

Inspection of Happy Days Nursery and Pre-School Yeovil

25 Forest Hill, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 2PG

Inspection date:

13 August 2025

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children enjoy their time at the nursery and have positive relationships with staff. Staff are caring and recognise when children need further support, reassurance or a cuddle, and help children feel safe and secure. The new purpose-built baby room offers an environment focused suitably on the needs of young babies, with everything down at their level and attentive staff promoting babies' well-being.

Staff formulate a curriculum that is focused on progressing children's skills. The nursery has clear curriculum aims linked to the parent company's values, for example to develop children into confident communicators and individuals. However, key persons in some age groups are not fully aware of children's individual learning needs. Additionally, staff are not always successful in maintaining a two-way flow of information and strong partnerships with parents. Staff do, though, offer interesting, age-appropriate sensory experiences for all ages and link to children's interests in activities; this motivates children to explore. Children then develop beneficial positive attitudes to new experiences and to developing their skills. For example, babies and toddlers build their confidence as they experience sand, excitedly crawling into the low-level trays, feeling it on their toes and grabbing it with their hands. Older children relish experimenting with natural materials. They mix real lemons with water and herbs to make their own lemonade potion or add leaves to make patterns in play dough. However, at times, staff are not always successful in channelling children's exuberant energy and supporting their clear understanding of behaviour expectations. This then affects children's engagement and learning.

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

- Key persons and staff assess children's development and work out what aspects they need to focus on next. They feed these into their support and the activities they will provide. For some rooms this works well, but in others the more recently introduced key-person buddy system has not been implemented thoroughly. In some age groups, when key persons change or are not in nursery, some staff do not know or focus on children's individual learning needs effectively to support children in a targeted manner.
- Staff plan useful small-group times to support children's communication and language. Babies learn signs to help their understanding and expression. Toddlers listen attentively and join in with actions and some words to songs. Older children take turns in conversations with staff and develop their vocabulary suitably; this includes children who speak English as an additional language.
- Staff share information online and hold parents' evenings, stay-and-play sessions and additional meetings as needed to develop relationships with parents and encourage information-sharing. However, leaders and staff do not fully evaluate

the effectiveness of all aspects of their partnership working with parents. Children's arrival and departure arrangements are not always effective. Some parents wait for considerable periods of time to drop off their children and miss having a full handover and discussion as they must leave for work. Additionally, information shared from parents is not always used effectively to promptly support children's learning needs, due to the weaknesses in the key-person system in some age groups.

- Staff prepare children for their move on to school and help children gain some of the skills they will need. Toddlers and older children develop their independence well. They build their confidence through the useful opportunities staff provide during mealtimes. They pour their drinks and serve themselves food. They also learn to clear their items away afterwards. Staff link with teachers at schools that children will be moving on to, sharing information to help a smooth transition for children.
- Staff offer useful and interesting activities for children to develop their physical skills and confidence. Babies learn to walk with staff's patient support. Children engage in yoga with staff and hold different poses successfully, strengthening their muscles and core. However, at times, staff do not successfully channel children's exuberant energy. Although they offer safety reminders they do not always adapt the activities on offer to help focus children and limit any riskier exploration. Additionally, they do not consistently and clearly teach children about behaviour expectations and risks, to help children learn to manage and follow these independently.
- Staff beneficially link with local organisations for children to learn about their community and develop an understanding of the world. Children visit the nearby care home and enjoy music activities with the residents. They attend special cooking sessions at the local supermarket's café and learn about ingredients and where these come from. During school term times, children enjoy outdoor learning sessions in the local primary school's woodland.
- Leaders have worked with their regional managers to help the evolving staff team since the nursery changed ownership. Staff say they feel supported and enjoy their work. Leaders outline areas for improvement and gaps in practice. However, they do not bring about change quickly enough, and weaknesses remain that affect children's ability to learn and develop to a good level.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding 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:

- develop key-person arrangements to ensure children's individual learning needs are clearly known by all staff working with them and targeted support is in place
- improve partnerships with parents and carers, developing consistent and effective routines for a two-way sharing of information and helping provide a strong, concerted approach for children
- develop the effectiveness of staff's management and support for children's behaviour, helping children to understand boundaries and expectations and to follow these independently
- increase the staff team's ability to reflect upon, adapt and more rapidly improve their practice, raising the quality of all aspects of the provision to good levels.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY487222
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10416656
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	72
Number of children on roll	112
Name of registered person	Yew Tree Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP909388
Telephone number	01935 471717
Date of previous inspection	12 October 2022

Information about this early years setting

Happy Days Nursery and Pre-School Yeovil originally registered in 2015; it re-registered using its current name in 2023 under new ownership. It is located in Yeovil, Somerset. It operates from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. There are 24 members of staff who work with the children. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 6, one at level 5, 14 at level 3 and four at level 2. There is also a cook. The setting provides government-funded places.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Rachel Howell

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed all areas of the provision and discussed with the manager how these areas are used.
- The manager and the inspector evaluated the effectiveness of an activity together.
- The inspector observed the children and staff and spoke with them at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector discussed the leadership and management of the nursery with the manager and regional manager.
- Parents shared their views of the provision with the inspector.
- Relevant documentation was reviewed by the inspector, including suitability checks and paediatric first-aid qualifications.
- The manager discussed their safety and child protection procedures, and safeguarding discussions were undertaken with members of the staff team.

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.

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