An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Little Gumboots
Setting Address	Sunshine House Church Street Balbriggan County Dublin
DCYA number	16FL0565

Date of Inspection: 08-03-2019

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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(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 setting's provision in each area.

Early Years Education Inspection

Date of inspection	08-03-2019
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with the setting owners and early years practitioner • Observation of interactions and activities during a pre-school session • Review of educational resources and facilities	• Interaction and discussion with the children • Brief conversation with parents • Review of relevant setting documentation • Review of records of the children's learning and development • Feedback discussion with the setting owners/ practitioners and early years practitioner

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Little Gumboots was established three years ago in Balbriggan. The setting provides a morning pre-school session for children enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Two owner/practitioners, an early years practitioner and twenty children were present on the day on the inspection. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report; a response was not received from the setting.

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.
- There is a wonderfully warm and very welcoming atmosphere in this setting. There was a palpable sense of fun and joy expressed by the children and the practitioners during the session observed.
- The practitioners have invested major effort and time into establishing close relationships with the children's families. They view parental support as a very important element of their programme.
- Relationships between the children and the practitioners are notably positive, affirming and consistently warm.
- There is a consistent, well-balanced daily routine in place with substantial time allocated for child-initiated play and learning. The practitioners adopt a flexible approach to the routine. They sometimes change the order of activities to meet the needs of the children and make the most of the weather. A chart with a visual daily routine is used very effectively with the children to discuss the routine and any changes that are being made, such as a trip to the library on the day of inspection.
- Transitions during the session are clear and are announced verbally by the practitioners. Visual and auditory cues such as timers and songs are also very effectively used. The children are allowed time to complete activities before beginning the next and the pre-school session flows very smoothly.
- Snack is a relaxed, social time where the children initiate and engage in conversation with peers and with the practitioners. The children take turns completing tasks at lunch and this is clearly displayed for them on a photographic jobs board.
- The children are viewed as competent learners in this setting. The support offered to children by the practitioners to be independent and to develop self-care skills is commendable.
- The practitioners know each child as an individual and they make real efforts to highlight each child's individuality within the group. The setting offers many opportunities for parents to become involved in the setting and in the curriculum programme. Parents attend events and celebrations, and accompany the group on trips out into the community, such as to the library. They have helped to build parts of the outdoor learning environment and a garden.

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 practitioners understand the importance of playful learning for the promotion of healthy child development. The setting implements a play-based curriculum fully aligned to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.* The practitioners have studied different early years curriculum approaches and have very successfully integrated some core principles from Montessori, High/Scope and Reggio Emilia into their own curriculum approach.
- The curriculum is broad-based and comprehensively documented. The practitioners effectively observe and record the children's current and emerging interests and use this information in medium and short-term planning at both an individual and at a group level. The introduction of enquiry-based approaches to this planning process would harness the children's spirit of investigation and deepen their thinking and learning.
- The practitioners observe and assess the children's achievements and learning in a variety of ways. They use checklists, collect work samples and maintain a very detailed and attractive floor book. They also use an online application to record individual observations and group observations with clear and skilful links made to the aims and learning goals of *Aistear*. These observations are shared with parents by email as soon as they are completed.
- The indoor learning environment comprises of three large interconnecting rooms. The rooms open onto a large corridor and large glass panels allow practitioners ease of sight between the rooms. One room is dedicated to messy play and art and is also used for snack. A second room has a commercial-sized jungle gym and a very comprehensive provision for socio-dramatic play. The third room provides for construction, manipulative, imaginative and language play. The rooms are arranged with care and great attention to detail and there is an overwhelming sense of aesthetic beauty, softness and homeliness in the setting. Resources and equipment are varied and interesting. There is a wide range of real, natural, recycled and open-ended materials throughout the learning environment.
- The practitioners effectively focus on supporting the development of the process of learning rather than on the learning of content. They very effectively support the children's voluntary play which is intrinsically motivated. The practitioners use very effective pedagogical strategies throughout the session to support and promote the children's learning and development.
- The children are learning in an inclusive environment. The setting is linked with the Health Service Executive early intervention team and the Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) to access assessment and support for children with possible additional needs. The practitioners very effectively adapt their interactions and support to match each child's needs and developmental level.

Actions advised

- To build on the very good curriculum provision already established, it is advised that practitioners begin to introduce enquiry-learning approaches by intentionally engaging the children in discussion about their current interests, what they already know, what they would like to find out and how they think they might do that.
- It is advised that the discussion, planning and progress made during these enquiries be documented with the children and displayed, allowing them opportunities to rethink and change their plans and lines of enquiry as needed.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is excellent.
- The children are extremely well-settled in the setting. It is evident that they have established secure and positive attachments with the practitioners.
- It is notable how confidently the children engage in play and learning activities. They make choices and decisions about activities and resources with ease and demonstrate enjoyment and a positive sense of well-being in their activities, throughout the session.

- Very good friendships are developing in the group. The children are caring and respectful of each other. They do things for each other unprompted.
- Many children are beginning to develop capacities to share, take-turns and to negotiate the use of space and resources with their peers. They interact in a very sociable manner with their peers and with the practitioners.
- The children's confidence in themselves as capable learners is evident. They approach challenges with positivity and display perseverance and persistence in their explorations and play.
- The children's early numeracy and literacy skills are developing very well as they explore pattern and rhyme in songs and action rhymes, engage in book making activities, decode symbols and pictures and visit the library monthly. They explore mathematical concepts and vocabulary and count in meaningful situations.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- There is a very professional ethos in the setting. The two owner/practitioners and the staff express a very strong commitment to delivering a quality ECCE programme to the children and their families. The setting views its role of integrating the children, families in the local community as vitally important.
- The staff engages in continuing professional development such as the *Leadership for INClusion in the Early Years programme* (LINC) training, Healthy Ireland Smart Start, Hanan and the Parenting Plus Programme.
- Systems for the smooth organisation of educational experiences and activities are very well established. The session observed was extremely well-organised and ran very smoothly.
- There is a clear allocation of roles and responsibilities in the setting. Each staff member's expertise is acknowledged and utilised effectively.
- The staff reflect informally at the end of each session and formally at the end of the week. Plans for quality improvement in line with *Aistear* and *Síolta*, the two national practice frameworks, are undertaken regularly.
- Information about the setting and the curriculum programme is shared very effectively with parents through guided visits, an introduction evening and a very comprehensive handbook.
- Information about each child's progression in learning and development is shared with their parents weekly through the online application, on a closed Facebook page and through informal conversations. Parents are invited to a meeting with their child's key practitioner to discuss their learning and development.
- Parents are actively consulted about aspects of the ECCE programme. On the day of inspection, parents were asked to indicate if they wanted the setting to take part in the up-coming St. Patricks Day parade, by ticking yes or no on a sheet in the hallway.
- The setting has established very strong links with the local primary school and has been invited to bring the children to visit the school this year. The practitioners invite children who have moved from the setting into primary school to visit the group and tell the children about 'big school'.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised is excellent due to the ongoing commitment of the owner/practitioners and staff to improve the quality learning experiences for the children in the setting.

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	**Very good**
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	**Excellent**
Quality of management and leadership for learning	**Excellent**

Language used in Early-Years Education 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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