### EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

#### REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>All Aboard Carrigtwohill Childcare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Station Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrigtwohill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Cork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>10CC0352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Date of Inspection: 13-06-2019**
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(s) 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>13-06-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback to setting manager and practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with setting manager</td>
<td>Meeting with practitioners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

All Aboard is an urban, privately owned early years setting, offering services for babies right through to school-age childcare. The setting operates three pre-school sessions during the morning and one pre-school session in the afternoon, under the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). Nine practitioners provide early years education for fifty-nine children during the three morning sessions and three of these staff members provide early years education for nineteen children in the afternoon session. Four practitioners are employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). 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 very good.
- A highly caring ethos with a warm, affirming atmosphere prevails throughout the setting. Practitioners show sensitivity and a very positive regard for the children and their families.
- In particular, during the free play periods, the children are very active agents in choosing and organising their learning and development activities. In some instances, during transition times or at snack time, there is more scope for the children to become self-sufficient and self-reliant.
- The daily routines of all groups promote the children’s physical, social and emotional security, together with their learning and development. In some cases, adult-directed activities are too long and there too many transitions. These are not seamless and fluid enough and they create long, inactive waiting times. Daily outdoor play needs to be an integral part of every day.
- Snack time is utilised very well as a social occasion and an opportunity to promote well-being and a healthy lifestyle. Most practitioners sit, eat and communicate with the children, acting as role models for healthy eating and establishing good habits, while also promoting language and social interaction. This good practice needs to become the norm for all practitioners.
- The relationships between the practitioners and the children are highly respectful, responsive and reciprocal. Practice is child-centred.
- The children’s sense of identity and belonging is nurtured very effectively. Throughout the setting, a broad variety of opportunities is provided for the children to develop an appreciation of themselves as individuals and as members of groups. There is lots of evidence of family and community involvement in the setting. On one of the days of the inspection a Garda visited the setting.

*Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to collaborate and review the daily routines of all the rooms as a team. Following this review, there is a need to establish a better balance between long, uninterrupted, child-initiated/led, active and interactive free play periods both indoors and outside, interspersed by short practitioner-initiated activities, throughout the service. Once established, this routine needs to be displayed in picture sequence in each room for the children to follow.
- In some instances, the children need to be given more agency, autonomy and independence to manage their self-care needs and to care for the environments. In general, the children should be encouraged to undertake all tasks which they are capable of. This will also alleviate waiting times and inactivity.
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.
- A broad-based curriculum, informed by Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework is documented and implemented to support children’s learning and development. The practitioners are very skilled in the development and implementation of an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum and they demonstrate knowledge and expertise in putting their plans into action.
- Information documented about children’s learning reflects their achievements in a range of connected learning experiences, with due regard for their individual interests, needs, learning dispositions and cultural backgrounds. Parents are regularly consulted and informed about their child’s learning and development in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect.
- High-quality interactions with the children are facilitated throughout the setting. The practitioners know the children well and are very skilled at using appropriate interaction strategies and methodologies to co-construct knowledge and facilitate a broad range of learning experiences.
- Throughout the setting, the learning environments and resources support children’s learning and development. One room in particular, has, over time been partly made into a camp site following the children’ interests. This room stands out, as it is so aesthetically pleasing, it is richly and meaningfully resourced to follow the children’s interests and the attention to detail is praiseworthy. The table in the spacious, play-inspiring home corner, was prepared with a tablecloth, place mats, real plates and cups and fresh flowers in the centre. The outdoor area is a work in progress and not all learning environments are currently used.
- The children’s emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills are fostered very effectively throughout the setting. The Montessori materials, used in some rooms, naturally enrich children’s literacy and numeracy skills. In the Naíonra room, songs, rhymes, finger-games and whole-body movement games are used highly effectively. They are acted out and supported through props, to enhance understanding and deepen the learning experience. The Irish language is used very organically for everyday things and situations. Overall, there is some evidence of the use of formal teaching methods, such as tracing letters and numbers, matching on paper and colouring-in. These methods and activities are not age and developmentally appropriate.

Actions advised
- The practitioners and management are advised to collaborate to evaluate the play value of all environments and to raise the play value, where necessary. It is advised that all spaces available be considered and developed as play spaces. These spaces include the extra room in the smaller building and the adjacent outdoor space, and the corridor on the top floor of the main building. The ‘Learning Environments’ pillar and the ‘Play’ pillar of the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide provide valuable information in this area. Working with the self-evaluation audits of both pillars is advised.
- Practitioners are advised to refrain from the use of formal teaching methods. In place of this approach, they are encouraged to utilise teach-able moments and everyday-life situations to extend children’s learning and development. For young children, this is the most age and developmentally appropriate way to establish a love for learning.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- Overall, the children demonstrate enjoyment in their activities. Most children are confident and competent learners, they are motivated and engaged and they display positive learning dispositions, such as resilience, resourcefulness and initiative. This was particularly striking, when one child decided to build a boat from a big cardboard box. He demonstrated a highly refined skillset, logical thinking and persistence.
- The children are skilled and confident communicators. They use language skilfully to give and receive information, to interpret experiences, to ask questions and to make requests.
Overall, the children avail of a myriad of opportunities to express their feelings, thoughts, ideas and their creativity in a unique, individual way. These include art and craft making; mark-making; storytelling and interactive exploration of stories; acting out songs, rhymes and stories; moving to music and active/interactive free play.

There are some praiseworthy examples of art displays, which are linked very effectively and clearly to the children's individual learning and development. These displays incorporate the voice of the child. A similar process is used for the children's learning journals. This high-quality practice needs to be extended throughout the setting.

The children have some good opportunities to make sense of their world by interacting with others and their environment and by playing and investigating. Currently, the outdoor environments are not appropriately maintained. Many children and the practitioners do not have full waterproof clothing available on a daily basis.

**Actions advised**
- In some instances, there is more scope to make the children's voices visible within the learning environment, by displaying their work and adding their voices to the displays.
- Practitioners and management are advised to develop aesthetically pleasing outdoor environments which enable and inspire the children to explore, investigate and experiment. The outdoor environment in particular needs to offer rich scope for the children to develop and refine their physical skills, such as their gross motor skills, core strength, muscle tone, sense of balance and spatial awareness. The setting is advised to organise full waterproof clothing for all the children and the practitioners to enable them to fully engage with and enjoy daily outdoor play.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- Management and staff currently only reflect informally on their practice, policies and procedures. A more cyclical approach to reflection and improvement needs to be established.
- The work ethos and overall work climate within the setting is very positive. A spirit of professionalism and partnership is evident.
- The roles and responsibilities of practitioners are not clearly defined and the varied skill sets of practitioners are not fully utilised. The managerial structures could be reviewed with this in mind.
- Practitioners evidently avail of continuous professional development opportunities when they become available.
- It is very evident throughout the setting that the voice of the child is respected and included in decision making processes that affect them. The children's opinions could be sought and included as the outdoor play environments are being developed. A parental handbook, a website, a social media page and regular newsletters are used to keep parents informed and involved as partners in their child's education. Parent-practitioner meetings are held twice a year.
- Good working connections with the local primary schools are established. Transitions into the setting are supported by family friendly settling-in procedures.

**Actions advised**
- Effective strategies need to be established for regular, professional reflection. Time and space need to be created for the staff team to collaborate and work in partnership. Regular whole-team meetings need to be arranged for the pre-school staff and management, to reflect and plan together. These actions will help to promote continuous improvement in the setting.
- A shared vision and direction for the work of the whole setting needs to be developed. The practitioners need to work collaboratively to evaluate and reconsider the rationale and desired learning outcomes of activities, materials and resources. The play value of all environments needs to be brought to an equally high standard. For the purpose of self-evaluation and to further raise the quality of practice throughout the setting, collaborative work with all areas of the online Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide is advised.
- As there is great expertise and knowledge within the setting, steps need to be taken to ensure that the varied skill sets of the practitioners are utilised effectively to further enhance practice throughout 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>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

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

Published February 2020
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report.

We, as a team, have taken on board all of the suggestions made on the day of the inspection. We have increased the amount of free play time during Pre-school sessions and re-arranged all of the classrooms to allow more imaginative play and scenarios. We have been updating and changing the different areas regularly and find that the children love this.

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

We are currently awaiting delivery of new custom made outdoor equipment. This will include climbing equipment and balance beams, which the children will love using while developing gross motor skills, core strength, balance and spacial awareness. The grassed area is having a total overhaul.

Regular non-contact time for each practitioner is now on our timetable, as are regular team meetings. Many of us are upskilling at the moment, 3 of us (including myself) to Degree Level. This will no doubt contribute to the experiences of the children in our care, as well as to the effective management of the centre.