EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>The Little Farm Pre-School</th>
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</table>
| Setting Address | Laragh East  
                | Glendalough  
                | Co. Wicklow   |
| DCYA number  | 09WW0065                   |

Date of Inspection: 11-04-2019
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 | 11-04-2019
---|---
Inspection activities undertaken |  
- Meeting with setting manager/practitioner  
- Observation of interactions during the pre-school session  
- Interaction with children  
- Review of relevant documents  
- Feedback to setting manager/practitioner and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

The Little Farm Pre-School was established in 2003. It is located in the rural village of Laragh, Co. Wicklow. This private setting provides a morning sessional service for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The provision of outdoor play and learning experiences is a key feature of this setting. On the day of the inspection, the manager/practitioner and two practitioners, one of whom is employed under the Access and Inclusion (AIM) model, and seventeen children were present. The manager/practitioner and the two practitioners 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 excellent.
- A very warm and welcoming atmosphere has been successfully created.
- Parents enter the setting with the children on arrival and engage in relaxed conversations with the practitioners and other parents during this time.
- The children enter the setting with great enthusiasm. They are greeted warmly by the practitioners.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are commendably warm and respectful. The practitioners share many affectionate moments with the children throughout the morning.
- The practitioners know the children well and are very sensitive to the needs, strengths and interests of each child.
- The children’s identity and belonging are very effectively supported through a birthday train, a family wall and photographic displays that show the children’s engagement in various projects. During the inspection, the children used the photographs to reflect on recent projects and to discuss their learning. The children’s individual art work is also displayed, along with a mirror at the children’s level.
- The children’s independent skills are being supported very effectively. They hang up their coats on arrival and place their lunch boxes in the fridge. They manage their self-care routines, such as washing and drying their hands, with confidence.
- The children are encouraged and supported to learn at their own pace. They take on new challenges and engage with complex tasks under the guidance of the practitioners.
- The children are consistently affirmed and encouraged throughout the morning. The practitioners provide them with very positive feedback, for example, ‘You are being very gentle’ and ‘That was so kind’.
- Outdoor play and learning is a key feature of the setting. The large walled garden provides a very rich backdrop for the children’s play and exploration. All of the children have access to rain gear and wellington boots which supports their engagement in the outdoors in all weathers.
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.
- Play is the central medium through which the children learn. There is a specific focus on outdoor play experiences. The children have ample time to engage in in-depth, high quality play experiences. A limited range of Montessori materials are also available to the children.
- The indoor and outdoor environments support learning across a range of contexts. A variety of play types were observed including creative, construction, physical and socio-dramatic play.
- The outdoor environment provides opportunities for the children to explore the elements of nature, for instance plants, flowers and trees. A good range of resources is provided, including tyres, swings, wheelbarrows and balance bikes.
- Curriculum planning occurs on long-term, medium-term and short-term bases and is linked to the themes and goals of Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. The long-term plan is based around themes and experiences, including planting vegetables, hatching chickens and road safety. These themes are used to develop monthly plans.
- Weekly plans are developed based around themes, experiences and the children’s emerging interests.
- A range of assessment methods is in place, including individual books containing the children’s photographs and creative art. The practitioners also regularly record the children’s progress through brief notes. The information gathered from assessment is currently not used to inform the next steps in the children’s learning.
- The practitioners regularly plan projects to extend the children’s learning. A large group journal is used to document the children’s experiences and the development of the projects.
- The children’s early literacy and numeracy skills are very effectively promoted in the indoor and outdoor environments. On the day of the inspection, the practitioners supported the children in setting up a train in the garden. They lined up chairs and assigned various roles. Throughout the game, the practitioners discussed the concepts of distance, time and money in the very meaningful context of the children’s play. Resources, such as painted stones, pine cones and sticks, are used to support the children’s early literacy and numeracy skills in the outdoors.
- Throughout the day, the children enjoyed stories, songs, rhymes and games; all of which support their emergent literacy and numeracy development.

Action advised
- Building on the current effective assessment practices, the practitioners are advised to ensure closer links between planning and the children’s emerging interests. The information gathered through assessment should be used to inform the next steps in the children’s learning.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is excellent.
- The children are deeply engaged in their learning. They are curious and intensely interested in their environment.
- The children are calm, alert and at ease. They negotiate the daily routine with confidence.
- The children are highly competent and capable. They regularly experience success and mastery in their learning experiences.
- Extremely positive relationships between the children are evident. They play collaboratively and show great empathy for their peers. For example, they invite their friends to sit with them at snack time.
- The children are developing a good understanding of the rules and boundaries within the setting. They replace activities when completed and encourage others to do so.
- The children are highly creative. They communicate their ideas with confidence. During the inspection, a group of children worked together to build a parking garage. They carefully sourced materials to build the garage. They then parked bikes and cars, filled them with fuel and washed them.
The children are visible in the local community and are familiar with many of the people that live in the village. They go on regular walks to the local forest, where they can explore plant and animal life in their natural habitat. As a result of this, they are developing a strong sense of the environment and caring for animals. The children also care for the guinea pigs and miniature horses that live in the setting.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- The manager/practitioner demonstrates exemplary leadership in the areas of outdoor learning, nutrition and well-being. She provides excellent guidance and acts as a role model for the other practitioners who are very committed to the ethos of the setting.
- The practitioners set high but realistic expectations for the children and work consistently to support each child to reach his/her potential.
- Reflective practice is highly valued. There is evidence that the manager/practitioner and the practitioners regularly reflect on all aspects of their practice and make changes as a result of this reflection.
- The practitioners have regular opportunities to take leadership roles in the planning and evaluation of the curriculum.
- The team is highly committed to engaging in continuing professional development. The manager/practitioner and practitioners have completed a broad range of professional learning programmes, including training on child psychology, storytelling, inclusion, partnership with parents and outdoor learning. Two of the practitioners have completed training on the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines. The manager/practitioner has recently commenced a training programme on the forest school approach.
- The manager/practitioner avails of advice and support from the local county childcare committee and is very open to learning.
- Commendable partnerships with parents are in place. Parents are very welcome in the setting. They share their interests and information about their roles with the children and join in story times.
- The relaxed and warm atmosphere in the setting also supports the development of relationships between the children’s families. On the day of the inspection, the parents chatted together in the garden at collection time.
- There are effective practices in place to support the children’s transition from pre-school to primary school and the manager/practitioner has established good links with the principals in the local primary schools.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is excellent.
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 develop</td>
<td>Excellent</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>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language used in Early Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</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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Published September 2019
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report
• After receiving the inspection report, we were very happy with the lovely report and feedback we received. Thank you very much.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.
• In September, we will work on having closer links between planning our curriculum with the emerging interests from the children.