

# Inspection of Cottis Preschool

Guide Hut, Trinity Road, Hassocks BN6 9UY

---

Inspection date: 14 July 2025 - 26 September 2025

---

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Children are happy and content at this pre-school. They and their families receive personalised welcomes from friendly leaders and staff as they arrive. Children confidently wave goodbye to their parents and place their belongings away ready to start their day. Those who are new to attending the pre-school are supported by staff, who talk through their arrival. This helps them understand what is happening and supports children to quickly get to know routines. All staff recognise children need secure attachments to feel safe and be able to explore with confidence. As such, all children benefit from the nurturing and attentive staff. These experiences support children's personal, social and emotional development.

Children are quick to gravitate to a range of activities and play experiences that have been thoughtfully planned for by staff. These include children's interests, their next steps and opportunities for them to explore in all seven areas of learning. This supports all children to make good progress.

Staff have high but appropriate expectations for children's behaviour. For instance, when it is time to sit down on the carpet, staff clap out a rhythm and children copy back to demonstrate they are listening. Children listen attentively and raise their hand politely for their turn to speak. In addition, staff provide children with consistent, gentle reminders for behavioural expectations and calmly help children resolve any minor conflicts. As a result, children have a good understanding of what is expected of them as they learn right from wrong.

### **What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?**

- Leaders and staff work collaboratively to develop a clear curriculum. They understand the areas of learning well and what they want to teach children and why. There are clear assessment processes in place to enable staff to ensure that children are continually making their own individual progress. Staff broaden children's experiences through trips into the local community and forest school sessions. They welcome visitors into the pre-school, such as the fire brigade and those with animals, for example hedgehogs. Consequently, children are gaining a good understanding of the world they live in.
- A priority for the curriculum is for children to become independent. Staff do teach children some independence skills, such as using the toilet, washing their hands and getting ready for the garden. However, at times, in their enthusiasm, staff complete tasks that older children are more than capable of completing themselves. For example, staff fully prepare and serve snacks, pour children's drinks and, on occasions, pre-prepare aspects of planned activities. This means older children are not consistently encouraged to practise a full range of independence skills.

- Staff promote children's physical development well. They support children to increase their fine motor skills, such as manipulating play dough and carefully pushing tiny sticks into clay as they create their own hedgehogs. These opportunities support children to develop their dexterity in their small hand muscles, as well as improve their hand-eye coordination. In addition, children have ample opportunities to be physically active as they freely access the outdoor area. They delight in manoeuvring their whole bodies in a variety of ways. This promotes their gross motor skills.
- Staff promote children's early love of books. They have arrangements in place to share books with home and ensure that books are readily available within the pre-school environment. They read to children with enthusiasm, and, as such, children gather round and listen intently. Children join in; they turn the pages and practise spoken words they hear. This supports early literacy skills.
- Staff understand the importance of developing children's early language skills. They adapt their communication methods depending on the ages of children. For instance, staff narrate younger children's play, use clearly spoken words, alongside exaggerated facial expressions and gestures. Older children engage in purposeful back-and-forth discussions and learn new words such as 'hibernation' in context. This supports all children to become confident communicators.
- Leaders have a clear oversight for the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are processes in place for identifying gaps in children's development, and leaders act swiftly to address these. Timely referrals are well supported, and leaders understand the importance of collaborative working with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists. Staff work together to implement effective personalised learning plans to support children's individual targets. This supports children with SEND to make the progress they are capable of.
- Parental partnership is strong. There are arrangements in place to promote an open, two-way flow of information-sharing. Parents are highly complimentary of the care and learning children receive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive safeguarding culture that puts children's interests first.

## **What does the setting need to do to improve?**

**To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:**

- support staff to consistently recognise opportunities to promote older children's independence skills, to enable them to build on what they can already do even further.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2738600
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10399907
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Sessional day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	25
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	45
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Anthony, Samantha Claire
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP512026
<b>Telephone number</b>	07976378373
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this early years setting

Cottis Preschool registered in 2023. It operates from a guide hut in Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex. The pre-school is open Mondays and Thursdays from 9am to 3pm, Tuesdays from 9.15am to 2.45pm and Wednesdays and Fridays from 9.15am to 12.15am, term-time only. The pre-school employs five members of staff. Of whom, four have early years qualifications at level 3 and one at level 5. The pre-school provides government funded childcare to eligible children between the ages of two and four years old.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspectors

Nicola Houston  
Natalie Moir

## Inspection activities

- The inspection started on 14 July 2025. Inspectors returned on 26 September 2025 to gather additional evidence in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy.
- The manager and the inspectors completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years foundation stage curriculum.
- The inspectors observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager showed one of the inspectors documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspectors.
- The inspectors talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- One of the inspectors and the manager carried out a joint observation of a group activity.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, 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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2025