

# Downs Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 509102  
**Inspection date** 08/06/2011  
**Inspector** Seema Parmar

**Setting address** Cannon Lane Methodist Church, Cannon Lane, Pinner,  
Middlesex, HA5 1JD

**Telephone number** 020 8866 0534

**Email**

**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

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## Description of the setting

Downs Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the playgroup and church members. It opened in 1976 and operates from two halls within Cannon Lane Methodist Church, Pinner, in the London borough of Harrow. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday morning from 9.30am to 12 noon, and on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons from 12.30pm to 3pm, during term time. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 50 children attending in the early years age group. The playgroup receives funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community. The playgroup currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup employs nine staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup is accredited by the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled and the playgroup staff are aware of their individual requirements. Staff work in partnership with other settings and parents to support children's needs. Overall, children's welfare, learning and development are well promoted. The required documentation is in place to support children's well-being. The playgroup has effective systems in place to monitor, evaluate and review practice, and demonstrates a good capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- update practitioners understanding of safeguarding children issues to enable them to implement the safeguarding children policy and procedure appropriately
- develop further the methods for ongoing observational assessment to identify the next steps in learning to inform planning for each child's continuing development
- develop strategies to encourage all parents to become fully involved in their child's continuous learning and development.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are safeguarded effectively, as staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. The staff are confident in their ability to recognise possible signs and symptoms of potential concerns surrounding the welfare of children. However, not all staff are fully confident in the referral procedures, if they had to take matters above the management, in order to, fully safeguard children. Recruitment procedures are robust and all staff are vetted to ensure their suitability to work with children. Staff supervise children's activities very well and through their vigilance and explanations, they help children appreciate the risks that are present in their day-to-day lives. The setting organises a system of risk assessments, noting any actions to be taken, in order to minimise potential risks on the premises. Children's welfare needs are well met because the required records are maintained.

The leadership and management of the provision is good. Clear communication between management and the staff team means that good practice is shared and encouraged. Ongoing reflective practice enhances children's welfare and results in a highly focused and motivated staff team. The setting has a positive attitude towards ongoing improvement of the provision and their self-evaluation reflects the good service provided. Parents contribute to the Self-evaluation process and the management team identifies actions to address areas for further development. Following the previous inspection, the setting has addressed the areas identified for improvement. For example, hygiene standards at snack time have improved to promote the good health of children, as they use paper hand towels and disinfectant hand gel. In addition, children have free flow access indoors and outdoors, as an integral part of the curriculum. The management team is eager in continuing to develop the setting and make improvements.

The setting has a range of attractively presented resources, which are of good quality and encourage children's interest and participation. The resources are used well, to achieve the aims and objectives of the planned activities. Staff are skilled and experienced at asking open-ended questions, to make children think for themselves and to stimulate their thinking. Staff work well as a team and are clear on their roles and responsibilities, within their designated areas. The safe organisation of the environment is conducive to learning and ensures that children are well cared for. Equality and diversity practices are threaded through many activities, so that children are gaining a strong awareness of the needs of others.

Children's emotional well-being is very well nurtured, as staff gather detailed information about their development when they first start, as well as any specific requirements to support their welfare and routines. However, not all parents are yet provided with opportunities to meet, discuss and contribute to their child's next steps in learning. Planning and other useful information is clearly displayed for parents, as the notice board provide a wealth of information, so that parents are fully informed of current affairs, both within and outside of the setting. In addition, the setting operates a parent rota and an 'open door' policy, so that parents are aware that they are always welcome. Parents in turn, regard the setting very

highly. They say their children enjoy their time there and feel the children's time is well-structured. They find the staff very welcoming and approachable. The setting has developed successful relationships with local schools within the area. For example, staff are invited to attend meetings, to plan for the smooth transition for children who will be moving onto school.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

Children make good progress in their learning and development, as staff work well together, to provide a wide range of learning opportunities, relating to their interests and enthusiasm. Children purposefully engage in meaningful activities with effective and sensitive support from staff. Staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, which is reflected in their practice. Staff effectively plan for individual children with the use of observations and assessments. However, they do not yet consistently use the information gained from observations for the next steps in learning. The planning of the learning environment is effectively linked to the six areas of learning and enables children to play freely and spontaneously. Staff ensure that activities are adapted, so that all children can participate and are not excluded. As a result, the children benefit from a well planned, balanced curriculum, which helps them become enthusiastic learners.

Staff provide very good support and spend quality time extending children's play and learning experiences. For example, staff sit with a small group of children, in the book corner, guiding and supporting them, as they take great delight in reading familiar stories, developing their listening and thinking skills. Staff talk and engage children, as partners in conversation, allowing children to initiate discussions showing interest in what they are saying. This also promotes and builds children's self-esteem and confidence. Children are developing their early writing skills, having good opportunities to write for different purposes and access to a range of writing resources, which they select independently. Staff encourage children to think critically and solve problems. For example, they complete simple jigsaw puzzles and sort out objects by colours and shapes during many practical activities. Children have very good opportunities to learn about living creatures. For example, during a focus activity, children are fascinated as they use their magnifying glasses to observe and investigate how caterpillars grow and develop. Staff skilfully engage and extend children's learning using books by making active references to the life cycle of butterflies, to reinforce their learning.

Children feel safe at the setting, as staff follow set routines and ensure that they are very well supervised, when moving around different areas of the premises. All staff hold current first aid certificates and are fully informed and aware of the accident and medication procedures. Hygiene procedures are thorough, to help prevent the spread of infection. Children are well aware of the importance of hand washing routines, for example, before eating and after toileting. Fresh water is provided throughout the day. Parents provide healthy snacks such as nutritious fruits promoting children's well-being. In addition free flow play, for outdoors,

promotes children's good health, as they gain fresh air and exercise.

Children's behaviour is very good. Children are very happy and settled and their self-esteem is very well fostered, through the praise and encouragement continuously given by staff. Experiences provided together with the resources available and interaction from staff, help to ensure children develop very good skills for the future.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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