EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Mountbellew Community Childcare Ltd.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Mountbellew</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Galway</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H53XR20</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09GY0054</td>
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Date of Inspection: 05-03-2019
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 05-03-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
<th>Review of educational resources and facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with the setting manager</td>
<td>• Review of educational resources and facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observation of interactions during two pre-school sessions</td>
<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interaction with the children</td>
<td>• Review of records of the children’s learning and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
<td>• Post-inspection feedback discussion with the manager and the practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review of records of the children’s learning and development.</td>
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</table>

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Mountbellew Community Childcare Ltd., established in 2008, is a full day-care crèche and pre-school located in Mountbellew, County Galway. It offers two morning sessions which run concurrently, for children enrolled in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of inspection, one manager, two room leaders, two assistant practitioners and thirty children were present. 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 very good.
• The children and their families are warmly welcomed into the setting with some children eagerly sharing stories with the practitioners as they arrive. The practitioners engage with the families in a responsive and affirming manner demonstrating how well they know their children.
• A written daily routine is displayed which allocates time for free play, stories, activities and snack. The routine is not currently accessible to the children. On some occasions throughout the morning, times of transition, when the children moved from one activity to the next, were supported by visual and auditory cues.
• A relaxed social atmosphere is created during snack-time when the practitioners sit with the children and natural exchanges take place.
• The strategies used to guide the children’s positive behaviour are commendable. Soft tones, modelling of behaviour and affirmative feedback are regular features of the responses provided by the practitioners to the children. The HighScope six-step conflict resolution strategy is also displayed.
• The practitioners effectively support the children to become confident in developing their self-help and self-care needs. Each child is given different tasks each day through the use of a displayed ‘Helper Chart’.
• During designated times, learner journals are made accessible to parents and they are encouraged to review their children’s learning records in the setting. This process could be strengthened through the use of a key person approach whereby each child is assigned a key practitioner who becomes the primary link between the child, the setting and the parents. This key practitioner will ensure that information documented on the children’s learning is effectively shared with parents on a regular basis and that opportunities for parents to comment on and review their children’s learning are provided.
• The setting provides many opportunities for the children to get to know people and places within their community. They have been visited by a paramedic and a dentist, taken a trip to the fire-station and they have plans to walk to some local shops.

Actions advised

• It is advised that a visual daily routine is displayed at child height in both rooms to support the children to understand the sequence of the day. The use of visual and auditory cues to signal upcoming changes consistently in both rooms will advance the effective management of transitions.
• It is advised that a key person approach is developed and that parents are made aware of who their child’s key practitioner is. Utilising the tip sheet ‘Using a key person approach’ from the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide will be useful in this regard.

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 very good.
• The play-based curriculum provided is influenced by the themes of Aistear: the Early Years Curriculum Framework and is planned on a long, medium and short-term basis. Plans consist of scheduled activities and projects with strong evidence of the inclusion of the children’s interests. These plans are regularly reviewed by the practitioners. The curriculum plan could be enriched by providing more visible links to Aistear.
• Information documented on the children’s learning showcases their developing dispositions and interests in art and science. The practitioners support the children to explore their particular interests such as volcanoes, skeletons and dinosaurs at a deeper level to create more meaningful learning experiences.
• The practitioners demonstrate a highly effective understanding of the benefits of process art and the importance of capturing the children’s personal intention behind their artwork.
• The resources available to the children indoors include a variety of literacy, socio-dramatic, mark-making and construction resources with some multi-sensory/open-ended items available.
• The practitioners regularly join in with, encourage and support the children in their play. There is scope for the practitioners to build on and extend the children’s learning further during play through the development of their interaction strategies.
• The support for the development of the children’s emergent literacy is highly commendable. The practitioners endeavour to ensure that the literature available is meaningful to the children. The children have created their own story-book which they bring home and share with their families. They are encouraged to bring in books from home to share with their peers.
• The practitioners are aware of the children’s individual strengths and needs and adapt their interactions appropriately to create a very inclusive environment. Strong links have been established between the setting, relevant early intervention teams and the Access and Inclusion Model with plans for specific support strategies in place.

Actions advised
• It is advised that the practitioners enhance the current planning process by making more explicit connections to the aims and learning goals of Aistear: the Early Years Curriculum Framework.
• It is advised that the practitioners strengthen their interaction strategies with more open-ended comments and questioning to extend the children’s thinking and learning during play.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

• The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
• Many assessment approaches are used to gather information about the children’s learning including learning records, anecdotal notes, developmental checklists, photographs, the children’s artwork and group learning stories. In the main, the children’s learning journals showcase pictures and narratives of the children engaged in group learning experiences with some missed opportunities for commentary on individual children’s learning and development.
• The children are developing a very positive sense of their identity and belonging with displays that foster the uniqueness of each child. A ‘When I grow up, I want to be’ display includes representation of the children’s thoughts through art with each child’s individual contribution identified by a photograph.
• The children are active agents in choosing and organising their learning activities during free play indoors and outdoors.
• The children engage, explore and experiment in the outdoor environment and use their developing gross motor skills to manipulate objects and diverse materials. The children demonstrate sustained engagement in their learning whilst exploring ‘a quarry’ play scenario by digging, engaging with ride-on vehicles and moving the stone from place to place.
• It is evident that the children’s voices are heard, respected and acted upon. In response to a child’s request to make smoothies, the practitioners and the children discussed the ingredients they would need, made a list and planned a trip to the local shop.
• The children explore sound and rhythm through song and musical instruments. In one room, the children enthusiastically engaged in a thematic-based, marching parade activity to celebrate a relevant festival. The practitioners provided the children with props and supported them through modelling.
• While discussing the current theme, the children were encouraged by the practitioners to look back at pictures and make associations with previous learning experiences to reinforce current learning. Formalising this highly effective practice on a systematic basis within key groups, will ensure that the information gathered by the practitioners meaningfully captures each child’s individual needs and interests.

**Actions advised**
• It is advised that the assessment for learning methods are refined to ensure that a rich picture of each child’s learning is created and that this information is used to progress the next steps in each individual child’s learning experiences.
• It is advised that the children are provided with the opportunity for regular discussion and reflection within key groups to consolidate their learning and provide the practitioners with the opportunity to plan for each child’s individual learning.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

• The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
• There is a strong ethos of teamwork and a highly professional approach within the setting. The manager and the practitioners demonstrate commitment to improving practices and in the past have engaged with the Better Start Quality Development Service. In some instances, staff members have been delegated specific roles to ensure appropriate systems are in place for the smooth organisation of educational experiences.
• The practitioners are encouraged to explore the self-evaluation tools from the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide to review practice. Information arising from reviews is not currently utilised to develop action plans for improvement.
• The manager and the practitioners regularly share information with parents through a variety of means including a parents’ noticeboard, a parents’ handbook, a monthly newsletter, social media and through formal meetings as, and when, these are required. In the past, questionnaires seeking parents’ opinions were distributed.
• The manager and the practitioners value continuing professional development and have most recently engaged with courses in healthy eating, Hanen, Equality and Diversity, Siolta and Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC).
• Regular staff meetings are facilitated quarterly. This time is used for addressing both the day-to-day organisational issues arising and quality development. Informal planning takes place every Friday.
• Information evenings are held for families. Parents are encouraged to visit the setting in advance of the child’s start date to support the settling-in transition from home. A gradual transition process is planned for the children who avail of the full day-care service.
• The setting is located in close proximity to the local primary school. The practitioners have developed professional relationships with the teachers and bring the children for a walk to their new school. Information on the children’s learning and development is shared through an ‘All about me’ booklet. Photographs are gathered of other relevant primary schools to support the transition of all children to school.

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Action advised

- To promote leadership opportunities within the setting, it is advised that an additional post to co-ordinate systematic reviews of practice be developed. The use of the self-evaluation tools in the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide will promote self-reflection and support the development of action plans for improvement.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The manager and owners are strongly committed to the ongoing development of quality provision. 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>
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<td>Very Good</td>
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### Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very good</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good</strong></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><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poor</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.</td>
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