EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Busy Bees Montessori</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Educate Together National School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barnwell Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dublin 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>14FL0507</td>
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Date of Inspection: 15-01-2019
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>15-01-2019</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interactions advised</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with setting owner and practitioners</td>
<td>• Interaction with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</td>
<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Feedback to setting owner and practitioners</td>
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**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Busy Bees is a privately owned, sessional and after-school setting. The setting has been in operation for over fourteen years. It provides two morning sessions and one afternoon session for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, thirty-five children and three practitioners, one of whom is the owner, and an assistant under the Access and Inclusion Model programme were present. 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 good.
- There is a warm and friendly atmosphere in the setting. The practitioners’ use of pleasant tones contributes to the positive and calm environment in all of the pre-school rooms.
- The daily routines are similar in each of the pre-school rooms. The routines provide opportunities for children to engage in large-group activities, such as work time, circle time, free play and outside play. Visual daily schedules are displayed at adult eye level. On the day of the inspection, the schedules did not reflect the daily routine observed and a small number of children did not appear to understand the sequence of activities.
- During the inspection, the children had ample opportunities to make independent decisions regarding their learning activities.
- The practitioners offer the children appropriate praise and affirmation for their efforts. This effective practice contributes to the reciprocal relationships which exist between the practitioners and the children and the children themselves.
- On a significant number of occasions during the inspection, the practitioners used verbal and visual strategies to inform children of impending changes in the activities.
- There are some effective strategies in place to support children’s sense of identity and belonging. These include a small amount of photographs and the organisation of special occasions which bring the children, their parents and the practitioners together. Some members of the local community have visited the setting. For example, the lollipop lady visited during safety week. These opportunities help children to get to know people and places within their community.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to ensure alignment between the daily routine and the visual schedule. It is also advised that practitioners display the visual daily schedule at the children's eye level to help them to understand and to predict changes in the activities.
- The practitioners are advised to source and display more imagery of the children's families, members of the local community and places of interest in the locality. These can be used, in conjunction with activities, to help strengthen the children's sense of identity and belonging.
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 setting's curriculum is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. Planning for children's learning is thematic. It includes seasonal events and the practitioners’ ideas which are linked to the themes of Aistear. At the time of the inspection, the children's emergent interests were not incorporated into the short-term planning.
- The practitioners use a variety of assessment methods to record the children's learning, including observations linked to Aistear, checklists on numeracy, sound and colour, photographs and the children's art work. The findings from these assessments are not used to inform planning for the next stage in children's learning and their progression.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are positive. During the inspection, practitioners sat alongside the children and commented on what the children were doing. The practitioners’ use of occasional open-ended questions and comments to extend the children’s thought processes was noted positively.
- Weather permitting, the children have regular access to an outdoor learning environment where they can engage in activities which support their gross motor development and physical skills.
- Within the pre-school rooms, there are a number of defined areas which are well resourced with manipulative materials, some Montessori equipment, construction materials and socio-dramatic toys. At the time of the inspection, a small number of real, open-ended and recyclable materials were available to promote children’s exploration of their learning.
- Opportunities are provided for the children to participate in open-ended play on their own, in pairs and in small groups. On the day of the inspection, there was potential for practitioners to extend children’s play through the allocation of more time for free play and the promotion of their role as play partners.
- During the inspection, the children had a few opportunities to participate in learning experiences that supported their emergent language and literacy skills. Examples included brief rhyming activities and listening to a story linked to the theme of the week.
- The practitioners provide opportunities for the children to engage in free mark-making activities. This is evident in the children’s painting and the entries in their journals.
- A number of steps have been taken to develop inclusive practices to promote children’s participation in the ECCE programme. This includes the setting’s engagement with Better Start Access and Inclusion Model and the facilitation of meetings with parents to discuss their child’s learning needs. The programme of activities does not differentiate between children participating in year one or year two of the ECCE programme. At times during the inspection, a few of the large-group learning activities did not support the engagement levels of all the children.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to further develop their assessment and planning practices to ensure they are more closely aligned to Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. This will support the provision of a programme reflective of the children’s emergent interests and their individual learning needs. The pillar ‘Planning and Assessment’ from the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide is a useful resource in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to provide more time for children’s participation in uninterrupted child-initiated play, with an increased focus on the practitioners’ role as play partners. The practitioners’ consistent use of open-ended questions and comments will help promote sustained shared thinking. The tip sheet ‘Thinking Together’ from the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide will assist in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to use the audit tool in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to enhance the availability, breadth and variety of resources and materials. It is also advised that the children’s art work be displayed so that they can see their achievements.
- The practitioners are advised to develop additional strategies to help the children’s engagement and inclusion in learning activities. The use of the key workers’ knowledge of the children and activities which focus on each child’s uniqueness and his/her stage of development will 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.
- During the inspection, the children demonstrated interest and motivation in the learning activities. These experiences included the children’s enthusiastic participation in painting during the free-play element of the session and during the sand and water play.
- Some children display positive learning dispositions and curiosity in their learning experiences. These examples included one child’s explanation about the colour she had made as a result of mixing paint on her picture.
- The children are developing effective social skills to support them to play co-operatively in pairs and in small groups. During the inspection, their developing friendships were noted in the laughter, collaboration and fun a small group of children displayed during outside time and the ‘freeze game’.
- The children display the capacity to name their feelings. On the day of the inspection, a small group of children confidently shared with others their thoughts on when they feel happy and scared.
- The children are provided with effective opportunities to experience success in their learning. During the inspection, this was evident in the sense of achievement exhibited by the children as they participated in ‘basketball’. In addition, some children spontaneously shared their learning journals with others. At the time of the inspection, formal opportunities for children to share their learning experiences to optimise this developing competence were not a regular feature of the programme.
- On the day of the inspection, many children demonstrated their inquisitiveness and curiosity about their world. An example of this was the creative manner in which they expressed themselves in the ‘moving through space’ learning experience. There were a small number of opportunities for children to explore and experiment to deepen their thinking about their learning experiences.
- A few children display their growing understanding of the meaning of mathematical language and concepts. They were observed classifying, counting and comparing sizes. During the inspection, the small number of available everyday materials provided children with a few opportunities to maximise these emerging skills.
- Many opportunities are provided for the children to become independent; they put away materials when finished working with them, they receive support in the management of their self-care needs and they complete tasks as part of the ‘class helper’ routines.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to provide regular formal opportunities for children to share their learning and achievements with each other and the practitioners. This could be facilitated through the key worker working with small groups and the provision of opportunities for children to review their individual learning journals.
- The practitioners are advised to provide more opportunities for children to participate in learning activities where they explore and experiment. This will strengthen their ability to make sense of their world and support their natural curiosity.
- The practitioners are advised to provide additional experiences that promote the children’s emerging numeracy skills and mathematical understanding. Activities where they can measure, count and predict through the provision of everyday materials, such as rulers, measuring tapes and cups, weighing scales and calculators, will assist in this regard.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- There is a good sense of positive teamwork and collaboration between the owner and the practitioners. Weekly reviews are conducted to record progress made on learning activities. At the time of the inspection, the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide was not used as part of this review practice.
- The practitioners have participated in training on mandatory topics, such as First Aid and Children First and manual handling. Currently, the owner and practitioners are developing a plan to support their participation in mentoring programmes.
Staff meetings are held every five weeks. In addition, the owner regularly meets with practitioners to informally discuss their role and responsibilities.

The practitioners use a variety of strategies to share information with parents about their child’s learning. The children’s art work is sent home regularly and the practitioners share their observations on children’s learning and development with parents at annual one-to-one meetings. The information on the curriculum in the parents’ handbook and the curriculum statements on display within the setting differ.

There are effective strategies in place to support children’s transition into and from the setting. Children are invited to visit the setting prior to commencing the ECCE programme. The practitioners meet with the vice-principal and the principal of the local primary school to ensure the sharing of relevant information to support the children’s transitioning to primary school.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to further develop their review and reflection practices. This could take place at the regular staff meetings when agreed areas of improvement could be prioritised. It is further advised that they commence this practice with a review of the setting’s curriculum statement.

- The owner and practitioners are advised to proceed with their plans to participate in national mentoring and training programmes. This will support practitioners in their ongoing development of practice.

- The practitioners are advised to share the children’s observations and progress with parents on a more regular basis. This will also increase parents’ awareness of, and involvement in, their child’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>Good</td>
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#### Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

In relation to CONTEXT OF SETTING:

Busy Bees did have 4 adults present on the day of inspection. The staff member mentioned in the report as the Access and Inclusion model is provided under section 47 of the grant

“47. Where a level 7 additional capitation has been granted to allow a reduction in the staff ratio, to what level can the ratio be dropped?

Where the maximum rate of level 7 capitation has been approved, the ratio can be reduced from 1 adult to 11 children down to 1 adult to 8 children”

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 1

- We have taken on board all comments regarding visual displays being placed to that of a child’s level, however, we have been limited in space with windows, doors and walls.
- In relation to the action advised on family members, local community and places we had visual art work, pictures, contents within the children’s journals that were on display on the wall. We believe in choice for the children and if he/she decides to take their work home or put it into their journal book they decide. On the day of Inspection the children had chosen a curriculum topic as “space” therefore the artwork and visuals were that of space as per request of the children. It is unrealistic to expect all paintings, visuals and information regarding every topic to be on display at the time of inspection.
- We will set up and have a visible journal book for children to view which stays in the setting (in the library) and this will contain photos of the local community, family photos if they wish, local public representative’s i.e. lollipop lady.

Area 2

- The setting is engaging in the Síolta training programme which will support and aid us with the use of a programme reflective of children’s emerging interests.
- We have taken on board the advice regarding measuring, pouring etc and we will add extra items such as measuring tapes, rulers etc. Busy Bees has a wide range of materials; due to lack of space and the children’s progression these are rotated within the room so children have a vast amount of choice to cover all topics of interest and difficulty as they arise. We will ensure to include more open-ended elements.
- We have taken into account that we were advised to allow for more children’s participation in uninterrupted child initiated play and develop additional strategies, however, no single day is the same within an ECCE setting. We will promote uninterrupted play more frequently. We have made changes to date and we will ensure to continue best practice by keeping up with all elements of the report.
Area 3

- The setting will ensure there is ample time for the children to work in small groups to share their learning and achievements with peers and staff, this will be done with their choice of participation. Busy Bees will also ensure there is more provision and experiences for opportunity for the child’s participation in their learning and to encourage their emerging skills. We will also share the observations more regularly with parents.