# EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

## REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Cute and Clever Playschool</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Richill</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lisnagry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Limerick</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09LK0118</td>
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Date of Inspection: 19-09-2018
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 | 19-09-2018
---|---

**Inspection activities undertaken**

- Meeting with setting manager and practitioners
- Observation of interactions during pre-school session
- Interaction with children
- Review of relevant documents
- Feedback meeting with setting manager and practitioners

**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Cute and Clever Playschool is a privately-owned and privately-managed setting in operation since 2002. It provides a morning session only to children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the morning of the inspection, nineteen children and four practitioners, one of whom is the owner manager, 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.
- A very attentive and caring ethos has been successfully created in the setting. The practitioners demonstrate great warmth towards the parents and the children on arrival. The children appear relaxed, confident and comfortable.
- The routines very effectively promote children’s emotional and physical security along with their learning and development. The majority of the children appear familiar with the routines and they receive five-minute verbal reminders from the practitioners in advance of any change in the routine. While a visual of the routine is displayed, this was never discussed or shared with the children during the inspection.
- Very positive relationships are established between the children and the practitioners. A key person approach is being successfully used to provide consistency of care. The practitioners are appropriately deployed within the room to ensure all the children receive consistent support, encouragement and guidance during their play.
- The practitioners are very good role models for providing guidance and encouragement to the children towards positive behaviour and in fostering child-child relationships. Many examples were observed where the practitioners provided timely reminders and affirmations to the children as they facilitated and encouraged paired and small-group activities.
- The snack-time routine very effectively supports social engagement, healthy-eating and independence.
- The children’s sense of identity and belonging is very successfully supported in the setting. The practitioners value and celebrate diversity, children’s individuality, families and the local community. Children self-register on arrival using their named photograph; the gathering of photographs featuring the children’s experiences and achievements in the setting has commenced. The practitioners reported that displays depicting the community and community events, families and children are created during the year. A commendable initiative took place during the previous pre-school year where children got the opportunity to get to know the residents in the local nursing home; this initiative is also being planned for the coming year. The success of this initiative was shared during the inspection through photographs and learning stories.

**Action advised**

- The practitioners are advised to consider discussing and sharing the visual of the daily routine with the children to support them in knowing what is planned for the morning and any changes that may occur. Introducing more transition strategies to support the children moving from one activity to another is also advised; these might include soft music and timers. There are many ideas in this regard available in the ‘Supporting Transitions’ pillar of practice in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide.
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 practitioners successfully provide a broad-based curriculum which is clearly underpinned by the principles of Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.
- Planning for curriculum implementation is organised in two-month blocks with the practitioners deciding together on what themes or topics they will focus on. These themes are influenced by seasons and seasonal events, developmental tasks and community events. The curricular plans are implemented through many and varied hands-on purposeful and exploratory play experiences, adult-directed activities, art and crafts, songs, poems and stories. Monitoring and review of the curriculum happens informally and has not yet been fully developed.
- A variety of pedagogical documentation is used successfully to celebrate children’s learning and includes children’s key learning observations, learning stories, individual and large group-learning folders that include photographs, narratives and anecdotes. Limited use is made of assessment information to identify the next steps in learning and for ensuring continuity in children’s learning.
- The practitioners facilitate high-quality interactions with children very successfully. They know the children very well and the children eagerly seek them out to share their stories and achievements. The practitioners use an extensive range of very effective pedagogical strategies to facilitate and support the children’s learning and thinking. They actively extend children’s thinking, talking and motivation, they come down to children’s level when they talk to them, they smile and they display enthusiasm and a keen interest in the children’s play intentions.
- The indoor environment is spacious and homely with lots of natural light. It is purposefully structured with suitably designated interest areas that support a wide variety of types of play and learning experiences. The well-designed indoor environment and the resources successfully facilitate the development of children’s positive learning dispositions, independence, creativity, social engagement and imagination.
- The practitioners encourage the children to participate in songs, rhymes and stories. Playing with language and having fun with rhyme and repetition very successfully supports children’s emergent language and literacy skills.
- Learning through play is clearly maintained and facilitated as the central medium through which children learn in the setting. The children have ample time to play indoors and outdoors, they confidently move between the various learning areas and choose what they want to play with and who they want to play with.
- The setting has a variety of outdoor spaces that are used regularly to effectively support children’s physical development, social learning, spatial awareness, curiosity and love of nature. The outdoor learning environment has a rich mix of natural elements and purposely-developed spaces with ample opportunity for children to run, cycle, balance, climb, hide, dig, relax and explore materials.
- The practitioners adopt an inclusive approach to their interactions with the children and strong links are well established with external agencies to support children with additional needs.

Action advised
- The practitioners are advised to review their planning and assessment practices to ensure they are implementing an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum where children’s current and emerging interests are incorporated more fully into the short-term planning in order to support and enhance their enquiry-based learning. Assessment for children’s learning needs to authenticate continuity in their learning and inform and progress the next steps for their learning. Engaging with the self-evaluation tools, templates, tip sheets and podcasts available in the ‘Planning and Assessment’ pillar of the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will be beneficial in this regard.
AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The majority of the children demonstrate high levels of motivation and engagement in their learning. They have opportunities to play alone, in groups, and with attentive playful practitioners. They interact very well with their peers and appear very interested in exploring the play materials.
- The children display very positive learning dispositions and attitudes to learning. They are resourceful, persistent and curious and very confident in initiating their own play agendas.
- The children take some responsibility for looking after their personal belongings and care needs. The practitioners took sole responsibility for tidying up after lunch, sweeping the floor and cleaning the tables.
- The children are developing very appropriate positive pro-social skills. They present as kind and mannerly to each other and are respectful to the practitioners.
- The children display a growing confidence in using their large motor skills, they jump, cycle, climb, run and challenge themselves when playing outdoors.
- The children are experiencing achievement in their play and activities and there were many instances where children drew attention to their successes and achievements.
- The majority of the children participated enthusiastically in the story, rhymes and songs on the morning of the inspection.
- A number of children demonstrated high levels of curiosity and awareness of mathematical concepts using the displays in the room. While some children were observed engaging with early mathematical concepts in their play and through conversations with each other and the practitioners, there were missed opportunities to maximise this within the range of play experiences throughout the morning of the inspection.
- Children are effectively supported to make sense of the world through hand-on activities and experiences undertaken as part of the various themes throughout the year as discussed and viewed within the documentation. Some recent explorations included hibernating, oral health and road safety. There were some missed learning opportunities on the morning of the inspection to capitalise on ‘Storm Ali’ for making sense of natural phenomena and for asking and responding to ‘I wonder why’ questions about the wind and its properties.

Actions advised

- To support the children’s innate desire to care for their environment and take responsibility in the room, it is advised that a pictorial jobs’ chart be created with the children and actively utilised. This will contribute to their growing sense of community and citizenship.
- The practitioners are advised to take a more purposeful approach to fostering children’s mathematical language throughout the variety of learning contexts. The addition of resources such as wind chimes, ribbons and flags along with asking more ‘I wonder why’ questions will further support children to make sense of and be aware of the natural world.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- There is a strong ethos of commitment to continuing professional development in the setting. The manager recently completed the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) programme and has engaged with the National Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) to ensure inclusivity for all children attending the service.
- The practitioners have clear roles and responsibilities within the programme of activities and respectful team work and collegiality is evident.
- Management and staff discuss practice informally on a daily basis and they meet formally every two months. These meetings are not documented.
- The organisation of the ECCE documentation is at an early stage of development.
- The practice of involving all staff in collaborative self-evaluation practice has yet to be developed.
- The staff in the setting avails of supports provided by the local county childcare committee and good links have been established with external agencies and supports such as speech and language professionals.
- The staff is actively involved in supporting children’s transition from the setting to the local primary school. Visits from the school principal and teachers to the setting are facilitated and the children attend school events and avail of some school facilities such as the astro turf pitch and gymnasium in the school.
Great efforts are made by the staff to engage with parents about their children’s learning and development; these include the regular use of informative newsletters, the sharing of photographs through a private social application, portfolios of children’s work and invitations to partake in events organised in the setting.

**Actions advised**

- Management is advised to develop an organised system for the documentation needed for implementing the ECCE programme.
- The manager is advised to document the formal staff meetings to ensure that agreed actions and changes to practice are followed up on to improve the learning experiences and outcomes for the children.
- Management is advised to develop a systematic review of practice using the *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide*. This will further support practitioners in self-reviewing their practice and making changes.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

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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<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Good</td>
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Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality 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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