

Little VIPs Daycare

Unique reference number (URN): 2791518

Address: Lowther Endowed School, Hackthorpe, Penrith, CA10 2HT

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registered with Ofsted: 01/07/2024

Registers: EYR

Registered person: Lowther Endowed School Governing Body

Inspection report: 17 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

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.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Children make excellent progress at this setting. They explore the environment with enthusiasm and show high levels of intentional engagement. They choose their own resources, instigate their own play and make connections with their prior experiences. Children proudly display the radishes they have been growing in the garden and excitedly show their peers and staff. Older children talk about growing things from seed and the need to water plants so that they grow. Younger children become animated as they talk about a recent holiday and going on a 'big aeroplane'. Children build a secure breadth of knowledge through practical application and real-life experiences.

Opportunities immerse children in learning from the start. For example, babies point with excitement as they recognise different characters in a storybook and hold out their arms as staff talk about the concept of 'big'. Toddlers enjoy making patterns in dry rice with their finger, while pre-school children enjoy using a blackboard to write their names. The curriculum is skilfully delivered so that children build their skills and become confident and independent learners.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well from their starting points. They steadily build new skills, interact with their peers and are able to express themselves during play. Strategies to support children are highly effective and help to prepare them for future success in the next stage of their education, including school.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

Strong standard ●

Staff are consistently positive role models and have built positive relationships with all children. Children understand expectations and remind one another of boundaries. For example, older children remind each other to sit with their legs crossed on the carpet so they do not fidget. Staff are consistent in their approach to positive behaviour. Children listen carefully, share resources independently and negotiate turn-taking between themselves. Staff encourage children to cooperate and help each other during play. For example, children work together, using lengths of wood balanced on milk crates, to make a bridge in the garden.

Staff are deployed well throughout the setting, which means that children receive high-quality support in all aspects of their play. The curriculum is extremely engaging, and incidences of unwanted behaviour are very low as children are so interested in play and learning. Children are very active learners and show extremely positive attitudes to learning. Routines are managed well and help children to understand expectations throughout the day.

Staff understand that children build skills and develop knowledge at different rates. They offer inclusive approaches to behaviour, attitudes and routines in line with children's age and stage of development. Staff are diligent in promoting children's punctuality and attendance.

They recognise the importance of children attending regularly, which helps children to settle, build their confidence and develop their social skills.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

Strong standard 

Staff provide nurturing care and focus intently on supporting children's welfare and wellbeing. They work closely with parents and do all that they can to mirror the care that is given at home. For example, staff support the youngest babies to get to sleep just as parents would do at home. Staff show a comprehensive knowledge of children's uniqueness and are extremely responsive to children's changing needs.

Staff support children to understand their feelings and emotions in imaginative ways. They ask how children are feeling in their tummy, and children delight in placing a pom pom in an empty bottle that has a corresponding face to mirror their emotion. Children are able to recognise their feelings and match with their emotions, such as 'I am happy when I see my mummy and daddy'. This helps children to identify and regulate their emotions. Staff explore important concepts with older children. For example, they discuss what children can do if they are worried about something and what a trusted adult is if they would like to talk to someone.

Children have formed close bonds with staff. They independently go to them if they need reassurance, have a problem to solve, need help or have a question. Staff value the voice of every child and encourage them to take part in expressing their opinions. Children vote for activities they would like to do and suggest ideas for meals they would like to see on the menu. This supports children to see that their voice matters, which helps them to be independent, with high levels of confidence.

Children are supported to develop an understanding of their physical development, personal safety, health and wellbeing. They enjoy growing vegetables in the garden, take personal risks as they climb different structures, and learn about the importance of self-care, such as good oral hygiene. Children are beginning to understand the importance of living a healthy lifestyle.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard 

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is tailored to meet the needs of all children. It supports children's natural interest and curiosity, gives children new experiences and allows them to recap on prior learning to establish key skills. The curriculum is carefully curated and sequenced to promote children's enjoyment and build a thirst for learning.

Staff are very skilful and adept at incidental learning. They provide consistently high-quality teaching opportunities and appreciate that every part of the day can be a learning experience for children. They sing to babies as they have their nappies changed, promoting early communication, and talk with toddlers about getting rid of germs as they wash their hands. Staff promote independence with pre-school children as they make their own decisions during play and designate roles between themselves. Staff have the highest expectations for every child, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Staff are excellent at promoting children's communication and language skills. This begins with the youngest children where staff encourage eye gaze, promote babbling and say a child's name as they begin to explore two-way communication. Staff use new words in context with children in the toddler room, who then use these terms during their play. For example, as they play in the water, children say, 'The boat is rocking' and 'I am splashing'. Children in the pre-school room are asked meaningful questions by staff, which helps to develop their thinking skills and gives them the opportunity to recap on prior learning. Children are skilful communicators. Opportunities for exploring mathematics are woven through play. For example, children act out having a tea party and understand concepts relating to capacity, while others make their own perfume using rose petals. They discuss the numbers of petals they will need, the order in which they should add the ingredients and how many stirs of the spoon it will need until it is ready.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Staff constantly observe children, carry out rigorous assessments, and quickly identify any gaps in children's learning and development. They consider the needs of every individual child and adapt the curriculum to reduce any barriers that children may be facing. The curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs of all children.

Staff work exceptionally closely with children's parents to understand children's individual needs. They welcome external professionals into the setting to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and make all reasonable adjustments to create a nurturing and inclusive environment. Staff are skilful in using strategies and interventions that support children's learning and development. They use strategies such as Makaton signs and visual timetables to support children's understanding and communication. Staff meet regularly with leaders to monitor if these strategies are beneficial to children's development. Staff work hard to support children who speak English as an additional language. Children's cultural heritage is celebrated, and all languages are equally valued.

Staff who support children with SEND are experienced and knowledgeable in supporting children with their individual needs. They ensure that all the staff team are aware of how to support children as they play. This creates a whole-team approach to supporting children's needs. If children are in receipt of funding, staff carefully consider how this can be spent to make the most impact for every child and reduce barriers to learning.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Senior leaders, governors and the management team work closely together to form a dynamic leadership team. They have a perceptive analysis of the strengths and areas they would like to further improve, are very reflective and identify constant improvements. High expectations for staff and children are woven right through the setting and beyond, into the on-site school.

Leaders empower staff so that they have a direct and positive impact on children's learning and development. Staff's workload and wellbeing are carefully considered. Staff say that they feel very supported and greatly value the leadership team. The staff team is very well qualified and works exceptionally well as a close-knit team.

Leaders identify targeted training that is individual to each member of staff and in the interests of the children. All staff have recently attended training to support children with special educational needs/and or disabilities so that they can offer effective targeted support. Training has a real purpose and develops new skills for staff so that they build even greater knowledge of how best to support the children in their care.

Staff engage well with parents and welcome their views. They regularly invite parents into the setting for different events, such as meeting new staff members or stay-and-play sessions. Staff involve parents in assessment processes and advocate home learning through home-learning bags, designed to help children extend their learning at home. Staff work closely with a wide range of professionals to support children's needs and share meaningful information with teachers as children transition to school. Staff engage superbly with professionals and the local community.

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

Children achieve well at this setting. They are extremely active learners and enjoy a curriculum that allows them to consistently revisit prior learning as they develop the knowledge and skills they need for future learning. The curriculum is extremely engaging and all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language, are engaged learners. They listen carefully to adults, follow their own interests, explore with enthusiasm and are self-sufficient and independent. The curriculum takes into consideration the different ages and stages of development of all children and reduces the barriers to learning some children may face. Children develop the skills they need to secure the best start in life.

Children are extremely settled and secure. They make their needs known and are confident learners. Staff listen to children's ideas, and in turn, children learn that their opinions matter and are valued. Children demonstrate they have built warm attachments with staff, which helps them to feel safe and secure. Staff skilfully support children's developing independence. They observe children and allow them to explore new concepts before immediately stepping in. Children develop their ideas and thinking skills in an inclusive and nurturing environment.

Parent partnerships are a key aspect of the provision. Staff invite parents to be part of every child's assessment and learning. They welcome the views of parents, work diligently in partnership to share meaningful information about children's learning and development and promote regular attendance. Constant observation and assessment allow any gaps in children's learning to be quickly identified. Referrals to other professionals are swift, and

interventions and strategies are put into place to help fill any gaps in learning as quickly as possible. Interventions and strategies are carefully considered and offered to children to help all children make the best possible progress.

Children thrive at this setting due to the dynamic leadership, ambitious curriculum and knowledgeable staff. Children have opportunities for learning that they may not have experienced before. For example, children grow their own vegetables in the garden, meet rescue animals such as the local red squirrel and take part in special days such as 'Mother's Day' events. Children build excellent social skills, have positive relationships with their peers and adults and are building the skills they need for future learning.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain their work to ensure continued improvement and high standards. They should focus on creating a transformational impact on the outcomes and experiences of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.
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About this inspection

The inspector spoke with the nominated individual, the early years governor, the manager, staff, the special educational needs coordinator, the cook and children during the inspection. The views of parents were gathered through written comments.

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:

Elisia Lee

About this setting

Unique reference number (URN): 2791518

Address:

Lowther Endowed School
Hackthorpe

Penrith
CA10 2HT

Type: Childcare on non-domestic premises

Registration date: 01/07/2024

Registered person: Lowther Endowed School Governing Body

Register(s): EYR

Operating hours: Monday,Tuesday,Wednesday,Thursday,Friday : 08:00 - 18:00

Local authority: Westmorland and Furness

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 17 June 2026

Children numbers

Age range of children at the time of inspection

0 to 4

Total number of places

45

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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