# EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

## REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Carebears Community Playgroup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Laurencetown</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ballinasloe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Galway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09GY0020</td>
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**Date of Inspection: 01-02-2019**
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>01-02-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
<td><strong>Review of relevant documents</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Feedback discussion with the manager and one practitioner.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with the setting manager and practitioners.&lt;br&gt;• Observation of interactions during one session&lt;br&gt;• Interaction with children</td>
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**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Carebears Community Playgroup, established in 1999, is a community playgroup in the rural village of Laurencetown, County Galway. It provides one morning pre-school session for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The lead practitioner is supported by two assistant practitioners. On the day of inspection, there were twenty children present. The lead practitioner and one assistant practitioner attended the post-feedback session. 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 good.
- The practitioners are warm, caring and welcoming in their approach with the children and families availing of the setting. Practitioners know the parents well and take the time to chat informally with them on arrival.
- Written daily routines are displayed with time allocated for free play, art and crafts, movement and sensorial activities. As there was more than one routine documented, clarity is required, for both the children and their parents, as to the elements and sequence of the daily routine.
- Some transitions throughout the morning were signalled verbally by practitioners and some were supported by song. There were some instances where the children had to wait in line during transition periods.
- Snack-time is seen as a very relaxed social occasion where practitioners sit and chat with the children.
- Practitioners model and promote positive behaviour through natural interactions and regular positive affirmative feedback to the children. Practitioners view children as very capable and competent and they motivate and support them in developing their independence and self-care skills. One child is given the role of ‘helper’ each day.
- Practitioners support children to develop an awareness of their local community through discussion about community roles with the aid of visual prompts and by bringing the children for walks in the locality. Community representatives are welcomed into the setting to talk to the children. Previously, the setting has been visited by a nurse and the fire brigade.
- Some resources are available to support the children’s understanding of diversity.

*Actions advised:*

- It is advised that practitioners review the daily routine and update their documentation to clearly reflect the schedule in operation. A visual representation of the routine, displayed at child height, would be most beneficial.
- It is advised that practitioners review transitions throughout the morning to minimise waiting times and maximise children’s purposeful engagement. Greater use could be made of visual and auditory cues to signal changes from one activity to the next to support children to manage and understand transitions.
- It is advised that the practitioners create more opportunities for the children to discuss, understand and experience diversity within the setting.
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 fair.
- A play-based curriculum is in operation. The curriculum statement outlines the curriculum’s links to Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. These links are not consistently evident in curriculum plans, however.
- On the day of inspection, a short-term plan and daily routines were on display. Plans are flexible and are linked informally to children’s interests.
- Practitioners regularly complete narrative observations on children’s developmental milestones and each child has a personal scrapbook which contains some artwork and colouring templates. This assessment data does not currently inform planning and is not regularly shared with parents.
- Practitioners interact with the children in a respectful way using calm positive tones and join in on play scenarios.
- The indoor environment is a large bright space which is well maintained, safe and inviting. Materials are stored at child height and provide creative, socio-dramatic and construction play opportunities with some sensorial materials available. There was limited opportunity for the children to explore real, open-ended and natural materials.
- A large soft mat in the corner of the room provides an area for relaxation. One child took a book to this area during the inspection. There is significant scope to develop the relaxation area to foster children’s emergent literacy. An attractive reading corner with access to a range of meaningful books and additional relevant resources would add greater richness to current provision for children’s emergent literacy skills.
- A large climbing frame is available to support children’s physical and risky play indoors. Although, not accessed on the day of inspection, the playground adjacent to the setting is available for outdoor play.

Actions advised:
- Practitioners are advised to review the curriculum statement and their planning processes to ensure that an emergent curriculum, informed by Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework is in place. The inclusion of the children’s individual interests in short-term plans will support this action.
- It is advised that practitioners develop their current approach to observation by ensuring a cycle of planning and assessing for learning takes place and that assessment information is shared regularly with parents. The use of the ‘Assessment and Planning’ pillar from the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide will be useful in this regard.
- It is advised that the practitioners review and develop the indoor learning environment, providing real, open-ended and natural materials within distinct learning areas, thereby reducing the amount of plastic resources available.
- It is advised that practitioners provide increased opportunities for story-telling and book-reading to promote the development of children’s language and early literacy. The inclusion of a wider array of easily accessible meaningful literature, prop-boxes and puppets will support this action.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children are motivated, engaged and interested in their learning activities. Children appear very happy with excitement and laughter evident throughout the session.
- Children are good communicators, they competently use language to give and receive information. There is scope to utilise children’s strong communication skills to support them to consolidate their learning through formal opportunities for discussion and review.
- The children had lots of choice in learning activities throughout the morning. Children’s voices were listened to and some activities were child-initiated. Some children chose not to participate and they were supported to explore other resources in the environment.
- Children play alone, in pairs and in small groups and there is evidence of friendships forming. Some children were observed to apologise to each other while resolving conflict independently.
- The children are developing the ability to take turns, co-operate and build relationships through support and guidance from practitioners.
- Children’s strong fine motor skills were displayed through table-top activities such as jigsaws, play-dough and mark-making with well-developed gross motor skills evident when they engaged with the climbing frame.
- Children are developing an awareness of their natural environment through discussions with practitioners, nature walks and nature related art activities.
- The children’s sense of identity and belonging in the setting is supported to some extent through a birthday display.

**Actions advised:**
- It is advised that regular formal opportunities be given to children to reflect on their own learning and to discuss their thoughts, feelings and ideas with others.
- It is advised that increased opportunities to support the children’s appreciation of their own uniqueness and to develop a deeper sense of identity and belonging be provided through the use of additional resources, activities, interactions and group discussions.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- There is evidence of teamwork and informal collaboration between the well-established staff team. There is clarity with regard to roles and responsibilities within the setting. Presently, staff do not meet on a regular, formal basis to review practice.
- The pre-school is well known in the local community. Parents and practitioners converse informally prior to children’s start date and a registration form is completed by parents which includes information on children's interests, likes and dislikes.
- Strong relationships with parents were evident on the day of inspection. A messaging group has been set up to communicate with parents on a regular basis and formal meetings are arranged, if required. The setting’s settling-in policy encourages parents to spend time in the learning environment to support the transition from home to pre-school.
- The setting has created strong links with the local primary school and bring children for a visit to see the school and to meet the teacher prior to graduation. Information on children’s learning and development is shared with the school through an ‘All about me’ book. Some children go to an alternative school and this transition is supported through discussion. There is scope to further support transition to school for this cohort of children.
- The setting has developed links with the local county childcare committee. The manager and practitioners have engaged with continuing professional development (CPD) courses including Equality and Diversity, Aistear and Síolta, Buntús along with regulatory training. Further CPD with regard to Aistear and Síolta; The National Quality Frameworks for Early Childhood Education would greatly support practitioners in the implementation of a play-based emergent curriculum.

**Actions advised:**
- It is advised that that management and practitioners organise and document regular, formal staff meetings. Engagement with the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide during such meetings will inform planning, review and action plans for improvement.
- The practitioners are advised to develop relationships with the local schools further to support the transition of all children to primary school. Additionally, social stories and other visual aids could be utilised to support this action.
- It is advised that management and practitioners engage further with high quality, continuous professional development in order to support best practice and to ensure Aistear and Síolta are effectively implemented.
CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The manager and the practitioner engaged professionally in the feedback discussion following the inspection. They demonstrated a good understanding of what is required to ensure ongoing improvement in the quality of provision for children’s learning and development. The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is 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>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Fair</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>Good</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Language used in Early-Years Education 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 June 2019*