An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Tippy’s Pre-School Playgroup</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Ballinahinch</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ashford</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Wicklow</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09WW0046</td>
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Date of Inspection: 04-04-2019
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 | 04-04-2019
---|---

| Inspection activities undertaken |  
Meeting with owner practitioner and practitioner  
Observation of interactions during a session  
Interaction with children  
Review of relevant documents  
Feedback to owner/practitioner and practitioner |

**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Tippy’s Pre-School Playgroup, is a private setting located in Ashford, Co. Wicklow. It provides a morning session for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, thirteen children and two practitioners, one of whom is the owner, were 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 pleasant and caring atmosphere is clearly evident. The practitioners take time to engage in friendly and warm exchanges with parents and children at arrival and departure times.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are authentic and reciprocal. The practitioners know the children well and demonstrate respectful regard for them and their families. The practitioners have commenced the use of the key-person approach. This approach is one in which each practitioner develops a close, secure relationship with a small group of children and acts as a link between the pre-school and the parents of these children.
- Children are provided with a number of opportunities to make decisions in relation to their learning experiences. These include their choices in the use of materials throughout the short period of free play, during the painting activity and at outside time. The majority of activities are predominantly adult initiated.
- The practitioners use some strategies to inform children of upcoming changes in the daily activities. Examples include audio props and the occasional use of the ‘now and then’ visual display. During the session, the transition from tidy-up time to the group activity was overly long and resulted in a small number of children becoming disengaged during this time.
- Lunch time is effectively used as a social occasion; friendly conversations take place between the practitioners and the children as they sit together.
- There are a number of photographs, including the family wall, and examples of the children’s artwork on display. On arrival, children enthusiastically self-register using their individually decorated ‘sign in/out stones’. This helps children to develop an appreciation of themselves as individuals.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to review the daily routine to ensure the provision of a greater balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated activities. It is also advised that the time allocated to free play be increased. This will further support children in making independent decisions in their learning.
- The practitioners are advised to develop further strategies to use at transition times to develop the children’s awareness and management of transitions. The consistent use of visual schedules, in conjunction with songs, rhymes and playful activities, will help children experience smooth transitions.
- The practitioners are advised to extend and embed the use of the key-person approach. The tip sheet ‘Using a Key Person approach’ from the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will assist 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 curriculum is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Planning for children’s learning and development is organised on long-term, medium-term and short-term bases. Generally, planning is informed by seasonal events and the practitioners' ideas.
- A variety of methods are used to record children’s learning and development. These include termly observations conducted by one of the practitioners, copybooks with photographs of children engaged in activities and monthly learning journals. The findings from these assessment methods are not used to inform the next steps in the children’s learning.
- The practitioners use effective interaction strategies to broaden and deepen the children’s understanding and learning. On the day of the inspection, their use of open-ended questions and thought-provoking comments to extend the children’s learning was noted positively.
- The indoor learning environment includes a number of interest areas. There are a wide variety of materials that promote the children’s engagement in a range of multi-sensory learning experiences. During the inspection, while the majority of materials were freely available to the children, the arrangement of some materials restricted children’s independent access to these resources and their decision making.
- The children have daily access to the outdoors where they have opportunities to engage in a variety of types of play on their own, in pairs and in small groups. On the day of the inspection, examples included the children’s active participation in imaginative play, physical play, socio-dramatic and sensory play.
- The practitioners skilfully model and promote language to broaden children’s early language and literacy development and their understanding and use of vocabulary. Throughout the inspection, the practitioners effectively used rhymes, songs and a good storytelling activity to encourage children’s language use. The practitioners record the children’s comments and thoughts on many of their mark-making achievements.
- The children are learning in an inclusive learning environment; the practitioners are aware of the children’s individual interests and their styles. The practitioners sensitively encouraged all children’s participation in activities.

*Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to use the templates and information in the ‘Planning and Assessment’ pillar from *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to further develop planning and assessment practices that involve both practitioners. This will help to ensure that children’s emerging interests and their individual learning needs are consistently used to inform short-term planning and to guide the next steps in children’s learning.
- The practitioners are advised to use the environment audit tool in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* with a view to maximising the layout of the indoor learning environment and the arrangement of materials and resources.

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 demonstrate interest and enjoyment in their learning. They present as happy and secure and eager to embrace new learning experiences and challenges. For example, they engaged excitedly during the egg and spoon race.
- The children display positive learning dispositions, such as using their imaginations and making decisions. An example included their enthusiastic participation in decorating eggs as part of the painting activity. At the time of the inspection, there was an over-use of templates for colouring-in and mark-making activities.
- The children are effectively developing their independent skills. During the inspection, they put materials away when finished with them and successfully put on and took off their coats and wellingtons.
Occasionally, members of the community are invited to visit and share their skills with the children. For example, a recent visit from a Garda has been captured in the children's individual photograph books. Some children demonstrate an awareness of individual difference and the capacity to take turns and to build relationships during social situations.

The children exhibit the ability to recall and make connections between their prior learning experiences and new learning. Examples noted included their responses to the practitioners’ thought-provoking questions during story time and a child’s responses to the double yolk in the egg that they cracked during the pancake activity.

The children have opportunities to explore the natural environment. There is evidence of the provision of meaningful learning experiences, such as the growing of pumpkins and sunflowers from seeds.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities for children to experience free mark-making and open-ended art activities that reflect their thoughts and ideas, and to place less emphasis on templates and product-art activities.
- The practitioners are advised to provide a greater range of learning experiences to help maximise and foster children’s awareness of diversity and the roles of members of the community. The facilitation of activities which explore differences and raise awareness of others in the community will assist in this regard.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- There is a positive ethos of collaboration and professionalism between the owner/practitioner and the practitioner. It is clearly evident that they are committed to the children, the parents and the setting.
- At the time of the inspection, while the owner/practitioner took responsibility for documenting planning and assessment practices, both practitioners were involved in the informal planning and assessment practices and the review of the curriculum. The *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* has yet to be used as part of this process.
- The practitioners participate in training relevant to an early years setting. They have attended a workshop on the Access and Inclusion Model facilitated by their county childcare committee. The practitioners also participate in regulatory training. At the time of the inspection, the owner/practitioner expressed a strong commitment to sourcing training in the use of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- The practitioners use a number of strategies which promote the sharing of information on the setting and the children’s learning with parents. These include daily discussions and the use of social media and information notes. At the end of the pre-school year, children’s monthly journals are shared with parents.
- The practitioners informally share the setting’s curriculum, policies and procedures with parents when their child commences in the setting. One-to-one meetings between the owner/practitioner and parents to discuss their child’s progress are also facilitated.
- Links have been established between the setting and a local primary school to share practical information, such as school closures and public health information. Towards the end of the pre-school year, the practitioners organise activities to raise children’s awareness of what happens in primary school. The owner/practitioner, with parents’ permission, has shared information on children with the principal of the primary school to promote continuity in the children’s learning as they progress to primary school.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to develop formal self-review and reflection practices. At regular staff meetings, they could refer to the self-evaluation tools in the guide to create and implement a shared action plan to address agreed areas for improvement. This practice could commence with a review of how to share the curriculum statement and more regular information on the children’s learning with parents.
- The practitioners are advised to further develop and use the policy on transitions. This will help the practitioners to establish consistent procedures to support children as they make the transition from the setting to primary school.
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>
<td>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>Good</td>
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Language used in Early Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<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

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
- The Daily routine has been reviewed with more time allocated to free play. Daily planning will endeavor to ensure the children have an even more role in how the day operates by incorporating a discussion time to identify the needs of each child.
- Transitions will be given greater consideration to ensure that children are clearly aware of the movement throughout the day. Songs Rhymes and playful activities along with visual schedules are somewhat in place but will be given more consideration at planning meetings and encouraged emphatically daily.
- Staff members have become familiar with the tip sheet ‘Using a Key Person approach’ from the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to strengthen the use of the Key Worker Approach already in place.

Area 2
- Staff are going to be included in planning going forward and the use of the Planning and Assessment Pillar will be common practice. Closer attention will be paid to the emerging interests of the children to inform short term planning and continue their learning. There will be a revamp and review of the indoor environment and materials and resources.

Area 3
- Open ended art activities will be more freely available and the continuous practice of encouraging Mark Making opportunities by discussing each piece and giving names to them.
- Planning will place emphasis on diversity and differences and use of the parents and community to assist in this regard.

Area 4
- Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide has been studied by all staff to develop self-review and reflective practice in a more formal manner. The sharing of curriculum with parents and invitation to peruse children's work regularly will be incorporated into our service.
- There is a Policy on Transitions in place in the service which was reviewed in April 2018 but greater adherence will be made to this going forward.