EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Pathways Childcare Ltd.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>The Mall</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maryborough Woods</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Douglas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Cork</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>17CC0603</td>
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Date of Inspection: 21-11-2018
WHAT IS AN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION?

The Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI) model is used to provide evaluative information, advice and support in relation to education provision in a pre-school setting participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. These inspections affirm good practice and advise actions, where appropriate, to aid the further development of education provision in the setting.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector(s) evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Quality of the context to support children’s learning and development
2. Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development
3. Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements
4. Quality of management and leadership for learning

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate’s quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the setting’s provision in each area.
Early Years Education Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>21-11-2018</th>
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| Inspection activities undertaken | Interaction with children  
Observation of interactions during a session  
Review of relevant documents  
Feedback to owner and practitioners |

**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Pathways Childcare is an urban, privately owned early years setting. Five practitioners provide early year’s education for thirty-nine children in three separate rooms during the morning Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) sessions. Thirty-four children attended on the day of the inspection, nineteen in one room, eight in the second room and seven in the third room. Some children stay for full day care. The three room leaders and the manager attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, and the response submitted on behalf of the setting can be found in the appendix of this report.

**AREA 1**

**QUALITY OF CONTEXT TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

- The quality of the context to support the children’s learning and development is very good.
- A very caring ethos, with a warm, welcoming atmosphere is prevalent. Practitioners show sensitivity, warmth and have a positive regard for the children and their families.
- Snack time is utilised very well as a social occasion and an opportunity to promote well-being and a healthy lifestyle. Songs and rhymes are used to create a calm mealtime atmosphere. Practitioners and children sit, eat and chat together. This supports children’s language acquisition and establishes good habits for life.
- The daily routine consists of too many transitions between activities; for the children, this is not conducive to in-depth engagement in play.
- Tidy-up times are utilised as positive learning experiences, fostering early mathematical experiences, such as sorting, pairing, matching, sequencing and organising. Before going to wash their hands and before going outside, the children are required to assemble and wait in lines; they could be afforded more autonomy and agency at these times.
- Relationships are responsive, respectful and reciprocal. Practitioners use praise and encouragement in a meaningful way, with a focus on affirming children’s learning dispositions and their personal and social skills.
- The children’s sense of identity and belonging is nurtured very effectively. Diversity is recognised, valued and affirmed within an inclusive learning environment. Some good connections are made with people from the community, such as the neighbouring beautician, the post man, the grass cutter and the Garda. Regular walks in the neighbourhood support this.

**Actions advised**

- Practitioners are advised to adjust the daily routine slightly, so that the children are enabled to engage in play in a more in-depth manner. Practitioners could offer Montessori work and arts and craft activities parallel to indoor free-play time. This will create more time for outdoor play at the end of the morning and will result in fewer transitions between activities.
- Transitions between activities need to be reviewed so that the children have more agency and autonomy at these times. Instead of requiring the children to assemble and wait in lines, the children could, for example, be enabled to independently decide to go and wash their hands after they have finished their work and after tidying up, or go straight outside once they are dressed for the outdoor environment.
AREA 2
QUALITY OF PROCESSES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The quality of the processes to support the children’s learning and development is very good.
- Provision is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. Practitioners show knowledge, understanding and confidence in the development and implementation of an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum.
- Various assessment approaches are used to gather information about children’s learning and development. The outcomes are regularly shared with the families. Information documented about children’s learning reflects their achievements and development with due regard for their individual interests, needs, learning dispositions, approaches and backgrounds. These outcomes inform curriculum planning.
- The children are clearly viewed as competent and confident learners. They have agency and autonomy in choosing and organising their learning activities.
- Interaction strategies and methodologies, such as active listening, prompting and asking open-ended questions are used effectively to facilitate a broad variety of learning experiences.
- One of the indoor learning environments is particularly well maintained and purposefully structured to stimulate, support, consolidate and extend children’s learning and development. The other two indoor rooms are less effective in this regard; they lack cosiness and a good, meaningful structure.
- The children have daily access to an outdoor play area, which offers a variety of play options and physical activity; the play value of this environment could be enhanced. Children and practitioners currently do not keep full rain gear in the setting.
- Child initiated/led, active and interactive free play is clearly recognised and utilised as the main medium through which the children learn and develop.
- Children’s emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills are fostered effectively and very naturally during free play and through the purposeful use of songs and rhymes throughout the day. Games, stories, books and a wide range of mark-making opportunities further assist to instil a love for learning.

Actions advised
- It is advised that the curriculum plans be displayed for parents so that they can be made aware of, and develop an understanding of their child’s learning and development activities.
- Practitioners and management are advised to engage with the ‘Environment’ pillar of the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide, and in particular to complete the environmental audit. The setting needs to focus on self-evaluation and on gathering ideas to restructure the environments and raise the play value of these rooms and the outdoor area. Access to rain gear for adults and children would be a further support.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is excellent.
- The children demonstrate great enjoyment in their activities. They are motivated, interested and engaged and show a positive sense of well-being.
- The children are competent, confident learners. They are developing their personal and social skills through their in-depth engagement in play activities, alone, in pairs and in small groups. This supports the development of their personal and social skills, such as self-regulation, problem solving, conflict resolution, negotiation, co-operation and building relationships.
- The children utilise the rich opportunities afforded to them to communicate their experiences, ideas, and feelings in a variety of ways, both verbal and non-verbal. Mark-making, arts and crafts, role-play, singing, interactive story exploration, imaginative play are just some examples of the opportunities provided to the children.
- The children have some awareness of the natural environment and its features and plants. They engage, explore and experiment in their environment, both indoors and outdoors and use their developing physical skills to manipulate objects and diverse materials.
AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- Effective strategies are in place to promote regular reflection and review of practice. The outcomes of meetings are documented, so they can be shared, acted upon and reviewed.
- An ethos of professionalism, teamwork, collaboration and partnership is evident.
- Currently, the younger children are allocated to two rooms; the room which accommodates a small number of very young children is very large, while the other room is very small and tight. This arrangement could be reviewed, to optimise the benefits of the indoor environment for these children.
- Management and practitioners regularly avail of a broad variety of professional development opportunities.
- Highly effective two-way channels of communication are established between the setting and the families. These include monthly newsletters with an education focus, such as the importance of ‘play’ for children’s learning and development, an informative web-site, an application through which information and photos are shared on a daily basis, an informative parental handbook; notice boards and daily informal chats.
- Transitions into and from the setting are managed sensitively and effectively.

Action advised
- Management in collaboration with the practitioners is advised to review and improve the use, layout and structure of the two rooms used for the younger children. The potential to combine the two groups of younger children in the bigger room could also be explored.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to continue to implement the actions advised above is excellent.
### Summary of Overall Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.</td>
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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

Overall, we were very pleased with the outcome of the report. We welcome any feedback for us to be able to enhance the children's experiences here. We enjoyed the experience and welcomed the positive comments the inspector had about our setting and the children's experiences. Our staff work extremely hard and this report highlights the good work here. Thank you for your feedback and most if not all the recommendations are in place since the inspection.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

Area 1

We have adjusted the daily routine and changed it to include 1.5 hours Free Play where we include Arts, Crafts and Montessori work during this time, snack time and an hour Outdoor Play.

We reviewed our transitions and with the new routine we have allowed the children to have more agency and autonomy during the session in regards to hand washing/getting ready to go outside.

Area 2

The curriculum plans are now on display on the doors for parents. This has added a lot more parental involvement and promotes discussion.

We have done the ‘Environmental Audit’ and we have changed the layout of the room to make it cosier and it now has meaningful structure. We have also added more resources to enhance the play value of these rooms and the outdoor area.

We have asked parents to provide rain gear and we will ensure all children have ‘all weather’ clothing for September 2019.

Area 4

We have combined the two younger rooms. This has worked extremely well; the children have a lot more space for exploration of play.