## EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

### REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Scallywags Childcare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>25 Bentley Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Wicklow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09WW0042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Date of Inspection: 14-01-2019**
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>14-01-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interaction with children</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with setting manager</td>
<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with practitioner</td>
<td>• Feedback to setting manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observation of interactions during a session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Scallywags Childcare is a long-established, privately-owned setting. It is located in a purpose-built building in a residential area in Bray, County Wicklow. It provides a morning and an afternoon sessional service using a play-based curriculum. On the day of the inspection, the morning session was observed. Twenty-one children, the majority of whom are in the first year of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme, the manager and a practitioner were in attendance. 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; 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.
- Families and children are greeted very warmly as they arrive in the morning.
- The display of the flexible daily routine details the sequence of the activities and contains photographs of the children engaged in the daily events. It is positioned at child height to support children’s independent access and use of the display.
- The practitioners use verbal reminders to signal upcoming transitions between activities. Children are provided with adequate time to finish their activity before moving on to the next one.
- The setting is divided into two adjoining rooms. On the day of the inspection, children demonstrated confidence in their own ability to select the room and area in which they wished to play and their play partners.
- Secure and supportive relationships have been developed between the practitioners and the children. The consistent use of positive affirmation and encouraging feedback supports and motivates children in their learning.
- On the day of the inspection, practitioners were attentive to the children’s needs. This included supporting children who arrived late by helping them to choose an activity they might enjoy.
- Snack time is valued as a social occasion and the practitioners sit and chat to the children about their favourite fruit and what they have brought for lunch.
- The uniqueness of each child is reflected in the large birthday display, his/her photographs and names on the coat hooks. The diversity of children present in the setting is reflected in the celebration of their cultural festivals and the sharing of their favourite stories.
- The parents visit for the Christmas party and the end-of-year graduation. Parents and family members, such as a nurse and a member of the army, have visited the pre-school to share their work experiences.
- Children are learning about the local area and people who work there, such as the Garda, the nurse, a member of the army and the fireman. Evidence of these visits are recorded in the floor book and includes photographs and children’s comments linked to the drawings they have made of the visits. At the beginning of the year, they went on a walk around the local area and the practitioner recorded the children’s comments on what they had seen. Practitioners bring the children on walks to the local woods and the local nursing home. A map ‘Where we live’ is on display with photographs of the local community.
Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to build on their established good relationships with the parents and the children through the introduction of a key person approach. This approach is one in which the practitioner develops a close, secure relationship with the child and acts as a link between the preschool and the parents.

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 setting has moved away from a solely Montessori approach to a play-based curriculum. Practitioners continue to avail of specific Montessori materials, such as sandpaper letters and numbers, to support aspects of children’s learning. Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework is clearly reflected in the setting’s learning programme and is displayed within the play areas.
- The practitioners undertake long-term, medium-term and short-term planning. These plans detail seasonal themes and topics and the associated activities. The practitioners take a note of the children’s emergent interests but have yet to include them in the short-term plans.
- A large ‘floor’ book compiled by the practitioners contains photographs of the children’s engagement in activities related to selected themes; it includes the children’s comments and examples of their creative art work.
- The practitioners gather information on the children as well as their drawings into individual learner journals. These are shared with parents at the end of each term.
- The practitioners share the recording of children’s learning once a term using a template linked to the themes of Aistear. These records contain clear planned steps for the children’s progression.
- The practitioners consistently use a variety of positive interactions with the children to promote and extend their learning.
- The indoor environment is well-laid out in specific interest areas. Each area has a range of suitable accessible play resources with some Montessori materials. In this setting, play is valued and encouraged by the practitioners and on the day of the inspection the practitioners were observed playing alongside and with the children when invited. This was particularly evident in the playful interactions during the ‘restaurant’ activity when the practitioner joined in the children’s play; she extended their engagement by offering paper and pencils to write menus and by modelling words such as ‘flavour’ and ‘delicious’.
- The children have limited access to a small outdoor area in front of the building.
- The practitioners recognise the children as competent learners and emphasise the value of everyday activities, songs, rhymes and games to support the development of the children’s emergent literacy and numeracy skills. On occasions, the practitioners report that a small number of children are introduced to sandpaper letters and numbers if they show an interest in the further learning of letters and sounds.
- Children have access to a wide range of books suited to their interests. On the day of the inspection, children were offered the choice of taking part in the storytelling activity or following their own play interests. During the storytelling activity the practitioner effectively engaged the children by posing questions and prompts and at the end of the story by asking them to recall what had happened.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to extend their current approaches to documenting the children’s progression in learning and their development over time. This could include the addition of the individual children’s interests into the short-term plans. In addition, the key person approach could be effectively used for the taking of more regular observations that include the children’s strengths and dispositions.
- The practitioners are advised to include more regular opportunities within the routine to support children’s access to physical activities when they cannot go outside.
AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children are happy and show real enjoyment and engagement in the play activities that they plan and lead as well as the adult-initiated activities such as the art and craft activity. Many children are achieving success and mastery. During the session, a child was observed building a tower and persevering until it had reached the desired height.
- They demonstrated enjoyment and pleasure in their interactions and activities with peers and practitioners. Laughter was heard throughout the session.
- The children generally play very well together socially and are encouraged to be kind and to help each other. On the day of the inspection, this was particularly evident; children who were there for the second year were attentive to the needs of the children new to the setting. They encouraged them to take part in their socio-dramatic play and one child was observed showing a younger child the correct shoe and helping her to put it on.
- On the day of the inspection, a few children were still learning to play co-operatively and they demonstrated difficulty in turn taking and sharing. The resulting distraction resulted in the practitioner stepping in to support them in negotiating their minor disagreements.
- The majority of children are in their first year of attendance in the setting. A differentiation in activities and learning experiences has yet to be developed for these children and those new to the setting.
- Opportunities are provided for the children to practise their self-help skills and independence. They are encouraged to take part in the tidy-up routines and independently put on their coats when going home. They are developing an awareness of their own abilities and one child was observed saying ‘Now I’m three, I can zip my own coat’.
- The children’s sense of identity and belonging is reflected in the many photographs and examples of their mark-making and art work that includes their added comments.
- The children are developing an awareness of the natural environment through the planting activities that they undertake.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to develop procedures, in consultation with the children, which will support the development of their understanding and ability to play socially together and to independently resolve minor conflicts.
- To optimise learning opportunities and to provide children with more individualised support matched to their stage of development, it is advised that regular small-group activities led by the key person be introduced.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The manager and the practitioner discuss the activities and events at the start and end of each day. Formal meetings take place once a term with the owner of the setting to discuss the plans for the pre-school.
- The practitioners have been working together for a number of years and there is a strong sense of a shared vision for children’s learning. They are committed to supporting children as active learners through positive interactions that motivate and support them as independent learners.
- There is evidence of strong teamwork, collaboration and seamless leadership, as noted during the discussions about moving on the next activity.
- The manager and the practitioner are committed to furthering their professional practice in order to support the children’s learning. In the past they have used the templates in the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide to support them in their reflections. They have recently attended workshops on Planning and Documenting the Curriculum and Paediatric First Aid and the manager is currently completing the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) programme.
- The manager accesses support and information from Early Childhood Ireland, the local childcare committee and a network of providers.
A range of approaches is used for sharing information with parents. At the start of the year, the setting’s policies and procedures are emailed to parents. A newsletter is sent every term outlining the themes and activities covered. Social media is used for the regular sharing of photographs of the children engaged in activities and for informing parents of upcoming events. Practitioners share information on the children’s learning with parents at arrival and collection items. As parents arrive to the setting a parents’ notice board contains the monthly plans, the birthday of the day and information relevant to their parenting role.

Transitions into and from the setting are managed very effectively to support the children’s learning and development. Parents are invited to an open morning in the setting before their children start and practitioners use the ‘floor’ book to share their learning programme and the activities. The setting offers reduced hours at the start of the year and parents are encouraged to stay until their child feels comfortable in his/her new environment.

The practitioners prepare the children for their move to primary school by discussing with them their upcoming move in a relaxed, gentle manner. They have recently started using the Mo Scéal transition document to support the transition to primary school and have planned to contact local primary schools in the near future.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to come together formally throughout the year to discuss and plan for the children’s learning. The recording of the decisions taken during these meetings is also advised to support the implementation and monitoring of improvement initiatives.
- Practitioners are advised to develop a handbook for parents that explains Aistear and the play-based curriculum in place in the setting.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The capacity of the setting to implement the action advised is very good due to the ongoing commitment of the manager and the practitioner to improving the quality experiences in the setting.
### Summary of Overall Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children's learning and development</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children's learning and development</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Published 2019