

Inspection of Dollymixtures Day Nursery

The New Lodge, Corporation Street, Stafford ST16 3AG

Inspection date: 29 July 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 are excited to attend this nurturing nursery. They enter happily and are eager to greet their peers and nursery staff. Children build trusting relationships with key members of the nursery team. They experience supportive transitions from home that allow key staff to get to know children's unique routines and needs very well. This enables staff to cater for children's individual needs and build trust with parents and children alike. As a result, children settle well and feel safe. Staff are positive role models and support children through gentle guidance and consistent praise, helping them to understand expectations. They promote kindness and respect for others. As a result, children behave well and follow routines confidently.

Children explore the outdoor area with delight. They practise moving in different ways and explore the slides and climbing equipment under the supervision of the attentive team. Children smile with pride as they travel down the slide. Staff engage with children as they make cakes with stones and mud in the outdoor kitchen. Others explore colour and build strength in their arms as they lift the parachute up and down. They throw balls onto the material and watch them bounce off before retrieving them. Children sit with staff and observe their pet tortoise in its outdoor enclosure. They learn how to care for it and ensure that it has fresh food and water.

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

- Leaders are passionate about enhancing children's learning opportunities so that they become confident in making choices and leading their learning. Children learn life skills, such as removing their own shoes and putting on their own coats. Older children practise changing into school uniform as they immerse themselves in role play. These skills support children to become confident and ready for their transition to primary school.
- Staff get to know children very well and share information about activities and next steps with parents so that they can support some of these activities at home. Staff plan activities that incorporate children's interests and current events in the community. For instance, they explore play dough to create footballs. Staff demonstrate how to roll dough into a ball and provide children with the play dough colour of their choice.
- The nurturing team offers an inclusive environment, ensuring that all children can access equal learning opportunities. Children are confident, independent learners. They feed themselves at mealtimes, closely monitored by the attentive staff who ensure their safety while eating. After eating, children wipe their own hands and faces as they check their reflection in a mirror. Younger children thrive in a soothing sleep routine. They join for a story before settling quickly to

sleep.

- Staff and leaders are committed to offering a communication-rich environment. They ensure that children have opportunities to learn from and converse with their older peers. Children enjoy listening to stories and singing songs. They take part in group activities in the sand. Children listen intently to staff and copy vocabulary as they describe the movements that they make. For instance, young children copy as staff draw lines and circles in the sand. They say 'wiggle wiggle' as they draw worms. Children maintain focus for extended periods of time.
- Older children are fascinated when visiting their allotment. Children plant seeds and visit regularly to water them and observe their growth. They notice caterpillars on their cabbages and gently handle them as they discuss their life cycle with staff. They observe the height of sunflowers and compare the head of the flower with the size of their hand. Staff invite children to harvest their beetroot. They explore ways of pulling it from the ground and work together when it is a little difficult. Children look forward to trying their produce when they return to nursery.
- Staff skilfully teach children how to manage risk. They discuss trees and plants that they see on their journey to their allotment and teach children about how to keep themselves safe. For instance, staff teach children that they can only pick fruits from their own allotment because they know that they are safe to eat. Children learn to identify stinging nettles and know what might happen if they touch them. Staff teach children about road safety as they cross the road together.
- Staff and leaders work in collaboration with other agencies to enhance learning opportunities for children. They liaise with speech and language therapists and physiotherapists to plan appropriate next steps that support children's unique needs. The creative layout of the nursery offers inviting spaces for staff to spend time working with children individually or in small groups. As a result, all children make exceptionally good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders and managers offer a variety of opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's journey through nursery. They are invited to take part in stay-and-play sessions, where they can discover their child's learning environment and get to know key members of the team. These opportunities strengthen partnerships, and parents speak highly of the nurturing team.
- Staff report that they are supported in their roles and that their well-being is prioritised. There are robust systems in place to keep children safe, and all members of the team have excellent knowledge of safeguarding procedures. Appraisals and meetings are held with staff, and leaders use these to identify areas for staff's professional development.

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	EY104370
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10399641
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	74
Number of children on roll	79
Name of registered person	Jones, Debra
Registered person unique reference number	RP513206
Telephone number	01785223511
Date of previous inspection	9 December 2019

Information about this early years setting

Dollymixtures Day Nursery registered in 2002 and is located in Stafford. The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 to level 6, including one who holds early years teacher status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 6.45am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Ali Myers

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector and the manager carried out a joint observation of a communication and language activity.
- Parents shared their views of the nursery with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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