

Inspection of Play A Way Activity Centre

Christmas Street, Gillingham, Medway ME7 1TD

Inspection date: 31 January 2022

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children of all ages are eager to come into the centre to interact with staff and friends. They are happy and confidently explore the interesting range of activities on offer. For example, older children enjoy being the shopkeeper and are keen to use the till at the checkout. Younger children see how fast the cars can move around the track they have built. Children are learning how to incorporate their own ideas into their play.

Babies are curious and eager to investigate the environment. For instance, they scoop up the sand before letting it fall through their fingers as they engage in sensory play. Staff make good use of babies' interests to help engage them in activities. For example, they walk the dinosaurs over the sand and talk to the babies about the prints it makes. Staff help babies to develop their communication and language skills through positive interactions.

Children of all ages develop good physical skills. They learn about the different ways that they can move their bodies. For example, staff encourage babies to reach for objects as they learn to crawl and walk. Older children stretch up high and bend to touch their toes as they exercise to music and learn about being healthy.

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

- Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. Children develop good social skills and learn to share and take turns. For instance, they pull and stretch the play dough as they break pieces off for their friends to use. Staff talk to the children about how the dough feels when it becomes sticky as they stretch it. The children take turns to sprinkle flour on the dough to stop the stickiness. Staff effectively introduce new vocabulary and reinforce words with actions to support children's communication and language skills.
- Partnerships with parents are good. Staff share information with them in a range of ways. They speak with parents at drop off and collection times and encourage them to view children's online records.
- Staff are attentive to children's needs. For instance, they help children to master new skills, such as putting on and doing up their own coats. Children delight in their outdoor play. For example, they skilfully walk across the different size tyres as they learn to balance. Staff make strong use of positive praise and encouragement as they support children to try to complete activities independently.
- Following the COVID-19 pandemic, management and staff recognised that some children might need more support with their emotional and social well-being. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with families and other

professionals to support any children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The manager makes good use of additional funding. For instance, they have purchased play equipment to help focus on children's emerging interests and additional resources to support home learning. This helps to ensure that staff meet children's needs and any gaps in their learning close quickly.

- The manager is committed to providing good quality experiences for all children and their families. There is a well-established staff team, who have high expectations for children's achievements. They identify areas for improvement and provide staff with online training opportunities to ensure they keep up to date with any mandatory training. Yet, opportunities for staff to further extend their understanding of the early years curriculum and enhance their practice are not as well embedded. As a result, staff do not always extend children's knowledge and skills fully.
- Staff form positive relationships with the children and recognise what they know and can do. They plan a variety of focused activities for children to engage with. For instance, younger children learn about the Lunar New Year, while older children explore shapes to develop their mathematical language. However, on occasion, staff do not have a clear understanding of what they want children to learn during some planned activities. During these times, children's learning is not supported to the highest levels.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The provider and manager of the centre have a secure understanding of how to safeguard children. The provider implements robust recruitment procedures to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. For example, they ensure staff receive relevant information as part of their induction procedure, such as safeguarding training and copies of policies and procedures. Management and staff have a suitable knowledge of the signs that may indicate that a child is at risk of abuse or neglect, including wider safeguarding concerns, such as being alert to extreme behaviours and views. They are fully aware of the procedures to follow if they have any worries about a child's welfare.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen and fully embed support for staff to improve their skills and knowledge to help further extend children's learning
- strengthen planning and delivery of the curriculum to make better use of focused activities.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY556709
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10190380
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 8
Total number of places	50
Number of children on roll	115
Name of registered person	Play A Way Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP556707
Telephone number	07961143106
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Play A Way Activity Centre registered in 2018 and is located in Gillingham, Kent. The centre operates all year round from 7am to 6pm. The provider employs 19 staff to work directly with children. Of these, seven staff hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and three hold a qualification at level 2. One member of staff has achieved early years teacher status. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sara Garrity

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector observed how staff interact with children during indoor and outdoor activities and assessed the impact this has on their learning.
- The inspector spoke with the provider, manager, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector meet with a number of parents and read letters or references to take account of their views.
- The provider, manager and inspector completed a learning walk together to discuss activities and intentions for children's learning.

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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