

Inspection of Dukes and Duchesses

Dukes Terrace, Duke Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L1 4JS

Inspection date: 29 August 2025

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children thrive at this exceptionally nurturing and dynamic nursery. Staff are highly trained and wonderful role models. They have extremely high expectations of what all children can achieve. They create a beautifully vibrant and inviting environment for children to explore and learn. Children benefit from a highly ambitious and innovative curriculum that captures their curiosity and passion for learning and discovery. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive excellent support. They benefit from strong partnership working with a wide range of early years professionals. Consequently, children love attending the nursery. They behave incredibly well and make excellent progress.

The central ethos of the nursery is nurturing children's creativity and giving them a rich set of awe inspiring experiences. For instance, children engage in a wide variety of different learning projects and initiatives to foster their language and literacy skills and knowledge of the world. For instance, children of all ages participate in a project to experience 100 different books before they leave the nursery. Staff uses these experiences to help children to develop a love of reading from a very young age.

Children engage in extremely high-quality and first-hand learning experiences. For example, during their frequent forest school sessions, they enjoy den building, nature crafts and develop a deep love of nature. Children take turns to attend 'beach school'. They explore pebbles and shells, as well as investigating rock pools. Staff also teach children about famous sculptures and involve them in projects about looking after the ocean. This helps children to develop a deep understanding of the world around them.

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

- The nursery is led by highly passionate and inspiring leaders and an extremely well-qualified team. Leaders deliver their strong vision for exceptional care and education in a highly successful way. They are pioneers for improving outcomes for children at the nursery and across the city. They frequently engage in collaborative research projects with education specialists, community hubs, universities and museums. Leaders exchange knowledge and inspire different educational practices. This helps them to support children to develop highly positive attitudes towards their learning and make strong progress.
- Children develop strong bonds with the dedicated staff. Young babies show they feel safe and secure as they enjoy singing familiar nursery rhymes along to an ukulele. This supports their early communication and language skills and supports them to develop a passion for music and storytelling. Toddlers delight in exploring a beach scene. Staff introduce lots of new vocabulary, such as

'rough shells' and 'soft sand', as they investigate. They support children to develop their concentration, language development and imaginations.

- Older children benefit from extremely high-quality teaching and interactions. They have a secure understanding of kind and respectful behaviour. Children show high levels of engagement as they play and learn. Staff ignite children's curiosity and skilfully teach new knowledge. For instance, children participate in sessions with dough and music to develop their listening and attention and fine motor skills in readiness for early writing. They also engage in a project to learn the meaning of different words and concepts through a series of first-hand experiences. Children develop excellent expressive language and creative thinking skills.
- A real strength of the nursery is children engaging in meaningful learning outdoors. Children fully immerse themselves in planting and gardening activities. They proudly discuss different life cycles, seeds and recall the process of planting various plants and vegetables. This supports children's awareness of the natural world.
- Children have remarkable opportunities to learn about different artists. This is evident when children visit an immersive art experience of Van Gogh's work. They recreate wonderful representations of famous artwork. Children also have frequent opportunities to express themselves when exploring clay and wood work. Children are currently working on decorating a chair that will be exhibited in a gallery in New York. The decorated chair represents the notion that everyone should have a voice. This supports children's imaginations and helps them to develop a strong sense of self.
- Staff successfully organise an extensive programme of trips across the city and beyond. This helps children to gain valuable knowledge of different cultures and ways of life. Older children participate in 'mini architect' sessions. They visit and draw famous landmarks and buildings. Staff use these experiences to help children to develop an understanding of architecture, engineering and different cultural places of interest.
- Building supportive and positive relationships with parents and carers is a high priority in the nursery. Parents have excellent opportunities to spend time in the nursery during their regular 'parental engagement' events. Parents enjoy attending stay-and-play sessions, cookery classes and music and movement afternoons. Parents express incredibly high levels of satisfaction. They collectively state that they value the passion and genuine love that staff show for their work. In addition, parents also value the exciting range of learning experiences and the evident progress their children make.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY261963
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10407977
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	111
Name of registered person	Top Class Day Nursery Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP908004
Telephone number	0151 709 1186
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

Dukes and Duchesses registered in 2003 and is located in Liverpool. The nursery employs 28 members of staff. All staff hold appropriate qualifications ranging from level 2 to level 6, including 12 staff who hold qualifications at level 6. The nursery opens all year round, from 7.30am until 6pm, Monday to Friday. It provides government funded childcare.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Amy Wilkinson

Inspection activities

- The inspector carried out a learning walk with leaders, where they outlined their vision and values in the nursery and the intent for the curriculum.
- Parents, staff and children's views were taken into account during the inspection.
- A number of observations were completed by the inspector to evaluate the quality of education.
- A range of required documents were viewed, such as staff's recruitment, vetting and qualification documents.

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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