An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Service Name	Chestnut Daycare
Service Address	1 Innismore Crumlin Village Dublin 12
DCYA number	09DY0041

Date of Inspection: 05-06-2018

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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 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	05-06-2018
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with service manager • Meeting with practitioners	 • Observation of interactions • Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Feedback to service manager and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Chestnut Daycare is a privately-owned, full day and sessional service. The pedagogical approach that informs the ECCE provision in the setting is Montessori. On the day of the inspection, sixteen children and two practitioners were present. The practitioners and the manager attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this 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.
- There is a very positive, warm and affirming atmosphere in the service. This was evident from the friendly and caring interactions noted during the inspection.
- The setting has introduced a key person system. This will ensure designated practitioners are the primary links between the home and setting and will offer further support in planning for the individual's child's learning and development.
- A well-balanced, visually represented daily schedule is in place, which the children can follow.
- It is evident that the children are viewed as active agents in their own learning as they are afforded opportunities throughout the session to make many decisions. The children's freedom to direct their own play was both affirmed and encouraged by the practitioners.
- Snack time is a social occasion where practitioners and children eat together and converse with each other. The children are involved in the preparation of snack-time and are independent with regard to self-care, opening their lunch boxes and tidying away their belongings.
- The practitioners often provide guidance and encouragement towards positive behaviour through the use of consistent conflict resolution strategies and supportive fostering of respectful child-child relationships.
- Transitions between activities over the course of the session are signposted verbally, in the moment. During waiting periods, time is not utilised effectively to engage the children.
- Children's identity and belonging are promoted through various displays such as the family wall and a community display. Photographs of the children completing recent activities along with name labels over their coat hooks supports them in feeling part of the pre-school group.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to implement effective transition strategies as the children move from one activity to the next, to provide clear and consistent signposting of transitions and to further support the children in engaging in those transition periods effectively. The *'Transitions''* pillar of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* offers useful tips in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to develop links with parents and the local community to celebrate and further enhance the identity and belonging of the children in the setting. Additional resources including dress-up clothes, books, wall displays and photographs will be beneficial.

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 lead practitioner plans a long-term programme of learning activities that is linked to the Montessori approach to education. It is organised around themes and adult ideas and is shared across the sister sites of this service. There is some evidence that practitioners respond to the emergent interests of the children through the on-going development of the learning environment.
- The practitioners gather information on the children's learning through the development of individual learner journals. These contain *Aistear* learning record observations, with identified next steps for children's learning, photographs of recent activities and free mark making.
- The practitioners use some effective interaction strategies such as engaging in building authentic, sustained shared conversations which support the children to talk about their ideas and make predictions. Practitioners ask open-ended questions sometimes that invite children to be creative in their responses and to problem solve independently. Consistency in the use of these practices across all activities and in the use of all play materials would be beneficial to the children.
- The practitioners often support the children's language, literacy and numeracy development. This is provided through conversations and through referencing numbers and letters.
- The indoor environment is inviting having many defined interest areas and good resources that prompt exploratory play and stimulate investigation.
- The children have regular access to the outdoor area which provides some opportunities for gross motor movement such as a running, playing ball and water play.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to enhance their planning processes by ensuring that plans are consistently and directly informed by the developmental needs and interests of the individual child as identified in recorded observations. Additional guidance on planning for and assessing children's learning is available in the *'Planning and Assessment'* pillar of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide.*
- The practitioners are advised to be consistent in their approach to engaging with the children as play partners and in their use of open-ended questions. The *'Play'* pillar of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* offers useful tips in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to audit the outdoor environment with a view to developing the range of materials, equipment and interest areas available. The *'Learning Environment'* pillar in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will be a useful resource in relation to this action.

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 eagerness and enjoyment on arrival in the setting and throughout the day. They have autonomy and agency in their learning, making many decisions about their activities.
- Many of the children are experiencing success and achievement. They celebrate success and share their accomplishments with both their peers and the practitioners.
- Many of the children display self-confidence and persistence. They are very competent at both making decisions and solving problems together. This was evident when two children were playing at the junk art table and made representations of themselves using various materials.
- The children are beginning to develop an awareness of mathematical concepts and sometimes include mathematical language in their play. For example, they counted images in a book and classified and compared items while building.
- The children often enjoy sharing similar experiences, interests, ideas and opinions with the practitioners and their peers. They engage in discussions about their creations and their free mark-making.
- The majority of the children play together co-operatively in small groups and in pairs. Many of the children are building the skills of turn-taking and negotiating. They were observed on numerous occasions engaging in this practice confidently and independently.

- The children understand the use of language and print. The children often draw letters in the sand and discuss the letters in their names. They often use mark-making materials throughout the session.
- There is some opportunity for creative expression for children through the junk art area, free mark-making and sand play. Books are provided in the environment and are used as a transitional activity.
- The children are developing an awareness of their changing abilities and personal achievements through practitioners' documentation of their learning experiences in individual learning journals which are available to them. They undertake some reflection on the previous day's activities during circle time.

Actions advised
- Practitioners are advised to provide further opportunities for the children to recall, share and discuss their learning, including additional opportunities for them to receive feedback on their progression. Regular review and development of their learning journals, which going forward could incorporate the child's voice, will help the children to view themselves as capable and confident learners.
- The practitioners are advised to provide increased opportunities for the children to engage in creative expression through the provision of song, rhyme, story-telling and movement to music.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- Individual support and supervision meetings are held every six weeks with formal team meetings held every three to four months, with discussion items noted. These include the day-to-day organisation of the service, documenting the children's learning, communication with parents and staff training. The practitioners can add items to the agenda.
- On the day of the inspection, there was evidence of good team work with effective partnership and shared leadership evident.
- The practitioners are due to participate in *Aistear* implementation training in September 2018.
- Good supports are in place to help children settle into the setting. Parents and children are encouraged to visit the setting in advance of the official start date. A staggered settling-in period is provided and parents are encouraged to stay for the first day.
- Information is shared with parents throughout the year through the sharing of observations and the child's individual learning journal, and through informal discussions at arrival and collection times. The preschool mascot visits each child at home and a diary entry captures this experience, developing the link between home and the preschool.
- The service has developed a programme of activities to support the child's transition to primary school. This includes developing a relationship with local primary school staff who in turn send a transition box to the children which contains a uniform and photographs of the classrooms and school building for the children to explore.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to develop a formal approach to practice review. The *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* could be utilised to support self-review practices.
- The practitioners are advised to formally seek parental feedback on the children's learning.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the service to continue to implement the actions advised above is 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	**Good**
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	**Very good**
Quality of management and leadership for learning	**Good**

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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