EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Little Dreamers Crèche, Montessori and Preschool</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Carnamuggah Upper</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mountain Top</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Donegal</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09DL0017</td>
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</tbody>
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Date of Inspection: 17-01-2019
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

Date of inspection: 17-01-2019

Inspection activities undertaken:

- Meeting with setting manager
- Meeting with practitioners
- Observation of interactions during two pre-school sessions

- Interaction with children
- Review of relevant documents
- Feedback discussion with setting manager and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Little Dreamers Crèche, Montessori and Pre-school is a privately-owned facility located on the outskirts of Letterkenny, County Donegal. It provides two daily pre-school sessions for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The Irish language is promoted in the morning Naíonra session. On the day of the inspection, there were thirty-two children in total in attendance between the morning and the afternoon sessions, with one leader and three assistants present. The manager, pre-school leader and two assistants attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. 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.
- Practitioners interact in a very warm manner with the children and their parents. They have created a welcoming atmosphere through the strategic arrangement of the children’s photographs and the time provided for caring exchanges upon the children’s arrival into the room.
- Circle-time is utilised as a welcoming activity whereby the children gather in a circle and wait for their peers to arrive. During the inspection, this particular activity did not support active engagement or choice for the children.
- There is a photographic display outlining key activities that occur within the routine to support inclusive practice. There is no daily routine in place outlining the consistent experiences on offer during both the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Snack and meal times are positively valued as social occasions during which the practitioners effectively engage with the children in a relaxed, supportive and kind manner.
- Practitioners have high, positive regard for the children and their families. The book corner is arranged in a wonderfully aesthetic way, highlighting photographs of the children with their families and with transcripts of the children’s voices hanging from natural branches.
- A key person approach is in place in the setting. The designated groups of children are recorded and displayed in the coat area for the parents to observe. Practitioners know the children well and are very responsive to their needs and requests during both sessions.
- Commendable opportunities are provided to promote the children’s sense of identity and belonging. Practitioners arrange many visits throughout the year from family members and professionals in the locality. In addition visits are arranged for the children to various amenities surrounding the pre-school.

Actions advised

- It is advised that practitioners review the activities currently on offer and develop a daily routine. Providing a wider range of experiences that support active choice and engagement for the children in both small and large groups would be beneficial to the outline of the day.
- It is advised that practitioners review the various transitions during the session to minimise the waiting periods between activities and to support positive learning experiences for 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 good.
- Practitioners organise planning on a long, medium and short-term basis for each session. They are developing an emergent approach by noting some of the children’s interests and learning needs in the ‘child notes’ section. They brainstorm the children’s ideas and evaluate the activities frequently. As planning does not consistently connect to the children’s observed next steps in learning, it does not fully maximise their progression in learning.
- Practitioners observe the children’s development frequently using snapshot observations. They complete learning stories occasionally and frequently use photographs of the children participating in activities to evaluate their learning. Parents of children in the morning session are invited to attend meetings twice a year regarding their child’s progress.
- During the inspection, practitioners utilised the outdoor environment more effectively than the indoors to encourage thinking and exploration during interactions. Provision outdoors includes a construction area, an outdoor kitchen, wheeled vehicles, sand and water. While some Irish language is used by practitioners throughout the morning session, the interactions did not promote the acquisition of the Irish language to maximum effect.
- Time is given for extended play during both sessions. Practitioners support the children’s awareness of emotions through discussions and the use of books between the pre-school and home environments.
- Practitioners work collaboratively with external organisations and services to promote inclusive practice. The have attended training and work in partnership with parents to support progression. During the inspection some missed opportunities to further promote inclusive practice for learners were noted.

Actions advised

- It is advised that practitioners further develop the emergent approach by making more explicit connections to the children's interests, recorded observations and previous experiences in planning.
- Practitioners are advised to develop interaction strategies that further extend the children’s thinking, mathematical language and acquisition of the Irish language through a range of individual, small and large group interactions both indoor and outdoor.
- It is advised that practitioners continue to evaluate activities within the daily routine offering children choice and collaborative opportunities that further promote an inclusive approach.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- Children in both pre-school sessions demonstrate enjoyment in their learning. They have the opportunity to explore authentic materials such as vegetables and utensils in the home-corner whilst engaging in role play with their peers.
- The children have opportunities to express themselves creatively through the weekly drama programme and through some mark-making opportunities within the indoor and outdoor environments. Both the accessibility and variety of creative and multi-sensory activities are limited.
- Children’s voices are highly valued, respected and recorded. The majority of children demonstrate growing self-confidence, positive self-esteem and are developing effective social skills whilst playing co-operatively. Some children demonstrate a sense of success during play.
- Each child has an individual folder which documents pre-school experiences through photographs and observations. The folders are freely available to the children within the room. The information contained within the folders regarding the children’s achievements and their progression in learning is limited.
- The children are developing a strong appreciation of their identity and belonging. Children use individual copy books at home with their parents to create pictures that represent their feelings.
Children are learning about the local community through active experiences such as recent trips to two restaurants in the locality. This extends their knowledge about adult roles and professions.

Some children are beginning to make connections and associations between learning experiences. This was observed as two children discussed ‘patterns’ on the paper outdoors and their prior experience of creating such patterns using various shapes and colours when painting.

Children are very inquisitive and curious in the outdoor area. They explore the environment by constructing and investigating the effects of weather. The children are developing gross-motor skills during physical play.

**Actions advised**
- It is advised that the children are exposed to a vast range of multi-sensory, dramatic and artistic experiences both indoors and outdoors to extend cognition, language and creativity.
- It is advised that information garnered within the children’s individual folders is consistently recorded to reflect a unique, holistic and connected picture of the children’s learning.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The manager provides opportunities for staff meetings on a number of occasions during the year. General matters are discussed and training is organised when required. There are limited opportunities provided for self and group review to promote improvement practices.
- Staff in the pre-school room meet on a monthly basis. They maintain a book of photographs that reflect the connections between the Aistear curriculum framework and the children’s experiences. They conduct frequent reviews of the planned experiences and have previously engaged with Better Start to explore the various pillars of practice. This particular type of reflective practice has not been sustained.
- Practitioners engage in continuing professional development, participating frequently in regulatory training. The manager has completed the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) programme and practitioners have engaged in a number of training opportunities to support inclusive practice.
- The practitioners work collaboratively in a partnered approach within the room. They are supported through regular informal discussions with the manager. There are no formal structures in place for the support and supervision of the staff.
- There is a parents’ notice board within the pre-school room. This outlines the current topics that the children are learning and hosts an invitation for parental and family participation during the pre-school year. Parents attend an annual celebration with the children at Christmas and their graduation event at the end of the year.
- Parents are invited to attend a registration evening prior to the commencement of the ECCE programme. A range of information regarding the curriculum and general setting procedures is discussed. Practitioners provide parents with a child’s profile form and a learning story to complete. This supports continuity of experiences for the children during the settling-in period.
- The setting has established positive professional relationships with the local primary schools. Communication is pre-dominantly regarding the number of children transitioning with some of the schools providing a transition form for completion to support the children’s learning within the new school environment.

**Action advised**
- It is advised that the manager provides regular opportunities to develop self and group review using a range of research and reflective tools such as the Aistear and Síolta National Practice Frameworks at team meetings. Establishing appropriate systems that support practitioners to reflect on provision in addition to the development of appraisal structures will benefit the development of practice.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The manager and practitioners are committed to the ongoing development of quality provision in the setting. The capacity to implement the actions advised is very good.
## 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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
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## Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Provision</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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