An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION - FOCUSED INSPECTION

REPORT

Service Name	Busy Bees Pre-school
Service Address	Rathkeevin Community Hall Cahir Road Clonmel County Tipperary
DCYA number	16TY0018

Date of Inspection: 22-03-2018

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WHAT IS AN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION-FOCUSED INSPECTION?

The Early Years Education-focused Inspection (EYEI) model is used to provide evaluative information, advice and support in relation to education provision in a pre-school service 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 service.

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 service's provision in each area.

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Date of inspection	23-01-2018
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with service manager • Observation of activities and interactions during the pre-school session with children	• Review of relevant documents • Post-inspection feedback meeting with the owner and service manager

CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Busy Bees Pre-school is a privately-owned, full day service, with the majority of children attending for a sessional pre-school programme. This pre-school is part of a chain which include a number of after-schools services. The pre-school is operating in a community hall for the past year which is a shared space for local interest groups. The service shares use of the outdoor facilities of the adjacent primary school. On the day of the inspection, the pre-school manager, two practitioners and fourteen children were in attendance. There were also two students on work placement. The owner /manager attended the post-inspection meeting. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, and the response submitted on behalf of the setting can 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 very good.
- There is an extremely warm and caring atmosphere in the service. The children and families are greeted warmly at arrival and departure time.
- A consistent routine has been established and is reflected in a visual display showing the various times. This contributes greatly to children's sense of emotional and physical security.
- The routine has a minimum of transition times; upcoming changes are signalled in a timely fashion in advance to support the children as they move from one part of the routine to the next. This prepares children to complete their activity and be actively involved in the transition. Effective use of song was noted to focus children's attention when moving from the outdoors back into the pre-school.
- The practitioners display positive regard towards the children through their kind and understanding interactions with them. They frequently acknowledge children's feelings; they ask meaningful questions and support children to talk about their experiences and achievements.
- The children are suitably supported to understand the appropriate boundaries of positive behaviour. This was illustrated in the children's engagement in their song about our rules.
- There is good range of materials to adequately support children to develop their understanding of difference within cultures; this includes a few books and dolls depicting different races.
- The practitioners suitably promote the children's understanding of the community life through a varied programme of visits and local sports events celebrated in the setting.

Action advised

- Practitioners are advised to reflect, to a greater extent, the diversity of culture in the materials and activities provided for children.

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.

- The curriculum is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and the Montessori Approach to Education. The manager reported that the curriculum has been developed to incorporate an improved balance of adult-initiated and child-initiated activities.
- It is evident that children's emergent interests are suitably incorporated into the activities and experiences provided facilitated by the practitioners.
- The practitioners work together to plan on a monthly and weekly basis. These highly effective plans take account of progressing and supporting children's developing dispositions, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The children's progress in their use of the Montessori materials is carefully tracked and used to inform next steps in their learning. A developmental checklist along with a summary assessment is completed at the end of the pre-school year to reflect children's broad developmental progress.
- Since September this year, the practitioners have introduced learning journals that capture each child's experience of their group learning, their voice and to a lesser extent, assessment information regarding their individual dispositions, interests and experiences.
- A wide range of play opportunities is provided and used very effectively to support children's learning and development. This includes very good provision for creative play, imaginative play and construction play.
- The indoor learning environment is purposefully structured into distinct learning areas. The Montessori materials are regularly rotated with practical life exercises that are incorporated into the 'Home Corner'. There is a commendable variety of sensory rich materials available for children to explore, such as, trays of rice, corn, flour and wooden materials.
- The overall provision for the development of children's early literacy skills is very good. There is a well-stocked area specifically for mark-making. This provides meaningful opportunities for children to create using stampers, punches and drawing materials.
- The outdoor area is scheduled for use on a daily basis. The practitioners introduce suitable materials to support children to use their physical skills

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to further develop the use of individual learning journals ensuring they capture the assessment of each child's unique dispositions, interests, skills, understanding, and knowledge.

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 display focus, motivation and enjoyment in their play-based learning. There is a positive sense of community within the group; at the end of circle time, children put their hands together and chant 'Go Busy Bees!'
- The children have many opportunities to lead their own learning. On the day of the inspection, children were not encouraged to communicate their choices before engaging in free play.
- Children are developing a sense of themselves as learners through their independent access to the scrapbooks. Children are encouraged to reflect on their experiences as a whole group discussion with only a few children contributing.
- Children demonstrate creativity and imagination as they explore the various materials. This was evident on the day of the inspection when a group of children made skipping ropes when threading beads.
- Many children were observed to confidently describe their interests, opinions and personal experiences.
- The children use their developing social skills to successfully play collaboratively, for example, negotiating roles during hairdressing role play, problem solving how to build towers using Duplo.
- The children display an interest in books and can recognise symbols within the environment. They frequently use mathematical language during their play to; comparing sizes, counting and measuring.
- There are very good opportunities avail for children to develop an understanding of the world through the exploration of a variety of topics. The children were involved in meaningful projects on the theme of recycling and experimented using milk.

Action advised

- Practitioners are advised to facilitate children to communicate their play intentions and reflect on their achievements and experiences which will lead to the development of their higher order thinking skills. This could be achieved by dividing the children into small groupings to enable each child to express themselves.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- The practitioners conduct regular reviews of practice and provision informed by *Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.* They regularly use self-assessment tools to reflect and improve outcomes for children. A recent improvement plan resulted in the enhancement of the environment into distinct learning areas and promotion of child-led play opportunities.
- A strong ethos of professionalism with a positive teamwork approach is evident in the service.
- On a weekly basis, the pre-school team conduct formal meetings to organise the educational experiences and activities in the service. This team attend a wider organisational meeting each month that promotes sharing of information and support.
- There are suitably formal and informal strategies used to communicate with parents as partners in their child's learning and development. Information is shared with parents in a variety of ways ensuring that they are constantly informed about the curriculum, events, children's experience and progress.
- The transition of children into the pre-school is given considerable attention to ensure it is smooth and builds on the children's previous experiences. The practitioners operate a transitional plan with parents to plan the first few weeks that are flexible to meet each child's needs. They conduct observations as children settle into the service to gather information on their interests and strengths to inform plans.
- The service manager reported an interactive working relationship established with the local primary school. The practitioners promote open sensitive communication with school staff and facilitate teachers to visit the children in the pre-school. The curriculum provides ample time for children to avail of opportunities to discuss going to school.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the service to continue to implement the actions advised above is excellent as demonstrated in the previous success in identifying improvement priorities and bringing about changes in practice and provision.

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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection **activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

Area1

We have looked into the extent of our culture and diversity within our setting. We will expand our dress up to include outfits from our cultures. We will invite parents to come and speak to us and learn more about the lives within our classroom.

Area2

Individual learning journals are started from Day 1. We have documented what the children enjoy, their skills and interests and use these to implement a curriculum based on the children's needs and interests.

Area 3

Smaller circle time to allow the children to discuss explain, hear and feel part of the community of our preschool. The children will feel that their identity and feelings will be listened to and expressed