

Play Away Day Nurseries Ltd

Unique reference number (URN): EY275052

Address: 43 High Street, Totton, Southampton, Hampshire, SO40 9HL

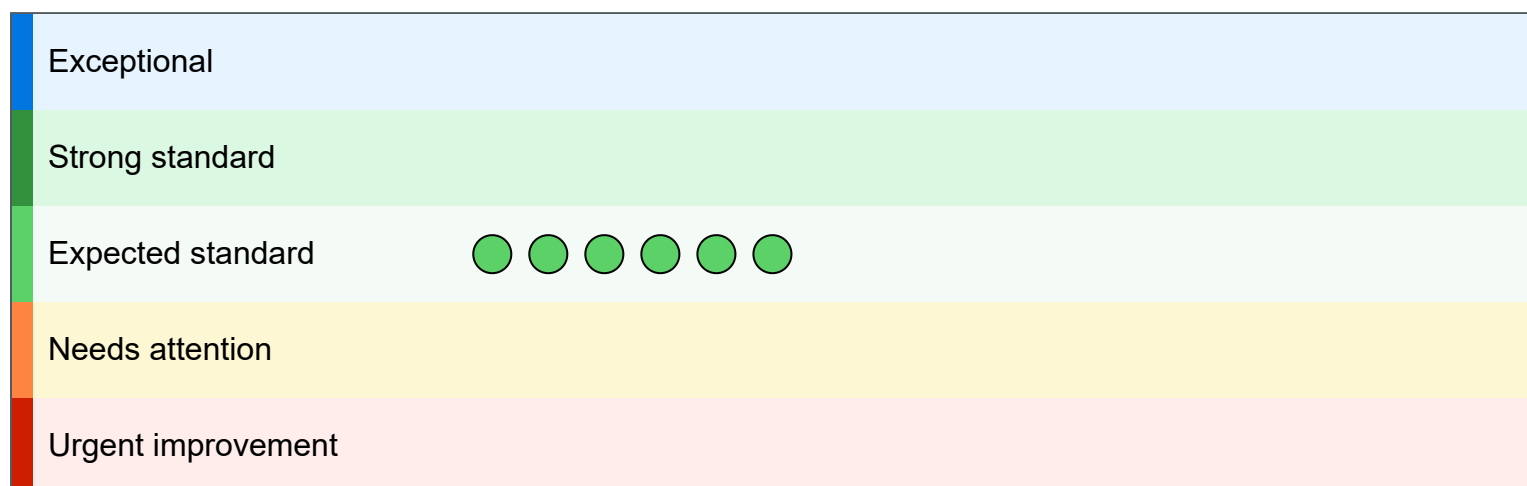
Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 17/12/2003

Registers: EYR

Registered person: Play Away Day Nurseries Limited

Inspection report: 2 April 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, children are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect settings for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The setting has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The setting has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Children demonstrate a positive attitude to learning and achieve well. For example, younger children focus as they pull themselves up to look in the mirror, pleased with their achievements. They can feed themselves and make their needs known. However, they do not always have opportunities to consistently develop their communication and language skills. Older children know the routines and independently wash their hands and prepare their own snacks.

Older children persevere and problem-solve. They persist when things are trickier and continue until they achieve. For example, children confidently build a complicated obstacle course. Children find different ways to safely make their way around it. When they stumble or planks move out of place, they find other ways to navigate the course. Children take risks and keep themselves safe.

Children fully engage in the activities and learn new skills. For example, they decorate Easter eggs and cut them out. They follow instructions and place their eggs in a circular pattern to create an Easter wreath. Children play well alongside each other. They communicate and show respect for one another. This helps to prepare them for the next stage in their learning.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Expected standard

Children demonstrate they are happy and safe in the nursery. They confidently approach adults and use their communication skills to express their wants and needs. Children play alongside each other, and staff generally support them in their play. In the main, leaders and staff promote the importance of punctuality and attendance and promptly follow up on any absences. Staff know children well. They form special bonds and children seek them out for cuddles. Children who face barriers to their learning progress well and staff typically closely monitor their progress. Staff generally have clear expectations in place. They consistently praise children for their positive behaviour and achievements in learning. Children behave very well.

Children follow routines with ease. When preparing for lunchtime, children wash their hands and sit at the lunch table. They collect their own cups, plates and cutlery. Children serve their own food, watching portion control. Children wait for their whole table to sit down before they start their food. Children have respect for one another and take turns. Children follow instructions well. They join in songs and do the actions staff ask of them. Children generally show a positive attitude towards their learning. They fully engage in the activities.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders typically create a safe space for children to thrive, belong and achieve. They find out what children know and can do when they start. Staff generally work with parents and carers to find out about babies' needs, such as weaning and feeding during settling-in

sessions. This helps them to prepare for their start dates. Children enjoy playing alongside their friends and staff. They are confident learners, who enjoy extending their further. For example, children concentrate as they thread wool through small holes during a craft activity. Children show pride in their achievements.

Children have constant access to outdoors and enjoy opportunities to be active and explore with their friends. They climb on the large play equipment and ride on tricycles. Children demonstrate positive gross motor skills as they move with strength and confidence.

Staff generally promote independence skills well. They encourage children to attempt to put on their coats themselves. If children need help, staff are available for support. Staff assist children with their toileting needs. They encourage older children to begin to independently manage their self-care needs. Staff generally teach children to make healthy choices, such as selecting the right foods to eat. Leaders typically provide healthy meal options and children are beginning to learn about portion size.

All children demonstrate positive social skills. They relish the opportunities to play with their friends. Children enjoy making 'food' in the role-play area to share with staff. They are kind to each other and are beginning to develop sound friendships.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard ●

In the toddler and pre-school rooms, staff promote communication and language well. Children use Makaton to sign and they benefit from effective interactions with staff. They excitedly take part in 'bucket time'. However, there is a minor inconsistency in the baby room where staff do not consistently give children the opportunity to communicate effectively. Staff have not considered the impact of the use of dummies on children's communication and language development. This does not ensure this area of learning is as consistent as it could be.

Leaders provide an ambitious curriculum which is generally sequenced well throughout the nursery. There is a focus on children sharing and turn-taking. Staff have an awareness of children's age and stage of development. When they reach the pre-school room, children can sit down and play a board game together. Staff skilfully weave mathematics into the curriculum; from simple number songs in the younger age groups to measuring and discussion about shapes in the pre-school room. This helps children to develop an understanding of early mathematical language.

Staff set up activities and resources for children to develop their physical skills. They provide a range of tools to strengthen children's muscles. For instance, in the water tray, children manage squirty bottles and use jugs for pouring. They enjoy playing with play dough and rollers. Children develop effective hand-eye coordination and confidently use pens for mark making.

Inclusion

Expected standard ●

The nursery provides an inclusive environment where staff value each child as an individual and supports them in their stage of learning. Staff generally have high expectations and closely monitor progress so that all children achieve well. Staff quickly identify children who

need additional help and support those facing barriers, including short-term difficulties, such as changes in family circumstances. Staff typically work effectively with external agencies, including speech therapists, Portage workers and neurodiversity specialists. They attend meetings, follow professional advice and complete relevant online training to meet children's individual needs.

In the main, staff support looked-after children well, which helps them to feel safe and secure. They work closely with families, carers and professionals involved in the children's lives. Staff generally use their understanding of children's circumstances to provide experiences they may not otherwise have. This includes regular outdoor play that builds children's confidence, curiosity and physical skills. Before moving to school, each child creates a personalised 'passport' that highlights their strengths and interests. This helps to ensure a smooth and positive transition into the next stage of their education.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The change in leadership has had a positive impact on the overall development of the nursery. Staff report they feel very supported by the new leadership team and their wellbeing is positive. Leaders provide regular supervision sessions and new staff undergo an in-depth induction period. This includes training, reading policies and regular meetings with leaders. Leaders take time to get to know each team member personally. This allows them to generally support staff well. However, leaders have not consistently supported staff working with the youngest children to fully consider the children's needs during the organisation of the day. This does not ensure consistency of practice across the younger age groups.

Leaders collaborate effectively with the local schools and invite Reception class teachers into the nursery. This helps to ensure smooth transitions when children move on to the next stage in their education. Leaders use funding appropriately to meet children's individual needs. They help parents and carers to access their full entitlement to funding. Leaders ensure parents know who their children's key persons are and provide regular online communications about their children's development. Parents report that they are very happy with the care and education their children receive. Leaders provide parents with ideas to support their children's learning and development at home. For example, a lending library provides opportunities to borrow books and encourage storytelling at home. Leaders work in partnership with other agencies to ensure children receive the support they need in a timely manner.

What it's like to be a child at this setting

There has been a change of leadership at the nursery since the last inspection. The leadership team have worked hard to address the actions raised at the last inspection, and this has had a positive impact on the nursery. Children arrive happily at this busy nursery and separate from their parents and carers with ease. Leaders greet parents and carers at the nursery door and welcome them into the building. Staff gain essential information from parents during settling-in sessions, such as babies' routines and any known allergies. This helps to settle children and develop their sense of wellbeing and belonging. Leaders also explain the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

Leaders provide an inclusive environment. Planned activities ensure that all children, including those who face barriers to their learning, make steady progress from their starting points. Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. Children develop the social skills they need to be able to take turns and play alongside their friends. Staff know their children well and set up range of activities for the children both indoors and outdoors. This gives children the opportunity to make choices in their play.

Overall, children progress well in all areas. Staff generally embed communication and language skills across the nursery. Babies enjoy sharing books with staff. They snuggle in to look at the pictures and listen to the stories. Toddlers begin to take their first steps and staff hold out their hands to offer support. This helps to develop their confidence as they refine their physical skills. Sleep time is relaxing in the baby room. When babies wake, sensitive staff are available to offer cuddles as they adjust to the environment.

Next steps

- Leaders should consistently focus on supporting children's communication and language development in all age groups.
 - Leaders should ensure that the nursery's professional learning and expertise programmes enables staff to implement the practice that supports the care needs of babies.
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About this inspection

The inspectors spoke with managers, staff, parents and carers and children during the inspection.

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.

Inspectors:

Lindsay Osman

Harriet Povey

About this setting

Unique reference number (URN): EY275052**Address:**

43 High Street

Totton

Southampton

Hampshire

SO40 9HL

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises**Registration date:** 17/12/2003**Registered person:** Play Away Day Nurseries Limited**Register(s):** EYR**Operating hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday : 07:30 - 18:30**Local authority:** Hampshire

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.



This data is from 2 April 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection**0 to 4****Total number of places**

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other settings can learn from it.

Strong standard

The setting reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The setting is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The setting needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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