**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Little Sunshine’s Day Nursery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Setting Address               | Mullinbro  
|                               | Ferrybank  
|                               | County Waterford                                  |
| DCYA number                   | 18KK0158                                          |

**Date of Inspection: 03-12-2019**
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>03-12-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Review of available records of children’s learning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-inspection meeting with the setting deputy manager</td>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory meeting with the practitioners</td>
<td>Review of educational provision and materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of the morning and afternoon session in the pre-school room</td>
<td>Post inspection feedback meeting with the setting owner and the deputy manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with the children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Little Sunshine’s Day Nursery is a private full-day, sessional and after-school setting located in the rural area of Mullinbro, in Waterford. The setting provides two sessions for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme; one in morning and one in the afternoon, both of which were inspected. A number of the children attend on a full-time basis. On the day of the inspection, three practitioners and twenty-two children were present in the morning session. In the afternoon, two practitioners and nine preschool children attended. 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.
- A calm and warm atmosphere, with a welcoming ethos is evident in the setting.
- The practitioners demonstrate warmth and positive regard in their interactions with the children.
- On the day of the inspection, the daily routine for both sessions provided insufficient time for child-led active learning through play.
- Transitions which are effectively signalled using verbal cues and a visual timer, prepare the children for changes in the routine. On some occasions during the inspection, the children experienced short waiting periods of inactivity as they moved from one part of the routine to the next.
- Lunch time supports social interaction. The children sit together with the practitioners in small groups engaging in relaxed two-way conversations.
- The uniqueness of each child is valued in the displays of photographs of their family, samples of their mark-making and a birthday wall. A number of mirrors positioned at child-eye level support the children’s developing sense of self and their features.
- A number of local sites are represented in the setting’s environment. This suitably nurtures the children’s awareness of their community. A ‘bring a teddy home’ project builds a connection between the children’s home and pre-school lives.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the children experience a block of one hour in the daily routine for free play. During this time, practitioners need to support the children to follow their interests, make decisions and choices and construct their own knowledge.
- Practitioners are advised to review the transitions within the routine to minimise the waiting times and maximise the children’s levels of 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 documented curriculum outlines a broad range of play types, routines and experiences that support the children’s learning and development. The curriculum reflects aspects of the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. No specific reference is made to the aims and learning goals of *Aistear* to inform the curriculum.
- Planning mostly reflects practitioner-selected topics and activities structured in a weekly plan. Occasionally, the emergent interests of children are used to inform planning.
- Practitioners assess the weekly activities noting the aims and learning goals of *Aistear* which have been achieved. This is a useful record which provides an overview of the experiences and activities. At the time of the inspection, practitioners were planning to introduce individual journals to record children’s learning experiences. Currently, one developmental report is completed for each child.
- Assessment information is not fully informing the practitioners’ decisions in planning to meet the learning and development needs of the children.
- The practitioners capably support the children’s learning through positive interactions. They use open-ended questions and they model interactions with the materials. This extends the children's understanding.
- The spacious indoor learning environment is well-maintained and inviting. Good labelling of the materials supports the children to find, use and return resources independently. An adequate range of sensory-rich materials is provided. Real and authentic props are available for role play scenarios, such as shopping and going to the hairdresser.
- Outside time is scheduled for the children on a daily basis. Two distinct areas provide for suitable child-led and practitioner-planned outdoor experiences; there is an enclosed play area and a yard space.
- Mathematical thinking and learning are effectively promoted through play and the provision of suitable props, such as, play money in the cash register and games.
- The daily story time routine positively supports the children’s language skills. Practitioners engage the children with high-quality reading materials. They read aloud introducing and explaining an extended vocabulary. They encourage the children to contribute their ideas.

*Actions advised*

- Practitioners are advised to use *Aistear* and the children’s strengths, needs and emergent interests to inform the curriculum plans. This will strengthen the link between assessment and planning to provide more holistic and meaningful learning experiences.
- As they develop the individual journals to record the children’s learning, practitioners are advised to regularly capture information about the children’s experiences. This journal needs to reflect what the child can do, say and make.
- It is advised that a greater range of sensory-rich materials be made available for the children to choose from during child-led and practitioner-initiated activities. The children need daily access to materials that foster curiosity, imagination and exploration such as sand, water and paint.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children express enjoyment and are interested in playing with each other and the materials.
- Photographic displays of past experiences and prompts from the practitioners provide good opportunities for the children to think and talk about their learning.
- The children experience good opportunities to develop their self-care skills and demonstrate self-reliance. There is potential to enable children to take more responsibility.
The children use their developing language skills to share information and personal experiences. They know a range of songs and rhymes. On the day of the inspection, a number of children excitedly shared their ‘elf on the shelf’ stories.

Evidence of the children’s free drawing showcasing their creativity was on display. The practitioners captured the children’s voice in notes on the drawings. The children regularly complete worksheets and template-based activities. These types of activities are limited in scope in developing emergent language and literacy skills.

The children demonstrate curiosity and inquisitiveness. While outside, they investigated the ice that had formed and used magnifying glasses and tweezers to find insects.

Most of the children display prosocial behaviours. They interact positively with each other in pairs and small groups.

**Actions advised**

- Practitioners are advised to create additional opportunities that enable the children to be responsible. For example, it would be beneficial to arrange the plates and cutlery accessibly so that the children can select and return it. In addition, the practitioners could create an area from which the children can independently get a wipe/ tissue to clean up after lunch.
- Practitioners are advised to replace template-based literacy activities with more hands-on meaningful learning opportunities to build the children’s emergent literacy skills. The children need to experiment with writing throughout the environment, engage with print, develop fine motor skills through play and see practitioners modelling writing.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The setting manager and the practitioners demonstrate a clear commitment to their roles in providing quality learning experiences and outcomes for children. A positive sense of team and an ethos of professionalism is evident.
- The setting manager and the deputy manager formally reflect on and review practice, policies and procedures leading to quality improvements in the setting. The engagement and contribution of the whole team in this process is not yet fully developed.
- Two appraisal meetings are held annually to provide the practitioners with feedback and support for professional growth.
- Engagement in continuing professional learning opportunities is encouraged. A practitioner has completed the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) programme.
- The manager maintains links with the local county childcare committee for support and advice.
- Communication with parents is mostly informal. Practitioners meet with parents at arrival and departure times engaging in brief and informal conversations. Parental feedback and sharing of views are welcomed.
- In preparation for primary school, the practitioners support discussions around what children can expect when they move onto primary school. At present, there are no formal links with the local primary schools to support information sharing with parental permission.
- New children starting in the pre-school are offered a flexible settling-in period and parents are welcomed to stay and support their child. Children moving between rooms in the setting visit the new rooms throughout the year to become familiar with their new environments and the practitioners. Practitioners share information about the children to support continuity of experiences in the setting.

**Actions advised**

- The setting manager and the deputy manager are advised to strengthen and formalise whole-team reflection and review on practice. The Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide online tool is a useful resource to inform quality improvement initiatives.
- The practitioners are advised to develop connections with the primary schools so that information can be shared between both settings to support continuity of experiences and progression in children’s learning. Working in partnership with parents, the setting could prepare a summary of the child’s strengths which could be shared with the teacher of the junior class.
### 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>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>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Published March 2020
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report.
This was our first Inspection in Little Sunshine's From the Department of Education and Skills. As the new owner and manager we welcome all suggestions made in the report to enhance the service we provide. We strive to provide a warm, loving, caring, and stimulating environment for all our children in our care. We acknowledge the areas where we need to develop and have started to implement some of the recommendation and we continue to work to implement others over the coming weeks, months and years.

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 now cut down circle time and story time to make more time for child led active learning through play and now have a block one hour for free play as recommended and the children seem to be really enjoying this.
- We have cut out waiting periods of inactivity when moving through the different transitions within the routine by letting the children take out toys or playing games or staff member doing an activity with them.

Area 2

- Started to link Aistear and the children’s strengths, needs and emergent interests to help advise and plan the curriculum, to provide more holistic and meaningful learning experiences.
- The children’s individual journals are only new for us and we are working on them to develop and expand more to reflect what the child can do, say and make.
- Have selection of paints and paper available for the children if they choose to paint and have more sand and water play available for the children to play with.

Area 3

- The children on the ECCE programme now get their own lunch bags and take out their own food. When finished they tidy up and return their bags to the cupboard themselves, which gives them more independence and gets them ready for Primary School. The children who are here a full day get their plates with food from the trays and return them when finished.
- We have cut down on template based literacy activities.

Area 4

- Now using the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide to support our self-reflection and self-review on practice. Planning to use these tools at staff meetings.
- We use developmental reports to detail the children’s strengths etc, along with how their developing in different areas. We are looking into other resources such as Mo Scéal for the children’s transition to primary school to be shared with teachers.