

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

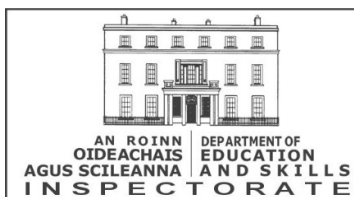
Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Report

**Little Rainbows Crèche
09DY0052**

**1 Holywell Avenue
Donaghmede
Dublin 13**

Date of Inspection: 7 December 2016



CONTEXT OF SETTING

Little Rainbows Crèche is a privately-owned, full day-care service based in a housing estate in Dublin 13. The service offers two pre-school sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon in a prefabricated building attached to the full day-care service. On the day of the inspection, the morning session was observed. Fifteen pre-school children were in attendance and were supported by the lead practitioner in the room, an assistant practitioner and a student on work experience. The setting has gone through a period of change in the last year, resulting in significant changes in personnel. The lead practitioner in the room and the manager of the service took part in the post-inspection feedback meeting. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this 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 good.
- The children coming for the sessional service come into the garden from the side gate and are warmly greeted by the lead practitioner. She chats to the parents as the children move into the garden. Some children choose to stay outside with the assistant practitioner and some children choose to go into the playroom.
- The daily routine was being updated at the time of the inspection and the children demonstrated confidence in following the daily programme. When the children move from the garden, they take their bags and coats and put them away on their hooks, demonstrating independence. The children know the routine and one child who brought a toy from home put it in a box until going home time. This approach helps the child feel a connection to home as he/she can access it whenever they may need comfort.
- Practitioners use verbal reminders to signal changes in the routine and the children are prompted to put their listening ears on. As they tidy up, the practitioners and the children sing the tidy-up song.
- A key person approach is used by practitioners who record their observations of learning for a designated group of the children.
- The practitioners offer regular praise and encouragement to the children and provide guidance towards positive behaviour.
- A birthday display demonstrates the uniqueness of each child in the setting. A family wall features the children and their families, although at the time of the inspection not all children were represented on the display.
- The parents visit the setting for the Christmas play and the end-of-year trip.
- There are some examples of the cultural diversity of children and their families indicated in the display of flags from different countries and the word for 'hello' in different languages.
- The practitioners have made connections with the local community and have organised visits from members of the local community to help develop children's sense of belonging to it.

Actions advised

- To support all children's sense of involvement in the daily learning programme, it is advised that the practitioners display the daily routine with photographs of the children engaged in different activities.
- The use of consistent approaches when signalling changes in the routine is advised such as the use of visual and verbal cues and offering ample time for children to settle into the new activity. These will ensure that all children will have a clear expectations of what is coming next.
- It is advised that the service develop the key person approach to extend its focus from taking observations of children's learning to supporting practitioners to work in partnership with parents in order to share the children's learning and to develop secure strong relationships 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.
- The practitioners undertake annual themed-based planning. This annual planning does not reflect *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and is broken into weekly topics. The lead practitioner assesses how the weekly topic has gone and notes any of the children's interests that emerged during the topic.
- The practitioners gather information on the children's learning using anecdotal records. These are then linked to the themes of *Aistear* and transferred by the lead practitioner into each child's individual scrapbook. Practitioners share the children's learning and achievements informally with parents at drop-off and collection times.
- The interactions are respectful and supportive to all children with some good examples of the practitioners extending the children's thinking. Phrases such as 'what do you think' are used regularly. On the day of the inspection, the practitioners displayed calm, positive responses to the children who struggled to listen while the other children were talking, respectfully asking them not to interrupt during group discussion time.
- Play is valued and encouraged by the practitioners. They move from group to group supporting the children's engagement in play. Some children find it difficult to settle to one activity and move frequently from one area to another. The practitioners encourage them to stay in one area.
- The indoor environment is laid out into specific interest areas which are equipped with a range of labelled resources. Each area has a notice that says how many children are allowed play there. An area with soft seating and cushions is used for story time.
- The children access the outdoor area on arrival in the morning and also during the day. The outdoor area has a soft surface, swings and slides.
- The children are enabled to recall their previous week's discussion on snow and snow melting by the practitioner making snow with the children. Some children are shown how to make a snowman based on the practitioner's example. The children's engagement in an adult-directed activity offers limited opportunity for them to engage in open-ended multi-sensory materials that stimulate imagination and creativity.
- The children's pre-literacy and children's pre-numeracy skills were promoted through their everyday activities such as when they were observed counting the buttons on the snowman and counting how many children and how many adults are present.

Actions advised

- To assist the practitioners in incorporating the individual children's emergent interests, it is advised that they avail of the templates in the *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide* to support them in their long-term, medium-term and short-term planning.
- The practitioners are advised to incorporate new approaches for gathering information on all aspects of the children's learning and to include the next steps for children's learning. The role of the key person could be developed further to ensure all practitioners gather and record information on the children's learning in the children's scrapbooks.
- It is advised that the practitioners provide opportunities for children to regularly experience open-ended natural play materials such as playdough, sand and water play.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is good.
- In general, the children are happy and show enjoyment in their self-selected activities. On the day of the inspection, some children struggled to be part of the groups led by the practitioners and tended to distract the other children. The distraction and disengagement impacted on the overall involvement and engagement of the children as the lead practitioner had to stop what she was doing to engage these children. She spoke calmly and positively to them explaining they needed to listen in the group and to refrain from interrupting other children.

- The children are confident in selecting the different stations they want to play in but some children get upset when they find the area they have chosen is already full. The practitioner spoke to them explaining that the stations were full and supported them to choose other activities.
- The children are learning to play cooperatively together and some nice friendships are being made.
- The children are confident in discussing the themes of the arctic.
- The child-helper routine encourages the children to feel connected to the group and promotes children self-help skills and independence. The child helper at story time brings a book from home for the practitioner to read.
- The children are able to express their feelings and this was observed when a child talked about how he felt when he was upset. A book on feelings is available with pictures of the children showing a range of feelings.
- The children have developed class rules, 'listen, be kind and gentle' using smiley faces, linked to the children's names.
- A range of mark-making materials is freely available to the children in one specific area. Some children choose to use stencils and colouring-in templates. Examples of the children's art and crafts are on display. The availability of templates and colouring-in pages diminishes the creative experience for children by limiting the opportunity to explore their own unique creativity.
- The children enjoy singing the Christmas songs they are learning for their Christmas play.
- A significant number of families attending this service come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, with many children presenting with English as an additional language. In the session observed, one example of this diversity was demonstrated in the children singing 'hello' in different languages.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to develop procedures that will promote the children's social skills and support the children to develop suitable coping and negotiation skills. The reduction of adult-led activities and an increase in small group activities led by the key practitioner is an option.
- The practitioners are advised to actively promote the children's free creativity by reducing the use of stencils and colouring-in templates and making the children's free art visible in the setting.
- To support an inclusive environment for all children, it is advised that the practitioners spend additional time with the children creating awareness of different family cultures. This could be achieved by frequent conversations on different cultural backgrounds and by linking the large map of the world on the wall to discuss different families 'country of origin'.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The practitioners do not hold formal staff meetings. An annual staff meeting for all the practitioners in the full day care service is held. The practitioners chat informally each morning about the planned activities.
- The practitioners have been working together as a team for only a short period of time but there is evidence of good teamwork and professional collaboration.
- The manager receives support and mentoring from Early Childhood Ireland and Fingal County Childcare Committee.
- There is clarity around the roles and responsibilities in the setting. The lead practitioner in the room is responsible for planning and for the transferring of the observations from the practitioner's notebook into the child's scrapbook.
- The practitioners share information on the children's learning and achievements informally with parents. The children's art folder is sent home regularly. A parents' notice board is at the entrance to the garden area and an information newsletter is sent home every month.
- The practitioners discuss the children's move from the pre-school to the local primary school with the children. The practitioners know the teachers well from collecting the children from the local schools for the after-school service but no formal links for sharing information on the children have been made with the local primary school.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the staff develop more formal approaches to meetings and reflection on their work. The *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will support the practitioners in their professional self-reflection.
- The staff is advised to develop more formal approaches to sharing children's learning and achievements with parents.
- The introduction of procedures to support the children's seamless transition from the pre-school to the primary school by developing more formal links with the local primary school is advised.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of Little Rainbows Crèche to implement the actions advised above is good.

Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Good
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	Good
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	Good
Quality of management and leadership for learning	Good

Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.
Very good	Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.
Fair	Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.
Poor	Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.