An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Little V.I.P’s Pre-school</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>The Commons</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Killybegs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Donegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>19DL0260</td>
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Date of Inspection: 21-11-2019
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 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 | 21-11-2019
---|---

Inspection activities undertaken
- Meeting with the setting owner
- Meeting with the practitioners
- Observation of interactions during one pre-school session
- Interaction with children
- Review of relevant documents
- Feedback to the practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Little V.I.P’s Pre-school is a privately-owned facility located in Killybegs, County Donegal. The setting has recently re-opened under new management. It provides one morning pre-school session to children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. On the day of the inspection, there were fifteen children, the pre-school leader and one assistant present. Both practitioners 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.
- The practitioners have developed a visual routine and a welcome chart that create a sense of security and belonging for the children. The children are aware of the outline of the day and enjoy a personally chosen greeting from the welcome chart upon arrival.
- Snack is viewed as a sociable occasion whereby the practitioners and the children sit together and engage in relaxed conversations. The children’s self-help skills are encouraged during this time.
- The practitioners use verbal cues, and occasionally a timer, to signal the transitions in the routine. These are not used consistently to prepare the children for upcoming activities. At times, the children were not purposefully engaged as they waited for subsequent activities to occur.
- There is a key-person approach in operation whereby each practitioner is assigned a designated group of children to observe. The designated groupings are displayed in the pre-school room and in the welcome hall-way for parents to see.
- The practitioners are sensitive to the children’s needs and use gentle, respectful tones when interacting with them. They guide them to be kind and caring towards their friends and encourage turn-taking. During the inspection, the children were overly reliant on adult support to resolve minor conflicts which did not fully support a problem-solving approach.
- Practitioners value the involvement of parents and have established a long-term plan for parental involvement. This term they have made efforts to establish links with parents and the local community by inviting a parent into the setting to support the children’s interest in farms and a public health nurse to discuss her role within the community.

Actions advised
- It is advised that additional transitional activities and strategies are introduced to minimise the waiting times created for the children during some aspects of the routine.
- It is advised that practitioners establish strategies that support the children to use problem-solving skills and negotiation as they independently resolve minor conflicts with their peers.
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.
- There is a broad-based curriculum in place informed by the principles of *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Plans are structured on a long, medium and short-term basis. Although ‘individual child interventions’ are noted in addition to the observed next steps in learning, these are not visibly planned for to promote further learning opportunities and progression of the children’s learning.
- Practitioners conduct monthly observations of the children’s learning within their individual scrapbooks. A similar outline of crafts and information observed in some of the children’s scrapbooks minimises an individual approach towards representing the children’s learning.
- Practitioners engage playfully and warmly at the child’s level. They view the children as highly competent learners. They use open-ended questioning occasionally, with some missed opportunities observed during play to extend the children’s vocabulary further.
- Practitioners offer the children opportunities to make independent choice at free-play and encourage them to assume helper roles at various times during the session.
- The defined indoor environment has a variety of interest areas for children to experience. Whilst there is an area for the children to write, paint and play with playdough, the availability of a wide range of creative and open-ended materials is minimal. The provision of authentic materials could be further extended in the various interest areas.
- The outdoor area is accessed regularly and the children have the opportunity to play in a well-equipped mud-kitchen, a construction area with a cement mixer and in a covered seating area. A boat is also available to encourage imaginative play. This area has recently been developed prior to the opening of the setting. Practitioners have plans to further enhance this provision.
- Emergent language is fostered through the morning circle-time activity and when reading books to the children on a one-to-one basis at the end of the session.

**Actions advised**

- It is advised that the practitioners make visible connections to the children’s individual needs, interests and enquiries in the planned activities to support progression in learning. Undertaking weekly evaluations and developing unique and connected observations of the children’s learning will support the planning structures further.
- It is advised that the practitioners use the playful interactions with the children to extend their language and cognition further through open-ended questioning, extended vocabulary and mathematical language.
- It is advised that provision in the indoor and outdoor areas be extended by the inclusion of authentic, creative and open-ended resources to further support the children’s engagement, imagination and their skills of enquiry.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children enjoy the sensorial experience of mixing paint with their hands and observing the colours change. They engage in many role-play scenarios in the hairdressing area and in the home-corner.
- Some children demonstrate developing dispositions such as imagination, creativity and resourcefulness whilst making many potions in the dress-up area.
- The children have the opportunity to communicate imaginatively with their peers during role-play. The circle-time activity is used to re-call information that has previously been discussed. There are no opportunities provided to enable the children to contribute their unique ideas and to use these, alongside their enquiries to generate new learning.
• A few children are aware of their evolving abilities and demonstrate a growing confidence during mark-making, painting and writing activities.

• The children have individual scrapbooks for the collation of samples of their crafts, photographs and monthly observations. These are accessible to the children on a shelf in the book area. Some documented observations indicate that pencil control is overly focused on as a key indicator of learning as is the formal acquisition of knowledge about shape and number.

• The children are learning about the roles of adults in the local community through some visits to the setting from external professionals.

• In the majority of instances, the children play co-operatively in a range of play scenarios both indoors and outdoors. There were missed opportunities to promote problem-solving skills, responsibility and empathy during some minor conflict situations that arose during the session.

• The children have opportunities to broaden their sense of the wider world as they learn about animals and other countries through topics such as African safari animals observed during the inspection. There were missed opportunities to extend investigation and exploration further to enable the children to make connections in their learning and to enhance cognition.

**Actions advised**

• It is advised that children develop social skills such as turn-taking, responsibility and empathy through a heightened awareness of feelings. This, in addition to developing strategies to assist with problem-solving during minor conflict, will support the development of social skills.

• It is advised that the children have frequent opportunities to communicate their thoughts, share their ideas and use them to plan for aspects of their learning.

• It is advised that the children have regular opportunities to extend their sense of the world by investigating a range of working theories in play, by making connections, generating ideas and by generating solutions to problems.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

• The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.

• There is an ethos of teamwork, collaboration and partnership in the setting and practitioners are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

• The practitioners consult informally on a daily basis and meet formally once a week to review the planned provision and activities. There are missed opportunities to use these meeting to evaluate broader elements of quality improvement using the *Aistear, Síolta, Practice Guide*.

• There is an organised, welcoming and aesthetically pleasing welcome hall-way which provides a wealth of information to parents. A pre-school library is available to encourage the parents and the children to borrow books.

• The practitioners produce a monthly newsletter which is distributed to parents to keep them updated about curriculum topics and activities. A parents’ voice template has recently been disseminated to garner parental opinions regarding their child’s pre-school experiences.

• Many informal conversations occur with parents upon the children’s arrival into the pre-school setting. There are no formal opportunities organised to meet with parents and no sharing of parents’ observations of their children’s learning with the practitioners throughout the year.

• The settling-in transition is supported by the provision of a meet and greet barbeque for the children and their parents. An informative parents’ handbook is provided which contains details in relation to the procedures implemented in the service. An ‘All about me’ form is completed to support the planning of relevant activities for the children during the settling-in period.

• A transitions photo book is made available to the children near the end of the ECCE programme to familiarise them visually with the local schools. As the setting is very recently established, professional relationships with the local primary schools have yet to be established.

**Actions advised**

• It is advised that the practitioners develop frequent opportunities for systematic review of practice and the overall organisation of the setting, using the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to support reflections and subsequent action-plans.

• It is advised that the practitioners maximise the use of the key-person approach by frequently communicating with parents in relation to their children’s observed learning. Sharing the children’s
scrapbooks with parents regularly throughout the year will promote communication that supports consistent learning between pre-school and home.

- It is advised that policy and procedures be developed to support the children’s transition to school. Providing a summary of each child’s learning which is presented to the parents and subsequently shared with the relevant primary school teachers will support the children’s transition to school. Utilising the ‘Mo Scéal: Moving from Preschool to Primary’ template available on www.ncca.ie will promote such continuity of experiences in the children’s learning.
### 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>Very 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>
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### Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

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