EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Fitzone Crèche</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Setting Address   | Fitzone @Westwood Club  
|                   | Leopardstown Racecourse  
|                   | Dublin 18 |
| DCYA number       | 09DR0165 |

Date of Inspection: 09-11-2018
WHAT IS AN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION?

The Early Years Education-focused 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>09-11-2018</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with assistant manager</td>
<td>Post-inspection feedback meeting with the manager and practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of interactions during a number of pre-school sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction with children</td>
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CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Fitzone Crèche was established in 1996. It is a private, purpose-built setting located in the Westwood Club in Leopardstown, Dublin. At the time of the inspection, the crèche was going through major refurbishment as part of the Fitzone Activity Centre. The setting provides sessional full-time and after-school services to children ranging in age from eight weeks to twelve years. Children enrolled in the pre-school session participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the morning of the inspection, thirteen children and five practitioners were present in the two pre-school rooms inspected. 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 welcoming and friendly atmosphere is evident in the setting.
- Relationships are positive, respectful and nurturing; the practitioners know the children very well. The positioning of the coat area in the middle of the room is highly effective in encouraging parents to enter the room; many conversations between the parents and the practitioners were observed.
- The flexible, daily routine supports the children’s active engagement and facilitates many enriching child-led activities. It is commendable that the children have the opportunity to select from a range of adult-led art activities offered throughout the day.
- The children’s self-registration routine is successfully used to support their transitions into and out of the setting.
- Snack time is a pleasant social occasion. The practitioners sit with the children, encourage healthy eating and engage in many general discussions.
- A number of routines and procedures have been successfully established to support the development of children’s self-help skills. They practitioners are successful in encouraging the children to put on and take off their jackets and to take on helper roles, such as giving out lunch bags.
- In general, the children’s transitioning between activities were calm and smooth. Some transitions were signalled by the practitioners’ use of verbal alerts and visual cues were used occasionally.
- Within the setting, each child’s uniqueness is represented through photographs, birthday charts, a sign in/out board, a family wall, footprints and art work. The practitioners are highly commended for recording children’s individual opinions in learning journals and on children’s creative work.
- In developing the children’s sense of identity and belonging, parents and family members are invited to attend yearly events at Christmas and graduation time. There are plans in place for parents to come to the setting to share their professional experiences with the children.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to further support the children’s predictability of daily events and their transitioning between activities. In so doing, it is advised that a picture display of the daily routine be devised, longer advance notice be given to inform children of the impending changes and a more consistent approach be undertaken to the use of audio and visual strategies.
- To develop children’s awareness of the local community, the practitioners are advised to further develop the connections between the pre-school and the local community. This could include extending invites to professionals and members of the local community to share their expertise and experiences 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 good.
- *Aistear: the Early Childhood Framework* informs the play-based curriculum that is implemented in the setting.
- The practitioners engage in long and medium-term planning to support the children’s learning. In general, planning is thematic, with a very small number of activities planned around the children’s emergent needs.
- Developmental checklists, observation notes, photographs, group learning journals and individual children’s scrapbooks are purposefully used as a means of tracking children’s learning and development.
- The newly refurbished, bright and well-maintained indoor environment is divided into discrete interest areas. On the day of inspection, not all resources were accessible to the children without adult assistance; some equipment and materials linked to areas of interest were not located together.
- The variety of indoor and outdoor play areas provides ample opportunities for the children to engage in gross-motor activities. These include an outdoor playground, football and tennis courts and an activity play-centre which consists of a large, soft, padded play area with balls and slides. During the inspection, the children used the football court and the activity play-centre area.
- The practitioners view play as central to children’s learning. They use highly effective interaction strategies to scaffold learning and to support the children’s development. The practitioners use soft tones and praise to provide ongoing support, as they sit and playfully engage with the children during table-top and floor activities.
- The practitioners encourage the children to be capable and competent learners. Children engage in activities at a pace that is suitable to their age and stage of development. This includes the opportunity for the children to participate in risky play when they access climbing equipment in the activity centre.
- The practitioners foster the children’s literacy skills in an effective manner. They provide children with high quality books and suitable mark-making equipment. They engage children in enriching experiences through the effective use of songs and stories throughout the day. Children are also encouraged to bring a book from home to share with the group. It was noted that the use of some worksheets reflected undue emphases on the formal teaching of letters.
- An inclusive approach is adopted in supporting children with additional needs. The practitioners liaise with parents and external professionals. They facilitate on-site support sessions from the Speech and language therapist, and engage with the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) to support children to participate and progress in their learning.

*Actions advised*

- Practitioners are advised to consult the ‘Planning and Assessment’ pillar of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to review and develop their approach to short-term planning and recording of the children’s interests. It is also advised that the practitioners develop their practice of aligning the children’s interests, needs and dispositions to short-term planning.
- Practitioners are advised to review the environment using the ‘Environment Audit’ from the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to guide them in developing areas of interest. It is also advised that all equipment and resources offered to the children be easily accessible throughout the session.
- It is advised that the use of worksheets to formally teach letters and numbers be discontinued and replaced with more open-ended, mark-making equipment.
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 show enjoyment and a high level of engagement and contentment as they actively participate in self-chosen activities. An example on the day of the inspection involved a number of children taking turns as they played with the cars and garage as they observed how fast the cars went down the ramp.
- The children demonstrate highly developed concentration and creative skills as they explore sensory materials such as paint, foam, and sand. While painting and using the foam, they displayed a sense of wonder as they mixed paint colours and referred to the foam as 'squishy'.
- The children’s confidence in sharing their experiences and successes and reflecting on past experiences are emerging. Children were observed to incidentally recollect on their previous learning experiences using phrases such as 'I remember' when discussing the mixing paint activity.
- The children demonstrate appropriate social skills and show a good awareness of self and others. Good friendships are evident as they play in pairs and groups.
- During the inspection, most of the children displayed highly developed self-regulation skills and their behaviour was extremely good. It was noted however that the very small number of minor disagreements that arose were resolved for the children by the practitioners.
- The children display confidence in their gross and fine-motor abilities. The confidently cut pieces of paper to glue, engaged in mark-making activities and ran, kicked footballs, climbed, crawled and jumped.

Actions advised
- It is advised that the children be given more opportunities to reflect on learning in small groups to help them consolidate their new and previous learning and to share experiences with others.
- The practitioners are advised to provide the children with the time and opportunity to use age-appropriate conflict resolution strategies to resolve any minor issues that arise.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- A professional atmosphere is evident in the setting. The practitioners reflect on, plan and discuss issues and concerns during whole-staff meetings that are held each term. The practitioners also support each other through informal meetings and daily chats. The manager provides regular supervision to individual staff members to affirm good practice and support their ongoing development.
- The management and practitioners are very dedicated to ensuring that a high quality early years’ service is provided for the children. To achieve this, they avail of support from the local childcare committee, Barnardos and private consultants for advice and training. They also seek support from Better Start, the National Early Years Quality Development Service, and regularly participate in continuing professional development courses.
- There is clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of staff members. The assistant manager reports that a key worker system is not currently in place due to the low numbers of children in the preschool rooms. The practitioners in each room share the responsibility for observing and documenting the children’s learning as it happens.
- A suitable range of policies and procedures is shared electronically with parents as a means of sharing relevant information.
- The practitioners regularly share information with parents on the children’s learning and development. This is achieved through daily conversations and yearly formal parent/practitioner meetings. Information regarding children’s learning is also displayed within the room and documented in the group-learning journals and in the children’s individual scrapbooks which are shared with parents at the end of the year.
Typically, children attending pre-school began their journey in the setting as babies. Staff report positively on the carefully developed settling-in policy that is in place to support the children’s move between rooms. Children are moved on a phased basis with a small number of them moving at a time. Parents are asked to fill new ‘All About Me’ information at the beginning of each year.

The practitioners undertake a number of preparatory activities towards the end of the year and hold a graduation event to support the children’s transition to primary school.

**Actions advised**

- It is advised that a key worker system be implemented to assist the process of planning, assessment and documentation of children’s learning and development and the sharing of this information with parents.
- The practitioners are advised to develop a policy to support transitions to primary school and to initiate relationships with the local primary school. The use of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* pillar on ‘Transitions’ will help support the implementation of this action.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above 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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Language used in Early Years Education Inspection reports

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

Area 2.

- We have now put in place a better approach to our short term planning. We record children’s spontaneous short term interests in their learning journal, these are backed up by photographs or materials that child has brought in that link to their interest at that time.

- All paper and all prewriting materials have all been moved to child level and all work sheets have been removed. All markings on paper are child led.

- We have introduced group in Zip-lock bags, as another approach to pre-writing skills as well as Shaving foam on trays and dry sand on trays with loads of different small pieces of equipment to encourage their pre-writing skills.

Area 4.

- We now have in place an easy program to help the children transition from preschool into primary school. This takes place the last two weeks of May and the first week of June.
- We will have some photos of the school the children will move to
- We will be borrowing some school uniforms for the dress up area so the children will be familiar with them.
- New books relating to first day at school will be read at story time.
- Art materials that link to this topic will also be available.