EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Pitter Patter Community Crèche and Playgroup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Macro Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green Street</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dublin 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>10DY0408</td>
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Date of Inspection: 30-04-2019
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 inspectors 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
30-04-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with setting manager</td>
<td>• Interaction with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</td>
<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feedback to setting manager and practitioners</td>
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CONTEXT OF SETTING

Pitter Patter Community Crèche and Playgroup, is a community setting which was established over eighteen years ago. It provides full-time care, and a morning and an afternoon Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme session for children of mixed ages. On the day of the inspection, twenty-two children, the manager/practitioner, two practitioners, one of whom provides support under the Access and Inclusion Model, and an assistant employed under a community employment programme, were present. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report; a response for publication was not received from the setting.

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.
• The practitioners have created a friendly atmosphere in the setting. The children present as safe and secure in the learning environment.
• Interactions between the practitioners and the children are positive. The practitioners use elements of a key-person approach. This approach is one in which the practitioners are assigned particular responsibility for a small group of children. The practitioners develop a close, secure relationship with this group and act as a link between the pre-school and the parents of these children.
• The daily routine for both sessions is similar. It consists of predominantly whole-group, learning experiences, such as free play, circle time, snack time and story time. Most of the activities are generally adult initiated.
• Transitions from one activity to the next are signalled by the ‘helper of the day’ who rings a bell, and there is occasional use of the visual daily schedule. During the inspection, the transition at tidy-up time was overly long and resulted in a small number of children becoming disengaged during this time.
• The practitioners offer children sensitive support towards the development of their self-help needs, such as putting on aprons, using wipes to clean their faces after snack time and drying their hands.
• The children’s uniqueness is celebrated through a wide range of photographic displays of the children engaged in activities. There is potential to include additional imagery to foster children’s sense of identity and belonging.
• During the pre-school year, trips to the local park and visits from members of the community are facilitated. At the time of the inspection, a visit to a local senior citizen group was planned. These outings and visitors help raise the children’s awareness of other people and places in their community.

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. The use of regular planned small group learning experiences, facilitated by the key practitioner, that focus on the children’s individual interests and their stages of development will assist in this regard.
• The practitioners are advised to develop further strategies to use at transition times to help children to experience smooth transitions. These could include the use of rhymes, songs and playful activities and the provision of sufficient advanced notice of pending changes in the routines. It is also advised that the visual schedule is consistently used to help children to predict the sequence of activities.
• The practitioners are advised to source and display additional photographs and pictures of the children, their families, members of the local community and places of interest in the locality. These can be used, in conjunction with appropriate learning activities, to help further celebrate the children’s uniqueness and their family cultures.

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 fair.
• The curriculum is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum. Short-term plans include activities linked to the themes of Aistear and ideas from a curriculum produced by a commercial company. The children’s emergent interests are not used to inform the short-term planning.
• The practitioners have started to use Aistear learning records to document children’s learning. Photographs of the children engaged in learning activities and samples of their art work and the learning records are placed in the children’s individual learning books. The class learning book includes group learning experiences. The findings from these assessment methods are not currently used to inform short-term planning or to guide progression and the next steps in children’s learning.
• During the inspection, on a few occasions the practitioners’ use of open-ended questions and props to extend the children’s learning was positively noted.
• The learning environments include interest areas and a wide range of materials that promote a variety of play experiences for children to enjoy. These experiences include opportunities for manipulative play, construction play, socio-dramatic play, physical play and creative activities.
• The children are provided with a small number of opportunities to participate in activities that support their emergent language development. On the day of the inspection, rhyming and language experiences included story-telling activities and action rhymes.
• The practitioners promote the development of an inclusive learning environment. They avail of support from the Better Start Access and Inclusion Model to ensure the participation of children in the learning programme. Differentiation in planning to cater for children’s differing stages of development has yet to become a regular feature of provision.

Actions advised
• The practitioners are advised to develop their approaches to planning to ensure that short-term plans incorporate children’s individual interests, needs and their particular stages of development. The advice and templates in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will assist the practitioners in this regard.
• The practitioners are advised to embed their use of the Aistear learning records to document the children’s emergent and individual interests. In relation to the photographs and entries in the children’s learning books, the practitioners are advised to expand on their descriptions of the children’s learning experiences. This information, along with the findings from the Aistear learning records, can then be used to inform the next steps in children’s learning.
• The practitioners are advised to review their roles as play partners and to increase their use of open-ended questions and commentary in their interactions with the children. This will support them to consistently extend the children’s thinking, interests and learning. The use of the tip sheet ‘Thinking Together’ from the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will be of benefit.
• The practitioners are advised to extend the range of activities used to support children’s emergent language skills. The tip sheet ‘Enhancing Language’ from the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide may assist in this regard.
AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children demonstrate interest and enjoyment in their learning. During the inspection, while they had ample opportunities to play alone, in pairs and in small groups, a small number of children found it difficult to stay focused during activities.
- The children’s creativity and imaginations are promoted through some mark-making and painting activities, and their exploration of sensorial materials.
- The children are developing the social skills necessary to help them to respond appropriately to situations. These include the ability to turn take, co-operate and negotiate. For example, two children co-operated and helped each other during their game of skittles in the outdoor area.
- Many children are developing their awareness and understanding of numeracy concepts, such as number, measurements and one-to-one correspondence. On the day of the inspection, there was a small number of real everyday resources available to support the children’s emerging numeracy skills.
- The children have ample opportunities to make choices in their play and many demonstrate the ability to follow through on their choices. At planning time, the children selected where they wished to play and followed through on their decisions.
- The children experience success in their learning. This was reflected in the sense of achievement a child displayed as he counted the sand castles with a practitioner. Many of the children’s achievements are on display throughout the learning environment. These include their mark-making creations, their paintings and their papier maché planets.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities that promote children’s sustained engagement in suitably challenging learning activities. Additional activities where children can explore and experiment will help to develop positive learning dispositions, such as being able to concentrate and to remain focused.
- The practitioners are advised to enhance the children’s emergent mathematical understanding and skills through the provision of more resources in the different interest areas and during learning experiences. The addition of everyday resources, such as weighing scales, rulers and measuring utensils will assist in this regard.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is fair.
- There is a sense of teamwork and co-operation among the practitioners. The setting is in the early stages of implementing a number of changes as a result of their partial engagement with the Better Start Quality Support Service. The practitioners’ commitment to the children and the families who attend the setting was particularly notable.
- The practitioners hold daily informal discussions and reviews on planning. The manager meets with the board of management once a month and plans have been put in place to hold regular staff meetings. It is envisaged that formal systematic self-review and reflection practices will become a consistent feature of the practitioners’ practice.
- The practitioners engage in regulatory training relevant to an early years setting. One practitioner is participating in the Leadership for Inclusion in Early Years (LINC) programme. The practitioners expressed a strong desire to avail of further mentoring and external advisory supports. They are committed to re-engaging with the Better Start mentoring programme in order to improve learning experiences and outcomes for children.
- It was reported that support and supervision meetings for individual practitioners have been recently introduced. There is potential to use these meetings to review the practitioners’ roles and responsibilities with regard to educational activities.
- The practitioners share information on the children’s learning with parents. This includes sharing the class learning book and displays detailing the children’s learning activities on the parents’ notice board. The children’s individual learning books are sent home at the end of the year.
Strategies are in place to support children as they make the transition from the setting to primary school. The practitioners have participated in the Grange Gorman Area-Based Childhood (ABC) ‘Stepping Up’ transition project for children moving from early years to primary school. Parents and the manager/practitioner accompany children on a visit to the local primary to meet the teacher of junior infants. The manager works closely with the local primary school to ensure the sharing of relevant information, with parents’ consent, and to support continuity and progression in the children’s learning.

Actions advised

- The board of management and practitioners are advised to use the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to develop formal self-review and professional reflection practices. They could use the self-evaluation tools in the guide to create and implement an action plan to address agreed areas of improvement.
- It is advised that the recently-introduced support and supervision meetings be used as a mechanism to explore the varied skill set of practitioners. This will help to ensure clarity regarding practitioners’ roles and responsibilities and to identify topics for mentoring and continuing professional development.
- The practitioners are advised to share the children’s learning and their progress with parents on a more regular basis. This will ensure that parents are more involved in their children’s learning.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is 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>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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