



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 509102

DfES Number:

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 17/06/2004
Inspector Name Kay Rutter

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Downs Playgroup
Setting Address Cannon Lane Methodist Church
Cannon Lane
Pinner
Middlesex
HA5 1JD

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of The Committee of the Downs Playgroup
Association 283834

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name The Committee of the Downs Playgroup Association
Address 44 Moss Lane
Pinner
Middlesex
HA5 3AX

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Downs playgroup is an established group which opened in 1976.

The playgroup operates from Cannon Lane Methodist Church. It has the use of one main playroom and several other rooms. It is situated within walking distance of Pinner and Rayners Lane stations, local bus routes, parks and shops.

There are currently 48 children aged between two years nine months and five years on roll. This includes 31 funded three year olds and 11 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports several multi lingual children and children with special needs.

The group opens five days per week in term time. Sessions are from 09:30 to 12:00 Monday to Friday, with additional sessions from 12:30 to 14:55 on Tuesday and 12:40 to 14:55 on Thursday.

Eight part time staff work with the children. Six of the staff hold recognised early years qualifications to National Vocational Level (NVQ) 2 or 3. One member of staff is currently improving her qualification level.

The group is run by a management committee. It receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and Pre School Learning Alliance. The setting is accredited by the Pre School Learning Alliance.

How good is the Day Care?

Downs Playgroup provides good care for children.

The playgroup is well organised and effectively managed. Suitably qualified and experienced staff are recruited, they work well as a team. A comprehensive operational plan and well organised policies and procedures promote the efficient and safe running of the group. The standard of record keeping is good.

The premises are warm and welcoming, dedicated play areas are attractive and

inviting to children. There are good standards of safety, hygiene and security in place to keep children safe.

Adults and children have good relationships. Children receive sufficient attention and support to enable them to feel secure and confident, their self esteem is fostered well as staff support them in making choices, conducting their own experiments and continually praise their efforts. Adults use a good range of teaching and questioning techniques to challenge children and extend their language and thinking.

Effective planning ensures children have access to a good range of activities which promotes learning in all areas and enables children to make good progress. Children are stimulated and interested in these activities. There is a strong emphasis on allowing children to make decisions and choices about what they play with. Some resources are organised to enable children to make independent choices; this allows them to exercise autonomy, be spontaneously creative and set their own challenges. Sessions are well organised to allow children the maximum amount of time to enjoy their play, although opportunities for vigorous physical play are limited at times when the building is shared with other groups.

Partnership with parents is very good. A good range of written information is available about the setting, the curriculum and children's progress. Relationships between parents and staff are good. Parents regularly participate in sessions and are able to access a home lending library for books and videos.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no actions set at the previous inspection.

The provider continues to meet the Children Act 1989 part XA and schedule 9A , the associated regulations and the requirements of the National Standards for sessional day care.

What is being done well?

- The setting is well managed and the staff team are established, experienced and motivated. Their complimentary skills and good communication create a lively and dynamic learning environment for children. Staff have clear responsibilities and are well deployed to support and extend children's play and learning.
- The environment is warm and welcoming as children's work is well displayed and dedicated play areas are attractive and inviting. A stimulating range of planned activities promotes learning in all areas. The routine is well organised to allow children ample time to enjoy their play, snack time in small groups creates a minimum amount of disruption to play and is a very sociable experience.
- Children receive sufficient attention and support to enable them to feel secure and confident, their self esteem is fostered well as staff support them in making choices, conducting their own experiments and continually praise

their efforts. Adults use a wide range of teaching techniques to challenge children, encourage them to think for themselves and solve problems.

- Children are building good relationships with peers, based on mutual respect and modelled from the example of adults around them. They converse, play cooperatively and help each other out. Children are sensitive to each other, share and take turns. They discuss experiences in their lives and are learning that people are different, which promotes a developing respect for individuality and diversity.
- Partnership with parents is very good. Written and verbal communication is very good. Parents comment positively on the high level of care children receive, the good advice and support staff offer parents, the ability to be involved with their child's learning and the regularity and accessibility of information.

What needs to be improved?

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following;
- opportunities for vigorous physical play when use of the outdoor area and hall are restricted.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Downs Playgroup provides very good, high quality nursery education.

Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals in the six learning areas. They are confident, curious, enthusiastic learners who enjoy a wide range of activities.

Very good quality of teaching and a rich environment ensures children are able to make very good progress. Staff have a very good understanding of how children learn, sound knowledge of the foundation stage and a commitment to ensure each child can develop at their own pace. Adults know children well, using their observations and assessments to create individual play plans for each child. This knowledge is also used to effectively plan a broad and balanced curriculum which interests the children. Resources are organised to promote independent access, encourage children to pursue their own ideas and conduct their own experiments. Children receive ample attention and support in their play from adults who employ good teaching and questioning techniques to extend children's language, imagination and thinking skills.

The leadership of the group is very good, and is supported by effective management and communication systems. Commitment to providing a high quality service is evident in all areas of practice. The staff team are positive, dynamic and motivated; they work well together to ensure that children receive high quality care and education, which is evaluated. Staff are valued and there is a strong commitment to professional development. This ensures adults have good access to regular training, which updates and enhances their skills, allows new ideas to be developed and promotes good teaching.

Partnership with parents is very good. Relationships and communication are warm and friendly. Parents have good access to records and are presented with their child's record of achievement when children leave the setting. Parents are able to be involved in their child's learning in several ways.

What is being done well?

- The manager and staff are committed to providing high quality education by continuous improvement of the provision. Staff are valued, the programme for professional development and good access to training ensures their skills and knowledge remain current, new ideas are used to develop teaching practice and children receive a good education.
- Quality of teaching and staff knowledge of the foundation stage is very good. Adults are clear about the scope of learning of each activity, they introduce relevant vocabulary and ideas and ask questions to make children think. Staff continually observe and assess children, this informs their planning and

ensures the good range of activities offered at each session effectively meets the needs of each child

- There is a strong emphasis on allowing children to make decisions and choices about what they play with, supported by easy independent access to equipment. Children exercise autonomy as they freely select items at the sand and water trays, choose from different construction kits and access the creative workshop. They express themselves creatively and spontaneously, conduct their own experiments and set their own challenges. Children make good progress at their own pace.
- Children enjoy and make good use of varied role play provision for extended periods. They have good imagination and freely share their ideas with peers, negotiate roles and discuss narratives for the characters they invent. Adults support children well, introducing key language and encouraging them to explore story lines in more depth.
- Written information is plentiful and easily accessed by parents in the reception area. Parents are valued as the first educators of the children and can be involved in their child's learning by participating in the sessions, contributing to topic work or using the home lending library for books and videos. Key workers and parents make an initial assessment of what children can do and consult regularly about their progress

What needs to be improved?

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following;
- the range of natural materials for regular exploration and investigation

What has improved since the last inspection?

No significant weaknesses were reported at the previous inspection, three points for consideration were highlighted;

to improve the provision and allow quieter children to participate in groups, answer questions and give their opinions

to improve ratio of staff to children in singing, story and games to extend their enjoyment and assist staff in keeping children on task

to make better use of number line and letter frieze at children's level

An action plan was drawn up with appropriate methods to make improvements and each point has been effectively addressed.

Staff are observed to be sensitive to all children, providing additional attention and support to children with special needs and multi lingual children.

Children are organised into small groups for story and singing activities.

Displays cover a wide range of concepts and are attractive to children. The group work within constraints as the premises are shared. Staff have made good use of the limited low level display areas to stimulate children's interest.

The points for consideration have been effectively addressed.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children demonstrate curiosity, excitement and enthusiasm for learning. They are lively, dynamic and persist for extended periods of time at activities. Children are confident and have good self esteem which is fostered well by staff who listen with interest to children and praise them. Children model respect and care shown by adults, enjoy good relationships and work cooperatively with their peers. Children have good opportunities to exercise autonomy and be independent in their learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children express themselves and communicate confidently using gesture, expression and language. Adults introduce new vocabulary and make good use of pictorial aids to reinforce developing language skills. Children's interest in early reading is stimulated through good use of labelling, recipe cards and written instructions. Children handle books competently, tell stories and recognise their own and friends names. Many letters are named and formed correctly as children write their own names

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Planned activities and everyday situations are used very well to explore mathematical concepts. Children use mathematical language to accurately describe colour, size, shape, quantity and weight. Children recognise numerals and count confidently to ten and beyond. There are good opportunities for children to learn about calculation through practical activities; handling money at the launderette and snack time.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children confidently investigate and explore a small range of favourite natural materials. There are daily opportunities for children to practice their design and making skills in the creative workshop. Children use simple computer programmes and handle the mouse skilfully, they have regular opportunities to learn about everyday technology and it's uses. Children demonstrate a good understanding of time and place as they talk about significant events in their lives.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are well coordinated, have good spatial awareness and a wide range of movement skills. Physical activities are well planned for indoor and outdoor space, although this is limited at times when the building is shared with other community groups. Fine physical skills are well developed; children are dextrous and have good manipulation skills, they handle simple tools and equipment safely and appropriately.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are encouraged to explore colour, shape, texture and space at art activities and in the creative workshop. Children enjoy and make good use of imaginary provision to role play familiar situations and involve peers in negotiating more complex storylines to act out, adults support and extend this play well. Children express themselves in various ways; painting, drawing and singing. There are regular activities to explore music, movement and play instruments.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following;
- the range of natural materials for regular exploration and investigation

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.