An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>The Playhouse Crèche and Playhouse</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>7 The Wells</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cortober</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrick-on-Shannon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Roscommon</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09RN0019</td>
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Date of Inspection: 20-02-2019
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>20-02-2019</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>▶ Meeting with setting owner/manager</td>
<td>▶ Interaction with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ Observation of interactions during one sessions</td>
<td>▶ Review of relevant documents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▶ Feedback to setting owner and deputy manager</td>
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CONTEXT OF SETTING

The Playhouse Crèche and Playschool is a privately-owned and operated setting located outside the village of Cortober. The facility offers sessional, full day and after-school services. It provides two morning sessions for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The larger session is located upstairs where most children are in their second year of the programme. The smaller session is downstairs where the children are in their first year of the ECCE programme. On the day of the inspection, there were no children present in the smaller of the two sessions and, therefore, the inspection took place in the upstairs session. In this learning environment there were nineteen children and four practitioners present. 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 good.
- A warm and welcoming atmosphere is evident in the setting. Children are individually greeted on arrival and invited to choose an area of interest to them in the learning environment.
- The daily routine provides a variety of experiences and includes a healthy balance between child-initiated and adult-initiated experiences.
- During the inspection, the large number of transitions, where children were required to move from one area or activity to another, negatively impacted on their levels of engagement during their play.
- Relationships between practitioners and children are consistently respectful. Secure relationships have been established in the session and children appear very comfortable in the environment. Many practitioners provide affirmation and meaningful encouragement towards the children.
- A small number of opportunities are provided for children to develop an awareness of themselves as individuals and as members of groups. Family and children’s individual photographs are displayed in the environment supporting recognition for each child and his/her families.
- The setting has made connections with the local community and welcomes community members to visit the setting throughout the year.

Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to minimise the number of transitions that happen throughout the daily routine so as to support opportunities for children’s more in-depth engagement in play experiences.
- The practitioners are advised to strengthen the ways in which the uniqueness of each child is recognised and celebrated throughout the learning programme. For example, by encouraging the children to be imaginative and expressive during their creative experiences and by displaying these throughout the environment sends a message to the children that their individuality is recognised and valued.
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 approach is used, with links to Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.
- The learning programme is documented retrospectively and displayed in the hallway for parents. A planned approach to developing children's learning and development is not in place.
- Practitioners regularly gather information about children's learning experiences. The focus of these assessment approaches varies. While some documented observations are effective in capturing children's learning experiences and achievements, others focus strongly on children's physical skills and their ability to recognise colours and to identify shapes. Information from the assessment approaches are not used to inform the learning programme.
- The practitioners use a variety of effective interaction strategies in their interactions with children. Practitioners regularly sit with the children, listen to them and maintain eye contact as they support them in their engagement with an activity.
- The indoor learning environment is spacious with many defined learning areas. The large quantity of resources, in particular plastic resources, impinges on the opportunities for children to be creative, imaginative and curious in their learning experiences.
- Daily opportunities are provided for children to engage in the outdoor learning environment. On the day of the inspection, a damaged fence in the large grass area meant that the children were confined to a small tarmac space. Typically, the children would have access to the entire outdoor environment which provides opportunities to support and promote children's gross motor skills.
- Practitioners recognise the importance of play as the central medium through which children learn and develop in the setting. The learning environment provides a variety of play types to include socio-dramatic, construction and creative play. The role of the practitioner as play partner in children's play is not fully realised and results in many missed opportunities by practitioners to support and promote children's learning and development.
- Children's emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills are effectively fostered in the learning environment. A variety of resources are provided to support children's natural curiosity around letters, numbers and their writing skills; most of these are appropriate to an early learning context.

Actions advised
- Practitioners are advised to use their documented observations to inform the development of a short-term curriculum plan. This plan should take account of children's dispositions, values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding ensuring that it is emergent and therefore reflective of individual children in the session.
- The practitioners are advised to minimise the quantity of plastic resources available in the environment. The introduction of a variety of open-ended resources would contribute towards enriching children's playful learning experiences.
- Practitioners are advised to develop their roles as play partners in facilitating, leading and scaffolding children's learning through play. In doing so, practitioners can support children's purposeful play experiences and promote their learning and development.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children present as happy and content in their environment. Many demonstrate enjoyment in their learning and remain at certain activities for extended periods of time. On the morning of the inspection, the sand area and the table-top activities were of particular interest to the children.
- Children make many decisions about their learning experiences. They choose where and with whom they wish to play with for the majority of the session.
- Children have limited access to documentation that reflects their learning achievements. There are currently no learning journals and each practitioner stores her individual observations in a file which are not shared with or available to the children.
• Practitioners promote the use of the Irish language in an informal way through songs and rhymes. The children express great enjoyment in this and demonstrate a developing appreciation of the language.

• Children demonstrate developing personal and social skills. The majority of children show an understanding of turn taking and co-operating with one another. Practitioners effectively promote these skills through the use of a Time Timer, one of the resources received through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) play pack.

• The range of books available in the environment is vast. However, on the day of the inspection, the children engaged very little with the reading materials as they were not easily accessible.

Actions advised
• Practitioners are advised to actively involve children in the creation of individual learning journals where records of the children’s various learning experiences could be gathered. In doing so, children can regularly access and engage with these journals to reflect on and recall their learning experiences. This can also effectively support and enhance children’s awareness of themselves as successful learners.

• Practitioners are advised to review the quality, quantity and accessibility of books available in the learning environment. To this end, practitioners are advised to critically evaluate the library spaces to ensure they are attractive and inviting. This can promote the effective use of books and wider reading materials, therefore supporting the way in which the children make sense of the world.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

• The quality of management and leadership for learning is fair.

• Practitioners demonstrate an enthusiasm for developing the quality of early years provision in the setting. They are committed to their roles and equally distribute responsibilities amongst the team. For example, as one practitioner read a story to the children, another practitioner prepared the environment for the subsequent learning experiences.

• The curriculum is discussed by practitioners informally through their daily conversations. Practitioners do not formally meet regularly to plan, review, and evaluate their practice.

• Some efforts are being made to ensure that information is shared with parents about their child’s learning. For example, brief conversations occur between practitioners and parents at collection times.

• The setting manager is currently involved in professional learning around the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter. There is no evidence of a plan to support continuing professional development of all practitioners in the setting.

• A gradual settling-in phase is offered to new children and families starting in the setting. As most children have been attending the setting for many years, their move between rooms is reported to be quite smooth.

Actions advised
• The setting is advised to avail of in-house mentoring from Better Start Quality Development Service. In doing so, the setting manager and practitioners will be supported individually and as a team to reflect on and discuss their practice with a view to providing consistent and high quality learning experiences for the children.

• Management is advised to facilitate and plan for regular team meetings where all practitioners have an opportunity to review and reflect on the curriculum and on the children’s progression through their learning experiences. It is important that the outcomes of those meetings are documented in a purposeful manner in order to ensure that they can be shared and acted upon in a way that improves children’s learning experiences and achievements.

• Building on the partnership with parents that has already been established, practitioners are advised to proactively involve parents in their child’s learning and development. In this regard, engagement with the resources provided in the ‘Partnership with Parents’ pillar in the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide is recommended.
CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The setting manager and deputy manager attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. They engaged in the professional dialogue in a positive manner, demonstrating interest in the future development of provision. The capacity of the setting 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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</thead>
<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>Fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Language used in Early Years Education 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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

- We at the playhouse found the inspection to be a learning experience, we found the inspector very helpful. The report was very informative and the report showed the areas where improvement was needed.
- The report was very accurate to what had been explained to us by the inspector on the day
- We at the playhouse found the report easy to read and we will continue to access it in order to help us to improve the service.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

Area 1  
- We at the playhouse have minimized the number of activities we’re continuing to encourage the children to be imaginative by letting them take the role more in the daily activities by deciding what they would like to do.

Area 2  
- All rooms have curriculum plans and journals are been done in Three rooms. We are consulting with the Aistear Siolta curriculum and the Roscommon county childcare.

Area 3  
- We are consulting with parents on updating them on the changes.

Area 4  
- We will continue to improve on all areas.