

Inspection of Dorothy Gardner Nursery School

293 Shirland Road, London W9 3JY

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The school helps all children to thrive. Children benefit from an ambitious curriculum. They explore the stimulating environment and enjoy their learning. Staff are excellent role models for children. They have high expectations of what children can achieve.

Children enjoy a wide range of planned activities and experiences. Books are a core part of children's learning. Regular educational visits, including outings to the zoo, are linked to what children learn at school. Through varied curriculum opportunities, leaders encourage children to be independent and confident. For example, children made bread which they later cooked on the campfire. Children learn about responsibility. For instance, they are taught to handle the school's pet snake with care.

Staff provide children with great support and guidance, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders build close partnerships with parents and carers, who value how safe their children feel.

Staff expect children to behave sensibly. Children settle quickly into new routines when they join the school. This is because of the caring and consistent approach of staff. Children work and play kindly together. Should any problems arise, staff are quick to step in and resolve them.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's leadership has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Leaders know where they want the school to get to.

Children's communication and language development is a strong feature of the school. Staff take time to embed key concepts and language. They encourage children to actively listen and to take part in discussions. Careful and deliberate curriculum planning helps children to increase their range of vocabulary. For example, children correctly used words such as 'flint', 'oxygen' and 'fuel' to describe how best to make a fire.

Leaders make sure that children develop an early love of books. Staff carefully select stories, including traditional tales and rhymes. They share these with children during regular story times. Children get to know these stories in depth. They handle books with care. They take great joy in visiting the library and spending time discovering new books.

Leaders' curricular thinking is broad and takes account of all areas of learning. For instance, in mathematics, children learn to count, compare sizes and measure. Leaders teach early writing effectively. They create varied opportunities for children to engage with early mark-making. For example, children paint and write lists and tallies regularly. Leaders check that topics have sufficient curriculum coverage.

However, sometimes, leaders' curriculum thinking about the key knowledge and skills that they want children to learn over time is not as well developed.

Staff have an accurate understanding of what children know. They check that children have learned key concepts before they introduce new learning. Staff pay close attention to children's own interests but introduce them to many new opportunities to extend their knowledge. Any children who may need extra help are quickly identified. Staff provide these children with focused support to close any gaps in their learning. This ensures that all children are ready for the next stages of their education.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. This is because leaders prioritise their regular training and development. Staff value these opportunities. As a result, typically, staff guide children's learning well. This helps children to build on their previous learning. On occasions, some staff do not use their interactions with children purposefully. When this happens, children do not get a chance to deepen their learning.

Leaders provide children with SEND with very strong support. They identify and plan for the needs of these children. They work closely with parents of children and specialists. Staff use this information to carefully plan for each child's individual needs.

Leaders plan children's experiences with great purpose. This includes promoting children's positive physical and mental health. For example, children enjoy participating in weekly yoga sessions. Leaders teach children about a wide range of religious festivals and celebrations, including Diwali and the Chinese New Year. Regular visits to museums, theatres and local shops help children to develop key knowledge about culture and the wider world.

Staff establish clear routines and have high expectations. They model to children the importance of taking turns and good manners. Leaders carefully consider which strategies to use to improve children's behaviour. They monitor these regularly. This helps any children that might struggle with their behaviour to make significant improvements.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They provide leaders with appropriate challenge and support. Alongside leaders, governors have an accurate understanding of the school and its next steps. Staff appreciate leaders' support to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise children's welfare and know their families well. They work closely with parents to understand their children's needs. Leaders have extensive links to external bodies to support families. They have strong processes in place to provide families with wide-ranging support.

Leaders work closely with external agencies. Staff are well trained and vigilant. They know how to manage any concerns should they arise. Staff teach children how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn from a young age about the importance of fire safety and their own personal boundaries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, leaders' curricular thinking does not identify in detail the most important knowledge and skills that children should learn. As a result, the knowledge children learn over time is not as well developed as could be expected. Leaders should ensure that curriculum thinking takes account of the key content that children should know and by when.
- Not all staff have the expertise to deepen children's learning. This means, at times, children do not learn as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the training and support, including from best practice within the school, to maximise their interactions with children.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	101105
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10227415
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carol Foyle
Headteacher	Ben Commins (Interim Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.qpeyfed.org
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2018

Information about this school

- Dorothy Gardner Nursery School is part of the Queen's Park Early Years Federation, which includes Mary Paterson Nursery School and Queen's Park Children's Centre.
- A new interim executive headteacher and most leaders at the school were appointed after the previous inspection.
- The school operates a fully integrated day, with two-, three- and four-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders. The lead inspector had a remote meeting with members of the governing body and met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked in detail at the quality of education. Inspectors focused on how the school met the requirements of the early years foundation stage curriculum. They focused in particular on literacy (including reading), mathematics, understanding the world and physical development. Inspectors also considered the school's work in other areas of learning.
- Inspectors met with curriculum leaders, teachers and other adults. They visited a wide range of activities across the nursery.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, children's personal development, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online Ofsted Parent View survey, including the free-text comments, as well as responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Noeman Anwar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Simon Jackson

Ofsted Inspector

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