

# Ottertots Day Care Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY358746
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 June 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Julie Neal
<b>Setting Address</b>	East Hill, Ottery St. Mary, Devon, EX11 1QH
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<b>Registered person</b>	Ottertots Limited
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Ottertots Day Care Nursery is privately owned, and is situated in a rural location on the outskirts of Ottery St. Mary. The provision has been purpose built, it is mainly on one floor, with the upper floor being an indoor adventure playground. There is an enclosed garden for outdoor play. The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 40 children under eight years of age at any one time. There are currently 80 children on roll, of whom 24 are in receipt of funded nursery education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 12 staff who work regularly with children. Nine of these have Level 3 childcare qualifications, and two of these also have Level 4 qualifications. One member of staff is due to commence professional training. Overnight care is not provided.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent routines and procedures, implemented extremely well by the staff team, ensure children are very well protected against illness and cross infection. For example, kitchen hygiene is exemplary. All staff have completed food hygiene courses and show very good understanding of requirements regarding the safe handling and preparation of food. Their knowledge is supported by simple and effective reminders displayed in the kitchen, such as which colour boards to use to chop particular items, which minimises any risk of cross-contamination. Throughout the nursery, staff pay attention to detail in order to ensure children are cared for in a hygienic environment. For instance, when changing nappies, cleaned changing mats are spread with fresh disposable towels before babies are laid down, and mats are cleaned again when the change is completed. Toilets and washbasins are checked and cleaned frequently, and there is plenty of easily accessible liquid soap and paper towels for children to use. Children show a very good understanding of the importance of personal hygiene. Older children talk knowledgeably about 'germs' and how they make them unwell. They very confidently manage their own needs, washing their hands before meals and after using the toilet. Younger children are supported very well by staff as they begin to learn independence. For example, ensuring they have sufficient water to successfully manage washing, helping them to rinse soap off and dry their hands properly, and making sure they know where to dispose of towels.

Children with specific medical needs are supported extremely well. Staff are very knowledgeable regarding individual children's medical conditions, and ensure that any medicines are administered and recorded clearly. Sickness procedures are clear and comprehensive and are shared with parents. All staff have appropriate first aid qualifications, ensuring that, in the event of an accident or emergency, children receive prompt and appropriate treatment.

Children throughout the nursery have excellent access to the health benefits of fresh air and physical exercise. Older children choose whether to play indoors or outside throughout the day, and all children take part in activities such as gardening, encouraging them to enjoy spending time outdoors. Babies enjoy outdoor play, staff sectioning off part of the external area so they are not at risk of bumps from lively older children. Staff ensure that children wear sun cream and sun hats when playing outdoors in warmer weather, in order to protect them from sunburn. There is a good supply of spare hats so no child is at risk, should they forget their own.

Activities that promote the development of muscles and physical coordination are excellent. There is a good balance of child initiated play and planned activities that promote specific skills. For example, children are currently practising for their own 'Olympic Games' and are very enthusiastic, concentrating hard as they train for the egg-and-spoon race and the long jump. Children enthusiastically use the large indoor adventure playground, confidently climbing, negotiating tunnels and rope bridges, manipulating and manoeuvring their bodies extremely well as they work round the apparatus. Children enjoy ball games and show high levels of confidence and control as they throw and kick to each other. They ride bikes and scooters, and show a very good awareness of space as they take care not to intrude on other children's less active games. Children of all ages are physically confident, for instance, babies and toddlers use sections of the large play equipment on a one-to-one basis with staff, promoting their coordination and development.

Children immensely enjoy the extremely well planned meals and snacks provided by the nursery. Mealtimes are extremely sociable and are used very well by staff to encourage children to think about what they eat, and why certain things are 'good for you'. Older children have a very good understanding of the importance of eating plenty of fruit and vegetables. Menus are planned in advance and take very good account of the individual dietary requirements of children present each day. Meals are all home cooked and there is an excellent variety of fruit and vegetables included each day. Menus are varied, including traditional favourites such as pies and roasts, and also more unusual items such as curry, and quiches. Breakfast, lunch and tea are provided. Children attending after school are provided with a cooked meal, while those who have a cooked lunch have a lighter meal at teatime. Babies' meals are organised according to their individual routines, and staff work closely with parents to adapt feeding routines as children grow and develop. Water is available to children at all times, and older children freely help themselves. Babies and younger children are regularly offered drinks. All children are encouraged to drink regularly by staff.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The physical environment is extremely well organised, in and out of doors, to meet the care, learning and developmental needs of children. The purpose built premises are bright and welcoming and very child friendly, taking good account of the ages and developmental stages of children using each area. For instance, the needs of babies and young children are given very good consideration in the way that the premises are organised, with a cot room and other quiet areas organised so that children can nap when they choose. Sleeping children are monitored very well to ensure they are safe at all times. The large indoor adventure playground and soft play area provides immense enjoyment for children of all ages and this is used enthusiastically. Good everyday routines support children's safety, for example, adults do not wear shoes in the nursery so children can play on the floor without risk to health or safety. Excellent organisation of the extensive range of resources means that all children have extremely good access to a very wide variety of toys and equipment, appropriate to their age and stage of development. This means they are consistently encouraged to make choices in their play and so confidently self select toys and activities from a very young age.

Children are safe and secure because the staff team are vigilant and implement the setting's health and safety procedures extremely well. Excellent risk assessments are made of all areas of the provision, and these are combined with rigorous daily routines that ensure children's safety. A regular analysis is made of any accidents to children, as part of the risk assessment process, ensuring any potential links to particular activities or equipment can be quickly identified and dealt with. Children take part in frequent fire drills in order that they learn to keep themselves safe and follow evacuation procedures in an emergency. All children practise this at least once a month, fire drills taking place on different days and times so all have ample opportunities to take part.

The staff team's excellent understanding of child protection issues also supports the safety and well-being of children. They have completed external training in this area and show themselves to be extremely well informed. All staff have very good knowledge of the setting's child protection procedures and are confident in their awareness of their responsibilities to act if they have concerns regarding abuse and neglect, in order to safeguard children.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children immensely enjoy the excellent range of stimulating activities that encourage progress and development for all ages. Children are actively encouraged to make choices in their play, and they very confidently move between activities as they eagerly explore resources. Children aged two and over can freely move between indoors and outside for most of the day, which further enhances their play and learning experiences. Babies also have frequent opportunities to play outdoors, and are taken for walks in their buggies so they can enjoy experiencing the natural environment. Staff have an excellent understanding of how children learn and develop, and this is demonstrated in the extremely effective way they monitor children's progress and use their very good observations and knowledge of individual children when planning activities. This ensures that activities provide rich and worthwhile play and learning experiences for all children attending. Resources are extremely well organised in all areas of the nursery, providing plenty of choice for all ages. For example, babies enthusiastically explore treasure baskets and sensory boxes, staff encouraging them to investigate the feel and texture of objects, the noises that can be made by crackling fabrics and foils, or by energetically banging and scraping wooden spoons against other objects. Some daily activities are structured and provide children with extremely good opportunities to develop confidence in speaking and working in a group. For example, two-year-olds check the weather each day. They are all given cards that indicate different weather conditions, and they go outside to check what kind of day it is. They are very serious as they look at the sky and examine each others cards until they identify the one that closely resembles the weather. They talk about whether it has changed since they arrived at nursery. The activity is short and focused, and is very effective in encouraging all children to participate. Children are enthusiastic participants in play and confidently make suggestions about what they want to do and particular resources they want to use. For instance, children take a dynamic role in discussing and planning the vegetable and flower gardens, and all ages thoroughly enjoy digging and planting together.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and they implement this extremely well in providing high quality learning experiences for all children. Children are challenged very well because planning is excellent, focusing on the individual child and ensuring that opportunities for development are clearly identified. Excellent observations are made of children's participation, of what they do and how they achieve. These are used extremely well to provide evidence of their very good progress in learning. Staff monitor children's progress extremely well and use their knowledge most effectively in planning the next steps for individual children. Staff are extremely good at seizing informal opportunities as they arise to develop children's knowledge. For example, children are weeding the vegetable bed and discover earthworms. There is animated discussion regarding the size of the worms, were the smallest ones the 'baby worms'; staff talk about why worms live in soil and children are fascinated, asking if they have 'worm houses' in the earth. Staff make very good links between activities in order to provide children with a general learning theme. For example, following on from the 'Jack and the Beanstalk' story, children plan and build a floor to ceiling three-dimensional beanstalk; they look at different types of beans and discuss how they grow; they choose beans to plant in the garden as part of their gardening programme.

Children are extremely enthusiastic learners. They confidently enter the setting and are very keen to explore activities and resources. They concentrate very well at chosen activities and benefit from the unhurried atmosphere where they are given sufficient time to complete tasks to their own satisfaction. For example, they can freely engage in painting and creative activities in the art room, where they have space to leave their work and come back to it as they wish until they decide they have finished. Children are very confident communicators. They enthusiastically share their thoughts and ideas, and make clear explanations about what they are doing. For example, children are absorbed in constructing with a range of materials, including bricks and 'pop-oids', they explain they are making a zoo and show which animals will be placed in each enclosure. They explain the large enclosures are for 'big animals, like elephants and giraffes'. Children are confident in the use of simple sign language, they learn new words regularly at circle time and practise simple phrases, clearly understanding the purpose of signing as a means of communication. Children link sounds and letters very well, confidently volunteering a good variety of words that begin with the same initial sound. Children thoroughly enjoy stories and listen avidly to staff, who ensure they read with atmosphere and characterisation in order to keep children enthralled. Children are encouraged to develop their own narratives, for example, as a group they made their own story about 'skeleton island', all contributing ideas about what happened next and developing the theme through words and pictures. Children demonstrate their extremely good understanding of mathematical concepts in all aspects of play, and staff are adept at encouraging and developing these skills informally. For example, children discuss how much space different plants will need in the vegetable beds, and they talk about measuring the height of the bean plants as they grow. Children thoroughly enjoy games that develop their understanding of number, and they count very well. For instance, they count the number of spots on dice rolled, and, with help from staff, can calculate the total number of spots showing on two dice. Children's awareness of the natural environment, and the world around them, is excellent. Children are extremely enthusiastic about their garden and have been active participants in choosing vegetables, fruit, herbs, and flowers to plant. They understand that plants need to be watered and weeded, and take this very seriously. Children show understanding of the life cycle of plants, from seed to fruit, because staff have used pictures in reference books to show them the way plants germinate. Children have recently hatched chicks in an incubator, and a member of staff is rearing the chickens, enabling children to follow their progress. Children help to take care of the pet rabbit, with a named person responsible each day for ensuring it has fresh food and water. They talk knowledgeably about what rabbits eat, and what they should not be given. Staff use photographs well to develop children's understanding of time and place, using these to promote 'do you remember...' discussions. For example, children talk about the visit from the nurse and the oxygen mask demonstrated, and when the fire-fighters came. Children are learning very well about their own and other communities and cultures. They know that not all people speak English as a first language, and they are proud of the fact they have learned to say 'hello' in a variety of languages. They explore different cultures through food and dress, and through celebrations and festivals. Children are actively encouraged to express themselves creatively, having access to excellent resources that they use as they wish. Imaginative play is encouraged, providing children with extremely good opportunities to practise and consolidate what they learn. For example, children make excellent use of role play equipment in the 'travel agents', they make good use of maps, globes and travel brochures to help 'customers' find a holiday, asking if they want to go somewhere hot, or whether they would prefer skiing. They use play money to buy their holiday and they work out whether they need to provide change. The 'travel agent' writes a receipt for the 'customer'. Children thoroughly enjoy singing and using a variety of musical instruments that promote their understanding and awareness of rhythm.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children of all ages have their individual needs met exceptionally well, which results in happy, contented children who are extremely confident. Excellent settling in procedures allow children time to become familiar with the setting and key members of staff involved in their care, which enables them to quickly feel secure. Babies benefit from the care of a consistent group of adults within the staff team, who have a thorough understanding of each child's individual routines and preferences. This leads to very young children quickly developing strong, warm, relationships with adults. Staff have an excellent understanding of equal opportunities and promote an extremely inclusive environment for children. For example, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent support. Thorough and rigorous systems of monitoring children's progress and development ensure that staff are well informed and thus able to work pro-actively with parents and others involved in children's care. Equally, children attending who are particularly able are stretched and challenged extremely well, because staff take excellent account of children's individual needs when planning all activities. Children throughout the nursery take part in a very good variety of activities that encourage an understanding of difference and diversity. For example, they celebrate festivals from their own and other cultures and communities, they use resources that reflect positive images of race, age and gender. All children learn simple sign language, and this is developed well in the pre-school area where some children show considerable fluency.

Children's behaviour is excellent. They know the simple rules of the nursery, which are based on safety and respect, and they have a very good understanding of why these are necessary. Babies and younger children are happy and content because their individual routines are met, they receive lots of warmth and affection and as a consequence they feel secure. Older children are consistently engaged in interesting and challenging activities, they are listened to and their ideas respected, therefore, they do not become bored or frustrated, which supports their very good behaviour. Where there are behavioural issues to be addressed, this is done in a positive and caring way, with the full involvement of parents, in order to ensure consistency for children. Staff interactions with children are extremely positive. They listen to children well and provide excellent levels of praise and encouragement, boosting children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered. Children take part in interesting activities that develop their awareness of their own and other communities and cultures. They have access to a very good variety of resources that reflect cultural diversity and use these freely in their play.

Staff work extremely closely with parents to ensure that individual children's care needs are met. Excellent settling in processes ensure parents have the opportunity to spend time in the nursery with their children, and getting to know key staff involved in their children's care. Parents are very well informed about their children's day. Comprehensive information is displayed regarding daily routines and current activities, and individual diaries provide parents with an overview of their child's day, including what they have done, how long they have slept, and what they have eaten. Staff throughout the nursery develop excellent relationships with parents and take a few minutes to discuss their child's day with them when they collect their children. Policies and procedures that underpin the care of children are displayed and accessible to parents.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is good. Information is displayed that links activities to children's learning and development, and parents receive

good feedback regarding their children's progress. Parents are encouraged to participate in their children's learning, for example, the nursery operates a lending library so parents can borrow books to read with their children, and they were encouraged to participate in choosing plants for the garden with their children. Other ideas to further involve parents are being developed by staff.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for which they provide. Children of all ages benefit from the excellent organisation of space and resources that provide a variety of exciting play environments. Robust employment procedures ensure that all staff employed are suitable to work with children. Staff demonstrate excellent knowledge of the setting's operational plan and related policies and procedures, and implement these most effectively to ensure that children are kept safe and well. Most documentation supporting the care and well-being of children is clear and well maintained. However, there are some minor inconsistencies. For instance, the record of children's participation in fire drills is not up to date, although there is supplementary evidence that these take place as stated, such as being noted in children's daily diaries when they have participated. Some records of behavioural incidents have not been countersigned by parents, although the parents had been verbally informed and were fully aware of the incidents. A key worker system is used throughout the nursery and this is extremely effective in enabling children's individual development to be monitored. For example, staff working with younger children have been making excellent use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework as they assess the progress of each child, and they use this knowledge effectively to plan activities that encourage and challenge children well. Staff throughout the nursery have attended training on the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well prepared for the implementation of this framework. Children benefit from very good staff ratios, usual practice in the setting being that at least two member of staff are supernumerary. This means that children have very good access to adult support.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. Strong systems of appraisal and emphasis on staff training and development ensure children benefit from well qualified and skilled practitioners. Sharing of information regarding children is very good, for instance at team meetings, and staff are aware of any significant issues that may have impact on children's learning. Excellent processes are in place to monitor children's progress in learning, and assessment records are used extremely well in planning the next steps for individual children. The management team evaluate what they do well, identifying areas for development. For instance, they have responded pro-actively to the challenge of a marked increase in numbers of children in receipt of early education, recognising the need to first establish strong relationships with parents and then develop frameworks for involving them in their children's learning.

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

Not applicable.

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

Since registration, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet 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 all records supporting children's care are consistently maintained

#### **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):

- continue to develop the effective partnership with parents, in order to further encourage their participation in their children's learning

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)