**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION - FOCUSED INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Name</th>
<th>Rossmore Playgroup</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service Address</strong></td>
<td>Willington Scouts Den</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Templeogue Lodge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Templeogue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dublin 6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DCYA number</strong></td>
<td>09DS0148</td>
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**Date of Inspection: 29-01-2018**
WHAT IS AN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION-FOCUSED 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 service 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 service.

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 service’s provision in each area.
Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>29-01-2018</th>
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</table>
| Inspection activities undertaken | • Interaction with children  
• Review of relevant documents  
• Feedback to service owner and manager/lead practitioner |

• Meeting with service owner  
• Meeting with manager/lead practitioner  
• Observation of interactions during a number of sessions

CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Rossmore Playgroup is a privately-owned sessional service located in a Scouts den in Dublin 6. The service was established in 1995 and offers a play-based learning programme. As the room is used by multiple users, the practitioners are restricted in using displays on the wall and are required to tidy away all the equipment at the end of each session and take it out again the following morning. On the day of the inspection, the owner, the manager/lead practitioner and twenty pre-school children were in attendance. The owner, manager/lead practitioner attended the post-inspection feedback session. 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.
• The practitioners have developed positive, respectful relationships with the parents and extended family members. Time is taken to chat to them at arrival and collection times and to share information on the children’s learning and upcoming events. Currently the key worker approach is not used. This approach is one where the key person builds a secure supportive relationship with the child and has the primary responsibility for sharing information in relation to the child.
• A weekly routine is displayed and broken into a daily sequence of activities. At the present time, this is not visible to the children. While transitions are signalled by the practitioners using verbal reminders to indicate upcoming changes, on occasions during the inspection, a few children found it hard to move easily from one activity to the next.
• Children are offered very good opportunities to be active agents in their learning. They self-register their attendance by picking their names during circle time. They choose and organise their own activities such as selecting their materials and deciding where they wish to play.
• Secure and supportive relationships are developed between the practitioners and the children. Throughout the session the practitioners regularly offer meaningful praise and encouragement to the children by giving high fives and using positive phrases such as ‘well done’.
• The practitioners use calm, positive tones when chatting to the children. They provide them with guidance towards positive behaviour and offer them the appropriate words to help them to negotiate during conflict situations.
• Snack time is valued as a social occasion and practitioners sit and chat to the children about their interests and lives outside the pre-school.
• The uniqueness of the children is reflected in the photographs on their coat hooks and on their placemats.
• Parents visit the service several times throughout the year such as for the Christmas concert and the end of year party.
• As part of the programme of activities the practitioners plan to invite the lollipop lady and the scout leader to visit the centre for the upcoming theme on community.

Actions advised

• In order to build on the secure relationships already developed with the children, the introduction of a key person approach is advised.
• The practitioners are advised to ensure the visibility of the daily routine by including photographs of the children engaged in activities and placing it at child height. The addition of a greater range of visual and verbal cues to support the children’s understanding of upcoming changes in the routine such as a timer, bell or song is advised.

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.
• Planning is undertaken by the manager and the broad plans are divided into monthly themes and then into a weekly routine with the theme of the week displayed. A resource file with a list of activities and topics associated with seasonal themes selected by the manager is maintained. The theme-based planning is displayed in the room. At the time of the inspection the plans did not reflect Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and did not include the children’s emergent interests.
• The manager records daily events and issues in a daily diary. These records reflect Aistear.
• The manager has sole responsibility for gathering and recording information on the children’s learning. A learner template is undertaken twice a term per child and these are shared with parents at the end of each term. A large group story relating to the children’s engagement in activities is compiled. These records broadly describe the children’s learning. However, no next steps for their progression are identified.
• The practitioners know the children well and respond to them in calm, kind, respectful tones. They use a range of approaches to engage children’s thinking and problem-solving skills, using open-ended questions and prompts such as ‘what do you think you could do next?’
• The large indoor environment is divided into some distinct areas such as a construction and home corner area, a shop area and a book area. On the day of the inspection, the range of resources available was limited. There is scope to provide additional accessible resources in order to offer the children further positive and purposeful learning experiences.
• The children access the outdoors on a regular basis. They use the area in front of the scouts den in winter and have access to a grassy area in summer adjacent to the car park. On the day of the inspection, the weather was deemed unsuitable for outdoor play. The tables were pushed back and children took part in games and musical movement.
• Children have free access to paper and crayons for mark-making and examples of children’s creativity are displayed in the room.
• The children’s emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills are developed through everyday experiences, such as counting the spoons at snack time and through stories and rhymes. On the day of the inspection, children were observed discussing the cost of the items they were buying in the shop.

Actions advised
• It is advised that the practitioners develop medium-term and short-term planning that is underpinned by Aistear and incorporates the children’s emerging interests. The resources, self-review templates and planning templates available in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will assist them in this approach.
• The practitioners are advised to extend their approaches to recording children’s learning more regularly. The addition of the children’s emerging interests, strengths and dispositions and the next steps for their learning is advised. The key person approach could help in this regard.
• To ensure that children experience further positive and purposeful learning within their play experiences, the development of specific interest areas with suitable, accessible resources is advised. The use of the Indoor Environmental Audit in the Aistear toolkit would be beneficial.

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 are happy and show real enjoyment in the play activities that they plan and lead, as well as the adult-initiated activities, such as the art and craft activity. They are active agents in their own learning and they present as confident and happy in the setting. For example, during the play with the tube, they share ideas about adding more height to ensure cars would slide down easily.

- Some children are achieving success and mastery as they display persistence and resilience. During the construction activity observed, children persisted in adding blocks until they achieved the height they wanted. At the time of the inspection, a small number of children struggled to be part of group activities and to stay focused on activities. This led to them becoming distracted and disengaged from the group.
- It is evident that the children have developed very good relationships with their peers. They play co-operatively in pairs and in small groups and effectively negotiate the taking of turns during activities.
- The children are developing a positive sense of self and are eager and confident to converse and engage with visitors.
- The children are developing a sense of their own identity as members of a family and this is reflected in the family photographs in their learning journals.
- The children are learning good self-help skills and independence. They take part in the tidy-up routines, put on their coats independently, distribute placemats, tidy away their lunch bags and replace chairs carefully after activities. They would benefit from further opportunities to develop these skills.
- Many children are developing very good early mathematical and literacy knowledge, recognising and naming numbers such as when counting during the chasing game and recognising their name when self-registering.
- During the playdough activity observed, the children discussed what they needed, they counted the spoons of flour, oil and water and shared their ideas when kneading the dough.
- The children are developing an awareness of the natural environment and they take part in planting nasturtiums and other flowers.

Actions advised
- It is advised that the practitioners introduce focused small-group activities and differentiate learning activities to a greater extent to accommodate children's individual learning needs and interests. The key person would be useful in this approach.
- To further support the children's self-help skills and independence it is advised that they be offered the opportunity to pour their own drinks, serve each other at snack time and be given specific jobs within the daily routine to help the practitioners and each other. The development of a child-helper routine would help in this regard.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The practitioners chat together informally every day about the day ahead. At the time of the inspection, the service did not hold formal staff meetings.
- The practitioners work together as a team and there is clarity around their roles and responsibilities with regard to educational activities. This is evident in their exchanges about changing to different activities, responding to children’s needs and leading activities such as circle time and the playdough activity.
- The service is undergoing a period of change in relation to staffing. The owner has identified the need to begin planning for the changes that will take place in the coming months.
- The owner accesses support and mentoring from Early Childhood Ireland and the local childcare committee. She links with a network of managers in the local area.
- The manager has recently begun training in the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) Programme in order to support the provision of a quality learning experience to all children in the service.
- The practitioners use different approaches for sharing information with parents. A letter is sent to parents at the start of the year that provides some information about the service. A detailed newsletter is sent each term with particulars of the themes and topics completed. Additional
information about the service could be provided for parents. The practitioners share information with the parents on the children’s learning informally at arrival and collection times.

- An open day is held in June to which parents and children are invited. A system of staggered hours is offered in September to support children settling into the pre-school. Parents are encouraged to stay with their child until they feel comfortable in their new environment.
- The practitioners discuss with the children their move to primary school and they share information with parents on the transition to primary school. The practitioners share information on the children with the primary schools if this is requested, and if parents give permission. Currently, the service has not established any formal links with the local primary schools.

**Actions advised**

- In light of the upcoming changes to staff, the practitioners are advised to introduce regular formal staff meetings to undertake planning as a team for children’s learning and to record decisions taken. It is advised that they avail of the professional self-evaluation tools in the *Aistear; Síolta Practice Guide* to support them in their professional reflection and to assist them in the new staffing arrangements.
- The practitioners are advised to develop an information booklet for parents that includes details of the policies, procedures and practice of the service, and reflects *Aistear*.
- It is advised that the practitioners begin the process of building formal links with the staff of the local primary schools. The addition of a transition box that includes photographs of the layout of the school and samples of the schools’ uniforms will help in the discussions about the move from pre-school to primary school.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The owner and the manager engaged positively in the post-inspection feedback session and they contributed to the professional dialogue. The capacity of the service to continue 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>
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<td>Good</td>
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<td>Good</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Language used in Early-Years Education-focused 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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*Published September 2018*
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

**Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report.**

Rossmore Playgroup Early Years’ Service would like to acknowledge this report, it is our intention to provide a quality learning experience for each child who attends our service. We have looked at all the recommendations and we are now implementing, or we are in the process of implementing the following.

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

- Key Person Approach: We have implemented a key person approach. This has enabled the practitioners to record and observe the children’s learning more frequently, each child will be observed at least once a month with reference to Aistear. The Key Person will be instrumental in creating small focus groups to enrich the child’s learning.

- We have a visual timetable on display in the room, we now turn the lights on and off to signal routine change.

- The Playgroup has a yearly curriculum plan which we will further develop. As we are in a period of staff transition, from September we will hold Monthly Formal Meetings where the curriculum can be further developed for that month, as our service delivers an emergent play-based curriculum we feel monthly planning is sufficient to ensure we incorporate the children’s current interests. We will use the Aistear, Siolta practise guide as a tool to assist us in our planning.

- To ensure that we are delivering enriching positive learning for the children we will use the Aistear toolkit to assist us in such provision.

- The Child Helper has been implemented.
• This Service has developed an information leaflet which reflects Aistear. This was distributed to our incoming parents at open day.

• The Service has developed a Transition Box which contains a school uniform, school bag and photos of the local school.