

# Potterspury Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	219968
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Margaret Coyne
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Horsa Building, John Hellins Primary School, Browns Wood Drive, Potterspury, Towcester, Northamptonshire, NN12 7PL
<b>Telephone number</b>	0790 4347104
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Potterspury Pre School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Pottersbury Pre-school opened in 1967 and operates from premises within the village school. They are situated in a village near to Towcester, in Northamptonshire. The group have access to two rooms, a kitchen area, and toilets. All children have shared access to a secure, enclosed outside area. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 with a lunch club operating till 12.30 on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The group is open for approximately 38 weeks of the year.

There are currently 21 children aged from two years, six months, to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The pre-school employs five staff and three relief staff. All of the permanent staff, including the supervisor, hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards extending her qualification. The pre-school receive support from a qualified teacher and the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through well-organised routines. They follow self-care practices to gain an understanding of how and why we wash our hands. This is done after using the toilet and messy activities, and before snacks. Low-level toilets help children develop their independence. Younger children develop their understanding as they watch older children and through the positive role modelling of the adults. Children are protected from infection because staff have efficient hygiene routines, such as the high standard of cleanliness of the premises and equipment and the exclusion of children who are unwell. Notices ensure that parents are kept informed if any infections have occurred in the group, so that they can look for signs and symptoms with their own children. For example, chicken pox and head lice. Staff are well informed about the children's health and effective documentation is in place to support this. Suitable consent has been gained to administer medication, first aid and to seek emergency treatment. A suitable level of staff hold a current first aid certificate and other staff are due to attend a course this term. Children's health and safety is protected because of the staff's team knowledge, understanding and confidence to administer first aid. Accidents are documented to ensure a full record is kept and this information is shared with parents to ensure children's overall welfare.

Children enjoy their snack time as they sit in small groups with staff. Snack time is well managed as a rolling snack bar, so that children can choose when they have a snack. They are able to operate independently as they serve themselves and thoroughly enjoy the snacks on offer. They gain an understanding about healthy foods through these varied and nutritious snacks, enjoying a selection of fruits, such as prunes and grapes, with malt loaf and Chinese noodles with prawn crackers and apples. Children can choose between milk or water and they are able to access drinking water throughout the session to enable them to meet their own needs. Staff take account of parents' wishes and any dietary needs of the children. Extra care is taken, if any child has an allergy or dietary requirement, when planning snacks or cooking experiences. Food tasting days and cooking activities contribute to the children's growing awareness of healthy eating as they make baked potatoes and vegetable soup. Children have the opportunity to stay for a lunch club and bring their own packed lunches from home. Again, this is a lovely social occasion as they sit with staff enjoying their meals and the interaction and conversations.

Children's physical development is fostered well with regular inside and outside play where children use their skills. The staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well to provide a range of stimulating physical play experiences for all children. Both the indoor and outdoor area are extremely well planned to ensure that children can move freely around the play areas. All children have good opportunities to practise body control as they take part in regular physical action sessions, group games, actions songs, use a range of play equipment and manipulate materials. Children move with confidence as they balance, climb and bounce and ride bikes around with growing skills. They dig in the garden and use their bodies to create a desired effort, such as group games with the parachute. These activities lead to the development of their self-esteem and increases their confidence and physical capabilities. Children's dexterity and hand and eye coordination is enhanced through the use of one-handed tools, the mouse on the computer and as they manipulate objects, such as construction equipment and small figures. They regularly have the opportunity to get fresh air, as they enjoy nature walks in the village and use the school equipment. They are able to rest, according to their needs, in the comfortable book area.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children's safety is paramount to the organisation of the group. Staff identify hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. A thorough risk assessment is carried out of the premises, outings, toys and equipment, and all necessary safety measures are in place to protect the children and safeguard their welfare. The premises are old but staff remain proactive in ensuring that children are cared for in a safe, warm and cheerful environment. Thorough safety and security precautions are in place to promote and safeguard the children's welfare. For example, socket covers, a gate at the entrance to the kitchen, guards over the heaters and a lock on the entrance door. Staff help children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe as they explain and practise simple procedures, such as emergency evacuation and road safety when on outings. Staff plan the children's environment carefully and achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits. Staff explain safety rules to the children in a simple but positive manner aimed at their level of understanding. This enables them to operate safely within their environment. For example, children let staff know if water is spilt at the water tray so that it can be wiped up and prevent slipping.

Children use an excellent range of safe, well-maintained and developmentally appropriate resources. They enjoy the free-flow between the indoor and outdoor areas, which gives them independence to choose between the activities on offer. A large wooden gazebo is in the garden which provides shade on hot days and enables staff to use this as an outdoor room for many exciting activities. All items are regularly checked for safety and high levels of staff supervision ensure children access the activities safely. A soft safety surface is in place to further protect the children as they use the outdoor equipment and this keeps them safe if they should fall. Equipment and activities are attractively presented to encourage the children to participate. Children are gaining a secure respect for their toys and equipment, picking items up from the floor. They are proactive at tidy up time, responding to the musical signal to help and work cooperatively together. They carry toy boxes between them, gaining a secure understanding of handling heavy items. This helps children gain an awareness of safety and take some responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

Children are well-protected. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection and all policies and procedures are up to date. There is a clear child protection policy in place, which is in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Supporting documentation ensures that all staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns and that a designated child protection officer is in place. All staff are encouraged to extend and update their understanding by attending additional training.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and secure. They relate well to each other and socialise together, seeking out friends to share activities. They enjoy a broad variety of exciting play opportunities, which help them to develop their knowledge and skills. Children develop their confidence and self-esteem as they independently make choices for their play and activities. They spend their time in a purposeful manner as they move freely around the activities, throughout the session. They enjoy exploring new and familiar concepts, such as new creative experiences to make props for the Friday story and they explore in the outdoor area, looking at spiders' webs and playing with the resources and activities.

Excellent systems are in place to allow children to develop high self-esteem and build their confidence. Children are keen to be independent in self-care and are able to express their wishes and ask for help, when needed, because they are confident and secure. They feel a sense of belonging as they enter the group and leave their parent or carer with confidence. They know where to hang their coats and stow their lunchboxes, and are aware of the routine at different times of the day. They eagerly help each other out during play and at tidy up time. Children's attitudes to learning are very positive. They enthusiastically attempt activities, take part in group events and move confidently around the setting. They are open and friendly, chatting comfortably to their peers and the adults around them about home, family, birthdays and the activities they are taking part in.

Staff encourage children to join in conversations and develop their language skills through group discussions and social times. Staff enable children to think things through for themselves because they ask open-ended questions and listen for the answers. Children quickly move from dependence to independence because staff have a realistic approach to letting children achieve things for themselves. They know when to step back and let a child lead an activity. For example, as they complete individual artwork or build with construction equipment. This fully supports the children's self-reliance and confidence to succeed. They have an abundance of resources to extend their play and develop their own imaginations. For example, children dig in the garden using child-size spades and turn the climbing frame into a castle. They behave well as they have a good understanding of right and wrong, reinforced by staff's positive attitude towards their social care and development. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well. This has been incorporated into their planning, linking into the skills and competences of the framework. Staff find that this helps to focus their activities into these areas for the younger children and they are able to link these into the early stages of the stepping stones.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have an extensive knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver an exciting programme of play-based activities. This provides an overall balance across all six areas of learning. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals, given their ages and starting points. Full information is gained, when children first attend, to recognise their entry level and produce individual play plans. These support their learning and enable staff to move them forward at their own pace. Effective systems are used to observe, monitor and record children's achievements. They are highly effective as they build on the Foundation Stage guidance. The system enables children's progress to be tracked against the stepping stones and is fully effective in promoting their learning. These are supported with examples of the children's work and photographs of the children taking part in the activities. Plans show a balance of stimulating child-initiated and adult-led activities across the six areas of learning. These include how activities can be adjusted for more or less able children, to ensure a balance between their educational needs. The pre-school has a key worker system in place which ensures children's individual needs are met and provides support for parents and children.

Children form strong relationships with each other and with staff. They are actively involved throughout their time at the group and their confidence, concentration skills and independence are enhanced as they move around activities. Children take responsibility for their personal care and their behaviour is extremely good. They play an active role in the daily routines, such as group time, snack time and tidy up time. They start the session talking about the items they have brought in for show and tell and listen to other children with interest. They show kindness and caring towards their friends and older children support younger children in their play. For

example, completing jigsaws together. Staff work together as a very effective and committed team, deploying themselves to support children's learning with sensitivity and respect. This impacts on the way children view themselves and others.

Children's language and literacy skills are developed through many different areas of play. They confidently write and make marks using a range of equipment and introduce this into their role play. The use of the computer also increases their understanding that print carries meaning, as they complete literacy programs. They enjoy group stories and often look at books in small groups. Staff manage the story time very well, introducing the children to props to bring the story alive. They encourage them to join in with familiar refrains and by turning the pages of a book. Children are learning to recognise their names and most can confidently say the sound of the first letter of their name. However, their early word recognition is not extended with the use of labels on familiar objects around the room. The children explore the syllables of their names by tapping them out on a drum. Older children are confident counters and can recognise written numbers and count and match objects. They enjoy counting as they sing nursery rhymes and understand simple problem solving as they count how many chairs they need at snack time. They gain a growing understanding of different mathematical concepts as they see patterns in nature and man-made objects, compare and sort objects and weigh play dough and cooking ingredients. They took part in an activity growing sunflowers then made a chart showing which one was taller and which one was smaller.

Children have a sense of time as they talk about past experiences and are aware of the routine of each session. Through exciting topics and activities they learn about other cultures. Children gain a purposeful understanding of the use of everyday technology due to the range of electronic toys in place. For example, children use a tape recorder to play music tapes and sing along to these with the microphone. They use the computer to support other areas of their knowledge, such as language and numbers. Children enjoy using all their senses to explore a wide range of different materials and to discover how things grow and change. They have grown a herb garden and can explore how the different herbs, such as chives, mint and rosemary, feel and smell. They prepare the soil, plant the seeds and nurture the growing plants. Children have many opportunities to explore their local environment, learning practical skills to keep themselves safe. However, they have limited opportunities to explore and discover how man-made objects are made and work.

Children's physical capabilities improve through a wide range of experiences, including good access to outdoor play, regular physical exercise, walks in the local area and action rhymes. They show an awareness of space for themselves and others as they move around the play area negotiating obstacles. They competently use a wide range of small and large equipment. For example, they use scissors, paint brushes, build with construction equipment, handle pencils and pens, and manoeuvre bikes and sit and ride cars. Children enjoy being creative and playing imaginatively, they have time to use their creative skills spontaneously or in group events, such as making under water pictures and elephant heads for the Ganesh festival. Many creative opportunities arise outside; children have been involved in painting their own fence in the garden and doing water painting on the gazebo. They thoroughly enjoy using musical instruments. They play in the imaginative role play area, which is changed regularly to provide familiar experiences, such as a home setting, a shop, a doctor's surgery and a travel agents. The children spontaneously plan activities using their own imaginations. For example, they decide that the climbing frame is a castle and that the hoops are the rocks they must step in to avoid being eaten by sharks. Staff work successfully to inspire, praise and encourage children to explore and develop ideas for themselves.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are very well known to staff. This enables them to tailor the care and education to reflect their needs and interests. Individual dietary and health needs are made known to staff so that appropriate care may be given. For example, any allergies or phobias are handled sensitively and without making the child feel embarrassed or singled out. Children are made aware of how their actions impact on others. They form firm friendships and show kindness and care for their friends and the adults they come into contact with. They share happily together and wait for turns to use equipment. Children become aware of the differences in culture as they celebrate festivals and discuss stories and images of people from around the world. They have recently completed topics about Ramadan and Ganesh. Wonderful wall displays help children relate to the topic and the temple they have created from boxes is a source of delight and achievement. Any comfort items that are brought in from home also help children feel settled and secure because they know they can access them at any time. There is a strong feeling of mutual respect throughout the group between staff and children. Children have learnt about showing respect for themselves, those around them and their environment. This contributes to the consistently high standards and the happy atmosphere which prevails.

The pre-school's ethos strongly values every child and all efforts are made to secure outside professional help and advice where it is thought that this will benefit a child and help in their development. Any child needing additional support, whether educationally, emotionally or behaviourally, is given a great deal of input and thoughtful attention. The result is that children make excellent progress and feel able to relax and express themselves freely. Makaton sign language is used along with conventional language, to aid children with speech difficulties and effectively help them to communicate. All children use samples of this as they join in some stories and songs. Staff are able to develop individual learning programmes with realistic targets; working closely with parents and outside professionals if required. This enables children to make very good progress. All children's achievements are always celebrated and shared with parents.

Children behave extremely well. They understand the boundaries and codes of conduct within the pre-school and respond to direction from adults. They respond well to the consistent approach followed by all adults and this impacts clearly on their security and confidence as they know what is expected of them. Children develop high levels of self-esteem as they are able to resolve differences and gain an understanding of acceptable behaviour. Excellent strategies are used to help children manage and control their own behaviour, supporting them to develop confidence and feelings of competence. Staff value each child and support them as they gain a robust understanding of right and wrong. Children receive high levels of praise and encouragement which again raises their self-esteem. Overall, children's behaviour is thoughtful and agreeable because staff set consistently good examples, present themselves as calm, caring role models and help children share responsibility for their own behaviour. They provide stimulating activities to keep children occupied and challenged, which impacts positively on their behaviour. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. This superior partnership is seen as key to providing high quality care and education for all the children attending. This begins with first approaches, when parents are given information about how the setting operates, expectations and details of day-to-day routines. Children then have an individualised settling in programme; with an understanding that each child will have a different need for support and will settle best if this is allowed to be followed. Children's details are taken and a key worker

is assigned, who will become the first point of contact for parents. Staff are always available for an informal chat at the start and end of sessions and an open door policy ensures that parents and carers feel welcome at any time. A parents' rota is in place if they wish to help or share any expertise with the children. The committee is made from a group of parents who are keen and extremely able to support the pre-school's practice. At an open day they are invited to come along to try activities, talk to key workers and review their child's records. They complete regular questionnaires which invite them to comment on the pre-school and say what they think works well, as well as make any suggestions for improvement. Parents' opinions are sought and valued and suggestions are acted upon if it is felt that a change would be beneficial to the children. Parents are kept well informed of events and activities at the pre-school. This includes regular, informative newsletters, full of seasonal information and reminders and details of topics and activities that the children will be following, contributing to their child's education and care. An excellent level of information is provided with regard to the National Curriculum and the early learning goals. This helps parents to gain a beneficial understanding of what takes place at the pre-school and how children learn through their play. They have regular, termly consultation times to meet with their child's key worker to look at their development records and discuss their child's progress and achievements.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are secure, motivated and happy due to the well-organised daily routine and play experiences they take part in. They benefit greatly from a very calm, caring and extremely dedicated staff team, who clearly enjoy spending time interacting and supporting children's play and learning. They work very well together and compliment each other, within their different strengths and skills, to make learning fun for the children. Children are well protected as the pre-school has a robust recruitment and selection procedure in place to ensure that they are cared for by suitably qualified, experienced and vetted staff. The pre-school is committed to improving the service provided; this is managed through regular staff monitoring, appraisals and one to one meetings, along with training opportunities. Staff have a high regard for the well-being of the children they care for. They communicate well with each other to ensure that they all make a positive contribution to all aspects of the organisation of the pre-school. Younger children are progressing well due to the effective use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff link the framework well into the Foundation Stage when planning their activities. This contributes to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievements. Parents are well informed and are welcome to become fully involved in the setting. They have opportunities to be involved in the committee, fund raising or to help their child by extending activities at home.

Good planning and evaluation of activities ensures that resources are well prepared and that sufficient time is allocated for each activity. The setting promotes an inclusive environment where each child is important. The deployment of staff, interesting activities and the daily routine, ensures that all children benefit from their time spent within the group. The staff team have a clear and positive vision for the future and are dedicated to the children's care, learning and play. A dedicated committee works voluntarily to update policies and procedures to ensure that they are in line with the National Standards, which in turn, releases staff to devote their time and attention to the children. However, some policies require updating. Highly effective organisation of records and documents ensures children's welfare and guarantees that information is stored in a safe, secure and confidential manner. All info is available for inspection and for parents so that they may fully participate in their child's care.



The leadership and management is good. The induction programme and strong commitment from staff and the committee, ensures that all adults work well together to promote all aspects of children learning. The staff work extremely well together as a team, which enhances the opportunities for children. Staff also receive excellent advice and support from a qualified teacher and the development team, to promote children's care and learning. Children are progressing well, in most areas, towards the early learning goals due to well-organised space and play experiences. The group are very well supported from the adjacent school, which in turn helps children in the transition period as they move on into the reception class. An inclusive environment has been created which clearly shows that each child matters. Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to: ensure that any person who has not been vetted is not left alone with children; develop an action plan outlining how staff qualifications and training requirements will be met; ensure anyone responsible for food handling complies with environmental health requirements, and obtain written permission from parents to seek emergency treatment or advice.

All staff have suitable clearance and no adult without this is left alone with children. The staff hold suitable levels of qualifications and many additional training sessions and workshops have been attended to raise their knowledge and therefore the standards of their care, learning and play. At present, four staff hold a Food Hygiene qualification and have a good awareness of handling food and hygienic food preparation. Permission has been obtained from parents for staff to seek emergency treatment or advice for their children, if required.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure policies and procedures are regularly updated.

## **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- extend the use of labels around the room to increase children's awareness of word recognition with familiar objects
- extend resources and opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world, with regard to regular opportunities for discovery and exploration and to investigate how inanimate objects work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)