

Pathways Childcare

Pathways Childcare Centre, Lid Lane, Cheadle, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST10 1QA

Inspection date	25/03/2014
Previous inspection date	05/04/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Teaching is good because staff have a secure understanding of children's capabilities. This enables them to plan a wide range of activities and continuous provision. As a result, children are confident and motivated learners, who make good progress in their learning and development.
- Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place, implemented by staff and thoroughly monitored by management. This ensures that the health, safety and well-being of children is extremely well-promoted at all times.
- Management and staff aspire to continuously improve the quality of the provision. This includes ensuring that staff participate in regular vocational training to enhance their knowledge and understanding of their practice. Children benefit as staff remain enthusiastic in their duties and interactions.
- Partnerships with parents are well-established through frequent information sharing of children's ongoing achievements and initiatives to support home learning. This ensures that children's unique care and learning needs are well-promoted by all those involved.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to enhance opportunities for children to be more spontaneously creative.
- There is scope to enhance the already good reflective practice to include peer on peer observations to enhance and extend the existing good standard of teaching.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed mealtimes and activities and interactions between staff and children, in the two playrooms and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation of an adult-led activity with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision and spoke with staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation and a range of policies and procedures.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and improvement plans.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and from information included in the setting's own parent survey.

Inspector

Sharon Lea

Full report

Information about the setting

Pathways Childcare was registered in 1996 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in premises at Bishop Rawle Primary School in the Cheadle area of Staffordshire and is managed by a board of trustees. The setting serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from two rooms, in separate buildings on the school site. Access to the baby room is via stairs. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play and additional playground use. The setting employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2 and 3. Several members of the board of trustees hold Qualified Teacher Status. The setting opens Monday to Friday, all year round. Sessions are from 7am until 5.30pm, which include before and after school care facilities. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 55 children attending, 35 of whom are in the early years age group. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance opportunities for children to explore their creative skills in more spontaneous experiences
- extend the programme of peer observations to enable staff to review and reflect on the quality of their own and other's teaching, to enhance and extend the existing good standard of teaching.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The quality of staff's teaching is good, ensuring that children make very good progress in all areas of their learning and development. This is because staff get to know children well through regular observations, which identify their skills and potential next steps in their learning and development. They use this information alongside their thorough knowledge and understanding of how children learn to plan a wide range of continuous provision opportunities and adult-initiated activities, both indoors and outdoors. These opportunities are extended to incorporate children's interests, such as using dinosaurs to develop counting, sorting and colour identification. Staff are also skilled in being able to identify when to leave children to become deeply absorbed in their play or when it is appropriate to intervene, in order to develop learning further. For example, when children become

interested in a set of different coloured wooden numbers, staff name these and identify the colours, then encourage children to find a specific colour or number to test out their understanding. This supports their developing mathematical development. Babies and toddlers have opportunities to freely explore a wide range of sensory resources, such as sand. Staff know that these opportunities enable babies to use all of their senses to learn about textures and how to handle this and do not intervene unless children need this. In contrast, while older children have plenty of opportunities for free exploration, they experience more of a balance of adult-directed activities. For example, they participate in regular group activities where they learn to identify letters and the sounds they make, teaching them skills which are built upon each day. This supports them to develop skills needed for the next stage of their learning, such as school. Consequently, children of all ages make good progress in their learning and development.

Staff plan plenty of activities in the outdoor spaces, which effectively promotes children's physical development so that they make strong progress. For example, they enjoy climbing on apparatus, using wheeled toys, making marks and digging in the mud kitchen. As children are able to play outdoors at all times, staff are mindful that this environment needs to meet all of their learning needs and support those children who learn better through being physically active. Therefore, they introduce large scale opportunities, such as riding bicycles and scooters through paint, promoting children to make marks in a way which is meaningful to their developmental needs. Opportunities to develop their physical skills are further enhanced through weekly visits to a local soft play centre and fortnightly sports sessions from a sports teacher. These sessions incorporate fun ways of moving on a large scale and other skills, including the ability to listen and follow instructions, such as when to move faster, slower and when to stop. Children's understanding of diversity and difference is promoted as they celebrate festivals and special events from around the world. They access resources that reflect positive images of people from different cultures and with physical disabilities. This ensures that children learn to value aspects of their own lives and the diverse society in which they live. Children with English as an additional language are supported through parents providing key words in their home language to staff. In addition, a translator pen is utilised to translate stories and other written information. This enables staff to understand and communicate with the child regarding their initial needs, aiding them to settle into the setting and feel welcome. Children's communication and language development is very well supported by staff throughout the day. Babies and children of all ages enjoy sharing picture books and stories with staff and engage happily with songs and action rhymes. Staff model language well, speaking clearly and repeating words to support younger children in their language development. Older children are continually engaged in conversation by staff, who listen to their responses and ask open-ended questions to further their thinking. Staff provide a print rich environment where resources and displays are labelled with pictures and words. Older children are encouraged to write their names and resources for writing and mark making are evident in all rooms to enable children to develop their early writing skills. Children's interest in books is supported through fortnightly visits to the local library where children can choose books which they can then share at home with their parents. This supports children's developing literacy skills in readiness for the next stage in their learning, such as school. However, there is scope to further enhance the opportunities for children to be more spontaneously creative.

The setting is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers and these relationships are well-established. Staff understand the importance of developing these positive relationships in order to promote consistency of support with regards to children's care, learning and development. Parents share detailed information on entry to the setting, regarding their child's personality, skills and development with their child's key person. This enables the needs of the child to be met from the outset and provides a more accurate assessment of children's starting points. Parents are encouraged to share their hopes and wishes for their child while at setting through recording these on a cut-out apple to add to the 'wishing tree'. Daily diaries are in place for all children who are under two years, sharing with parents their child's care routines, such as nappy changes, food and fluid intake and the activities that they have been engaged in. For children over two years, staff provide daily verbal feedback regarding the child's day, new skills they have learnt and any significant activities they have enjoyed. Parents are encouraged to contribute information about their child's learning at home through the 'sharing achievements' boards. These are shared with children during circle times to celebrate these achievements with the whole group. Summaries of each child's learning and development progress are shared termly with parents and thorough progress checks at age two are in place to complete with parents when appropriate. This ensures that children's needs are continually assessed and planned for and that children who require additional support receive this at the earliest opportunity. Learning links between home and the setting are promoted through 'Jessica bear', who shares children's home experiences which are recorded in her journal to discuss with all children. Parents are invited to attend activity days where they can experience a wide range of activities with their children and learn about the learning intentions and benefits of these to their children.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The emotional security of children is given an exceptionally high priority by all staff, who take time to get to know each child and their unique needs. There is an excellent and flexible settling-in procedure in place, providing as many induction visits as each individual child needs, which supports children and their parents in a smooth transition into the setting. This, alongside the excellent key person system in place, ensures that children quickly and happily settle, forming strong attachments and superb relationships with staff and other children. Parents comment that they are very happy with the standard of care that their child receives and the level of their child's happiness, many of them asking to go to the setting on days they are not due to attend. Parents share information with staff about their child's care needs, interests and achievements on entry to the setting. This enables staff to appropriately support the child's needs and provide for their interests from the outset. As a result, children have strong and secure emotional attachments with staff. This enables them to enjoy their time and make excellent progress in all areas of their development and learning, in a safe and secure environment. Similarly, transitions between rooms within the setting and on to school are equally well supported, in partnership with parents and the new key person or teacher. This ensures that children's needs are consistently promoted and are excellently supported.

Children of all ages develop their independence in self-help skills extremely well. This is because staff know children exceedingly well and recognise when they are ready to take responsibility, such as managing their own toileting and hygiene needs or putting on their own coats for outdoor play. Children are encouraged to have a 'can do' attitude by staff, who promote children to try something themselves before they intervene with support. This helps children to develop positive attitudes, which extends their belief in their own abilities and enhances their self-esteem. Toddlers and older children are encouraged to serve their own meals and pour their own drinks. They do this very competently because staff provide serving implements which are an appropriate size and small jugs for gravy or water, which are manageable for small hands. Children put on their own coats and change their footwear from shoes to wellington boots for outdoor play, putting these on the correct feet first time. An understanding of the importance of hygiene is fostered from an early age, toddlers being aware of when their hands need washing, such as before they eat and older children sharing their knowledge that hand washing removes the germs from their hands. It is evident that because children have daily opportunities to manage these skills for themselves, they learn to do these extremely well, enhancing their sense of achievement. Therefore, they develop valuable skills which will benefit them throughout life. Staff create a very inspiring and enabling learning environment for all ages. High-quality toys and equipment are in good order and easy to find. All areas of the premises are clean, safe and secure with staff attentive in promoting a safe environment. The learning environment enables children of all ages to independently select resources of their choice, supporting them to extend their play and their developing imagination. Displays celebrate children's creativity and the many photographs in their learning journeys showing them engaged in activities, celebrate the skills they have used and the learning gained from these experiences. Positive behaviour is highly evident and children happily play together in this calm and caring environment. This is because staff understand the importance of ensuring that children are stimulated and actively engaged in play to prevent them from becoming bored and support children in working together. Children are reminded about respecting others through using their listening ears, kind hands, sharing and taking turns and these are reinforced throughout the sessions. Staff provide exceptional role models in being kind and respectful to one another and actively encourage children to be sensitive towards others. This results in children being polite and respectful and confident to communicate their ideas with others. These personal skills in managing their emotions and developing positive relationships support children extremely well towards the next stage of their learning, such as school.

Children of all ages enjoy daily fresh air and exercise, developing physical skills and confidence as they enthusiastically play in the well-equipped outdoor area in all weathers. There are separate areas for the younger and older children, enabling the provision of resources to meet their different levels of physical skills and promote their safety. Older children have continual access to outdoors, giving them freedom of choice and supporting children who learn better through active, physical play to benefit from this. Staff supervise children in using a wide range of resources, some of which they are able to move around, using these to construct imaginative structures and obstacle courses. For example, children use offcuts of wood to build a small house. As the pieces are different shapes and sizes, they have to work out which ones will fit together and where they should be placed. This supports them in developing a number of skills, including physical dexterity, working together as a group and mathematical understanding of shape, space and measure. A

mud kitchen, with a range of resources, provides children with opportunities to develop their physical skills and their imaginations, making their own creations, which they enhance with additional materials, such as leaves and twigs. Drainpipes attached to fences enable children to learn about forces, from how fast the different vehicles travel through these. Children are reminded about how to hold and carry these resources safely, so that they do not hurt themselves or others. Awareness of how to keep themselves safe is also promoted during regular outings to the local soft play centre and library. Children wear high visibility jackets on outings and staff use a special safety harness to ensure that children stay together and can be safely supervised. Through these opportunities, children are made aware of how to cross roads safely and in the soft play centre they have opportunities to take risks safely, under adult supervision, supporting them in understanding how to keep themselves safe. Staff support children well in understanding the importance of a healthy diet through discussions about healthy food choices. Parents have the option of providing their child with a packed lunch, which staff have developed guidance for on healthy contents, or a hot meal provided by the on-site school kitchen. Children who have hot meals are able to choose from the selection available, which include lots of healthy options, such as baked potatoes and fresh vegetables. As children self-serve their meals, this enables them to have portions according to their appetites and individual preferences and also supports them to try other foods which they may not have tasted before. This means that there is usually something for all children to enjoy. An ample supply of fresh fruit is also available to children in the room at all times, if they become hungry. Snacks are provided mid-morning and mid-afternoon, which means that children are well-nourished, maintaining their energy levels throughout the day. Staff monitor children's food and drink intake and share with parents verbally or through daily diaries what their child has eaten or drunk.

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

The manager has a good understanding of her roles and responsibilities in ensuring that the setting meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Comprehensive policies and procedures, risk assessments and safety measures are all in place, implemented by staff and monitored by management. These help to ensure that all areas of the setting, both indoors and outdoors, are free from hazards and that resources and equipment are safe and age-appropriate for children in each of the different age rooms. Management ensure that accurate staffing ratios are met, in order that children are appropriately supervised at all times, keeping them safe from harm. Policies and procedures are shared with parents when starting in the setting and are available in group rooms at all times. In addition, some of the main policies, such as safeguarding and the complaints procedure are displayed on noticeboards for parent's continual reference. Staff's knowledge of the safeguarding procedures is strong through regular training and the manager frequently testing their knowledge. Staff have a clear understanding of their role and duty to report any concerns they may have about children in their care. The written safeguarding policy contains detailed information of the procedures to follow should any concerns about a child be identified and information is evident throughout the setting to support staff in making a referral to the appropriate

agencies. Safeguarding measures include the procedure to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff and the use of mobile telephones in the setting. Staff telephones are locked away, with access limited at lunch breaks in a room away from children. Similar procedures are in place for visitors and parents are requested not to use their telephones within the setting when dropping off or collecting their children. Thorough recruitment procedures are in place to ensure that new staff are suitably qualified and vetted. On appointment, a detailed induction process is carried out, supporting new staff to settle into the setting and enabling them to fully understand their roles and responsibilities. All of these measures in place ensure that effective steps are taken to minimise risks and to keep children safe, healthy and secure.

Staff benefit from established supervision and appraisal processes, which are used to identify support, highlight training and meet their development needs. There is scope, however, to support staff development further through the introduction of peer observations, to enable staff to review and reflect on the quality of their own and other's teaching. Staff receive mandatory training in safeguarding and first aid and attend additional courses provided by the local authority, when these are available. It is evident that staff training has a very positive impact upon the setting as staff demonstrate how they have put ideas they have gained into practice. For example, the outdoor area has been enhanced with greater learning opportunities. Activity bags for parents to use with their children at home are currently under development, following ideas gained from different training courses. The manager is currently developing a method of evaluating new developments which are put into place, in order to measure the impact these have upon children's learning and well-being. Evaluation of the setting's strengths and areas for development is ongoing and involves contributions from staff, parents, children and the board of trustees. Parents can share their opinions verbally at any time, through a suggestion box in the entrance hall and annual questionnaires. An ongoing improvement plan is in place, which all staff contribute to in their aspiration to continuously improve the quality of the provision. This reflects the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff team to provide the best possible provision for children they care for. Systems are in place to monitor children's progress through their learning journeys and the planning in place to support their next steps in learning. This means that management are able to identify those who are making good progress and that any gaps in learning or the provision can be addressed swiftly. The management team are highly involved within the childcare rooms as they are also room leaders, engaging in play with children, modelling good practice to staff and ensuring that the environment and the planning in place are supporting children to make the best possible progress in their learning and development.

Partnerships with parents are well-established, enabling staff and parents to work together to support the care and learning needs of children throughout their time in the setting. Parents are happy with the level of care that their children receive and the progress they are making in their learning and development. Daily written and verbal information is shared with parents of babies and toddlers. In the older children's room, verbal information is shared each day. This ensures that a two-way flow of information is encouraged between parents and staff on a daily basis, keeping everyone informed and up to date about children's needs. Parents receive regular newsletters, a range of information through noticeboards and termly updates on their children's progress. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the life of the setting through attending activity days,

such as mothers or fathers days. Effective partnerships with external agencies and local schools are also well-established and contribute securely to meeting children's needs. Staff work well with the area special educational needs coordinator and speech and language therapists to support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers are invited to meet those children who will shortly be transferring to school, enabling information to be shared about individual children's personalities and needs. In addition, staff seek the expertise of teachers at the on-site school to support the educational needs of children who are exceeding the early learning goals, in order to ensure that their continued learning towards key stage one is promoted.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	218468
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	965489
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	44
Number of children on roll	55
Name of provider	Pathways Childcare Centre Committee
Date of previous inspection	05/04/2011
Telephone number	01538756860

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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