EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Jellytots Playschool</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Ashford, Kilcoolishal, Glanmire, County Cork</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09CC0163</td>
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Date of Inspection: 29-11-2019
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>29-11-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Interaction with children</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Review of relevant documents</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Feedback to setting manager and practitioners</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Meeting with setting manager</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>• Meeting with practitioners</strong></td>
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**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Jellytots playschool is an urban, privately owned early years setting. Two practitioners provide early years education and care for a maximum of eight children on a daily basis during the morning session. On the day of the inspection all of the children were present. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report, and the response of the setting will 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 fair.
- The ethos is caring. The practitioners are sensitive and friendly and create a welcoming, warm atmosphere and show a positive regard for the children and their families.
- The current daily routine consists of far too many transitions, which is not conducive to the development of in-depth play engagement. The activities are primarily adult led and directed with very little agency for the children to choose and organise their learning activities or follow their interests and learning dispositions.
- Snack time is utilised as a social occasion, where the children sit at their designated place at a table of four to eat their lunch and communicate with each other. The practitioners sit at a separate table. The practitioners prepare and clean the tables. These practices need to be reviewed.
- The adults do most of the work during tidy-up times and transition times. They sort the children’s conflicts through direct instruction and solve their problems for them. This is not conducive to the children's learning and development. There is great potential to develop the children’s competence in managing and organising their own hygiene and personal care needs.
- The setting and the families celebrate several festivals together during the year. There is no picture representation of the children and their families in the setting. Diversity is not represented in the environment.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to review and change the daily routine. Long, un-interrupted, child initiated/led free play times both indoors and outside need to be provided. Adult-initiated/led arts and craft activities and/or experiments can be offered as optional activities during these times. A short circle time and a short story time can be interwoven, creating a good balance between the long child-led and the short adult-led activity times. This will also reduce the number of transitions.
- Practitioners are advised to create a relaxed, family-type mealtime, during which the children choose where to sit and the adults, as role models of good behaviour and healthy eating, sit, eat and chat with them. To promote their sense of responsibility, the children need to be actively involved in preparing the tables and cleaning and tidying them after the meal.
- The practitioners are advised to create an environment where the children are encouraged and supported to be active agents in choosing and organising their learning activities. In this regard, there is a need to enable the children to manage and organise their own hygiene and personal care needs; and utilise tidy-up times as positive learning and development activities, where the children take leadership. In addition, the practitioners need to explore and develop positive interaction strategies, which enable the children to become self-reliant in solving problems and conflicts. The practitioners need to develop ways to nurture the children’s sense of identity within
the setting more effectively. This could include a family wall display, photos above the coat hooks, a birthday chart with photos. These displays, amongst others also need to be used to explore diversity with the children.

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 fair.
• A broad-based curriculum is documented and implemented. The main focus in the curriculum plan is on academic learning. The practitioners are not familiar with an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum.
• An electronic devise is used to share photos and monthly observations with the families. On a daily basis a group activity photo, with some links to learning is also shared with the families. The main focus is on academic learning or completing table-top tasks, such as puzzles. Commercial workbooks and scrapbooks are also used to show the children’s ability to trace numbers and letters, colour-in, match on paper and other similar activities.
• The overall approach to provision is very adult-led and directed. This is not conducive to supporting the children’s learning and development.
• The indoor and outdoor environments are well maintained and inviting. Both environments, the lovely pre-school room and the outdoor area have charm and great potential to create an interesting, inspiring play environment. The indoor environment is set up with a focus on table-top work, which is not conducive to exploratory, active and interactive play. The outdoor area provides lovely opportunities for manipulative, exploratory play such as sand and water tables. It is divided into several play areas and the children are separated into these areas, which restricts choice and agency.
• The approaches used with regard to nurturing the children’s language, literacy and numeracy skills are focused on academic learning through the use of didactic teaching methods, which are not age or developmentally appropriate. There are no free mark-making opportunities available. All art and craft activities are carried out as whole-group activities. There is a strong focus on didactic teaching of numbers, colours and shapes. This which is not age and developmentally appropriate.

Actions advised
• The practitioners are advised to focus their observations on the children’s individual interests, strengths, abilities and learning dispositions. These observations need to then be used to plan the individual and group curriculum, based on these attributes. The practitioners are advised to work with the ‘Planning and Assessing’ pillar of the on-line Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to familiarise themselves with the development and implementation of an emergent curriculum.
• The play value of both environments needs to be raised. The environments need to be restructured and well resourced to encourage child-initiated/led, exploratory, active and interactive free play. The practitioners are advised to work with the ‘Learning Environment’ and the ‘Play’ pillars of the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide, and in particular to complete the self-evaluation audits.
• To explore language, literacy and numeracy, the practitioners need to utilise teachable moments, related to real-life situations during child-led play. Arts and craft activities need to be offered as optional activities, parallel to free play. A broad range of free mark-making opportunities, such as paper, crayons, scissors, glue, junk-art material; a painting easel with paints, aprons and A3-sized paper needs to be set up during free play periods. Stories need to be interactively explored with the children to extend their own abilities to predict, remember, think and use language. All didactic teaching of academic learning needs to be discontinued.
AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children show some enjoyment and fun, in particular during outdoor play and while engaging in games, and acting out songs at the end of the morning. During these times, they demonstrate positive learning dispositions, such as initiative, resourcefulness and persistence.
- During several of the adult-directed activities and table-top tasks, the majority of the children quickly become bored and disengaged. Choice, agency, making decisions, creativity and natural curiosity are not supported by this adult-directed approach.
- Some short, but lovely interactive play episodes develop during the second outdoor time. During these episodes it is evident that the children are using and developing their personal and social skills, as they require self-regulation, problem-solving, negotiation and co-operation.
- The children are very quiet, well-behaved and compliant. Some verbal and non-verbal communication strategies are used to give and receive information. At news time, the children listen to each other in a highly commendable manner, as they tell their news one-by-one.
- The children utilise several opportunities to develop their physical fitness and their motor skills, such as cycling, dancing, hopping and acting out songs. These opportunities need to be expanded.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to focus on creating space, time and resources for the children to express their feelings, thoughts, ideas, natural curiosity and creativity in a broad range of ways.
- The whole day needs to offer rich opportunities to the children to develop positive learning dispositions such as initiative, self-reliance, self-competence and confidence, resourcefulness and resilience. Equally, opportunities to develop their personal and social skills further through deep engagement in free play need to be provided throughout the day.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The practitioners engage in daily informal reflection talks. There are no formal team meetings. The outcome of reflection is not documented.
- The practitioners have not yet used the on-line *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide* as a basis for reviewing and improving practice.
- Some engagement in continuous professional development is evident. A few years ago the ‘Healthy Ireland Smart Start Programme’ was completed.
- Good, effective two-way communication channels between the setting and the families are established. These include monthly newsletters; parent-practitioner meetings once a year or at request; regular sharing of information via electronic media and daily informal chats.
- Family-friendly, gradual settling-in procedures are in place. Families come and visit the setting, and at an open day they are provided with information about the setting.
- Transitions to the primary schools are supported through the use of a transition pack, which focuses on preparing the children for this transition. Some working relationships with the local primary school are established.

Actions advised
- Regular, formal team meetings need to be held, to enable the practitioners to develop practice collaboratively and to ensure that all of their skills and knowledge are utilised.
- The practitioners are advised to collaboratively engage with all the pillars of the on-line *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide*, starting with ‘Curriculum Foundations’ pillar.
- The practitioners are advised to engage in continuous professional development options, such as the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) in the Early Years Programme and courses about the development and implementation of an emergent, play-based curriculum.
## 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>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Good</td>
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### Language used in Early-Years Education 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>
</tr>
<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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*Published March 2020*
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1   Observations on the content of the inspection report

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

Following the inspection, we made the following changes in Area 1:

- On the following Monday, we changed the routine and inputted less transitions and changed the layout of the room.
- We now have circle time and dance time while the children are washing up.
- We extended playtime and now have crafts as part of free play, we offer lots of choice including colouring, cutting, painting, gluing etc.
- We have made a little home corner where the kitchen is and put in a smaller table, and we have put a shelf with lots of baskets full of different things such as tea sets, pizza, ice cream etc.
- We made a construction/small world area, there is a shelf with lots of different construction boxes, the farm and dolls house is also part of this area.
- The children are very independent washing up before snack time. For Safety purposes, a staff member supervises them. The children help wipe down the tables and bring in and out the lunch bags.
- We asked the parents to send in photos and made a family poster for each child.
- We have a Birthday chart up and a photo of each child on their Birthday month.
- We also asked parents to send in photos of any Birthday celebrations with family and friends.
- We have a photo of each child on the coat hooks.
- If there is any disputes between the children over for example a toy, we use a timer to take turns, this has worked a treat, as it is a visual aid for the amount of time.
- In relation to Aistear and Siolta, we are attending an Aistear and Siolta workshop to help us implement these in the required way.
- Our outdoor play has also been extended and the children can choose from a variety of toys including tools, dress up, dinosaurs, duplo, train tracks, large building blocks etc.
• We have recently invested in new sand and water trays which the children can chose to do any time during outdoor time.

• We now have monthly meetings and continue our formal chats at the end of the morning.

• As mentioned earlier, we are attending the Aistear and Siolta workshops and any follow up workshops that are available.

• We also try to attend as many CPD training courses available