An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Little Blossoms Crèche
Setting Address	163 Tonlegee Road Raheny Dublin 5
DCYA number	09DY0192

Date of Inspection: 09-11-2018

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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	09-11-2018
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with setting owner and practitioners • Observation of interactions during a number of sessions	• Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Feedback to setting owner and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Little Blossoms Crèche, is a privately owned setting located in Dublin 5. It offers full day care, part-time care and two morning sessions for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The setting has recently commenced engagement with the Better Start Quality Development Service. On the day of the inspection, there were four practitioners and twenty-nine children present. 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 good.
- There is a friendly and pleasant atmosphere in the setting. The practitioners are responsive to the children and demonstrate positive regard for the children and their families. At the time of the inspection, the setting was not operating a key person approach. This approach is one in which the practitioners develop a close, secure relationship with a group of children and act as a link between the pre-school and the parents of these children.
- The daily routine includes whole-group learning experiences, table-top activities, snack time, activity time, play time and outside time. On the day of the inspection, there was potential for children to participate in activities in line with the visual daily schedule so as to optimise their participation in child-led, active learning opportunities.
- During the inspection, a number of transitions from one activity to the next were overly long. This resulted in a small number of children becoming distracted.
- The practitioners model and provide guidance and encouragement to the children in the use of good manners with each other and the practitioners. On the day of the inspection, the practitioners provided direction to a few children, as needed, regarding positive behaviour and how to resolve minor issues of social conflict.
- The children are supported in managing their own self-help and self-care needs. This is evident from the sensitive support they received when washing their hands and getting their snacks.
- The children from the two pre-school rooms come together for the annual Christmas concert and parents are invited to attend.
- The wide variety of displays within the setting nurture the children's sense of identity and belonging. These displays include photographs of the children, their individualised art work and the family trees. The children's personal place mats further highlight the children's awareness of their uniqueness.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to review the daily routine to ensure that it is reflective of the visual daily schedule and to consistently use transition times as purposeful learning opportunities.
- To build on the practitioners' relationships with the children and their communication with parents, it is advised that a key person approach be introduced. The tip-sheet 'Using a Key Person Approach' from the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* will assist in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to use further strategies to support children to develop their self-regulation skills. A review of the setting's policy on behaviour management may assist in this regard.

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 fair.
- Provision for children's learning is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.* The practitioners promote a play-based curriculum.
- The practitioners use themes which incorporate their ideas, along with suggestions from a commercial curriculum folder. At the time of the inspection, formal planning was not a regular feature of the practitioners' practice.
- Developmental observations on the children are conducted once a term. At the end of the pre-school year, scrapbooks containing evidence of the children's participation in activities are presented to parents.
- During the inspection, interactions between the practitioners were positive and respectful; there were a small number of instances where children's learning was suitably extended by practitioners through the use of some open-ended questions. In the main, activities were adult initiated.
- The indoor learning environments are bright with a small number of interest areas. At the time of the inspection, planned changes to these environments were imminent. These changes include the addition of a dedicated creative area and a review of the current provision of materials and resources with a view to maximising children's learning experiences.
- On the day of the inspection, the children had opportunities to participate in brief periods of open-ended play: they engaged in a small amount of creative play and book play. During outside time the children engaged in physical play.
- The children's emerging language development is promoted through the use of storytelling, songs and rhyming activities.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to develop and implement assessment and planning practices that are aligned to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and to incorporate children's emerging interests and their learning needs. The use of individual and group learning journals along with the 'Planning and Assessment' pillar of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will assist in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to progress their plan to ensure that the indoor environments are more purposefully laid out with defined interest areas and resourced with more real, open-ended and sensorial materials.
- The practitioners are advised to extend the time and opportunities provided for children to engage in extended, open-ended, free-play. This will support children's learning as they engage in uninterrupted, child-initiated play.
- An increase in the provision of child-initiated activities is advised. This will allow additional opportunities for the practitioners to act as play partners with the children and their more consistent use of open-ended questions, comments and prompts.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is good.
- During the inspection, there were good examples of the children experiencing fun and enjoyment in the activities; this was particularly noticeable during the small-group pasta activity and during outside time.
- The children are developing positive self-esteem and an understanding of their own identity as competent learners. During the inspection, a small group of children confidently presented and discussed the mirror they had created with others.
- The children display their developing emergent language and mathematical skills during their spontaneous conversations with their peers and the practitioners. There is potential to extend these emerging skills.

- The children's sense of identity and belonging is fostered through a number of effective strategies. These include 'All about me' activities and visits from the ice-cream man and the *Garda* to raise the children's awareness of others in the community.
- The children have opportunities to be creative. Examples included the books they created about the book of the week, 'Room on a Broom' and their participation in the playdough activity. There is potential for the provision of more process-art activities so as to optimise the children's creativity.
- The children are developing an awareness of the natural environment. On the day of the inspection, children engaged in discussions about what grows in 'grandad's garden' and that a picture resembled 'shooting stars'.
- It is evident that the children are curious and inquisitive. A small number of children confidently shared their understanding with others. For example, two children engaged with interest in a conversation about the leaf drawing and how leaves change colour. The provision of more activities to build on these skills will support their participation in enquiry-based learning experiences.
- The children display appropriate social skills. During the inspection, they played co-operatively, negotiated with their peers and demonstrated their developing social skills and competences.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to provide increased opportunities for children to develop their creativity, to include their engagement in process art and mark-making activities. It is also advised that the use of templates for colouring-in, art activities be decreased.
- It is advised that more experiences be provided to support and extend the children's emergent language and mathematical skill development. The use of props, puppets, story sacks and real materials, such as calculators, rulers, measuring cups and spoons, will assist in this regard. The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities for children to explore and experiment; this will further support their inquisitiveness and thought processing skills.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork and partnership between the owner and the practitioners. At the time of the inspection, the setting had recently commenced engagement with the Better Start Quality Development Service in order to improve the quality of children's learning experiences. This clearly demonstrates the team's commitment to the children and families attending Little Blossom's Crèche.
- The owner and practitioners hold daily informal discussions. They meet once a month for a whole-setting staff meeting. At the time of the inspection, plans were in place to use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* as part of the setting's review practices.
- The owner has a clear vision for the work of the setting. She arranges one-to-one support and supervision meetings with individual practitioners every three to six months. On the day of the inspection, al practitioners were aware of their roles and responsibilities and the daily routine.
- The practitioners use a number of strategies to share information with parents about the children's learning. Examples include displays in the lobby and the use of social media. Meetings between practitioners and parents are facilitated if requested to discuss a child's progress. At the time of the inspection, the children's observations were not shared with parents.
- As children prepare for the transition from pre-school into primary school, the practitioners organise child-centred activities, including story reading and discussions, to explore the idea of moving into primary school. The setting has not developed any formal links with primary schools in the locality.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to progress their plan to use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to help them to implement systematic planning, review and evaluation practices. This will help in the development of a collaborative, agreed action plan to support ongoing improvements in the learning experiences for children.
- The practitioners are advised to share the children's learning and progress with parents on a regular basis. This will ensure that parents are proactively involved in their child's learning.

- It is advised that formal links with the local primary schools be developed. This will support the practitioners' sharing of information with the primary school and promote continuity in the children's learning experiences.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting 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	**Good**
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	**Fair**
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	**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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