An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Gatelodge Childcare
Setting Address	Gatelodge B, Green Road, The Curragh, Co. Kildare
DCYA number	18KE0424

Date of Inspection: 10-10-2018

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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	10-10-2018
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with setting owner/manager • Observation of interactions during a number of sessions • Interaction with children	• Review of relevant documents • Feedback to setting owner/manager and practitioner

CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Gatelodge Childcare is located in a purposefully redeveloped Edwardian structure on the edge of the Curragh. The setting provides a play-based learning programme, with some elements of the Montessori approach, for children enrolled in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. While this setting was established in 2017, the staff are experienced practitioners and the manager previously owned and managed a Montessori setting. There are ten children currently enrolled in the ECCE programme in Gatelodge Childcare. On the day of the inspection, the owner/manager and one practitioner were present and they both 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 excellent.
- A caring ethos and a warm, affirming atmosphere are evident. This is an inclusive setting where diversity is recognised, valued and affirmed and where children with additional needs are enrolled, welcomed and supported.
- Parents' visits are welcomed. Time is taken to talk to families during times of transition into the setting, which supports positive learning experiences for children.
- Visual cues, verbal prompts and photographs support all children to become confident and independent in managing their own self-help and self-care needs. For example, children are aware of how to manage their own hand hygiene and were observed putting on and removing their own boots and coats when transitioning between the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Children's identity and belonging are nurtured through the ongoing development of displays such as a family wall, a birthday chart and a helper schedule.
- A key person system is very effectively used. Practitioners are very sensitive to the needs of individual children. Practice is child-centred, respectful and affirming. Positive encouragement of children was a consistent feature of the highly commendable interactions observed during the evaluation.
- Snack time is a relaxed, social occasion where practitioners sit and eat with the children at a large table. On the day of the inspection, the children and practitioners engaged in shared conversations, identifying healthy items in their lunchboxes.

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.
- Planning for curriculum implementation is thematically organised on long-term, medium-term and short-term bases and practitioners demonstrate knowledge about putting these plans into practice.

The process of developing an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum has begun.

- Indoor and outdoor learning environments are well resourced and provide for multi-sensory learning experiences. Children have access to high-quality books and are provided with regular opportunities to explore stories. On the day of the evaluation, children creatively constructed a pirates' ship during a storytelling session. Opportunities exist to re-organise the indoor learning environment in order to creatively celebrate children's achievements.
- Children explore the outdoor environments daily and engage with animals and plants in the natural environment. They use their developing physical skills to manipulate diverse materials and to partake in appropriate opportunities for risk taking. It was noted during the inspection that a new sheltered outdoor play area is at an advanced stage of completion.
- Play is the central medium through which children learn. Spontaneous play is valued and the child is viewed as an active, competent and confident learner. Children make choices about their play and are supported in planning for a variety of types of play. These include opportunities to engage with activities that build early positive dispositions towards science, technology engineering, the arts and mathematics (STEAM).
- An inclusive approach is adopted to ensure the engagement of all children within the setting. Practitioners sensitively and effectively facilitate inclusive play in order to support the learning and development of all children. The setting has made meaningful links with external agencies with a view to optimising support for children with additional needs.

Actions advised

- Building on current practice and to further support children's learning and development, a broad-based curriculum, directly informed by *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is advised.
- In order to consolidate and connect learning experiences for children and their parents, it is advised that children's creative achievements and learning journals are linked to the aims and learning goals of *Aistear* and displayed in the learning environment where children and their parents can easily access them.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is excellent.
- Children demonstrate a natural curiosity in their learning. During the evaluation, their very evident enjoyment, sense of wonder and engagement, while experimenting with floating and sinking objects at the water trays was notable.
- It is evident that children's voices are heard, respected and acted upon. On the day of the inspection, children made decisions about their learning and shared aspects of their learning achievements with their peers and with practitioners. Birthdays are a very special, social occasion in the setting where children's awareness of their own changing and developing abilities are celebrated in a personalised photographic timeline which connects the past to the present for each child.
- Children have a growing understanding of the meaning and use of mathematical language. A few children were observed to count and classify the leaves which had been collected during a recent nature walk.
- Very successful child-child and child-practitioner high quality interactions are evident where experiences are interpreted, problems are solved and feelings are communicated.
- Children are very well settled in the setting and demonstrate high levels of interest, engagement and enjoyment in their learning activities. This was particularly evident when they expressed their feelings, thoughts and creativity through story-telling and moving to music. There is scope to develop the frequency of these activities.

Action advised

- To build on the exploration of pattern, rhythm and repetition in language, the provision for all children of more opportunities to experience action and number rhymes, jingles and songs, is advised.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- There is clarity around the roles and responsibilities of practitioners with regard to educational activities. An ethos of professionalism, teamwork and collaboration is evident in the setting
- Management and staff demonstrate thoughtfulness and reflection in all aspects of their practice. They formally review their practice in order to improve learning experiences for children.
- All staff participate in continuing professional development and avail of external advisory advice and supports, where available.
- There are formal and informal opportunities to exchange information with families. Parents, including parents whose first language is not English, are made aware of the policies and procedures in operation within the setting.
- The setting has established close links with local primary schools and procedures have been developed to sensitively manage transitions between settings.

Actions advised

- To support ongoing improvements in children's learning experiences and achievements, practitioners are advised to systematically use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* in the context of self-evaluation and to ensure that the outcomes of self-review are documented, shared and acted upon.
- In order to foster a connected, holistic learning experience for children, it is advised that the learning goals of *Aistear* be proactively shared with parents and families and that more opportunities be provided to involve parents in their child's learning and development.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

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	**Excellent**
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	**Good**
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	**Excellent**
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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