

# Chalgrove and Watlington Children's Centres

Children's Centre Office, High Street, Chalgrove, OX44 7ST

**Inspection date** 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:		
		Not previously inspected	
Access to services by young children and families		Outstanding	1
The quality of practice and services		Outstanding	1
The effectiveness of leadership, governance and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for children and families

### This is an outstanding centre.

- The centre manager's inspirational leadership enthuses others to have high aspirations for all children and families, but particularly those in most need. She leaves no stone unturned and is highly creative in her approach to even the most difficult problems.
- Staff share her enthusiasm and are passionately committed to do whatever it takes to continually improve opportunities for safety, health and well-being for all children and families, and in particular those families in most need.
- Everyone is welcomed and feels valued. Staff know the families exceptionally well. They listen carefully to what families need and work hard to plan the right activities to help each individual family. Parents say that the centre is 'a complete life-saver'.
- The number of families who access the centre's early childhood services has increased year-on-year and now exceeds the number of families that official information says live in the area. This is because the centre has an excellent knowledge of the area and is very quick to pick up on any newcomers.
- Partnerships are a key strength of the centre. The centre has so few staff, so many families with very different needs and such a wide area to cover that the seamless partnerships are vital in ensuring families' needs are met on a continuous basis. Exceptionally strong partnerships with local schools mean that children are very well prepared for school.
- The centre reaches a very high proportion of its target population because staff do not only rely on the information and figures supplied by the local authority. They get out to see for themselves. This way, they have an 'up-to-the-minute' picture of the area and a very detailed understanding of the local community.
- The high quality of the centre's governance, together with rigorous checks on how well it is doing and high-quality training for all staff, drives improvement rapidly forward and helps to shape its innovative practice. The governing body sets challenging targets and holds the centre to account, measuring its progress year-on-year and against local and national targets.

## **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.

The inspectors held meetings with the centre manager, the headteachers from Chalgrove and Watlington primary schools, outreach and support workers, the locality social worker, the military relocation officer and a representative from the local authority. They also met health, education and early years partners, an adult economic well-being officer, parents, volunteers and representatives of the advisory group and the governing body. The inspectors also undertook a home visit to a family.

They looked at the centre's self-evaluation, action planning, a sample of case studies, safeguarding procedures and a range of other relevant documentation. Visits to activities such as musical fun were undertaken jointly with the centre manager, who also attended all team meetings.

## **Inspection team**

Barbara Atcheson	Additional Inspector, Lead Inspector
Penny Mathers	Additional Inspector

## Full report

This stand alone, phase three centre opened in 2009. It is open Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm and some evenings and weekends. The centre has two bases which are located at Chalgrove (URN123092) and Watlington (URN123032) primary schools, both of which are subject to separate inspections. It is managed and jointly governed by both schools and there is an independent chair of the advisory steering group. The centre offers a mixture of universal provision and targeted services to meet the core purpose, including Stay and Play, Wonderful Words, Musical Fun, baby massage, parenting support groups and work with families in their own homes. There is a centre manager and a small team of part-time workers. The centre also works closely with health and other providers to offer a baby clinic, two-year-old checks, a speech and language drop-in, antenatal sessions, breastfeeding support and parenting craft.

This rural area has 445 children under five years old and there are two significant pockets of deprivation. The centre has identified families in rural isolation, forces families, low-income households, and those facing health and parenting issues as its key target groups. Almost all of the families are White British, although there are a few bilingual families from central and eastern Europe and a few families from the Philippines. There are 49 military families currently registered as using the centre. A few children live in workless households and a few are eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. Children's skill levels on entry to early years provision are broadly in line with those expected for their age.

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

- Plan more opportunities that will increase children's awareness of what it is like to live in communities that are very different from their own.

## Inspection judgements

### Access to services by young children and families

Outstanding

- The very good partnership with the military housing officer ensures that families placed in the community, often with no extended family support and many miles from their place of origin, are quickly introduced to all that the centre and community has to offer.
- Families who are rurally isolated enjoy the benefits of the children's centre library bus. This provides books and games to share, and activities to do, and is a vital meeting point for families who would otherwise have very little contact with other families.
- The centre runs a very effective rolling programme which it rotates around different sites so that no family misses out. Events such as the popular 'Play Out', where a village road is temporarily closed to provide a play space, ensures as many families as possible access the centre's services.
- The friendly persistency and warmth of centre workers ensures that even those who were at first reluctant to join soon enjoy the benefits of all that the centre has to offer. Those expecting children, older parents, those who are rurally isolated and those who have children with disabilities have grown in confidence, become regular attenders and encourage their friends to attend.
- The centre's annual 'Visioning Day', when all partners meet to discuss and plan the programme of events, ensures a tailor-made programme and an excellent balance of services for all its families, particularly those who are in most need.

### The quality of practice and services

Outstanding

- The centre offers an extensive range of universal and targeted services to meet the very wide range of needs of its families. Fairground families have benefited significantly from adult literacy; families with twins have learned how to deal with the demands of two young babies and those who have children with disabilities have learned invaluable ways to cope with the difficulties that every day

presents.

- Children are well prepared for school, and their health and well-being have been significantly improved as a result of the centre's carefully planned provision. Excellent parenting courses have equipped families to better deal with their children's behaviour and, as a result, headteachers report that the behaviour in schools has significantly improved.
- A centre survey shows that almost all parents have a greater understanding of their children's development as a result of specific programmes to promote children's learning, including 'Let's Talk' and story sacks, help with speech and language and mark making. As a result, children are much better prepared for school and the gap between the lowest-achieving children and the rest is closing. At one time, only a minority of children reached the expected levels at the end of Reception. Because of all that the centre offers, most children now reach the expected levels at the end of Reception.
- Parents say their understanding of how to keep their children safe and improve their well-being is now much better than before. They use the portion size and healthy eating knowledge they have learned in courses delivered by the centre and tips from those that help prepare for weaning.
- First-aid courses provide vital skills to help parents to deal with emergencies such as choking and how to recognise childhood illnesses. The centre's expert knowledge and sensitive ways of helping those in most need ensure children are kept safe. The home-school link worker ensures seamless provision between home and school .
- The life chances for families are significantly improved by the wealth of easily accessible benefits, and financial advice and opportunities to work as a volunteer. Adult literacy, help with interviews, writing job applications and courses such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which lead to qualifications are very beneficial in helping parents get back to work successfully.

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

Outstanding

- The highly effective leadership of the centre manager is underpinned by a very secure framework of policies and procedures which are understood by all. This ensures high-quality provision due to exceptionally effective partnerships with a wide range of agencies and services.
- The 'Visioning Day' enables partners from health, school, social work and pre-school to share, plan and review together. This strong partnership work is the key to the centre's success in identifying, reaching and providing so well for all its families, particularly those in most need, with a limited workforce and budget.
- Staff and senior leaders share the centre manager's pursuit of excellence and her relentless focus on improvement. They have an accurate view of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. The centre has a warm, welcoming atmosphere, where everyone feels safe, diversity is celebrated and families learn the value of living harmoniously within the community. However, the centre recognises that too few opportunities are planned to raise children's awareness of what it is like to live in communities that are very different from their own.
- The leadership team make good use of the information they gather to demonstrate the successful impact of the centre's work. For example, the centre has very successfully increased its contact with families and children in most need. This includes military families, those who are rurally isolated and those who have children with disabilities.
- Governors measure the centre's performance against local and national information. Together with the advisory board, they keep a close check on all that goes on, set challenging targets for the centre's work and hold it to account in order to continually improve and so reduce inequalities between families.
- The local authority not only checks the information that it has on the centre's performance, but it attends meetings and drops in on activities to ensure the centre's high performance is sustained.
- Safeguarding is given the highest priority. The strong partnerships that exist between the centre and health and social care professionals maintain a high-profile focus on reducing the risk of harm to children. The timely, sensitive, well-informed work with families in their own home has significantly enhanced their well-being, including those whose problems have been assessed using

the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). As a result of this excellent work, there are only four CAFs, three have been closed and there are no children subject to child protection plans.

**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.

**Select details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	20618
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	421446
<b>Managed by</b>	Chalgrove and Watlington primary schools on behalf of the local authority.
<b>Approximate number of children under five in the reach area</b>	445
<b>Centre leader</b>	Helen Rints
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 400219
<b>Email address</b>	Helen.rints@oxfordshire.gov.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).

(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.

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)

© Crown copyright 2013

