An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI)
Final Report

Setting name	Gate Childcare Ltd.
Setting address	Eastgate Hall Little Island County Cork T45XR67
TUSLA registration number	TU2015CC162
DCEDIY number	09CC0311
Date of inspection	11-10-2023
Date of issue of report	18-12-2023

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:

- Quality of the context to support children's learning and development
- Quality of processes to support children's learning and development
- Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements
- 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

Dates of inspection	11-10-2023
Inspection activities undertaken • Pre-inspection meeting with the setting owner/manager • Pre-inspection meeting with the management team • Meeting with relevant early years educators/other members of staff • Review of setting documentation and records of children's learning and development • Review of the education resources and facilities • Observations of interactions during a number of sessions • Interaction with the children • Feedback meeting with the setting owner/manager and early years educators	

Context of setting

Gate Childcare is a private childcare setting operating on the outskirts of Cork City. It was established in 2001 and the current owners took it over in 2008. It provides a morning session for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the morning of the inspection, thirty-seven children and six early years educators were in attendance. 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 was good.
- The educators were knowledgeable about the children's personalities, temperaments, needs and individual preferences. On the day of the inspection, one child celebrated her birthday. This special event was marked by telling a story about her life.
- The educators supported the children to become confident and independent in managing their own self-help and self-care needs in a meaningful and respectful way.
- Times of transition when managed effectively, supported positive learning experiences for the children. A review of how transitions were managed was needed.
- The manager and the educators created and maintained conditions necessary for nurturing relationships with the children.
- The key-person approach supported consistency and security in the children's relationships in the setting. The key person acted as an important link between the families and the setting.
- The educators provided opportunities for all the children to develop an appreciation of themselves as individuals and as members of their families. There were no community images displayed.
- Opportunities were provided for the children to get to know people in their community. The educators organised visits from members of the Gardaí, guide dogs and autistic spectrum disorder support dogs.

Actions advised

- The educators are advised to revise the transition times within the session so that they support, to a greater extent, positive learning experiences for the children. The children

need to be given the opportunity to gradually conclude their play. Continuity in their learning, needs to be promoted throughout the session, including at transition times.
- The educators are advised to develop a display which features images of the community. By placing the display at the child's height, it can form the basis for discussions with the children. The children will gain an enhanced appreciation of their identity as individuals and members of a wider group.

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 was good.
- The planning for curriculum implementation was organised on medium and short-term bases. A broad-based curriculum plan was not being used to support the children's learning and development. The children's emergent interests were not documented in the short-term plans.
- The educators gathered information about the children's learning experiences and achievements. The observations were not linked to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.*
- The educators documented learning experiences and shared them with the children's families through a childcare software application. The children had no individual learning journals.
- Opportunities were provided by the educators for the children to achieve fulfilment, success and mastery during the learning activities.
- The educators knew the children well, they were attuned to them and they responded to their verbal and non-verbal cues sensitively and appropriately.
- The indoor and outdoor environments were purposefully structured and organised to develop the children's curiosity, imagination and desire for exploration.
- Play was the central medium through which the children learned and developed within the setting. Play was used as a medium for the children to interact with, explore and make sense of the world.
- The children were provided with opportunities to listen to, explore and engage in stories in the company of affectionate and attuned educators.
- An inclusive approach was adopted to ensure the engagement of all the children. Specific attention was paid to the learning of children with additional needs and those who spoke English as an additional language.

Actions advised

- The educators are advised to develop a yearly broad-based curriculum plan. The children's emergent interests need to be included in the short-term planning. This will support the development of an emergent curriculum.
- The educators are advised to link all the children's observations to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. This will help to ensure continuity and progression in their individual learning.
- The educators are advised to introduce an individual learning journal for each child. Within this journal, each child's individual artwork needs to be maintained. This will give an account of their rich and individual learning journey. It would be of great benefit to the children to have easy access to their journals, so that they can reflect on their achievements and progress.

Area 3: Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements

- The quality of children's learning experiences and achievements was good.

- The children were developing the ability to play co-operatively in pairs and small groups. They were interested and engaged in their learning experiences. Some children had choices and made decisions about their play and learning.
- The information documented about the children's learning reflected their achievements in a range of connected learning experiences appropriate to an early education context.
- The children were able to communicate their interests, family background and personal experiences. There were conversations about new baby siblings, their names and birthdays.
- The children interacted with the other children and adults by listening, questioning and taking turns in conversations.
- The children explored sound, rhythm and language by engaging in conversations and songs throughout the session.
- The children represented their ideas and feelings through various media and play activities. Adult-directed art and templates were used and these were sent home on a daily basis. These practices merited review.
- The children were aware of the natural environment and its features, animals and plants. There was a strong emphasis on autumn, conkers, acorns, leaves, and pumpkins.

Actions advised

- The educators are advised to provide the children with more opportunities for child-led play. This will enable them to make decisions about their play and learning during their daily routine.
- The educators are advised to discontinue the use of template-based, pre-writing skills, and adult-led art activities as these are not developmentally appropriate. Instead, more informal activities associated with the children's play scenarios and creative work are required. It would be beneficial to place the child's artwork and mark-making in their individual learning journals and to document the child's interpretation of their work clearly.

Area 4: Quality of management and leadership for learning

- The quality of management and leadership for learning was good.
- The manager and the educators provided oversight and had responsibility for the programme of learning and care, in line with best practice and research. The self-evaluation tools from the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* were not used.
- The educators were knowledgeable about the roles and functions of external professionals and support services and how to access and engage with these service.
- The manager provided opportunities for annual support and supervision of all staff.
- Mandatory training was completed by the staff in the setting. There was scope for them to participate in more continuous professional development opportunities.
- The parents and families were made aware of the policies, procedures and curriculum in operation within the setting. All parents received the parent handbook, before the children commenced in the service.
- The manager and educators regularly shared verbal and documented information about the children's learning and achievements with parents and families in a spirit of openness, mutual respect and transparency.
- There were formal opportunities for the two-way exchange of information with the parents and the families at their parent/teacher meetings and one-to-one meetings by appointment. The informal opportunities occurred each day at arrival and collection times.
- The manager and educators had established a professional mutual relationship with the principal of the local school. The principal visited the children in the pre-school. The educators, parents and children completed the *Mo Scéal* templates to share information that supported and recognised the children's experiences, and the progress they had made.

Actions advised

- The educators are advised to document their internal review and reflection at their staff meetings. The self-evaluation tools in the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* may help in this regard.
- The manager is advised to implement strategies which support all staff to engage in continuous professional development opportunities.

Summary of overall inspection

Area	Quality level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Good
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	Good
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	Good
Quality of management and leadership for learning	Good

Language used in Early Years Education Inspection Reports

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the setting using the language which is shown below.

Level	Description
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.*

The following resources can be used by ELC settings in their quality improvement:

Aistear Siolta Practice Guide

Department of Education Insights – Quality in Early Years Education webinars

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.

Area 1- Quality of context to support children's learning and development.

We are including transition times throughout play.

We have successfully displayed a birthday and family wall at eye level. We have completed a community wall on each child's own area.

Area 2 - Quality of processes to support children's learning and development.

A yearly broad-based curriculum has been developed.

Child's observations are now linked to Aistear.

We have introduced individual learning journals for each child where their artwork is maintained. Children have access to their individual journals.

Area 3- Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements.

Opportunities for more child led play have been introduced.

Children's artwork and mark making are kept in their journals and the children's interpretation of their work is documented.

Area 4 - Quality of management and leadership for learning.

Educators have been given a copy of the Aistear and Síolta self-evaluation tools to support their internal reviews. All staff are supported in continuous upskilling and professional development, upcoming course dates are made available to staff.