

Team Development



Dukes and Duchesses, Liverpool

'Exceptional for the depth and reach of their development activity, making a huge impact on their local area'
Judge

Dukes and Duchesses is a private purpose-built day nursery in Liverpool city centre. It was opened in 2003 by qualified teacher Liz Ludden, who has made building a strong, capable and reflective workforce a priority.

Now, the nursery has eight staff with an early years degree (with three more working towards it), five with EYP/EYT (one working towards it) and four forest school practitioners, all gaining their qualifications while working at the setting. More than half have been with the nursery for more than 10 years.

Staff have areas of expertise in which they seek out additional training, which enables them to become specialists who can lead and support others within the setting and improve outcomes for children and families.

The nursery is in an area of deprivation, and so the team has undertaken training on attach-

ment theory to allow them to develop a bespoke relationship with families seeking asylum or needing support with domestic violence, housing or financial problems.

Dukes and Duchesses believes that training has the greatest impact when sharing learning with others and learning from them in the process. The nursery has used its training to support other practitioners in the sector, hosting visits, delivering training packages, presenting at conferences and providing bespoke support visits for settings judged as requiring improvement.

The local authority has designated Dukes and Duchesses as one of four hubs of good practice, and the nursery has run training on early language development, Tots Talk, for 20 local settings, led by two of its EYPs. It also supported four settings, with three moving from 'requires improvement' to 'good'.

Dukes and Duchesses has been part of four

practitioner action research projects – on learning environment, early communication, emotional wellbeing and partnership with parents – with learning clusters facilitated by Kay Mathieson, Elizabeth Jarman and Julia Manning-Morton. Staff now continuously seek out ways to improve their practice and 'own' the changes they make.

The nursery is also a partner setting with Edgehill University and has members of the team on the EYT steering group and early years development group, which aims to upskill the early years workforce. The setting is recognised as an exemplary place for students to experience exciting and innovative provision.

One Liverpool quality improvement officer praises the 'strong collaborative ethos', 'spirit of enquiry' and ability to articulate their shared pedagogy. It is evident that the whole staff team has a shared purpose and vision, she adds.

Highly commended Kidzone Cranwell, Sleaford

A charity situated on a RAF base, Kidzone has bounced back from near closure, with team development a big part of why it now thrives in supporting children from military families with a complex range of needs. Personal and organisational training needs are identified and acted on; a critical friend scheme and peer-on-peer observations enable sharing and reflective practice. The nursery has also created

specific roles such as outdoor resource co-ordinator. Collaboration is key and decisions are 'road tested'.

Training Depot Day Nursery (TDDN), Luton

The Training Depot is a private nursery in a deprived area of Luton. Practitioners are given roles and responsibilities depending on their skill sets and encouraged to experience different roles using a scaffolding system. Recently, the team

has been expanded and upskilled as part of a move to take more two-year-olds from deprived backgrounds. To ensure supervision throughout the setting, TDDN found leadership qualifications and used in-house mentoring and coaching.

Criterion

Open to early years and childcare service providers who have built a high-quality staff team through good practice in recruitment and retention, training and career development