

Pathways Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	117137
Inspection date	19 March 2008
Inspector	Heather Morgan
Setting Address	Pathways Nursery, 194 Peverell Park Road, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 4QE
Telephone number	01752 700164
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Registered person	Vicki Cross
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Pathways Day Nursery is a private family run nursery, which first opened in 1991. It is situated on the ground floor of a large house near to Central Park in Plymouth. Children attend from the surrounding area. They have access to two play rooms, a sensory room and conservatory, as well as a fully enclosed outdoor play space. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year.

The nursery is registered to provide full day care for a maximum of 16 children aged from two to under eight years. There are currently 28 children on roll, 11 of whom receive funding for nursery education. The children's hours of attendance vary to suit the working hours of their parents. The nursery currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

Including the proprietor, there are three members of staff working with the children, all of whom hold relevant qualifications. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are supported well in developing healthy eating habits. They are offered very nutritious snacks during the session and enjoy eating different fruits and vegetables, toast and breadsticks or sunflower and pumpkin seeds. They have a drink of milk or juice with their snack and can also help themselves to additional drinks throughout the day to keep themselves well hydrated. At lunch time they enjoy healthy packed lunches, which have been stored in the fridge to keep perishable items fresh.

Children's good health is promoted through the implementation of a range of procedures to maintain good levels of hygiene. The premises are kept clean and special attention is paid to maintaining the cleanliness of key areas such as the kitchen, toilet and nappy changing station. Children learn the importance of washing their hands carefully before eating and after using the toilet. They use liquid soap and an air dryer to limit the risk of cross infection. Parents receive clear information about the importance of keeping the children at home when they have an infectious illness.

Children are well cared for in the event of an accident or injury because all members of staff maintain current first aid certificates. There is a well stocked first aid kit and staff keep clear records of any injuries. These records, along with detailed records of any medication administered, are shared with and signed by parents to promote children's continuity of care.

Children's emotional well-being is supported well as they are cared for by a consistent team of familiar adults. They have regular opportunities throughout the day to enjoy individual attention as they listen to stories or play alongside their familiar carers. Children are able to rest or enjoy quiet times during the day and sometimes bring a favourite comforter from home.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure within the nursery because staff regularly check the premises and the equipment in order to identify any potential hazards. Their play environment is attractive and well equipped with good quality resources. Staff monitor the environment throughout the day to ensure that safety controls are in place. For example, electric sockets are covered, cleaning fluids are kept out of children's reach and the kitchen door is kept closed when not in use. Staff promptly mop up spills and sweep the floor after mealtimes to reduce the risk of slipping. Entry and exit points are secure and managed effectively by staff to ensure that children cannot leave unsupervised and that the premises cannot be accessed by unauthorised persons.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe as they discuss how to use equipment such as the slide appropriately, or consider the consequences of leaving toys on the floor and running on slippery surfaces. They regularly practise their fire drill to ensure they can evacuate the building quickly and safely in the event of an emergency. Children can access resources safely as they are all stored at a low level in clearly labelled containers. They are well supervised as they play, particularly when they are learning to use tools such as scissors with increasing confidence and safety.

Children's welfare is given high priority as staff have a good awareness of child protection issues and a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. There are many reference documents available to support them in recording and referring information in the event of any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages arrive happily at the nursery and enthusiastically choose from the wide range of available resources. Younger children are supported well in making appropriate choices and play experiences are carefully planned to provide opportunities to support their progress and development. For example, they participate in small group activities that help develop their communication skills and have many opportunities to listen to stories. Visual prompts, such as puppets, help to sustain their interest at story time. The spacious role play area provides young children with good opportunities to begin exploring real life experiences as they begin to play with other children and use toys and resources to represent familiar objects. They have many opportunities to explore a wide range of materials, both natural and man made, using all their senses. They enjoy touching and feeling different textures, listening to and making sounds with musical instruments and watching the effects created by a range of light sources.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn through play. They plan a wide range of play experiences that promote children's progress in each of the six areas of learning. The play environment is well organised to enable children to select resources and initiate their own play. They are also encouraged to participate in adult-led activities with carefully planned learning objectives. However, adult-led activities are offered at specific times and sometimes interrupt children's spontaneous play. The activities are offered for limited times, which sometimes results in children moving on to another activity before they have completed the first one to their satisfaction. Staff observe the children as they access all available activities and carefully evaluate the learning experiences. They keep records of children's achievements and use this information to influence the planning of future activities. However, when identifying individual next steps for each child, they do not always build on what the children know and can do. Nevertheless, staff know the children very well and interact sensitively with their play to support and extend their learning.

Children have very positive dispositions towards learning. They are able to initiate their own play and link up with others to extend their activities. For example, they use role play and small world equipment to develop imaginative stories and work together to solve problems, such as finding out how to operate electronic toys. Children enjoy listening to stories and talking about familiar characters. They enthusiastically join in with singing songs and rhymes and are developing their communication skills as they are encouraged to talk to others during small group times. Children are becoming confident with numbers and often use their developing skills to count objects during spontaneous play and daily routines. They are able to identify different shapes and sort objects by different categories. Children have a fascination with their environment and features of the natural world. They enjoy planting and growing seeds, caring for their pet snails and stick insects and exploring natural materials, such as sand and water. Children have many opportunities to express their ideas and feelings using a range of different resources. They create colourful paintings, complex collages and three-dimensional models. Their artwork is highly valued by the staff, who create lively displays of the children's work.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and settle quickly in the familiar environment of the nursery. Their individual needs are met well as staff liaise closely with parents and keep clear information records which are regularly updated. Children with specific needs are supported well through effective communication with other professionals and with parents to ensure they are working towards achievable targets. Children learning English as an additional language are supported in developing their communication skills through the use of clear instructions and visual prompts.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their behaviour is good as they are learning the importance of sharing resources and taking turns in order to support harmonious play. They respond well to the regular praise and encouragement they receive from staff. Children make good friends with one another and enjoy playing together. They have opportunities to learn about different cultures and celebrations, which they explore through themed activities.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. They are well informed about the activities of the group and about their children's learning. They are able to access information through newsletters, informal discussions and reviewing their children's assessment records. Informative notice boards provide specific information about the activities their children have enjoyed each day and this enables them to extend conversations and play experiences at home, which has a positive impact on their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are cared for by a consistent team of qualified staff. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable persons. All members of staff access additional training to support their professional development.

Daily routines are generally well organised to provide opportunities for children to access a range of play opportunities that promote their progress and development. They are able to play indoors and outdoors, initiate their own play as well as participate in adult-led activities and also to rest or enjoy quiet times during the day. However, sometimes when they are all grouped together in one place their play experiences are limited by a lack of space, or the individual needs of quieter children are overlooked.

All regulatory documentation is in place and well organised. A range of additional policies and procedures are in place and used to underpin good practice and promote positive outcomes for children. However, these do not always fully reflect the practice of the setting.

Leadership and management are good. The proprietor works closely with her team of staff and together they reflect on their practice and evaluate planned activities in order to identify whether or not learning objectives have been met. Long term planning documentation is used to ensure that children access a broad and balanced curriculum and that their play experiences support their progress along the stepping stones. All staff have a strong commitment to improvement. They welcome advice and input from other professionals and regularly access training. Staff enthusiastically implement new ideas to improve delivery of the nursery education curriculum and promote positive outcomes for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the staff have accessed specific training to support them in developing appropriate activities for children under three years. They now use the Birth to three matters framework effectively to plan and deliver play experiences that support younger children's progress and development. The child protection statement has been amended to include additional regulatory information, although it requires further clarity to ensure that all staff and parents are fully aware of the procedures in place to support children's welfare.

Delivery of the nursery education curriculum has been continually reviewed and improved since the last inspection. Activity plans now clearly identify how play experiences are adapted to support the needs of all children in making good progress in all areas of the curriculum.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider, or Ofsted, to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that all regulatory documentation is up to date and fully reflects current practice; pay particular attention to procedures to be followed in the event of a child not being collected and allegations being made against a member of staff
- ensure that daily routines are always managed effectively to support children's individual needs, make good use of available space and do not interrupt children's learning experiences (also applies to nursery education)

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that individual children's next steps for learning build on what they already know and can do

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk