An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Rainbow Childcare Academy
Setting Address	Unit 2 Riverpoint Bishop's Quay Limerick City
DCYA number	16LK0225

Date of Inspection: 23-05-2019

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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 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	23-05-2019
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with setting manager • Meeting with practitioners • Observation of interactions during a number of sessions	 • Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Feedback to setting manager and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Rainbow Childcare Academy was established in 2016. It provides full-day care and three morning pre-school sessions for children enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Thirty-four children and four practitioners were present on the day of the inspection. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report, and the response of the setting will 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 is excellent.
- There is an exceptionally warm and caring ethos in this setting. Relationships between the practitioners and children are very responsive and respectful.
- Parents and children are greeted individually on arrival. The practitioners know the children and their families very well and positive relationships with families are evident. Parents are welcomed into the rooms and time for informal exchanges and the sharing of information is valued.
- The children make choices about their play and learning activities throughout the sessions. They appear very familiar with the unhurried daily routine. The children demonstrate confidence and independence in managing their own self-help and self-care skills and in looking after the environment.
- Transitions are managed very effectively. A variety of appropriate and individualised strategies, such as the use of timers, songs and playing soft music, are utilised successfully by the practitioners before and during changes in the routine.
- Secure relationships are fostered successfully between the practitioners and the children. On the day of the inspection, the children were very familiar with, and appeared securely attached to, the practitioners. The practitioners are kind and affectionate in their interactions with the children.
- Respect for, and recognition of, the uniqueness of each child are significant features of this setting. Highly effective strategies are in place to nurture children's developing sense of identity and belonging. Provision is very child-centred and many examples of individual conversations between the practitioners and children and their lives outside the setting were observed. There is purposeful use of unique, culturally-appropriate materials in the play areas, along with attractive displays of the children's achievements. These include photographic displays of the children, their families and landmarks from various nations.

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.
- Provision is clearly underpinned by the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and the quality standards of *Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*. Planning is organised on a long, medium and short-term bases. The planning processes and play provision take account of children's emerging interests and needs.
- A variety of worthwhile assessment approaches are used. These include periodic baseline developmental assessments, learning stories, key observations, photographs, anecdotal notes and the practitioners' own reflective notes. The assessments are strengths-based and the information is used periodically to inform the short-term planning and the next steps in children's learning. There is scope to utilise these further to support progression and continuity in learning for the children.
- Commendable examples of the practitioners' high quality interactions and pedagogical strategies were observed. These were, in the main, implemented consistently throughout the sessions. The approaches included the use of open-ended questioning, the effective organisation of the rooms, actively listening and interacting with children at their level, and offering guidance and support when needed.
- The purposefully planned and richly-resourced rooms, along with the structure of the daily routine, encourage the development of children's positive learning dispositions.
- The indoor environments are cheerful, aesthetically pleasing and comfortable learning spaces for the children. They support a wide variety of types of play and lots of opportunities are provided for the development of peer-peer relationships.
- Play is the central medium through which children learn. Children have ample time to engage in uninterrupted, spontaneous play. The play materials are attractively presented in all of the rooms, with cosy spaces for quiet activities. A wide variety of resources effectively support and encourage children's early writing, reading, imaginative and creative play, and their exploration of mathematical and scientific concepts.
- The outdoor area is small, with limited resources to stimulate children's engagement, imagination, exploration, curiosity or physical challenge.
- The practitioners' use of songs, rhymes, drama, movement games and storytelling successfully supports children's emergent language and literacy skills.

Actions advised

- The management and practitioners are advised to further the development of the outdoor learning environment and to prioritise the introduction of open-ended, real and natural materials, resources, props and tools.
- The practitioners are advised to utilise the pedagogical documentation, such as their anecdotal notes, learning stories and observations of the children, to discover the children's current interests, achievements and developmental needs. These can be linked to the goals of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework,* included in the children's journals, shared with parents and children and used to directly inform short-term planning.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children display high levels of motivation and engagement in their learning and they are developing the ability to play co-operatively in pairs and in a small group.
- The children present as independent and enthusiastic learners, secure in themselves and the choices they make. They are facilitated to experience success and mastery as they explore and manipulate the materials. There is scope to support them to think about and share aspects of their learning achievements with others.
- The children have well-developed, self-care skills; they manage their hand-washing and toileting needs independently. They confidently place their used utensils in the sink and they competently use the bins and clean the tables
- The children enjoy participating in rhymes, circle-time discussions, imaginative role play and story time. A diverse range of books is available in all of the rooms; the children clearly enjoy exploring books together.
- The children are developing very positive pro-social skills; they get along with each other and the practitioners, they wait their turn and they work together on tasks and during play.
- The children are keen communicators. They utilise language appropriately to give and receive information and to share their ideas and feelings. They are also developing the capacity to interpret body language and cues. Almost all of the children asked questions and listened to each other and the practitioners respectfully and positively. Strong friendships are evident and children with the same home languages enjoy using these languages to engage with each other.
- The children are supported to see themselves as unique, competent individuals; their families' cultures and their achievements are valued and visible in the rooms. There is scope to utilise the children's journals and the pedagogical documentation further to make their thoughts and ideas more visible.
- Many of the children demonstrate an emergent understanding and awareness of the meaning and uses of symbols, print and pictures as means of communication. A number of children wrote down the customers' orders when role playing a restaurant. One child had a keen interest in making his own newspaper and engaged in very purposeful writing and drawing of pictures which he used to share his news.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to add comments from the children in their journals, pedagogical documentation and on their art work and creations. This will further support children to reflect on their achievements and to see themselves as competent learners.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The practitioners demonstrate a professional attitude. The pre-school sessions are well organised and run smoothly.
- Team meetings are facilitated on a monthly basis, these are documented and individual teams reflect on their own practice. Self-evaluation and improvement measures are not embedded systematically in practice for all sessions.
- Continuing professional development is prioritised by the practitioners. Recent workshops on introducing Science, *Aistear* and *Síolta* awareness and after-school practices were attended by a number of the practitioners. The setting has made links with the local county childcare committee and regularly accesses support and advice. There is potential to utilise the team meetings further to share new learning from the various training workshops with all of the practitioners.
- Information about the setting and the pre-school programme is shared with parents through orally and through newsletters. Displays of children's group learning experiences, art work and photographs are placed on notice boards in the rooms and are often shared through an online social media application.

- Information about the children's individual progression in learning and development is mainly shared with parents through informal conversations at arrival and departure times. The children's learning journals are shared with their families at the end of the pre-school year.
- Families are invited to share in seasonal celebrations, such as Christmas and cultural festivals, during the year.
- The setting has established good relationships with a number of local primary schools. At the time of inspection, the management and practitioners shared their desire to improve the links with schools and to develop more supports for families and children to ensure they have a smooth transition between the setting and primary school.

Actions advised

- The management and practitioners are advised to utilise the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* systematically to support their individual and team self-evaluation and planning for improvement.
- The management are advised to maximise the potential of team meetings for sharing ideas and information from training sessions.
- It is advised that the practitioners share documented information about each child's progression in learning and development more regularly with parents.
- The practitioners are advised to utilise the information in the 'Supporting Transitions' pillar of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* for ideas and strategies on building relationships with school personnel and sharing information about the children's learning and development with schools.

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

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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Observations on the content of the inspection report

- As this was our first inspection I am very happy with the report. It was very beneficial to receive so much positive feedback and also to receive advised actions so we are aware of any areas that needed further development.

Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection **activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

- At the moment we are currently working on our outdoor environment to provide more real and natural materials as due to the location the children don't have access to grass, trees and flowers etc.
- The pre-school teachers will begin adding comments to children's work that they are documenting such as in their learning journals so children can reflect on their achievements and past learning.
- Staff and management will be meeting regularly to discuss curriculum planning and the children's achievements, staff will also meet with parents at organised parent teacher meetings.
- We have begun referring to the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to support us and will begin the self-evaluations as advised.