EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Busy Bees Playschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Staplestown, Co Carlow</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09CW0044</td>
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Date of Inspection: 11-12-2018
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 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

Date of inspection: 11-12-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
<th>Feedback to owner and full staff team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with the settings Owner/Practitioner and the early years practitioner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation of interactions during the Pre-school session</td>
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<td>Interaction with children</td>
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<td>Review of educational resources and facilities</td>
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<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting with owner/ practitioner, full time early years practitioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time early years practitioner</td>
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CONTEXT OF SETTING

Busy Bees Playschool was established in 1992 and provides a morning sessional pre-school programme for children enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The owner/ practitioner, one early-years practitioner and seven children were present on the day of the evaluation. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report; the setting chose to accept the report without response.

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.
- The setting is long established and very well integrated into the community with many members of the same families attending the pre-school over the last twenty-two years.
- There is a caring, inclusive and very intimate atmosphere in the setting. Very secure and stable relationships have been developed between practitioners, children and families.
- A highly effective open-door policy is in place which supports and encourages positive communication with families. Practitioners take time to engage respectfully with parents and share information with them daily. There is currently no key person system in operation in the setting.
- The practitioners offer children clear and gentle guidance towards positive behaviour. Children’s emotional needs are responded to effectively by the practitioners. Great care is given to acknowledging the children’s feelings and needs.
- A consistent daily routine is in place which allocates time for indoor play periods, outside play, circle time and snack time. An effective balance is provided between child-initiated and practitioner-guided activities.
- Snack times are seen as social occasions where practitioners and children sit and talk together. This promotes well-being and a healthy lifestyle effectively. A helper system is in place, where designated children are responsible for getting the children’s bags, putting out napkins and snacks. This gives the children autonomy and agency in the routine.
- Transitions between parts of the daily routine are clearly announced by the practitioners and typically the practitioners allow activities to overlap.
- The children’s developing sense of identity and belonging is effectively nurtured. This is achieved through conversation, photographic displays of their play and learning activities; and individual scrapbooks containing information about children such as their likes and dislikes.
- The setting regularly invites parents, their extended families and members of the local community into the playroom to spend time and share experiences with children. The staff team display a great knowledge and pride in their local community and often organise short nature walks and an annual trip with the children to locations of local and historic significance.
Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to explore the benefits of implementing a key person system in the service. This will support more formal exchange of documented information about the children’s learning and development with parents. It will also allow parents add comments, thoughts and assessments on their children’s learning experiences to the records.
- The practitioners are advised to reflect on how they could develop a group awareness of and celebration of their local community. Practitioners could, for example, introduce displays that show the local landmarks and use these to create conversations and to share information amongst 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 very good.
- A play-based curriculum, informed by the principles of the Montessori Method of education is used purposefully to inform the programme provided for the children. A clear curriculum statement has been documented which outlines appropriate, broad-based aims for the children’s learning.
- Planning for children’s learning is organised on a long-term, medium-term and short-term basis with clear links to the four themes of Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. The development of an emergent curriculum is in its infancy with practitioners recently making the shift from thematic planning to an emergent curriculum where children’s interests are captured, planned for and supported through the programme. A strong interest in, robots, aeroplanes and farm animals has arisen among several children. Some of the planned learning activities were informed by these interests.
- Regular observations, capturing critical aspects of the children’s learning experiences and their achievements, are undertaken and recorded by the practitioners.
- Interactions of a very high standard are used to support children as active agents in their learning. The practitioners are aware of children’s interests and needs and discuss these with the children.
- The children are engaged and motivated by practitioners in their learning. The practitioners skillfully support, guide and, as needed, redirect children in their play activities and experiences.
- A high value is placed on play as the central medium through which children learn and develop in this setting. There are opportunities to engage in a variety of types of play including sensory play, socio-dramatic play, small-world play and construction play. The practitioners are very aware of their role in play and they effectively facilitate, lead and direct play in order to support the children’s learning and development.
- The indoor environment contains a suitable range of equipment and resources to support construction play, socio-dramatic play, creative play and literacy play. The inclusion of more clearly defined and logically located learning areas and additional of open-ended resources in some of the play areas would further support and stimulate children’s interest, curiosity and engagement in their play. The outdoor environment offers a large space for play and contains equipment and materials to promote sensory exploration. There is good provision to promote the children’s gross motor skills.

Actions advised

- It is advised that practitioners begin to incorporate observed and documented emerging interests into short-term curriculum planning. This will develop an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum. The ‘Short-term curriculum’ template in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will be a valuable resource in this regard. The establishment of a key person system will also support this action.
- The practitioners are advised to continue to develop the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Logically located interest areas need to be developed indoors. More open-ended, real and natural equipment and materials need to better support gross motor play in the outdoor area. Use of the ‘Creating and using the learning environment’ self-evaluation tool in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will support this action.
AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children attending the setting are notably well settled and appear very confident with the practitioners.
- During the child-initiated play times the children were highly engaged and motivated in their self-selected play, and displayed dispositions of independence, perseverance and concentration.
- The children are making choices and decisions in their play and learning. During free play, they chose what to play with, with whom to play and when to change play and learning activities. This was exemplified in one child’s decision to change from making an aeroplane with Lego to joining another child to make a robot together.
- The children really enjoy the songs and rhymes during the practitioner-facilitated large group time. Some children expressed a desire to move their bodies in different ways to the songs. Resources, props and planned strategies to promote more physical movement activities during indoor play periods could be enhanced.
- Many children expressed a strong interest in using the paint and mark-making materials that practitioners made available to them. Some children created very individual, self-expressive pieces. A review of children’s workbooks and wall displays in the setting provided evidence of the children engaging in colouring in and template activities. These are too formal and structured for the children’s current stage of development.
- Very strong friendships are developing and many children demonstrate caring and respectful attitudes towards their peers and to practitioners.
- While working and playing in groups many of the children are capable of turn taking and negotiating. They reach agreements and demonstrate very well developed capacities for self-regulation. Children demonstrate the capacity to think about their previous and future play ideas. The practitioners support them to engage in their play themes over sustained periods of time.

Actions advised
- It is advised that children be provided with daily access to a spacious art and mark-making area stocked with a wider range of materials and tools. Practitioners are advised to support the children in their individual, creative and imaginative use of these materials.
- It is advised that the children be provided with daily opportunities to express their creativity through movement experiences during practitioner-guided large group activities.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- There is a very professional ethos in this service. The owner/practitioner articulates a very clearly developed and passionate commitment to providing a high quality learning experience for children.
- The practitioners work as a very strong and positive team. Roles and responsibilities are shared very equitably and both practitioners take leadership roles at different times during the session.
- The staff engages in informal planning for quality improvement and is aware of the necessity for continuous quality improvement. The introduction of a systematic approach to self-review would greatly support future quality improvements.
- The owner/manager and practitioners display a strong commitment to continuous professional development. The setting is linked with the Carlow County Childcare Committee for support and advice. Practitioners have completed the National Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training and engage with the Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).
- Information about activities and events in the pre-school is shared with parents in a regular newsletter. Information about each child’s progression in learning and development is shared with
parents through informal conversations. The children’s individual portfolios are sent home for parents to review at the end of each term.
• The children’s transition into the service is effectively supported through an open day. A detailed information and welcome pack outlines key policies and procedures in the service. At the time of the inspection, the practitioners did not yet share information with schools. This would enhance the children’s transition to primary education and better support continuity in their learning.

Actions advised
• It is advised that the practitioners establish a system of review, self-assessment and action planning for quality improvement. This needs to be aligned to Aistear and Síolta. The online Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will support this action.
• It is advised that the setting explores strategies to begin to share information about the children’s learning and development with the teachers in the local primary schools. This will support transition.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE
The capacity of the owner / manager and practitioners in the setting to implement the actions advised above is very good, as evidenced by their collective openness to reflecting on practice and their professional engagement during the post-inspection feedback meeting.
### Summary of Overall Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
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### Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>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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