

# Wendover Children's Centre

Wharf Road, Wendover, HP22 6HF

<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–18 June 2015
<b>Previous inspection date</b>	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.

- Families new to the area, including those based at nearby RAF Halton, receive very good support from staff which helps them to settle quickly into the community and use centre services.
- Most families are registered with the centre and a large majority of families in most need of support, including those from target groups, access the centre's services on a regular basis.
- The quality of activities provided by the centre is good and so attendance at sessions is consistently high.
- Children who use the centre's services enjoy their experiences and make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Despite significant recent change, staff provide very good support for all children and families, especially in times of crisis.
- Volunteers build confidence and skills and make a significant contribution to the effective running of the centre.
- Managers and the advisory board provide strong, sensitive support for all staff, who are well trained and passionate about improving the lives of families. There is good capacity to sustain improvement.

### It is not outstanding because:

- On occasions, the lack of timely information provided by the local authority hampers managers' ability to make decisions about planning services and impedes the checks being made by those responsible for governance.
- Despite the efforts of the centre staff, not all primary schools are working with the centre to support school readiness and further narrow achievement gaps.
- The advisory board requires strengthening and further training so it can better challenge as well as support the centre.

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

- Ensure that local authority provides timely and robust data to the centre in order to:
  - assist the centre in planning activities
  - support the work of the advisory board in holding the centre to account
- Work with primary schools to better identify where more educational support for children is needed to support their readiness for school.
- Expand the membership and appropriately train all members of the advisory board so it can more effectively challenge and support the centre.

### 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 two Additional Inspectors, working in conjunction with the inspectors leading two other simultaneous inspections. The inspection took place at the same time as Risborough Children's Centre and Prestwood and Missenden Children's Centre.

The inspectors held meetings with: Barnardo's managers and staff; parents and volunteers; partners in health, education, social care and community services; advisory board members; and, representatives from the local authority.

The inspectors visited the centre, observed the centre's work, such as Multiple Magic and Little Breaks, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

### Inspection team

Alan Comerford-Dunbar, Lead Inspector	Additional inspector
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Lesley Talbot-Strettle	Additional inspector
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## Full report

### Information about the centre

Wendover Children's Centre serves a mainly rural population. There are currently approximately 1,045 children under the age of five living in the area served by the centre. Most families are of White British heritage and about 8% are from different minority ethnic heritage groups. Children enter school with skills, knowledge and abilities that are above those typical for their age.

The centre is governed and managed by Barnardo's on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council. The day-to-day running of the centre is carried out by a service coordinator, supported by the Barnardo's area manager and a national team. There have been significant recent changes to staff and managers at the centre. The centre works in a cluster with Risborough Children's Centre (URN: 22509) and Prestwood and Missenden Children's Centre (URN: 22028) to provide a range of activities and services at the centres and at outreach venues. Wendover has its own advisory board.

The area covered by the centre is varied, with generally affluent villages containing very small pockets of deprivation, including unemployment. Housing is mostly owner occupied, although the centre serves some areas of social housing. The number of looked after children and children subject to protection plans is low.

The centre has identified its target groups as: families with two-year-olds entitled to funded early education; children under five from multiple birth families; children from referred families and those at most risk; and, families of serving staff living at RAF Halton.

## Inspection judgements

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

- Most families are registered with the centre and have access to good information about the services that are available. A large majority of children from families with two-year-olds entitled to funded early education, children under five from multiple birth families, children from referred families and those at most risk, and families of serving staff living at RAF Halton attend centre activities on a regular basis.
- Due to the affluent, rural demographic profile of the area served by the centre, families, especially those who move into the area such as service families who live on the RAF Halton airbase, often feel socially isolated. Centre staff effectively work with partners within the community to provide outreach services such as Stay and Play. Families are therefore better able to access services close by and integrate themselves swiftly into the community.
- Families benefit from the strong partnership between centre and health professionals; as a result, access to early childhood services by expectant and new parents is good. Weekly health clinics run locally are supported by staff from the centre and they are always very well attended and popular with families. Families benefit from a wealth of advice and guidance about any family health issues, so that their children can get the best start in life.
- The local authority, together with centre staff, has been highly effective in identifying, informing and enrolling eligible two-, three- and four-year-olds to take up their free early years education entitlement; as a result, almost all children are included and involved. The very large majority of settings used for child placements are of good or outstanding quality.
- Effective systems are in place to ensure that children, who are known to social care, or those receiving early help, regularly engage with centre services. Coordinated early intervention strategies with other agencies mean fewer children are becoming subject to child protection plans.
- Access and registration information and data sharing by strategic partners have improved recently. The centre now receives relevant information that helps them to identify families that may need their services, such as new birth data and information regarding families that may be eligible for

two-year-old funding. However, the centre does not always know when they are going to receive this information, which makes future planning of activities difficult.

### The quality of practice and services

Good

- The centre continues to provide good quality activities which have a positive impact on the lives and well-being of families despite staffing changes. Parents enjoy attending sessions intended for all families, as well as those targeted at supporting children and families in most need. All sessions are run to capacity, for example the highly popular paediatric first aid course for parents.
- There is good support to help parents understand how their children learn. Stay and Play sessions are organised well, with a clear focus on promoting purposeful play. This enables parents to really understand how children's learning can be supported. Close links with the speech and language team mean parents develop an understanding of how to support children's communication skills at home.
- Managers and staff are totally committed to helping families to overcome issues they may face in life. Families are very well supported by staff at the centre, who consistently provide caring, personal support, especially for families in times of crisis. As one father said, 'When my daughter was diagnosed with a rare disability my world collapsed, the staff here helped carry me through this difficult period in my life.'
- Families attend health clinics run at the centre and receive good care, guidance and support about health matters. Health outcomes are good. Sustained breastfeeding and childhood obesity outcomes are more positive than local and national figures.
- The number of adults who need help and support to improve their employability is very low. Staff are highly effective in signposting parents, including those from the most deprived neighbourhood, to the services of partner organisations operating locally. Most adults who undertake courses meet their personal goals.
- Volunteers play an important role in helping staff to provide services. Trained to a very high standard by Barnardo's, many volunteers run sessions independently and also go on to gain employment, some within the children's centre. The training of volunteers is particularly well planned and organised.
- Most children make good progress and are well prepared for school. However, information about how well different children learn is not sufficiently analysed and this impedes the centre's otherwise good work to reduce inequalities. For example, the local authority and some schools do not provide the centre with details about the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the time they are five. Consequently, staff cannot accurately identify which children may need more support earlier on with their learning in order to narrow any achievement gaps.

### The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management

Good

- Leadership, governance and management are good because leaders have a clear vision for the centre and have appropriate plans for sustaining improvements. The effective annual review, led by the local authority, and Barnardo's quality improvement checks ensure close monitoring of the centre's performance. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the centre is good.
- Significant staff changes have been well managed. The well-qualified staff come from a range of relevant professional backgrounds and provide effective support for children and families. Already, the very recently appointed centre coordinator is making a significant improvement to the quality of services offered. Staff benefit from consistent, supportive supervision and attend a wide range of relevant training courses.
- Centre staff are passionate about the care, safety and welfare of families and report concerns appropriately. All partners, together with centre staff, ensure that children who are looked after, in need or subject to child protection plans, and those families being supported through early help

assessments, are well protected.

- Partnership working is effective because staff work well with partners from health services and particular partners working on the nearby RAF Halton base. Relationships and communications with social care are improving. There are appropriate plans to further increase the number of schools and early years settings the centre works closely with, for example by getting them involved in the work of the advisory board.
- Resources are used effectively. Staff make the most of the space available and most activities are full to capacity. Parents are constantly asked to evaluate and comment on services; for example, the highly popular Multiple Magic service for families of multiple birth children has grown so large that staff and parents are actively discussing options to better meet the needs of the group.
- Governance of the centre is good and leaders have a clear understanding of the issues facing the centre. However, the advisory board, whilst highly supportive with some long-standing dedicated members, does not sufficiently challenge the centre. Although offered, members have never received training on how to become a more effective advisory board. Furthermore, the data presented to board meetings about the centre's performance are not always up to date and this restricts the board's full accountability checks.

**What inspection judgements mean**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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.

**Children's centre details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	23484
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	455084
<b>Managed by</b>	Barnardo's on behalf of the local authority

<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	1,045
<b>Centre leader</b>	Anita Steward-Lees and Vicky Masters
<b>Telephone number</b>	01296 621143
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