An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>The Little Kingdom Childcare</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Newtown</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beauparc</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Navan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Meath</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>12MH0271</td>
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Date of Inspection: 10-04-2019
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 | 10-04-2019
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**Inspection activities undertaken**

- Pre-inspection meeting with the setting owner/practitioner
- Conversations with the early years practitioners
- Observation of interactions and activities during a pre-school session
- Interaction and discussion with the children
- Review of educational resources and facilities
- Review of relevant setting documentation
- Review of records of the children’s learning and development
- Post-inspection feedback discussions with the early years practitioners
- Post-inspection feedback meeting with setting owner/ practitioner

**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

The Little Kingdom Childcare provides a morning pre-school session for children enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The setting also provides part-time care and full day care. The owner/practitioner, three early year’s practitioners and twenty-three children were present on the day of the inspection. 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.
- There is an extremely warm, welcoming and home-from-home atmosphere in the setting.
- The practitioners have established very positive relationships with families and take time to converse and share information at arrival and home times.
- Relationships and interactions between the practitioners and the children are characterised by gentleness, calmness and positive regard. There is a very effective key person system in operation.
- There is a consistent daily routine in the setting which the children are very familiar with. Times are allocated to child-initiated play and learning indoors and outdoors, circle and snack time.
- Snack time is relaxed and is used very effectively by the practitioners to converse with the children and to support their communication and social interaction skills.
- The practitioners take great efforts to support the children to be independent, to do things for themselves and develop self-care skills at every opportunity.
- The children’s developing sense of identity and belonging is highly effectively nurtured through numerous attractive photographic displays of the children, their families, the local community and recent play and learning activities. Family members are invited into the setting for events and celebrations throughout the pre-school year.

**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 implements a play-based curriculum that is fully aligned to Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. This is documented in a clear curriculum and ethos statement.
- The practitioners have developed a very comprehensive system of observation and assessment. A learner journal recording each child’s individual learning journey is compiled by his/her key person. Learner story observations are recorded regularly and shared with parents. The practitioners record the children’s current interests and ideas for the next steps in their learning.
Recording more detail with regard to the children’s thinking and engagement in their current interests would provide rich prompts to guide planning.

- Planning for learning is thematic-based and is completed by the practitioners using spider webbing to generate ideas around a specific theme over a week or more, depending on the children’s interests and engagement. Detailed notes are made at the end of the session recording the children’s play and learning activities. The use of an enquiry-based approach to planning with the children for their learning would further support the development of learning experiences in the setting.

- The indoor learning environment consists of three interconnecting rooms each providing different play and learning opportunities. Each room is a base for one of the three key groups. There is a very wide range of play and learning opportunities freely available to the children, both indoors and outdoors. Many of the materials and resources are real and natural and spark the children’s creativity and exploration.

- The practitioners have a strong commitment to ensuring that the children experience play and learning outdoors every day. The outdoor play space has recently been developed and effectively supports the children’s holistic development.

- The interactions used by the practitioners to support the children’s learning and development are very effective and well-matched to children’s individual needs. The practitioners are very supportive of each child’s personal interests, they engage in in-depth conversations with the children to prompt, support and extend their ideas and thinking.

- Highly effective support for the children’s early literacy and numeracy skills is provided by the practitioners through their day-to-day conversations and play.

- The children are learning in an inclusive environment. Commendably, children for whom English is an additional language are greeted in their home language by the practitioners. Key phrases and words have been gathered from parents.

**Actions advised**

- It is advised that the practitioners, when recording the children’s current interests, record detail about what the children are doing, thinking and trying to understand.

- To further develop the curriculum, it is advised that the practitioners use enquiry-based approaches to planning, actively collaborating with the children to identify the next steps in their learning. Asking questions about their specific interests such as; ‘What do you know already?’ ‘What would you like to know or discover?’ and ‘How might we do that?’ will ensure that the children are actively engaged in and leading their learning.

**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 very well-settled in the setting. They arrive in the morning motivated and eager to begin play and learning.

- There is a very strong sense of community among the children. Good friendships are developing and the children display care and loyalty to each other.

- The children are developing dispositions of persistence, curiosity and motivation in following their intrinsic learning motivations. They engage in lengthy periods of free play, both indoors and outdoors.

- The children are developing capacities to make choices and decisions and follow through on them.

- Very good play skills were observed. The children intentionally choose to play alone, in pairs and in small self-selected groups. The children are very eager to communicate their thoughts and ideas and to express themselves to others.

- The children thoroughly enjoy and fully engage in whole-group circle time involving songs and action rhymes.

- Many children demonstrate capacities to play co-operatively, negotiating roles and responsibilities.

- The children are developing good physical and gross motor skills and engage in a healthy positive way with nature during their daily outdoor play time.

- The children are learning and achieving in line with their individual capabilities.
Action advised

- To further support the children’s communication skills and higher-order thinking, it is advised that time be allocated to small-group discussion and activities centred on topics that are currently of interest and meaningful to the children.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- There is a highly professional ethos in this setting. The owner and staff articulate a passion and desire to deliver a quality ECCE programme. They have a shared vision on the broad-based learning goals that underpin their curriculum programme. Documentation of these goals would support curriculum planning and would provide very valuable information about pre-school learning for parents.
- Very supportive and positive team working was observed and the session inspected was very well organised and ran smoothly.
- The staff engage in self-reflective practices and are very familiar with Aistear and Síolta, the two national practice frameworks. They use the online Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to support and guide self-evaluation and quality improvement measures at regular staff meetings.
- There is a very clear management structure in the setting. The owner/practitioner recognises and values the practitioners’ individual areas of expertise.
- The staff maintain their continuing professional development through attendance at training workshops, linking with local support agencies and professional networking.
- Information about the setting’s policies and procedures and the ECCE programme is shared with parents through a handbook, numerous photographic displays and a social media application.
- Information about children’s individual progression in learning and development is shared with parents through daily informal conversations. The children’s learner journals and learning story observations are shared regularly with parents.
- The setting has a transitions policy and works in partnership with parents, where necessary to arrange individual transition plans. The setting has established a positive professional relationship with the local primary school. Information to support the transition between settings is often shared informally. The staff is currently exploring strategies to begin to share information more formally.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the practitioners document the broad-based learning goals that underpin their play-based curriculum and use it to guide planning for learning and to share with parents.
- It is advised that the practitioners progress their plans, in partnership with parents, to share information about the children’s learning and development with primary schools to support smooth transitions.

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>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>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
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### Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</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>
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<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.
I would like to say as a team from The Little Kingdom we are very happy and proud of the 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 2 – Actions we plan to take
- When recording the children’s current interests we plan to record what the children are doing, thinking and trying to understand.
- We plan to use enquiry based approaches to planning.

Area 3- Actions we plan to take- Further children’s communication skills.
- We plan to allocate time for small group activities centred on topics that are currently of interest and meaningful to the children.

Area 4
- We also plan to document our broad based learning goals and use it to guide planning for learning and to share with parents.
- We will also progress our plans in partnership with parents to share information about the children’s learning and development with Primary schools to support smooth transitions.