

Pathways Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	218468
Inspection date	05/04/2011
Inspector	Janet Keeling

Setting address	Pathways Childcare Centre, Lid Lane, Cheadle, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST10 1QA
Telephone number	01538756860
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

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*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Pathways Childcare Centre opened in 1996. The setting is run by a board of trustees and operates from facilities at Bishop Rawle Primary School in the village of Cheadle, Staffordshire. The setting provides pre-school and out of school care. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area and to the school playground. The setting serves children and families from the local and surrounding areas.

The setting is open Monday to Friday from 7am to 5.30pm all year round. A maximum of 44 children from birth to eight years may attend the setting at any one time. Currently there are 62 children on roll, of whom 36 are within the early years age group and 26 are aged five to eight years. Children attend for a variety of the sessions on offer. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. It is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are seven members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, six hold National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 3 and one holds NVQ at level 2. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and kept safe at this very welcoming setting. They make good progress towards the early learning goals through a varied and interesting range of activities which fully support their interests and learning needs. Staff are caring, work well as a team and strive to offer an inclusive service where all children are valued as individuals. Effective partnerships with parents and other agencies have been established, ensuring continuity of care for all children. Hygiene measures are largely effective and thorough. The setting is led and managed by a dedicated and enthusiastic manager who demonstrates a positive attitude and commitment towards sustained and continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve opportunities for children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded effectively. Staff are competent, demonstrate a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and have a good understanding of child protection procedures. They know who to contact should they be concerned about a child in their care. There are effective recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable adults. Staff routinely verify the identity of all visitors to the setting and are vigilant about the safe arrival and collection of children. Written fire procedures are in place and staff ensure that children engage in emergency evacuation procedures. Risk assessments are completed and cover all aspects of the indoor and outdoor learning environment and outings. All required documentation is in place and well maintained. The deployment of resources is good; for example, staff are successfully deployed to support the children's learning and welfare. The indoor environments are well organised with clearly identified learning areas. However, children have limited opportunities to move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments to access all the activities on offer.

Staff are positive role models, work well as a team and are fully aware of children's individual needs and interests. Regular meetings provide valuable opportunities for staff to discuss children's interests, share good practice and use information gained to inform future planning. All staff hold an early years qualification, engage in yearly appraisals and are encouraged to enhance their own professional development through ongoing training. All staff demonstrate a good commitment to working with external agencies to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff strive to improve their practice through the effective use of their self-evaluation system and feedback from parent questionnaires. Recommendations made at the previous inspection have also been addressed. Staff work successfully in partnership with other early years settings and the host school, and have developed positive links with the foundation stage teacher. Consequently, this has a positive impact on the children's future needs as many of the children move on to attend the school where they will see familiar adults and recognise their new learning environment.

Partnerships with parents and carers are good. Parents speak highly of the setting and comment that they find the staff approachable, caring and very supportive. A parent's notice board ensures that parents and carers have access to information about the running of the group. In addition, staff use a white board each day to record the activities and also use digital photograph frames in each playroom which record children's play. The daily exchange of information ensures that children's changing needs are consistently met, particularly for those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Parents are also encouraged to share their children's achievements at home by contributing to the 'Apple Tree' achievements board. Children undoubtedly benefit from the positive relationships that have been established between their parents and the staff.

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

Children are familiar with the learning environment, settle quickly on arrival and are eager to learn. They have many opportunities to make choices about their own play and learning as they freely access a range of interesting and stimulating activities. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play that result in children being active learners. Children interact very positively with their peers and are keen to share their ideas with their friends and staff. All children are valued and treated with equal concern, with any specific requirements being met sensitively through discussion with parents and other professionals. Staff observe children and record information on a daily basis. This information is evaluated and used effectively to inform future planning. All children have 'learning story folders', which contain both photographic and written information of their learning, achievements and records of their own work. These folders are shared with parents during parents' evenings and are available for them to see at any time.

Children of all ages engage in play situations, have fun and enjoy the company of their peer groups. They are cared for in a calm and welcoming environment where they can actively explore their surroundings with curiosity and interest. They enjoy a good range of first hand learning experiences, and children demonstrate excitement during cooking activities. They take turns to mix the butter and flour, carefully pour liquid into the bowl and then add cheese. They mix the ingredients together and talk about the colour and texture of the dough. They describe it as 'sticky and gooey' and 'soft and white'. Children are developing a love for books as they enjoy story time and freely access a range of picture books which they enjoy looking at with their friends. Staff help younger children develop their communication skills with positive interactions at their level, using picture books and by singing their favourite action rhymes and songs. Older children learn to recognise their own names as they self-register at each session and also have many opportunities to develop their mark making skills.

Children's creativity is fully supported through a good range of role play equipment, construction toys and access to a wide range of media, such as paint, water, sand, dough and chinks. The children enjoy playing in the sand pit and chuckle with delight when the sand trickles through their fingers. They make patterns in it with toy cars and look in amazement at the size of each other's hand prints in the sand. Their physical development is supported very well as they confidently pedal bikes, throw and kick balls and have fun on the seesaw. Children have good opportunities to explore their local community as they regularly visit the lending library and the toy library at the local Children's Centre.

Children are happy and settled, displaying confidence and self-esteem. They behave well, responding positively to the boundaries set, such as helping to tidy up. Gentle reminders from staff help children develop a sense of right and wrong. They are encouraged to share, take turns and be kind to each other. They are beginning to develop an understanding of the wider world through access to resources that are representative of diversity and by celebrating cultural festivals throughout the year. Staff encourage children to keep themselves safe as they

discuss the appropriate use of equipment and engage in regular emergency evacuation procedures. Most hygiene procedures minimise the risk of cross infection, however, in the room used by children under two years old, the manager is currently looking at ways to minimise the risk of cross infection with regards to the wearing of outdoor shoes in the playroom. Healthy lifestyles are supported well as children access healthy snacks each day. They are also able to select a healthy cooked lunch, which is freshly prepared by the cook in the main school kitchen. Drinking water is also made available throughout the session, ensuring children remain hydrated. Children demonstrate that they are developing good skills that will help and support them in 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

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
---	-----

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
--	-----