Closer analysis of data, however, carried out by the local authority, has yet to help to identify any potential families who may need additional support in helping children to become ready for school and further narrow achievement gaps.
- Safeguarding arrangements underpin the centre's work effectively. All staff are fully trained and demonstrate a strong commitment towards protecting vulnerable families. When social care has been slow to respond to referrals, staff and Barnardo's managers have shown a dogged determination and tenacity to take relevant action to support children's welfare.
- Despite operating with reduced resources and budgets, staff have continued to deliver services in the areas most in need. Staff should be praised for the way in which they have found innovative solutions to overcome potential barriers. As a result, families most in need continue to benefit from relevant support and services.
- Clear procedures are in place for monitoring the centre's work. Leaders and managers regularly carry out quality assurance and identify areas to improve. Through supervision and annual appraisals, staff are regularly encouraged to reflect on their work and develop their practice. Regular audits and evaluations ensure that leaders and managers have an accurate view of the quality of the centre's work.
- The children's centre is valued as an essential service within the community. Many partner agencies commended the work of the staff, describing them as 'fantastic', 'amazing' and 'always willing to go the extra mile to help'.

**What inspection judgements mean**

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for children and their families and, as a result, inequalities are reducing rapidly and gaps are closing.
Grade 2	Good	Practice enables most children and their families to access good quality services that improve children's wellbeing and achieve the stated outcomes for families.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	Performance is not as good as it might reasonably be expected to be in one or more key areas.
Grade 4	Inadequate	The needs of children and families in its area are not being met and/or the leaders and managers are not providing sufficient challenge to bring about improvement to the quality of services.

**Centre details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	22509
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	455083
<b>Managed by</b>	Barnardo's on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,173
<b>Local services coordinator</b>	Vicky Masters and Jo Lawrence
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01844 347934
<b>Email address</b>	risboroughcc@barnardos.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

This template is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130186](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130186).

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 St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
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. 130186

© Crown copyright 2015

