An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Coosan Childcare Centre</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Coosan Road</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Athlone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Westmeath</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>13WH0136</td>
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Date of Inspection: 27-09-2018
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>27-09-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interaction with children</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Review of relevant documents</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Post-inspection feedback meeting with the setting manager and inclusion coordinator</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Meeting with setting manager</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Observation of interactions during session</strong></td>
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**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Coosan Childcare Centre was established in Athlone in 2013 and operates under the management of a community-based body. The purpose-built facility is located in a housing estate and offers pre-school, full day and after-school services. At the time of the inspection, the manager and three practitioners, one of whom was made available through the Community Employment Scheme, were involved in providing care and education for twenty-one children who participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The children range in age from two years and eight months to five years of age. The setting manager and inclusion co-ordinator 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; the setting chose to accept the report without response.

**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 very warm and friendly atmosphere is evident, making children and parents feel comfortable and welcome in the setting.
- Routines and procedures offer a variety of experiences and contexts that positively promote children's physical, social and emotional security.
- Great emphasis is placed on promoting children’s independence. The freedom the children experience to manage their self-help and self-care skills supports their developing confidence.
- Relationships between children and practitioners are highly respectful. Practitioners are very responsive to the children's needs and interests. They show sensitivity and warmth in their interactions with children, contributing to the secure relationships that have been fostered.
- Highly effective feedback and recognition are regular features of the practitioners’ responses to children. This supports children to identify and celebrate their individual and collaborative efforts and achievements.
- Many children’s sense of identity as individuals and as members of family groups are celebrated and reinforced through their interaction with the visual displays. The manager reports their intention to strengthen the imagery in the environment to identify and acknowledge each child's country of origin.

**Action advised**

- The manager and practitioners are encouraged to pursue their plans to enhance the imagery in the environment to include positive, visual depictions of diversity that shows awareness and appreciation for all children in the setting. The **Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education** is a useful resource 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 good.
- A play-based curriculum is in place with many links made to Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. Curriculum planning is organised on long-term, medium-term and short-term bases. The short-term plan documents the routine of the day with some references made to children’s emerging interests.
- Practitioners use a suitable variety of assessment approaches to gather information about children’s learning and development. This information is gathered and synthesised by practitioners to create individual learning records. At the time of the inspection, these observations did not strongly inform the curriculum plan.
- Children are viewed and treated as very capable and skilful learners by the practitioners. Practitioners have developed secure relationships with the children and demonstrate how well they know them through their interactions and conversations during the session. This supports a safe environment where practitioners skilfully extend and challenge children’s thinking during play.
- The indoor environment has been carefully prepared and purposefully structured into many clearly defined spaces. Resources are easily accessible and plentiful with a variety of materials to support the development of children’s fine motor skills.
- Children are provided with daily experiences to explore the outdoor environment. This space is effectively used to develop children’s physical fitness and gross motor skills. The limited supply of loose, natural and open-ended materials results in minimal opportunities for children to develop their curiosity, creativity, imagination and desire for exploration.
- There is recognition of the importance of play in the setting. This is particularly evident in the indoor environment where a variety of types of play are provided for. Practitioners demonstrate a clear understanding of their role in supporting children’s play effectively and regularly join in as play partners to enrich their learning and development opportunities.

Actions advised
- Practitioners are advised to use their observations to inform the short-term curriculum plan. This would ensure that an emergent curriculum is offered that is reflective of children’s varying interests, cultural backgrounds, strengths, needs and previous learning experiences.
- The practitioners are advised to reflect on the resources available in the outdoor environment with a view to further developing children’s skills and learning dispositions. This might include a variety of open-ended materials such as water, paint, blocks, stones and sand which could extend the types of play provided to children in the outdoor learning environment. The self-evaluation tool entitled, ‘Creating and Using the Learning Environment (3-6years)’, in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide may prove useful to inform this reflective practice.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- Children present as being very happy in the setting. They demonstrate great enjoyment in their learning and display high levels of engagement.
- Children experience high levels of autonomy and independence which supports them to consistently choose and self-direct their learning experiences and activities.
- On the morning of the inspection, the manager facilitated a meaningful discussion about feelings with the children. Practitioners built on this throughout the session, ensuring the children were aware of, and confident to name and speak openly about, their emotions.
- During their play, the children frequently discuss and share their learning achievements with others. Practitioners are very responsive to these conversations, often affirming the children’s developing abilities.
Children engage mostly in large-group activities where many effectively use verbal communication to discuss, negotiate, refuse, and to clarify their thinking. A small minority of children with English as an additional language communicated very little during the session. Opportunities are not provided for key practitioners to meet with their key group of children. Although there were various children whose home language differed from the language in the setting, there were no occasions for these children to appreciate their own language or for other children to understand how these languages could be used.

Children show a good understanding of and regard for the identity, views and rights of others. They demonstrate a developing capacity to understand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

Children’s emotional well-being is supported and nurtured in the setting. Practitioners encourage children to express themselves and provide them with the necessary tools to develop their social skills.

**Action advised**

- Practitioners are advised to build on the opportunities provided to support children to use their language to express themselves. The introduction of a small-group activity time, facilitated by a key practitioner, could offer a safe space for children to communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas. Furthermore, this time could also be used by practitioners to promote opportunities for children to appreciate their first languages. Exposure to children’s home-languages is important for all children to understand how different languages can be used with different people and in varying situations.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- Various informal and formal opportunities have been established to facilitate professional reflective practice among the staff at individual, team and whole-setting levels. The setting manager and practitioners use these meetings to great effect by engaging with the self-evaluation tools in the *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide* to critically reflect on various aspects of practice.
- The manager, who has recently been appointed, is currently engaged in a course leading to a Level 7 qualification in early childhood care and education; she is committed to sharing this knowledge with staff.
- Practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. A strong sense of teamwork is evident as the practitioners and the manager work closely together to ensure the smooth running of the pre-school.
- The setting has been proactive in accessing both in-house and external supports. An inclusion co-ordinator works in an advisory capacity providing support and mentoring to practitioners around inclusive practices for children with additional needs. The setting also reports receiving support from their local county childcare committee and Early Childhood Ireland.
- Previously, the setting engaged in the Healthy Ireland Smart Start (HISS) Programme. Outside of mandatory training, there are no strategies in place for the continuous professional learning opportunities of the pre-school team.
- A system of appraisals is in operation in the setting where the manager meets practitioners on a regular basis to affirm good practice and to support ongoing improvement in the setting. Similarly, the group manager, who has responsibility for all settings under the community-based body, meets weekly with the setting manager. She offers the setting manager ongoing support and guidance, while also ensuring the setting provides for a high quality learning and development experiences for children.
- The manager and practitioners communicate with parents in a variety of ways. These include the use of a social media page, a texting system, an information handbook for parents, the use of email and a parents’ noticeboard. Observations of children’s learning experiences are also shared with parents, very few of which include the parents’ contribution.
- Connections have been developed with the local primary school to support the children’s transition from pre-school. The children become familiar with the local primary schools through imagery that is displayed in the environment. Teachers also visit the children in the pre-school and value the importance of becoming familiar with the children and their interests and needs in advance of their transition to primary school.
Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to proactively consult with parents in relation to their child’s learning and development. In doing so, practitioners could encourage parents to contribute to the information documented in relation to their child’s learning achievements. This information could effectively support and enhance the learning experiences and activities provided for children in the setting.
- It is advised that management liaise with practitioners to identify priorities for continuous professional learning opportunities. This will ensure that all practitioners continue to upskill, remaining informed and knowledgeable about current best practices.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The manager and inclusion-co-ordinator actively engaged in the post-inspection feedback meeting. They demonstrated an openness to feedback and a commitment to ongoing improvement. 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>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>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>
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### Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</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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