

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

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Choice Childcare
Setting Address	Aghards House Thornhill Gardens Celbridge County Kildare
DCYA number	18KE0423

Date of Inspection: 22-11-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

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	22-11-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interaction with children• Review of relevant documents• Feedback to setting owner, manager and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Choice Childcare is a privately owned full-day setting. The setting provides three morning pre-school sessions through its participation in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection thirty-three children were present in the pre-school rooms together with eight practitioners. The owner and the manager of the setting 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; a response was not received from the setting.

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 caring, warm and relaxed feeling in the setting; the children and parents are personally greeted upon arrival which creates a welcoming atmosphere. This relationship building is effectively supported through the key-person approach in operation.
- The children arrive confidently into the setting. They are very familiar with the environment and the routines. The routine provides ample opportunities of free play, with a balance of adult-initiated activities.
- It is evident that the children are viewed as active agents in their own learning. They are afforded many opportunities throughout the session to make decisions which are affirmed and encouraged by the practitioners. One example of this is a rolling snack time which affords the children the opportunity to be independent in their choice of when to eat, and in the preparation of their own snack.
- The practitioners are very responsive, warm and affectionate with the children. They often provide support and encouragement towards positive behaviour though there are some inconsistencies in this practice.
- Recognition for the uniqueness of the child is promoted through various displays such as the family wall, art displays and a birthday chart. There are community displays in some rooms.
- An emphasis is placed on developing strong connections with the families of each child. This is developed through the key-worker system and through the activities that parents are encouraged to engage with. Recent activities include an art exhibition, and annual celebrations such as the Christmas play. In addition, parents are encouraged to share information about their roles and family backgrounds.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to review the conflict resolution strategies which they use when challenging behaviour occurs. There is a need to ensure that the practitioners have a shared understanding of the strategies. In addition, there is a need to ensure that the strategies are implemented consistently.
- To enhance the current supportive measures, practitioners are advised to embrace the children's cultural diversity through additional visible representations and activities. These could include resources, books, dramatic play, additional linguistic representation and increased parental engagement.

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.
- The setting is developing a play-based approach to its curriculum which is aligned to the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. There is evidence that the practitioners are developing their understanding of an emergent curriculum as identified in some of the documented short-term plans. There is scope to strengthen this practice.
- The practitioners are developing individual learning journals that gather information about the children's learning experiences and achievements. These include samples of children's artwork, and photographs of the children completing activities. They gather information about the child's learning using the *Aistear* learning record observations. The next steps for children's learning are identified and noted; this assessment information could be used to inform the short-term planning more consistently.
- The practitioners use a number of effective interaction strategies such as providing new information and facts, and at times they engage in play-partnering and establish authentic discussions with the children. On occasions during the inspection, the practitioners supported children to talk about their ideas, asking open-ended questions that invited children to share their knowledge, make assessments and predictions.
- The majority of the indoor environments are bright, inviting and presented in an attractive manner. There are defined interest areas within all of the rooms. Many of the materials are accessible to the children, and displayed in a way that promotes their independence. These areas provide many opportunities for creative expression and promote various types of play such as socio-dramatic play, construction, mark-making, and play with manipulatives. Some rooms would benefit from having additional resources that are responsive to the children's interests and needs.
- The outdoor area is currently being developed. It is normally used on a daily basis and provides opportunities for the children to engage in purposeful, imaginative and creative play.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to continue to strengthen their emergent curriculum through the consistent use of the identified next steps in children's learning as they develop the short-term plans. Using more than one identified interest per week will ensure that all children's learning needs and interests are met on a regular basis.
- The practitioners are encouraged to enhance interactions with the children through the increased use of open-ended questions, and by developing shared thinking approaches which will scaffold and extend independent problem-solving.
- The practitioners are advised to develop additional interest areas that are responsive to the children's identified interests and needs and to extend the range of play materials and equipment. For example, they could provide a small climbing structure for the younger children that express an interest in climbing; natural materials in all of the rooms to promote exploration; and resources that promote exploration of literacy and numeracy concepts. The 'Learning Environment' pillar of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* offers further guidance on this point.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- Children display eagerness and enjoyment on arrival and throughout the day. They have autonomy and agency, and they make many decisions about their activities, the materials, their play partners and where they will play.
- Many of the children are confident in expressing their thoughts and opinions. They make requests and their views are sought in relation to their choice of play materials or areas. This practice enables the children to have a voice as active agents in their own learning. It would be beneficial to enhance this by including their voice in their learning journals and in the planning process.

- The children demonstrate motivation, perseverance and confident dispositions as they engage in exploratory and collaborative play in the indoor area.
- On the day of the inspection, many of the children experienced success in their chosen activities and they shared that success with the practitioners as they completed these activities. They are enabled to develop an awareness of their changing abilities and the progress in their development by reflecting on their recent activities with the practitioners, and through the feedback from the practitioners. Some children need additional support and communication strategies to engage in these discussions and share their thoughts and ideas.
- The children are developing the ability to play co-operatively and they are establishing friendships. This was apparent during the inspection, when they acknowledged friendships with their peers and also in their ability to take turns.
- The children engaged in many types of play that promote literacy and language development. For example they engaged in mark-making, songs and rhymes, and story-telling.

Actions advised

- To further support the children's visibility and active participation in their learning and progression, the practitioners are advised to engage the children in the planning process and in reflecting on their recent learning activities.
- The practitioners are advised to develop additional supportive strategies to support all of the children to share their thoughts and ideas.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The team have formal meetings on a regular basis. These meetings are used to develop their curriculum, and to reflect on their practice. There is evidence that the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* is used to inform and review practice. There is also some evidence of weekly reflection on the planning documents.
- The team is committed to providing a quality learning experience for the children; they identify play as their method for supporting children's learning and development.
- There is a professional ethos in the setting. There is a clear sense of effective teamwork and shared leadership. Job charts are provided once a term and these are used to identify additional supports or training needs.
- Parents are encouraged to engage with activities and to attend various events throughout the year. The practitioners facilitate an information session prior to their child starting at the setting, and the parent and child are encouraged to visit the setting. A settling-in period is facilitated as required.
- The children's progress is shared with parents informally each day at arrival and collection times and through two formal progress meetings. A parent's noticeboard and a messaging service keeps parents informed about events and activities. The learning journals are available for parents to view, and are sent home once a term. The journals do not currently include any documented parental feedback on the child's progression.
- The setting prepares the children for the transition to primary school by engaging in discussions and activities which support their understanding of school. The management is currently developing plans to generate links with the primary school.

Actions advised

- To enrich the current practices and enable the practitioners to identify plans for quality improvement, the practitioners are advised to enhance their approach to their self-evaluative and reflective practices on a more consistent basis. The *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* provides useful guidance in this regard.
- To support the children's transition to primary school, the practitioners are advised to explore opportunities to develop a relationship between the setting and the school.

Summary of Overall Inspection

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Very good
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	Good
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	Very good
Quality of management and leadership for learning	Very good

Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

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