An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Bumbles Crèche and Montessori</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>75 Upper Rathmines Road</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rathmines</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dublin 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09DY0321</td>
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Date of Inspection: 29-04-2019
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 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 29-004-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with setting owner/manager</td>
<td>Interaction with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with practitioner</td>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of interactions during a session</td>
<td>Feedback to setting owner/manager and practitioner</td>
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</table>

**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Bumbles Crèche and Montessori was established in 1996. It is located in a large Georgian house and provides a full day care service and one morning pre-school session. On the day of the inspection, fourteen children, who are in their first and second years of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme, the owner and a practitioner were in attendance. The owner and practitioner attended the post-inspection feedback session. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report, and the response of the setting will 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 fair.
- Arrival and collection times are parent and child friendly. Parents bring the children into the room and settle them at an activity before leaving. Time is taken for conversations with parents and for the mutual sharing of information relating to children’s well-being.
- A weekly routine is displayed on the wall but is not visible to the children. Transitions are signalled by the practitioners through verbal reminders and the occasional use of a bell.
- Children have developed good relationships with the practitioners. Praise and encouragement are offered by the practitioners to support children in their learning.
- During snack time the practitioners sit and chat to the children about their lives outside of the pre-school.
- The children’s photographs are displayed on their coat hooks at the entrance to the setting. A small number of children attending the setting come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. This cultural diversity was not reflected in the displays or resources available in the room.
- The parents visit the setting at Christmas and for the end-of-year party.
- There is no evidence of the promotion of children’s awareness of the local community.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to develop a visual daily routine with photographs of the children engaged in activities and to display it at child height. The consistent use of strategies to signal upcoming changes is further advised. This will support the children to understand what is happening next and help them to move confidently from one activity to the next.
- The introduction of a key person approach is advised. This approach is one in which the key person builds a secure supportive relationship with the child and has the primary responsibility for sharing information in relation to the child with his/her parents.
- To enrich the children’s experience and understanding of cultural diversity and to support an inclusive environment for all children, the practitioners are advised to reflect the range of cultures present in the setting. This could be achieved by using displays, props and books and by frequent conversations on different languages, and cultural celebrations.
- The practitioners are advised to provide opportunities for the children to get to know the people and areas of interest in the local community.
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 poor.
- The provision in this setting is informed by the Montessori Method of Education. At the time of the inspection, there was no evidence of the use of *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- Weekly planning is based on topics selected by the practitioners. The children's individual emergent interests are not used to inform planning for the curriculum.
- On the day of the inspection, there were no records of children’s learning The owner stated that in previous years they had used computer technology to document children’s learning but that this practice was no longer in place.
- Children’s progression in their use of the Montessori materials is not currently recorded. The practitioners compile children's art and craft activities linked to the weekly themes into a folder.
- During the session, the practitioners were observed overly directing the children’s learning experiences. The practitioners selected the activity for children or pointed children to specific materials. There were some missed opportunities to promote the children’s thinking, language and problem-solving skills.
- The indoor environment is divided into two rooms and includes a play area and an area with a range of Montessori materials. On the day of the inspection, a focus on large group activities, such as table-top activities and circle time, was observed. Many of the children engaged positively in the singing of songs and rhymes.
- Specific time is not allocated to play in the weekly routine and play was not observed during the inspection. The play resources include a cash register, a dolls house and dressing-up outfits, and a small number of vehicles and construction resources. The play materials are inadequate and do not appropriately provide for children's positive play experiences.
- Children have opportunities to practice their gross motor skills on a daily basis in the well-designed outdoor area.
- The children’s emergent literacy and numeracy are fostered through the use of the Montessori materials. Workbooks, templates and dot-to-dot activities are also used to promote children’s emergent literacy and numeracy skills. On the day of the inspection, testing of children’s knowledge of letters, numbers and shapes was observed during the circle-time activity.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to develop an emergent curriculum that is reflective of *Aistear*. The introduction of long-term, medium-term and short-term planning that includes children's individual emergent interests and reflects a two-year cycle for children attending for two years of the ECCE programme is advised.
- The practitioners are advised to conduct regular observations of children’s learning and to record their use of the Montessori materials. As part of this process, the inclusion of children's strengths and dispositions and the identification of clear, planned next steps for their progression are advised. In addition, practitioners are advised to share the records of children's learning with parents.
- Practitioners are advised to place greater emphasis on the use of everyday play activities to promote and support children's emergent literacy and numeracy. In addition, practitioners are advised to decrease the use of resources such as workbooks and template-based activities, and the formal teaching and testing of children’s knowledge of letters, shapes and numbers.
- Practitioners are advised to consistently use a range of strategies, such as open-ended questions and prompts, to support and extend children’s thinking and their language development.
- The practitioners are advised to review the routine in order to provide time for the children to engage in free play. The addition of suitable, accessible play resources is advised. The pillar ‘Learning through Play’ in the *Aistear; Siolta Practice Guide* will assist practitioners in developing this aspect of their curriculum.
AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- On the day of the inspection, the children generally displayed enjoyment and engagement in the Montessori materials provided. A number of them achieved success and mastery and they demonstrated good concentration. An example of this included a child who completed the jigsaw independently for the first time.
- During the inspection there was a strong focus on adult-led large group activities, with limited opportunities for child-led activities. A few children found it difficult to remain focused and on task during these large group adult-led activities; they lost interest and discontinued their participation after a short period of time.
- Children are learning how different languages are used. They demonstrate understanding of the practitioners use of Irish, such as ‘Suigh sios’ (Sit down) ‘Lámha suas’ (Hands up), and they confidently use some every day Irish words.
- The children showed confidence, physical co-ordination and great enjoyment as they took part in the musical movement exercise.
- Children are developing a positive sense of self and some are eager to talk about their lives outside of the pre-school. The children’s sense of identity and belonging is reflected to some extent in displays, such as the template-based activities that are on display at the entrance to the room. The practitioners plan to introduce a family wall with photographs of the children and their families.
- Children are learning to play co-operatively. They chat together while engaged in table-top activities and on occasion two children worked together to compete a jigsaw.
- During circle time the children discuss the classroom rules and call out the motto of the room ‘Is féidir liom’ (I can).
- A number of children show an awareness of letters, shapes and numbers. They discuss items starting with the same letter, compare shapes and chat about the different sizes and heights of the flowers they have planted.
- Children’s awareness and understanding of the natural environment are promoted through the use of a nature table that includes pine cones, shells, leaves and twigs; children have also planted herbs in the classroom.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to reduce the emphasis on adult-planned and template-based, art and craft activities. To support the children’s creative, imaginative and artistic development, practitioners are advised to provide increased opportunities for them to independently access mark making and art materials.
- To support all children in achieving success, to develop their confidence and to increase their motivation and interest in activities, the practitioners are advised to reduce the number of large-group and adult-led activities. The provision of additional opportunities for child-led activities and regular small-group work led by the key person is advised. This will support a more differentiated approach to suit the individual children's interests and needs.
- Practitioners are advised to promote children sense of well-being, identity and belonging in the room. This can be achieved by displaying photographs showing the children engaged in activities and by the inclusion of displays of children’s free art and mark making, including their comments.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is fair.
- Practitioners informally discuss the plans at the end of week and they chat on a daily basis about the planned activities.
- There is evidence of teamwork, professional collaboration and shared leadership. For example, the practitioners discuss the timings for going outdoors and each practitioner has an opportunity to lead learning. For example, one practitioner leads circle time and the other practitioner leads the musical movement activity.
- The owner accesses support and information from Early Childhood Ireland.
• The practitioners recently attended workshops on First Aid and Child Protection. One of the practitioners is engaged in training to support children with additional learning needs.
• Parents are given a copy of the setting’s policies and procedures at the start of the year. At the time of the inspection, information on the setting’s learning programme was not shared with parents. The practitioners chat to parents informally about their children’s learning at arrival and collection times.
• The setting has yet to develop policies and procedures to support children’s transition into the setting and from the pre-school to primary school.

**Actions advised**

• It is advised that practitioners meet for regular, formal staff meetings. These can be used to discuss planning and to identify plans to support children’s interests and learning needs. The use of the templates and self-evaluation tools in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will assist them in this process.
• The practitioners are advised to develop a parents’ information book that includes information about the setting’s curriculum and links to *Aistear*.
• The practitioners are advised to develop policies and procedures to support children’s transition into and from the setting. The use of the pillar ‘Supporting Transitions’, in the *Aistear; Síolta Practice Guide* and the transition programme *Mo Scéal* for children moving to primary school are advised.
• The owner is advised to engage the services of the Better Start Quality Development Service to support the setting in developing its provision for children.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The owner and the practitioner engaged positively and professionally in the post-inspection feedback meeting. The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is fair.
**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>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children's learning and development</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
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**Language used in Early Years Education Inspection reports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></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 February 2020*
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report.
We have commenced implementing the recommendations since the DES inspection and we are continuing with our improvements.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.
We have engaged with Better Start, National Early Years Quality Development Service and they are due to visit us in early February so they can assist us with our improvements.