An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Bright Beginnings
Setting Address	Rathconnell Mullingar County Westmeath
DCYA number	09WH0092

Date of Inspection: 22-01-2019

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 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	22-01-2019
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with setting owner and manager • Observation of interactions during two sessions	 • Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Feedback to setting owner, manager and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Bright Beginnings was established in 2001. It is a privately owned and operated setting in the parish of Rathconnell. The facility offers sessional, full day and after-school services. At the time of the inspection, twenty-six children were participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The setting provide a morning and an afternoon session; both sessions were observed as part of the inspection. The same two early year's practitioners facilitated the morning and afternoon sessions. 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.
- A warm and welcoming atmosphere is evident throughout the setting. Parents and grandparents are individually greeted on arrival and many spend time in the learning environment at the end of the sessions.
- Each of the daily routines promotes autonomy and independence. A large proportion of the sessions provide commendable opportunities for children to choose their own learning experiences.
- Relationships between practitioners and children are consistently secure and responsive. This can be attributed to the key person approach that is in operation in the setting. This approach involves each child being assigned a named practitioner who is primarily responsible for creating a close relationship with the young child and their family. Currently, some children and parents are unclear about the identity of their key person in the environment.
- Practitioners have effectively introduced a rolling morning meal time where each child has the freedom to choose when they eat. This approach provides great flexibility to the children and is also responsive to their individual needs.
- The practitioners know the children very well and respond to their individual needs. Few examples of cultural diversity being recognised, valued or affirmed were observed on the day of the inspection.
- Visual displays in the environment give recognition and visibility to many of the children, their families and the local community. The children are familiar with these displays and made reference to their photographs and drawings throughout both sessions.

Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to give greater visibility to the key person approach in the learning environment. By clearly identifying the two key practitioners and their assigned children this will support children's and parents' awareness as to who their primary point of contact is. In addition, as children divide into their groups in the morning session, the use of a visual would support them to identify their own group.
- It is advised that practitioners strengthen their recognition and celebration of children from diverse backgrounds as part of their everyday practice. Consideration could also be given to ensuring that representation of different cultures is reflective of the children in the setting.

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 very good.
- Curriculum plans, informed by *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*, are effectively used to support children's learning and development. Practitioners demonstrate knowledge of the importance of following children's interests and diligently document and plan for these on a regular basis.
- Practitioners regularly document individual children's learning experiences and achievements. These are shared with parents throughout the year in the form of individual learning journals. The practitioners plan to further explore individual children's interests, skills, learning dispositions and values so as to build a richer of the individual child is commended.
- Many high quality interaction strategies between the practitioners and children were observed on the day of the inspection. These included modelling, scaffolding, facilitating and leading learning. A small number of thought-provoking questions were used to extend and challenge children's thoughts and theories.
- The indoor environment is bright and spacious with clearly defined learning spaces. These spaces are richly resourced and contain a selection of natural and open-ended materials. The provision of a wide variety of sensory trays in the environment works very effectively in offering children opportunities to explore and investigate multiple tactile materials.
- Children and practitioners avail of the spacious outdoor learning environment on a daily basis. This space is divided into various interest areas that promote and facilitate many playful experiences.
- The setting's play-based philosophy is strongly evident in practice. Practitioners value the importance of learning through purposeful play. The setting makes a conscious effort to inform parents and families of the benefits that play can have in effectively supporting children's learning and development.

Action advised

- Practitioners are advised to strengthen their interaction strategies further by consistently promoting meaningful conversations with children. As part of this process, the use of more open-ended questions to extend children's language, thinking and problem-solving skills is advised.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children present as very happy in the setting. They demonstrate great interest and motivation as they make choices about where and with whom they wish to play. This results in the children remaining engaged and focused for lengthy periods of time.
- Children proudly share aspects of their learning achievements with practitioners. Practitioners acknowledge and affirm these achievements; they provide encouraging feedback particularly towards the children's developing self-help skills. Fewer opportunities were available for children to engage, reflect on and recall information documented about their learning achievements.
- During both sessions, the children demonstrate the ability to play co-operatively with one another. They display their developing personal and social skills with support and guidance from practitioners where necessary. For example, on the day of the inspection, a practitioner offered a sand-timer to a group of children to facilitate and support turn-taking during their play.
- Many children display a strong sense of who they are. They freely discuss and describe their siblings, families and pets in conversations with other children and practitioners.
- Through play, many children show an awareness and an emergent understanding of the meaning and uses of print, numbers, pictures and symbols. They discuss these with other children and practitioners, demonstrating their growing confidence in communicating their knowledge and experiences.

Action advised

- Building on ways in which children experience achievement, practitioners are advised to make documented information, such as the children's learning journals, accessible and freely available to them in the learning environment. This will also support the provision of additional opportunities for children to reflect on their learning and to make connections between new and previous experiences.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- The management are proactive in accessing mentoring and professional development opportunities for the practitioners. The setting has benefitted from mentoring through the Better Start Quality Development Service and receives ongoing support and input from their local county childcare committee. The professional knowledge and skills garnered from these experiences, and others, are used to very good effect.
- A culture of professional dialogue has been developed in the setting. Various opportunities are provided for management and practitioners to meet regularly. These meetings provide time and space to share and discuss policies, procedures and practices. Individual support and supervision meetings are held on a regular basis to affirm good practice and to support ongoing improvement.
- An ethos of teamwork and collaboration is strongly evident amongst the practitioners. The practitioners, setting manager and owner are clear about their roles and responsibilities. This clarity supports the smooth organisation and facilitation of the learning programme.
- Various approaches are used to facilitate and promote two-way channels of communication with parents. An annual parent evening provides an opportunity to inform parents further on the setting's philosophy, to exchange information between management, practitioners and parents and to strengthen the relationship between the setting, parents and families.
- The setting recognises the importance of supporting new children and parents as they start in the setting. A flexible settling-in period is offered to each child in accordance with his/her needs and in consultation with the parents. The setting reports that this works effectively in ensuring both child and parent are comfortable and happy in the environment.
- The setting recognises the importance of a smooth and seamless transition from the early years setting to primary school. To support this move, practitioners ensure that there are opportunities for regular informal conversations with the local school throughout the year. Visuals of the local schools displayed in the learning environment support the children to become familiar with their new learning environment. Local teachers also visit the setting to meet with the children; this provides an opportunity for children to discuss and ask any questions they may have in advance of their move to primary school.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The setting owner, manager and both early years' practitioners attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is very good.

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	**Very good**
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	**Very good**
Quality of management and leadership for learning	**Excellent**

Language used in Early-Years Education-focused 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.

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