

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Service Name</b>    | Pixie Lane Crèche, Montessori and Afterschool        |
| <b>Service Address</b> | Caheroyan Road, Caheroyan, Caheroyan, County Galway. |
| <b>DCYA number</b>     | 14GY0393   |

**Date of Inspection: 07-12-2016**



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## **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 service 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 service.

## **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 service's provision in each area.

## Early-Years Education Inspection

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Date of inspection</b>  | 06-12-2016  |
| <b>Inspection activities undertaken</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</li> <li>• Interaction with children</li> <li>• Review of relevant documents</li> <li>• Feedback to service manager and practitioners</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with service manager</li> <li>• Meeting with practitioners</li> <li>• Meeting with board of directors (including parent representatives on the board)</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul> |   |

### CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Pixie Lane Crèche, Montessori and Afterschool is a private service, located in Athenry, County Galway. It provides a sessional service for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The children are divided between two rooms in accordance with their age. This inspection focused on one room, which provides for a total of twenty children, a number of whom speak English as an additional language. On the day of the inspection seventeen children were present. The setting has a manager, and two assistants are assigned to the room. 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 excellent.
- On arrival at the setting, the children make free choices about their activities and they interact with their peers in a very enthusiastic manner. The overall atmosphere is very positive and encouraging.
- Very effective routines and procedures are integrated into the day. The children react promptly to the various transition cues, including music, and transitions between activities are very smooth.
- Snack time is an enjoyable social occasion. Healthy eating is discussed and promoted. The setting takes part in the Healthy Ireland Smart Start Health Promotion Programme. The children are supported to manage their hygiene and personal care needs, with many of the children demonstrating good independence.
- Affirming feedback is provided to the children and the practitioners are very attentive to their needs. Throughout the inspection, caring and respectful interactions were noted. The practitioners use effective strategies to enable the children to discuss and overcome their day-to-day concerns. This has proven to be very beneficial to some children.
- The extensive efforts undertaken by the practitioners to nurture children's sense of belonging and identity are worthy of great commendation. Children's names, and work are displayed, alongside numerous photographs of outings and activities. The setting is very inclusive; purposeful efforts are made to include children from other cultures. Simple greetings in a number of languages are displayed. Recently, the parent of a child from another country facilitated activities to explore some aspects of the country's culture.
- Excellent connections are made with the local community. Guest visitors from the locality speak to the children about their occupations. There are regular outings including to the local playground, park, nursing home and library in Athenry; and to an aquarium and activity centre in Galway city. By visiting Athenry Castle, the children are enabled to grasp a simple understanding of the historic town. Parents take part in these activities.

## 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 excellent.
- On a half-termly and weekly basis, the practitioners collaborate to set out a very clear programme of work which is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- The programme of work is informed significantly by children's interests and needs. Recently, the response to children's interests resulted in to a visit by a fireman; and visit by a tractor owner followed by very interesting work in art which culminated in the construction of a tractor. In response to an identified need to promote oral and dental hygiene, a visit from a dentist was arranged and a cumulative reward system was put in place to encourage and reward good habits.
- A learning journal is compiled for the setting and a learning record is carefully maintained for each child. These include photographs illustrating the child's engagement in a broad range of activities. The practitioners record succinct and incisive observations, as well as the next steps in the children's learning. These records are used as a basis for communicating with the children's parents.
- The indoor and outdoor environments facilitate play as a central medium for children's learning and development. Internally, ample play resources are available to facilitate socio-dramatic and construction play. The external environment is exemplary. It is very spacious and very well maintained and it is being continuously developed by the manager. It provides for gardening and gross motor activities, experiments and investigations, socio-dramatic play and free play.
- Very good steps are taken by practitioners to develop children's language and literacy skills. The children are encouraged to express their views, and many opportunities are provided for vocabulary development. Rhymes and songs are recited throughout the day. The children have access to a well-stocked, well-furnished library area. They explore books freely and they enjoy story-telling on a daily basis. They engage freely in mark-making using pencils, crayons and paints.
- Concepts in measurement, shape and space are explored through exploration of open-ended resources and practical activities.

## AREA 3

### QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Overall, the quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children demonstrate enjoyment in their learning and they are proud of their work and achievements.
- The children co-operate with each other in a very respectful manner. They understand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and they respond very well to the practitioners' requests.
- In the course of their play, the children take turns and negotiate. They engage in construction play and imaginative play, and they eagerly complete puzzles and read books. On the day of the inspection, the adult-initiated activities outweighed the child-initiated activities and the free-play activity carried out in the morning was cut short to facilitate more structured learning.
- The majority of the children are very comfortable in expressing their views and they have well developed vocabularies. Some of the children engage with books meaningfully, and a number of the children they are developing skills in early writing.
- While some practical number-related activities, using concrete materials are facilitated, these could be further prioritised.

#### *Actions advised*

- The practitioners are encouraged to extend the periods of free play so that the children can engage spontaneously and creatively with materials for more sustained periods.
- The practitioners are encouraged to facilitate more tangible hands-on activities relating to number, so that the children develop the ability to refer to and use number in practical day-to-day contexts.

## **AREA 4**

### **QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- The manager and practitioners take great pride in the setting and they work collaboratively to provide high-quality learning experiences for the children. They keep abreast of developments in the sector and they engage in relevant continuous professional development.
- On a monthly basis, formal review meetings which are informed by the *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide*, take place. Reviews are productive and key actions are implemented: a recent review led to the introduction of a free mark-making copy for each child in which they make doodles, patterns, pictures and letters in age-appropriate manner and in line with their own stage of development.
- Communication between the parents and the practitioners is very good. There are presentations to parents and annual parent-teacher meetings are held. Ongoing information is provided through the setting's Facebook page and website. Where particular needs arise for a child, additional, regular communication with parents is facilitated.
- Transitions between the setting and the local primary schools are very well supported. Booklets which are co-constructed by the practitioners and the children are provided to the schools, to inform the school about the child. Where necessary, the practitioners in the setting communicate with the school staff regarding a child's particular needs. This helps to generate consistency in the approaches used by the settings.

### **CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is very good. The manager and the practitioners demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement and they have a clear vision and understanding of what is required to enhance the overall quality of provision within the setting.

### Summary of Overall Inspection

| <b>Area</b>   | <b>Quality Level</b> |
|---|----------------------|
| Quality of context to support children's learning and development   | <b>Excellent</b>     |
| Quality of processes to support children's learning and development | <b>Excellent</b>     |
| Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements         | <b>Very Good</b>     |
| Quality of management and leadership for learning                   | <b>Excellent</b>     |

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

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Excellent</b> | Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.                                  |
| <b>Very good</b> | Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.                           |
| <b>Good</b>      | Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed. |
| <b>Fair</b>      | Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.                      |
| <b>Poor</b>      | Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.    |