An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Green House Pre-school</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Corbeg</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ballinahown</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Offaly</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09OY0041</td>
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Date of Inspection: 26-03-2019
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 26-03-2019

Inspection activities undertaken
- Meeting with setting manager
- Observation of interactions during the morning ECCE session
- Interaction with children
- Review of relevant documents
- Post-inspection feedback meeting with setting owner and ECCE practitioner

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Green House Pre-school has been in operation in Ballinahown, Co. Offaly for over seventeen years. The building consists of a baby room, toddler room and one pre-school room. The toddler and pre-school room have free-flow access to each other during the morning routine. The owner/manager provides care and education for local children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, the owner/manager, ECCE practitioner and eight children were present. 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 good.
- A welcoming atmosphere is evident in the setting. The relationship between the practitioners and the children are respectful and caring. The practitioners have good relationships with parents and talk openly to them at drop off and collection times.
- There is a busy daily routine in place with children being active and engaged in their play throughout the morning. This daily routine is currently not displayed for children.
- Circle time is a short and introductory occasion. The children sing a welcome song where each child is acknowledged. There is an effective play period with free-play and planned activities taking place. As transitions between activities are instantly initiated by the practitioners, children are not always fully prepared for subsequent activities.
- Snack time is seen as a social occasion and practitioners use this time to discuss healthy eating and promote self-help skills. The practitioners sit with the children during snack time and support social interaction. The children independently get their own bags, open their lunch boxes and clean up after their snack.
- The children’s individual identity and belonging is nurtured and celebrated in the room. They enjoy sharing stories about their family life. On the day of the inspection one child shared a story about planting daffodils with his father and seeing them grow along the road. There are some local community visitors to the setting during the year including a worker from a pet farm, a member of the fire brigade and a farmer with agricultural machinery. There are limited displays relevant to the local community.

Actions advised
- It is advised that the practitioners use displays to support the children’s awareness of the daily routine. An interactive display of the daily routine would benefit all children in following the daily activities.
- It is advised that the practitioners review the daily routine to ensure transitions between activities are effectively managed and prepared for through the use of props and various resources.
- It is advised that practitioners emphasise the local community within the pre-school setting. To promote identity and belonging further, it would be beneficial to enable the children to reflect on and connect with their surrounding community through their play activities and in discussions.
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 curriculum is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and a play-based curriculum is evident in the daily activities and experiences. The ECCE practitioner reports that she is moving to an emergent curriculum building on the children's current interests.
- Curriculum plans are organised with long-term, medium-term and short-term planning in place. Planning currently focuses on themes and annual events.
- The practitioners complete observations every three months; they record the activity and document future plans. These observations could be extended. While observations are shared with parents, few parents respond with signatures and comments.
- Play is the main medium for learning with time given to children to explore and discover different ideas. The children have a strong interest in imaginative and role play. They are given choice as to whether they would like to complete the planned activity. On the day of the inspection, the planned activity was creating flower pots for a Mother’s day gift. Children freely chose to access the activity and complete it as desired.
- The indoor environment is well laid out with defined interest areas offered across both rooms. There is a good range of resources available to the children to support imaginative play.
- Interactions between practitioners and children are playful and practitioners use instructions to guide and promote children’s understanding of concepts and learning. The use of open-ended questions is limited.
- Practitioners focus on elements of language, literacy and numeracy throughout the morning to support children’s understanding of these concepts. Their understanding could be further nurtured by providing them with opportunities to access, explore and engage with additional resources.
- The setting provides an inclusive environment with a focus on supporting children with additional needs. All children are encouraged to mix socially and have the opportunity to engage in all activities.

**Actions advised**

- It is advised that the practitioners review the short-term plan which a view to developing the emergent curriculum. The plans need to set out the children’s interests, and document how the interests will be supported and incorporated into their future learning and development.
- Practitioners are advised to broaden their assessment approaches to capture a more fulsome view of the children’s progress. This could be achieved by expanding the use of photographs and explicitly naming the children’s skills and dispositions. Links between the setting and the home could be promoted by encouraging parents to comment on and sign the observations.
- The practitioners need to focus, to a greater extent on supporting language, literacy and numeracy. To this end, additional resources need to be provided and more open-ended questioning of the children is required.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children are safe, secure and happy within their environment.
- The children get on well together and enjoy playing in pairs and groups. These occasions occur naturally and at times they are organised by the practitioners.
- The setting has three distinct outdoor areas offering various experiences to the children. On the day of the inspection the children played on the tarmac doing exercises, drawing with chalk and building houses using large plastic blocks. The ECCE practitioner read a story to the children outside.
- Songs and rhymes are planned for within the daily routine and children enjoy engaging in this. During the inspection, the owner sang a song to encourage the children to clean up, and the children danced to the music after clean-up time.
• The children have access to sensory exploration and messy play as planned for by the practitioners. On the day of the inspection no sensory play took place. The owner reported that children have access to water play and sand play on occasion. There is potential to extend this type of hands-on learning further.
• The practitioners use templates and copies to support the development of pre-writing skills; this practice is not fully in line with the children’s needs or stage of development. There are some examples of process, mark-making art; the children would benefit from further opportunities to engage in mark-making.
• Children regularly hear positive affirmations about themselves and their activities during the session.
• The children are independent and enjoy completing tasks. On the day of the inspection children eagerly asked for responsibility and jobs. A helper chart of daily tasks would further support this.

Actions advised
• The children would benefit from daily access to sensory play. The practitioners could vary the resources and materials offered to the children periodically. A nature table could also be included in the environment.
• The practice of using templates and copies as a basis for developing pre-writing skills needs to be reviewed. In place of this approach, practitioners are advised to provide a space where mark-making and creative play incorporating writing materials could take place; these activities are more appropriate for the development of young children’s pre-writing skills.
• The introduction of a helper chart using real-life photographs and children’s individual pictures is needed to help nurture and embed the children’s sense of achievement and responsibility.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING
• The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
• There is a professional working ethos evident in the setting.
• There is a good sense of teamwork; the owner/manager delegates’ paperwork tasks and responsibilities relevant to the pre-school to the ECCE practitioner. They work well together as a team to optimise the learning and development for the children in their care. There are staff meetings held where the curriculum is planned and house-keeping issues are discussed.
• The owner/manager reports that in recent years, she has moved to a more play-based curriculum which offers the children more choice. The ECCE practitioner is currently completing a qualification in Childcare and is supporting the setting’s curriculum developments. Support from Better Start, the Quality Development Service would support further setting developments. The setting currently does not engage in self-reflective practice and the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide is not used to support reflection.
• The owner/manager and practitioner have an awareness of Siolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and this is reflected in the setting’s policies and procedures.
• The owner/manager and practitioner use a range of resources to communicate with parents. There is a partnership with parents’ policy and the owner uses social media to share information. There are parental meetings organised where necessary.
• The transition to primary school is planned for in June and the owner/manager reports that the local principal contacts her to share information as required. There is potential to develop a procedure to support this transition in the children’s lives.

Actions advised
• It is advised that the setting access external advisory support for quality improvement provided by Better Start. This will support the setting to make improvements in a sustained and continuous manner.
• It is advised that the practitioners use the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide as a resource for supporting self-reflection. The practice guide will document changes and development in the setting.
• Practitioners are advised to develop strategies and procedures to support the children’s transition to primary school. The Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide pillar of practice ‘Transitions’ will be useful in this regard.
### 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>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>
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<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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