# An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

# Department of Education and Skills

## Follow-Through Inspection

## REPORT

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| **Service name** | N.C.R. Childcare |
| **Service address** | 466 North Circular Road<br>Dublin 3 |
| **DCYA number** | 09DY0074 |

## Date of Evaluation: 16-04-2018

An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

**WHAT IS A FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION?**

Follow-through inspections evaluate the progress a service has made on implementing actions advised in an earlier inspection rather than the overall quality of education provision in a service. Inspectors also advise the service on strategies and actions to enable them to fully address actions advised in the earlier inspection report.

**HOW TO READ THIS REPORT**

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated the progress the service has made in implementing actions advised in an earlier inspection under the following headings:

1. Progress achieved to date
2. Summary of findings
3. Actions advised

Inspectors describe the quality of the progress made in each of these areas using the Inspectorate's follow-through quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The follow-through quality continuum explains the terms used by inspectors when evaluating the service's progress in implementing actions advised.

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.

| ORIGINAL INSPECTION DETAILS | FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION DETAILS |
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| **Type: Early education focused Insepction**<br>**Date of Inspection: 23 September 2016**<br>**Report Published: Yes** | **Date of Inspection: 16-04-2018** |

**Follow-through inspection activities**

The following activities took place in the course of the follow-through inspection (Please amend as appropriate)

- Meeting with the service owner/manager
- Interview with relevant practitioners
- Review of service documentation and records of children's learning and development
- Review of education resources and facilities
- Observation of part of pre-school session
- Interaction with children

| Action advised in original inspection report | Progress achieved to date on implementation of action advised |
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| The introduction of a key person approach is advised in order to enhance the relationships between the practitioners and the children | **Very good progress**<br>The service has introduced a key person approach where each practitioner has a designated group of children assigned to them. In this service, the approach is used for the recording of information about the children's interests and learning by the key person and for the use of focused small-group activities. A colour-coded chart, with photographs of the key person and the children in her group is on display in the room and at child height. |
| It is advised that the practitioners prioritise methods of engaging and communicating with the high number of children from diverse backgrounds and languages attending the setting in order to avoid children feeling frustrated and discouraged. | **Very good progress**<br>The practitioners have developed a variety of admirable strategies to support the large number of children with diverse languages present in the service , to engage in the daily sequence of activities. For example, a visual display of the daily routine at child height and a range of transition techniques are used consistently throughout the session. On the day of the inspection, practitioners were observed showing the routine to the children and discussing what was coming using the 'Now' and 'Then' cards. They use visual cards to show the different materials and activities and a choice box to enable children to choose what they want to play with. |
| Practitioners are advised to develop consistent procedures for meeting the needs of children requiring security and comfort. For example, children who are upset during settling-in require additional supports such as one-to-one attention from a practitioner until they feel confident to join in group activities. | **Very good progress**<br>On the day of the inspection, the practitioners were vigilant and attentive to a child who was struggling to settle in. The practitioners identified the processes that they use to support children to settle into the group. For example, they invite parents to stay with their |

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| | child, and when ready to leave, the practitioners stay close to the child, engaging them in activities which they like until they are ready to join friends. |
| It is advised that the children's individual learning needs and their emergent interests be included in the planning for an inquiry-based curriculum. | **Very good progress**<br>The key person notes and dates the individual children's emergent interests and dates when the activities are undertaken to pursue this interest is completed. The activity and resources required to accommodate the child's interest are linked to the themes of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.* |
| Practitioners are advised to gather information that records children's progress and plans for their future development. | **Good progress**<br>At the time of the inspection, the practitioners had moved away from a computerised system that they had developed for recording the children's learning. A learner record template and developmental checklist based on the age of the child are used. In general, the next steps for the children's learning are noted. However, this needs to be extended to all learning observations. |
| The use of consistent approaches by practitioners to interactions with the children, such as the use of open-ended questions and prompts to support and motivate children's thinking and language skills is advised. | **Very good progress**<br>Practitioners consistently use calm tones, eye contact and positive body language when interacting with the children. They regularly use open-ended questions and prompts to support children's language development and their thinking and problem-solving skills. |
| Reducing the number of large-group activities and the creation of more focused small groups is advised to support children's concentration and sense of well-being. | **Very good progress**<br>A reduction in large-group activities was noted and replaced with greater opportunity for child-selected free play and small-group learning activities. Both the indoor and outdoor environment are divided into discrete interest areas. The key persons in each group are timetabled to move around the different areas with their small group of children at specific times of the day. Children are given choices about whether they want to stay at their activity, go with their group or to go with another group. In addition, the practitioners have developed a weekly colour-coded timetable for each group for indoor activities and outdoor play. |
| Practitioners are advised to adopt approaches to recording information that reflects the uniqueness of each child's ability and achievements. | **Very good progress**<br>The practitioners have introduced learning journals for each individual child that recognises and celebrates their specific interest, strengths and experiences. They compile examples of children's art and crafts, and free process art with the voice of the child included. Within the observation records and the 'floor book' the uniqueness of each child is demonstrated in the description of the photographs of them engaged in activities on their own or in groups. |
| The development of a child-helper routine will help the children develop their independence | **Very good progress** |

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| and promote feelings of identity and belonging | A large display of the child helpers with their photographs is visible in the room. Children are offered many opportunities to develop their self-help skills and independence by taking part in jobs throughout the session such as line leader, giving out materials and being snack helpers. |
| Supporting children's social skills and enabling all children, but especially children with English as an additional language and children with additional needs, to play cooperatively requires additional behaviour management strategies to be implemented. For example, the use of visual cards that are made accessible to children, the taking of time to give children the words to share their feelings will support children's communication and social skills. | **Good progress**<br>The practitioners engage the children in small group and paired play by using positive tones. They encourage them to be kind to each other and a display featuring good manners is in the room. They acknowledge the children's feelings when upset, restate the problem when disagreements arise and give children words to negotiate. The addition of a small number of classroom rules developed in consultation with the children and supported with pictures would further support this practice. |
| Increasing opportunities for children to express themselves through free-art activities and the reduction of the use of stencils and template is advised. | **Good progress**<br>There are many examples of the children's open-ended process art on display in the room. A new painting area has been created in the indoor/outdoor area and painting is freely available. A mark-making area has a good selection of paper, pens and crayons. At the time of the inspection, children were observed to take part in template-based, dot-to-dot activities and stencils. The removal of these from the mark-making area will encourage the children to use their imagination and creativity more freely. |
| The use of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* is advised to support the staff's self-reflection and review of policies and procedures. | **Good progress**<br>The service has introduced formal monthly meetings and decisions taken are recorded. These are used to discuss planning, upcoming events and to identify any issues that need to be addressed. A decision taken at one of these meetings has resulted in the development of the outdoor area to include space for children to play indoors when the weather is bad. The practitioners' engagement in professional self-reflection will be supported through their use of the self-evaluation tools in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide.* |
| It is advised that the staff build on and complete the work undertaken as part of the Síolta, Quality Assurance Programme. | **Partial progress**<br>At the time of the inspection, the staff in the service had not been engaging in the Síolta, Quality Assurance Programme. They have begun to incorporate the standards of *Síolta, the Quality Framework* into their planning practices. |
| Practitioners are advised to consider additional approaches to developing communication with parents by sharing observations more regularly of children's learning and progression. | **Very good progress**<br>The practitioners share children's observations regularly with parents once a term and their comments were noted on the observation |

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| | templates. Information is now shared with parents through a termly newsletter outlining events and upcoming topics. The children's learning journals are sent home once a term and parents are invited in to view them whenever they wish. |
| It is advised that the owner/manager develop a more formalised, systematic approach to engaging with the local primary schools to ensure a smooth transitional experience for children from the preschool to the primary school. | Plans are in place for the month of May and June to support the children's transition from pre-school to primary school. At the recent staff meeting, decisions were recorded that describe how they will introduce the process of transition. They discussed bringing in uniforms of the local schools, role play and it is hoped to bring children to visit the teacher in the school. An extension of this approach could also be to invite a member of the school to visit the pre-school. |

**Summary of findings**

- The service has had a change of staff in the past two years.
- Measures have been taken to address the actions previously advised with very good progress being made in relation to ten actions advised and good progress in relation to four actions advised. Partial progress has been made in relation to one action advised.
- The key improvements noted relate to the attention given to the learning needs of the children, in particular children with English as an additional language. A new layout is in place in the room and extra indoor space has been provided outdoors with a range of sand, water and painting freely available. The service has developed its own template for recording the children learning and shares this with parents regularly. Parents are invited into the setting for the breakfast meetings to look at children's journals and to take part in reading stories.
- The planning reflects the children's interests and progression in their learning.
- The service has moved away from the more formal approach previously used to teach children literacy and numeracy and now focus on supporting the children's experience of early literacy and numeracy concepts and skills through playful activities including songs and rhymes. A book club has been set up to promote a love of books and children bring books home both in English and where available in their own language.

**Actions advised**

- Practitioners are advised to build on the planning practices regarding the documentation of children's interests and learning needs. In order to strengthen the planning, implementation and assessment practices relating to children's learning, it is advised that these be incorporated into one document.
- It is advised that the practitioners, in consultation with the children, develop class room rules that will be understood and followed by all and display this at child height.
- The reduction in the use of stencils and template-based activities within the pre-school room is advised to allow more time and opportunity to concentrate on opportunities that promote children's creativity and imagination.
- The use of the self-evaluation tools in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice guide* is advised as part of the staff meetings where staff engage in professional reflection on the policies and procedures.
- Practitioners are advised to extend their current plans to support the children's transition to primary school. This could be achieved by formally inviting staff of the school to visit the service. Practitioners are asked to engage with the 'Transitions' toolkit being developed by the NCCA.

| THE QUALITY CONTINUUM FOR FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTIONS |
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| *Very good progress* indicates that appropriate action has been taken to address the action advised, and that the action has fully achieved or will achieve the required outcome. |
| *Good progress* indicates that appropriate action has been taken to address the action advised, and that substantial improvement has occurred, although further progress is necessary. |
| *Partial progress* indicates that some appropriate action has been taken to address the action advised, and some improvement has occurred, but considerable further progress is necessary. |
| *No progress* indicates that no action has been taken, and that the original action advised remains to be addressed. |

*Published December 2018*