EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Farmyard Kindergarten</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Quaker Meeting House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summer Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Cork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>15CY0148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of Inspection: 26-11-2019
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(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 setting’s provision in each area.
Early-Years Education Inspection

Date of inspection: 26-11-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with setting lead practitioner</td>
<td>Observation of interactions during one session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with practitioners</td>
<td>Interaction with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback to setting owner and lead practitioner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONTEXT OF SETTING

The Farmyard Kindergarten is a private sessional pre-school setting, which was established in 2006. It has a sister setting under the same name located on the outskirts of Cork City. On the day of the inspection there were fourteen children, two practitioners and one work experience student present. 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.
- There is a warm and openhearted atmosphere in the setting. The children are greeted in a welcoming and happy manner. Practitioners take time to chat openly with parents at arrival and collection times.
- The setting’s routines effectively support the children’s sense of responsibility and independence. The routines offer extended periods of free play, active outdoor play, ring time and small group time. The children would benefit from a pictorial reminder of the sequence of the day’s events.
- Transitions during the pre-school session are very clearly announced by the practitioners using songs. The children are respectfully given time and the autonomy to complete their play.
- The mealtime is peaceful and relaxed, beginning with a song and continuing with engaged social discussions. A healthy-eating policy is supported by parents; children sip on herbal tea or water independently pouring from a jug into their ceramic cups.
- Children move freely around the outdoor learning environment and are actively engaged in choosing and organising their play. During the inspection, three children retrieved wheelbarrows and collected walnuts from the garden and gathered them into a large pile at the other side of the garden.
- The children are developing a sense of identity and belonging which is nurtured well through displays which celebrate their creativity and individuality. They would benefit from increased visual representations of themselves and their families.

Actions advised

- The setting is advised to display the daily routine at child height. This display could include photographs of the children engaged in different activities. This will support the children to understand the daily sequence of events and further support transitions from one activity to the next.
- It is advised that the practitioners increase the visual photographic displays of the children and their families. Such displays would further support the inclusive environment in the setting by celebrating and valuing the uniqueness of each child and family.
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.
- The pedagogical approach adopted in this setting is underpinned by the Steiner philosophy of education with *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* embedded in the planning for the provision for learning and development.
- The integrated learning experiences centre on seasonal events and festivals, and the practitioners’ and children’s emergent interests. Short-term curriculum plans are hung close to the entrance encouraging parental engagement.
- The nature and sensory-rich outdoor learning environment is large and valued as an essential area for learning. A circle of logs, a mud kitchen, a swing, a climbing frame and climbing trees are just some of the areas that support the children’s exploration of the outdoor learning environment.
- The indoor learning environment is warm, welcoming and aesthetically pleasing featuring defined interest areas. The selection of open-ended materials encourages many discussions about different aspects of nature including the seasons, birds and animals.
- Practitioners judiciously vary their pace, interactions and involvement with children. They complement one another and are working towards a shared goal for the provision in the setting and for the children’s learning experiences.
- Children learn in an inclusive environment where equitable opportunities are provided to promote the engagement of all learners during the sessions. Practitioners work in partnership with parents and external professionals to support children with additional needs.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is excellent.
- The children demonstrate an interest in exploration, experimentation and enquiry as they work with the materials provided.
- Children demonstrate enjoyment and they share their thoughts with the practitioners. Their voices are heard and time is provided by the practitioners who carefully position themselves and allow the children space to reflect and make decisions on their learning.
- The learning environment provides opportunities for the children to be creative through mark making both indoors and outdoors. During the inspection, three children were observed collecting leaves from the ground, placing them in a muddy puddle and then walking to the wall of the preschool room and sticking them on. This routine was repeated many times and an elaborate design was created.
- The children demonstrate an interest and awareness of the meaning and uses of symbols and print and they are supported to explore these in their playful interactions. A few children were observed exploring the formation of the number four using the bread dough at small group time.
- Children are inquisitive and confident; they gather materials from other play spaces to enhance their play and that of other children.
- The children share ideas and thought processes through discussing when playing together. Children present as highly motivated and engaged in their play during active free-play outdoors.
- The children enjoy singing and rhyming and take great delight in engaging in the animated story telling which is led by a practitioner. They use props to further enhance this experience.
AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- There is an ethos of collaboration and partnership between the practitioners in the setting. The management promotes a supportive approach by organising frequent opportunities for the staff to meet within the setting and occasionally with practitioners of the sister setting. The practitioners record minutes of these meetings. They are aware of the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide.
- The team are motivated, and demonstrate a strong and positive sense of collaboration and commitment to the setting and the children they work with.
- It is evident that the pre-school team have a clear and shared understanding of the importance of engagement with parents and families. Parents are continually informed, formally and informally, with regard to their child’s evolving learning and experiences.
- Practitioners engage in discussions with children to support them in their transition to the local schools. There is no policy or formal procedures in place to support children during this time.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the practitioners use the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to further develop their review, self-reflection and quality-development processes. This will provide a platform to guide the setting to support practice improvement thereby enhancing the children’s learning experiences within the setting.
- It is advised that a policy on transitions be developed. This could include the procedures necessary to establish links with the principal of local schools and to support continuity in the children’s learning as they make this transition.
## Summary of Overall Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

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

Published March 2020