

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Busy Bees Daycare and Family Centre Ltd.
Setting Address	Rathmadder Estate Gurteen County Sligo
DCYA number	09SO0035

Date of Inspection: 09-10-2019



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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	09-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with the setting manager • Meeting with the practitioners • Observation of interactions during two pre-school sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Feedback with the setting manager and practitioners.

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Busy Bees Daycare and Family Centre is a community-based setting, situated on the outskirts of Gurteen village, County Sligo. It offers two concurrent pre-school sessions to children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme, along with after school and full day care services. The pre-school curriculum is informed by the principles of *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. During the inspection, one manager/leader, one pre-school leader and four practitioners provided care and education for twenty-seven children. The manager attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. 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.
- There is a visual routine on display in both pre-school rooms which promotes the children's understanding of the daily activities on offer. The children have many opportunities to select preferred areas of interest during free-play, both indoors and outdoors.
- The children attend the dining room for breakfast. Independence is fostered as children take turns to pour cereal and obtain water from a dispenser. There were missed opportunities for the practitioners to socialise with the children at this time and, in doing so, extend their self-help skills further.
- Practitioners encourage the children to develop social skills such as turn-taking and to act caringly towards their peers. They regularly affirm their efforts and achievements in play situations.
- Practitioners predominantly use verbal cues at transition times with some use of a visual timer in one of the rooms. During the inspection, there were minimal lead-in periods provided to adequately prepare the children for the subsequent change of activity.
- The children and their families are welcomed positively into the setting. The practitioners are respectful and responsive to the children's needs. Currently, there is no key-person approach in operation which would enhance the relationships between the practitioners, the children and their families.
- The child's sense of belonging is supported using photographs on the 'family tree' and by displaying their creations in the designated 'art gallery'. A learning journal of group activities and a digital photographic frame are displayed in the hallway for the parents and children to view.
- There are many opportunities for the pre-school to become integrated with the local community. The children visit many businesses during walks in the locality and a range of professionals visit the setting at various times of the year to share their skills with the children.

Actions advised

- It is advised that practitioners utilise breakfast time as an opportunity to socialise with the children and enhance their self-help skills.
- It is advised that practitioners utilise additional transition strategies that provide appropriate lead-in times and adequately prepare the children for subsequent activities.
- It is advised that practitioners establish a key-person approach to enrich the relationships between the practitioners, the children and their families further. Developing a key-person policy that

outlines the rationale and procedures for implementation of the approach will effectively inform practitioners and parents of the expectations of the approach and the collaborative roles involved.

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 good.
- Practitioners have developed an emergent approach to planning with connections made to the children's interests and some use of the *Aistear* learning goals. It is unclear how the planning currently supports the children's progression in learning. Evaluations of planning are not conducted.
- Practitioners use snapshot observations to highlight the children's interests. They use individual scrapbooks during the year to collate observations, artwork and photographs of the children's various learning experiences. On the day of inspection, it was noted that this work had yet to be commenced.
- Practitioners are caring, responsive and engage playfully with the children. They encourage peer interactions throughout the session.
- Defined indoor spaces provide a range of interest areas, open-ended materials and some authentic resources in both pre-school rooms. The children regularly access the outdoors and a canopy area enables this to occur in all types of weather. Sand, compost and gravel provide both physical and sensorial experiences. The children have access to wheeled vehicles in the sheltered area.
- Practitioners occasionally afford the children opportunities to engage in simple experiments to develop mathematical and science concepts.
- Practitioners effectively position themselves during interactions with the children and playfully engage in a range of activities with them. There were many missed opportunities to maximise the children's learning through open-ended questioning and through the use of expanded vocabulary during interactions.
- The manager is the inclusion co-ordinator for the setting and has completed the Leadership for Inclusion Programme (LINC). This promotes inclusive practice.
- There is a daily circle-time opportunity in each room which effectively promotes the children's emergent language through story, song and rhyme. There is no allocated time for the children to reflect on and plan for their play experiences.

Actions advised

- It is advised that practitioners develop regular assessment practices so that the children's individual learning needs are progressed in the planned activities. Making more explicit connections to *Aistear* learning goals, in addition to frequent evaluations of planning, will promote progressive and connected learning experiences.
- It is advised that practitioners utilise their positioning to maximum effect by promoting extended vocabulary, open-ended questioning and mathematical language during playful interactions.
- It is advised that practitioners allocate time and opportunities for the children to express their views, plan for and think about their play experiences and to recognise themselves as partners in their learning.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children enjoy engaging in a range of multi-sensory experiences and particularly appreciate story-time in each room. They are developing fine-motor skills whilst exploring the magnetic construction shapes and by mark-making with materials such as pencils and paints.
- Some children confidently share their accomplishments and they are regularly affirmed for their efforts. As work on the children's individual scrapbooks had not commenced at the time of inspection, opportunities to maximise the children's success and to develop their identity as learners were limited.

- Most of the children confidently discuss their interests and describe family and personal experiences with ease. This demonstrates their developing sense of belonging within the pre-school rooms.
- The children are developing an appreciation for the local community by actively using the socio-dramatic and small-world play areas to assume a variety of community roles.
- The majority of children are developing the ability to play co-operatively whilst others require frequent adult support. There were missed opportunities to promote independent conflict resolution and problem-solving strategies during times of minor conflict between children.
- The children have some opportunities to explore natural materials through planned activities such as making hedgehogs, using leaves to paint with and playing with compost. There is scope to deepen this learning further through more investigative play and active-learning in the natural environment.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the children are supported to develop skills for independent conflict resolution through problem-solving, negotiating and communicating with their peers during minor conflict situations.
- It is advised that information is regularly documented regarding the children's learning, experiences and achievements to promote their development and sense of success as learners.
- It is advised that the children have regular opportunities to explore and investigate using books, discussions and inquiries to make sense of the natural environment and the world around them.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The setting has previously received mentoring support from the Better Start Quality Development Service which encouraged practice review and use of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*. Consistent, collaborative review remains to be embedded in practice.
- The manager undertakes support and supervision of individual practitioners and organises team meetings on a termly basis. The minutes of the team meetings are recorded. Non-contact time is provided for the practitioners to document the weekly plans.
- Practitioners implement a partnered approach in each of the rooms. Although they are aware of the assigned daily duties, the absence of collaborative planning, regular assessment and review minimises the capacity of a team approach.
- Parents are informed about their children's learning experiences informally on a daily basis. They are provided with their child's individual scrapbook at the end of the year. There are no formal opportunities for parents to obtain regular information regarding their children's observed learning.
- A notice board, social media page and termly newsletter provide parents with additional information regarding activities in the setting. Information is currently only available to families in English and in a printed format.
- The settling-in period is supported by offering parents and children the opportunity to visit the pre-school. Parents receive a setting handbook within an enrolment pack. Children who transition from one room to the other gain familiarity with the practitioners during their time in the setting. They have opportunities to transition to the 'new' room prior to the commencement of the ECCE programme.
- Previously the practitioners have completed an 'All about me' book to share information with parents regarding the children's learning prior to their transition to primary school. Currently there are no measures in place to share a summary of the child's learning with their parents or subsequently with the primary school prior to the transition.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the manager and practitioners develop clearer and collaborative systems for planning, assessment and regular reflection on practice to promote quality improvement.
- It is advised that the manager and practitioners develop measures to promote regular, formal communication with parents and adopt practices for consulting them during setting reviews. Developing documents that are accessible to children and families with English as an additional language will support stronger channels of communication.

- It is advised that the practitioners record a summary of learning for each child transitioning between rooms and when moving on to primary school, with parental permission. This will support continuity of experiences and a smooth transition process for the children.

Summary of Overall Inspection

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Good
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	Good
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	Good
Quality of management and leadership for learning	Good

Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.
Very good	Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.
Fair	Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.
Poor	Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.

APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report.

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: For our Family wall, we will use alternative method instead of using family pictures. It has been quite difficult getting parents to bring in family photos, so in future, if this is the case we will get children to draw their only family picture and put them on the wall. We have also given our email address to parents so that they are able to email their pictures and we can print them off. For transitions from one activity to another, we will explain to the children what is coming next and give children a five minutes warning using visual timers such as egg timers or a 5 minute hand, so that they are aware of what is going on and they are prepared for the next transition. During meal times, we will be more prepared in the kitchen so that we can sit with the children to socialise with and engage in conversation with them. A key person approach has been established in the rooms. Key groups meet in the morning for 15 minutes and 15 minutes before home time to establish how their day went, what activities they carried out etc. This is to ensure that relationships are being enriched between the practitioner, the children and families.

Area2: Practitioners meet with their key group in the morning to establish what they would like to do for the day. Ideas are gathered from children to promote their learning and interests from both children and the practitioner. This ensures that the children's individual learning needs are progressed in the planned activities. Evaluation of our planning sheets is now carried out on a weekly basis. The staff ensure to use more open ended questions to engage in longer conversations and encourage the children to be confident about talking about the creations they have and talking about how they made them and the story behind this etc. A new curriculum has been put in place and is displayed in the hallway for parents to see. It is based on the children's experiences and interests and recognises themselves as partners in their learning.

Area 3: We now use the High Scope approach to conflict resolution and this helps children to solve the problem themselves through problem solving skills, negotiating and communicating with their peers. The adult takes a step back to let the children come up with a solution themselves. The adult will intervene if necessary. More natural life has been introduced into the room, through books, posters, discussions and arts and craft activities. We also introduced a natural life shelf.

Area 4: Newsletters with more information about the work we do is now sent out on a regular basis. Our enrolment pack now contains, in 5 different languages, explanations as to what is included in the enrolment pack. This was done with the help of parents who attend our service. This year we will be doing the Mo Scéal: moving from preschool to primary, so that this will help children with the transition from preschool to primary.