

# Dorothy Gardner Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101105
<b>Local Authority</b>	Westminster
<b>Inspection number</b>	354942
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Watts

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fiona Kilkelly and Marc Zanchetta
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nikki Elsmore-Cary and Helen Chin-Fatt (acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	293 Shirland Road London W9 3JY
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### **Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision**

<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	Not previously inspected
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<b>Age group</b>	3–5
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 July 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who observed 11 learning sessions or part sessions taught by three different teachers and early years educators. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessments of children's learning and development, children's work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the acting headteachers, staff, and members of the governing body. They held informal conversations with parents and carers. The inspectors analysed 54 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and others by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the nursery's strategies to develop children's English language skills.
- The provision for and children's progress in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy.
- How well leaders and staff have improved provision and the outcomes for children in knowledge and understanding of the world.

## Information about the school

This nursery is part of Queen's Park Children's Centre, providing extended services to the local community. It is federated with another nearby nursery and the two organisations share the same governing body. Children in the nursery come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Nearly three quarters of the children are learning English as an additional language and many are at an early stage of English language acquisition when they start. There is a 12-place provision for two- and three-year-olds. This provision is managed by the school and overseen by the local authority. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

The nursery provides before- and after-nursery care for three- and four-year-olds. This provision is managed by the governing body and was part of the inspection. The organisation has been without a head of centre since January 2010. The centre, including the nursery, is currently led and managed jointly by two acting heads of centre.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Dorothy Gardner is an outstanding nursery. It has successfully built on the strengths identified in the previous inspection. Children make extremely good progress in all areas of learning because of high quality teaching and the stimulating learning activities provided. Children from different backgrounds and cultures thrive in the setting's very positive and harmonious community. An outstanding partnership has been established with parents and carers, who are extremely pleased with the care, education and support provided. They fully appreciate the school's efforts to help them support their children's learning, and their comments included, 'Extremely happy with the nursery.' 'Staff are wonderful and very supportive,' and, 'A lot of support goes above and beyond what is expected.'

Teachers, early years educators and learning support assistants work very well together in providing high quality learning experiences. The setting correctly places considerable emphasis on developing language skills and children make rapid gains in this area. Assessment information is used very well to modify activities to children's different needs. While children use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently, the range of ICT resources is limited and so opportunities are sometimes missed to fully utilise technology to support and enhance children's learning.

Children make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of excellent care, guidance and support, and the high quality relationships between adults and children. Most children demonstrate considerable confidence and independence. They learn and play very well with their peers. Children feel extremely safe in the nursery because of good attention to safeguarding. They adopt healthy lifestyles. The nursery promotes community cohesion very successfully and children's spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Children show consideration and respect others. Behaviour is usually outstanding and children make very good contributions to the nursery community.

In the absence of a head of centre, the two acting heads of centre have ensured that provision has been maintained and developed. The partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies are exceptionally productive. Self-evaluation is systematic and effective action is taken to bring about improvements. Since the previous inspection, children's progress, teaching and the curriculum have improved from good to outstanding. The nursery is very well placed to sustain further improvements.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the range of information and communication technology (ICT) resources so that greater opportunities are provided to support teaching and learning through technology.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

**1**

Children clearly enjoy the wide range of exciting experiences the nursery provides. They enter the nursery with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age, particularly in terms of their English language skills. They make exceptionally good progress and by the end of their time at the nursery, attainment is above the levels expected for their age. Children's achievement is therefore outstanding. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-targeted support and make rapid progress. The wide range of exciting activities on offer and the high quality teaching enable both boys and girls to perform exceptionally well. Effective planning and creative teaching ensure that the most able children are suitably challenged and extended.

In communication and language skills, children make rapid progress because adults promote speaking and listening effectively through all activities. Children love books and listen to stories attentively and with interest. They tell stories of their own and these are carefully recorded and displayed by staff. The strong emphasis on language work enables children who are learning English as a new language to make exceptional progress. Children acquire and practise mark-making and early writing skills very well.

Children make good progress in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy because of the good opportunities provided. For example, children explored how many jugs of water were needed to fill larger containers. They acquired and applied useful mathematical vocabulary such as 'empty', 'more than' and 'full'. Through the growing of plants, children have gained a good knowledge and understanding of what plants need to grow. Carrots were grown, washed and eaten by the children. Children use the limited ICT resources well to support their learning. They use computers to consolidate their language and number skills, and paint programs to create colourful images and patterns. Digital cameras are used confidently in recording their learning.

Children thoroughly enjoy exploring with different colours and they create attractive patterns using red, orange, yellow and green paints. Their balancing and climbing skills are developing extremely well with the clear guidance from adults. Children show increasing coordination and control when exercising on the inflatable trampoline or travelling on the bouncy 'space hoppers'.

Children feel extremely safe and know who to turn to if they are upset or need help because of the high quality relationships established with very caring staff. They enjoy healthy snacks. Children know that fresh fruit is good for you and understand the importance of drinking milk or water. They participate enthusiastically in regular exercise in the outdoor learning area. High expectations from adults and excellent relationships lead to exemplary conduct. Through the celebration of Christmas, Eid and Bangladeshi Independence Day, children are developing an appreciation and very good understanding of different cultures and faiths. They are very keen to come to the nursery and attend regularly. Their outstanding progress in basic skills and highly developed personal and social skills prepare them very successfully for their next school and later life.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	1
Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	2
Children's attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Skilful teaching successfully promotes outstanding learning and much enjoyment for children. Staff have a very secure knowledge and understanding of how children of this age learn. Highly effective assessment procedures provide a clear overview of each child's attainment. This information is used very well to plan the next steps of children's learning. Children's performance and learning experiences are well recorded in individual folders with detailed annotations and photographs. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed and make valuable contributions to children's learning. There is a good blend of adult-led activities and those chosen by children. Children have plenty of opportunities to explore and learn independently. Since the previous inspection, the provision for knowledge and understanding of the world and for problem solving, reasoning and numeracy has been successfully extended. Provision in these areas is now outstanding. Staff use the existing ICT equipment well, but there are no interactive whiteboards in the setting. The outdoor area is well resourced, well used and provides interesting activities. As a result, children are very active and purposeful learners. Children's learning is further enhanced by visitors. For example, a visiting author successfully inspired the children to create stories and pictures of the character 'Rasta mouse'.

Highly effective care, guidance and support and the very positive ethos are central to the nursery's success. The extremely well organised, safe and welcoming environment is much

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appreciated by children and their parents and carers, who commented, 'The school provides exceptional care and advice,' and, 'Since my child joined, he has thrived under the care, compassion and endless enthusiasm by staff.' In partnership with other agencies, the school is very successful in supporting children and their families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Guidance and support are carefully matched to the needs of different children. There are effective procedures to monitor and promote attendance which is above average. A few children take advantage of the well organised before- and after-nursery provision, which is much appreciated by working parents and carers.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders and managers are promoting excellent provision and outstanding outcomes for all groups of children. Staff are committed to each child doing as well as they can. Leaders and staff rightly place much emphasis on developing very strong partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies in order to enhance children's learning and development.

The governing body has a good understanding of the nursery's strengths and improvement priorities, and provides good support and constructive challenge. However, few members of the governing body visit the nursery in operation to gain a full understanding of day-to-day practice. Steps are being taken to tackle this issue. Good emphasis is placed on safeguarding. Practice and procedures to protect and safeguard children are effective and robust. A few administrative procedures relating to safeguarding are not yet as tight as the practice. All staff are well trained in safeguarding, and safe practices for children are promoted extremely well through the learning activities.

The school strives to meet and exceed the needs of parents and carers, who have welcomed the parenting courses which are delivered in Arabic, Bengali and English. Learning workshops have been equally successful. As one wrote, 'The school has tailored courses to meet the needs of parents.'

Equality of opportunity is promoted extremely well. All children are highly valued and have full and equal access to the outstanding provision. The setting is highly inclusive and tackles discrimination very effectively. Community cohesion is promoted exceptionally well and the staff have a very clear understanding of the diverse community that the nursery

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serves. The curriculum and learning activities are promoting children's knowledge and understanding of people's different backgrounds, cultures and faiths extremely well.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The inspectors had a good response to the survey. All the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are happy with their children's experience at the nursery, and they generally hold very positive views with very few concerns. A very small minority did not feel that the school prepared their children well enough for their next school and for the future. The inspection found that children's outstanding progress in basic skills, and well developed personal and social skills, prepare them very well for the next stage of their education.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Dorothy Gardner Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 80 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	79	13	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	72	14	26	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	74	10	19	2	4	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	61	20	37	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	59	20	37	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	69	16	30	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	57	20	37	0	0	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	30	56	18	33	3	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	56	23	43	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	52	24	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	50	24	44	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	56	22	41	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	63	19	35	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 July 2011

Dear Children

**Inspection of the Dorothy Gardner Centre, London W9 3JY**

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and sharing your learning with us. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. Your nursery is outstanding.

These are the main strengths.

- You really enjoy learning and the exciting activities provided.
- The nursery areas are attractive and welcoming places to learn in.
- You are making outstanding progress because of the very good teaching.
- You behave really well and get on extremely well with others.
- You know all about how to be healthy and fit.
- You feel very safe because the adults look after you very carefully.
- You show a very good knowledge of different festivals and how people live in different communities.
- The two acting heads of centre run the school exceptionally well. They are well supported by other staff.
- You are very well prepared for your next school.

We have asked the senior leaders and staff to do one thing to improve areas of the nursery's work.

- The school should increase its ICT equipment so that you have even more opportunities to support your learning through technology.

You can all help by continuing to do your best. We wish you all success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

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