Tops Day Nurseries - Winchester

Unique reference number (URN): EY263786

Address: Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Romsey Road, Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 5DG

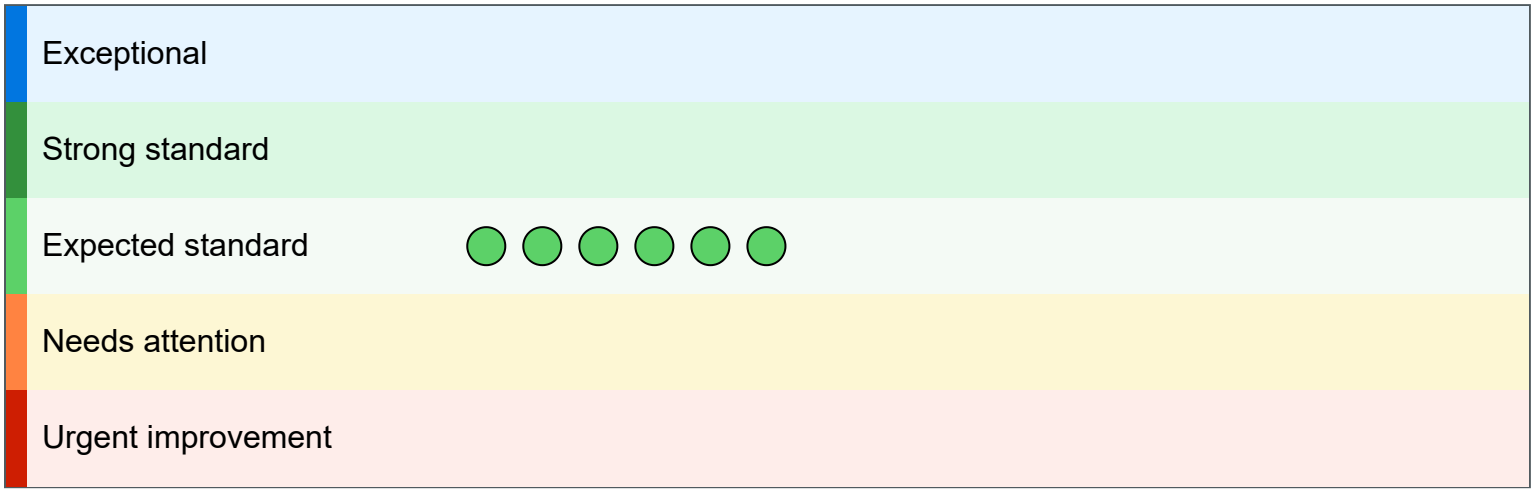
Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 04/06/2003

Registers: EYR

Registered person: Tops Day Nursery Limited

Inspection report: 23 July 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 make appropriate progress across their learning and in relation to their starting points, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They develop the skills they need for the next room they move on to or for when they start school. For example, toddlers begin to use the toilet and develop self-care skills. Older children practise pencil control by drawing over a variety of patterns and paths that move from left to right and up and down. As children become ready for school, they eagerly start to identify the letters in their names and start to form recognisable letters on paper. Staff offer lots of praise for these achievements.

Babies are continually exposed to conversation and singing. They are confident to approach visitors to the setting and invite them into their play. Toddlers also show confidence in group situations. They begin to show the confidence to dance in front of their friends, who clap and cheer for them. When older children go outside, they have opportunities for a little risky play and challenge their physical skills on the ropes and slopes in and around the trees.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Expected standard

Leaders and staff implement an effective key-person system. Staff know all children well and use their knowledge of each child to support their needs. They build warm and trusting relationships with children and their families and this helps to promote regular attendance.

Overall, children's behaviour is positive. They are encouraged to be kind to each other, and staff help them to resolve minor conflicts. Toddlers learn to share, take turns and show respect for others during group times. Older children use their manners, as they say 'please' when asking for more milk to drink with their snack, for instance. They also develop an understanding of safe play. For example, children ask staff for help to move large items off the floor as they play and say, 'someone might get hurt'.

Staff generally promote positive attitudes to learning by encouraging children's curiosity and perseverance. The environment in the downstairs rooms is not always conducive to these expectations however, as noise levels can become quite high and there is not yet an established routine to ensure all children have equal time outside.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders and staff promote children's health and welfare well. Toothbrushing is promoted in all rooms, starting with babies, whose key persons set up a calm environment for the activity. Staff and children sit in small key groups, with large mirrors so that children can see themselves. Staff set up timers and name various body parts while singing, which also helps children to learn more about their bodies. Babies show they are happy and confident as they explore their surroundings. They readily approach staff for support and cuddles, who respond thoughtfully to their emotional and physical needs. The youngest babies have time

in 'The Nest' away from older children, if needed, and enjoy focused time with their key person.

During term-time, older children participate in forest-school sessions and learn more about their environment and the natural world. In school holidays, children have use of the nursery garden, although staff do not always recognise children's need to be outside in the fresh air, which results in the indoor environment becoming less calm. When they do go outside however, children are able to develop their physical skills in a number of ways as they climb the slopes around the trees, slide down the equipment and use the climbing frame. Staff are very kind and caring as they deal with minor falls, for example. They give children cuddles and say 'do you want to uncurl yourself so that I can check you over'. They wait until children are ready and give lots of reassurance.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders and staff design a curriculum that reflects children's developmental stages, interests and prior experiences. They typically sequence children's learning carefully, which helps children to build knowledge and skills over time, and staff use what they already know about children to inform their planning. Staff provide close support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and enable them to have focused learning and development opportunities.

Babies develop physical skills and learn to take risks when they climb and explore using equipment in the baby room. Staff encourage use of their senses well. For example, babies roll balls of different sizes and textures, listen to 'what's in the box' and learn how a toy shaker sounds like rain. Toddlers show a love of books and listen intently to stories. They feel valued as staff sing welcome songs to include all children's names, and gain confidence asking for songs they would like to hear. Staff introduce older children to mathematical language. For instance, as children challenge themselves on the ropes outside, staff use positional words such as 'over' and 'under'. Noise levels in the downstairs rooms can become quite high, however, which at times prevents children from being able to concentrate fully or play quietly. This is exacerbated by staff not always planning well enough for outdoor play. When forest-school sessions are not in operation, for instance, staff do not plan as well for the outdoor learning environment, which limits opportunities for children to play and learn outside and benefit from the fresh air.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Overall, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with other barriers to their learning benefit from positive partnership working between the nursery staff, other professionals and their families. For example, parents and carers are well informed about children's learning and development, and staff use strategies learnt from other professionals to help children make progress. At times, the flow of information between parents, leaders and staff about other agency involvement is not consistent, meaning that staff are not always kept fully aware of any updates. However, staff strive to ensure that children with SEND have access to the right support by the time they start school.

Key staff make prompt assessments and are aware of how to meet children's needs, including for those with SEND, and make appropriate adaptations for them. They promote the attendance of children with barriers to their learning by thinking of strategies to help with anxieties about changes to the routine. For instance, staff implement 'now and next' picture boards, supporting this both at home and in the setting. Leaders and staff use additional funding effectively, as they bring in new resources to support children's developmental needs. Children who are known, or previously known, to children's social care receive effective support, although robust communication between leaders and staff on some matters involving the children in their care is inconsistent.

Leadership and governance **Expected standard**

Overall, leaders strive to make decisions in the best interests of all children in their care. Leaders generally identify the strengths and areas for development within the nursery. They are aware, for example, that noise levels in the downstairs rooms need to be addressed. However, they have not yet fully begun to take action on the matter.

Leaders prioritise staff's wellbeing and manage their workload effectively. They ensure that staff have regular opportunities for training that is relevant to their work. Leaders deploy staff effectively and set manageable expectations. Staff comment that they feel well supported, which contributes to a positive and stable working environment. However, communication between leaders and staff does not fully support them to understand all matters relating to the children in their care, to ensure staff can support them to the best of their ability.

Leaders know families well and tailor support to meet a range of needs, recognising different family structures and circumstances. Parents and carers comment positively on the supportive staff team and that they generally feel well informed about their children's care and progress. They are aware of the key-person system and typically know about their children's learning and next steps.

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

Children enjoy their time at this nursery and increasingly develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need for their next stage of learning. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with other barriers to their learning. Children typically benefit from a curriculum that gradually builds on what they already know and can do. For example, staff in the baby room introduce simple songs that signal the time for tooth

brushing, and staff in older children's rooms continue with these songs while increasingly helping children to better understand the importance of oral hygiene.

Practice in the baby room is nurturing and babies respond positively to gentle, enthusiastic interactions with staff who know them well. Toddlers show great enthusiasm for the activities and experiences staff set out for them and enjoy the responsibility of having proper glasses and crockery with their meals. Pre-school children delight in spontaneous activities with staff, such as when they play with a large cardboard tube and staff encourage them to think about sound and how this travels through the tube. Children learn to alternate listening and speaking so that they can hear each other and respond, and they laugh at how different their voices sound. The company ethos of sustainability is embedded well by staff into daily routines and activities. For example, staff use reusable nappies for children, use food waste bins and help children to grow herbs and vegetables in the garden. This helps children learn how to protect their environment from an early age.

Overall, children behave well and attend regularly, which supports continuity in their learning and development. Staff act as positive role models and support children to make positive choices about their behaviour. Families feel welcomed and say that staff genuinely care about their children. Staff offer lots of praise, which helps children to feel valued.

Next steps

- Leaders should develop the curriculum for the outdoor area to provide more targeted learning experiences for children and to increase the opportunities children have for fresh air and physical exercise.
- Leaders should consider and enhance the environment, particularly in the downstairs rooms, to enable children to concentrate, play quietly and relax more easily without interruption, to promote their learning outcomes to even higher levels.
- Leaders should further improve communication with and between staff, parents and carers so that staff are fully informed about pertinent matters involving the children in their care.

About this inspection

The inspector spoke with leaders, staff, special educational needs coordinators, children, parents and carers 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.

Inspector:
Nicky Hill

About this setting

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Address:
Royal Hampshire County Hospital
Romsey Road
Winchester
Hampshire
SO22 5DG

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 04/06/2003

Registered person: Tops Day Nursery Limited

Register(s): EYR

Operating hours: Monday,Tuesday,Wednesday,Thursday,Friday : 06:00 - 20:00

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 23 July 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

0 to 4

Total number of places

61

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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