An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Rainbow House Educational Childcare Centre
Setting Address	An Cosán, Kiltalawn Jobstown Dublin 24
DCYA number	10DS0277

Date of Inspection: 06-12-2019

An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
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Education and Skills

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	06-12-2019
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with setting manager • Observation of interactions during the session • Interaction with children	• Review of relevant documents • Feedback to setting manager and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Rainbow House Educational Childcare Centre, has been located in a residential area in Jobstown, West Dublin since 1999. It is one of six settings operated by *An Cosán*; it offers a variety of programmes in early years education and care, parenting, community, further and higher education. The Educational Childcare Centre provides after-school, part-time care and education and a morning sessional pre-school programme to children from the local community, some of whom are enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, ten children and three practitioners were in attendance. The children were in their first and second years of the ECCE programme. 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 very good.
- The practitioners have created a friendly atmosphere. Children and parents were greeted in a warm manner and conversations between the practitioners and parents were respectful and caring.
- The positive and nurturing relationships between the practitioners and the children are highly commended. A key-worker approach is in operation; the practitioners know the children and family members well and are attentive to their needs. There is a history of siblings and family members attending the setting.
- The daily routine helps to promote children's active engagement in their learning. The sequence of the events is on display and used to support the children's predictability of the daily activities.
- The practitioners use verbal alerts to inform children that activities are coming to an end. During the inspection, a small number of children did not respond to these cues and were hesitant in tidying up.
- During snack time, the children sit in small groups with their key practitioner and engage in social conversations. The practitioners use snack time as an opportunity to encourage the children's social skills. The children help to set the table and are encouraged to pour their own drinks.
- The children have formed very good attachments with the practitioners and actively seek them out for support and comfort. The practitioners acknowledge the children's engagement in activities throughout the session.
- For the most part, the children display age-appropriate, self-regulation skills. The practitioners effectively use the six steps to conflict resolution from HighScope to address the small number of minor social disagreements.
- The children's sense of identity is nurtured and represented in the inclusive learning environment. There are photographic displays, a family wall, samples of children's art work, and flags and maps of the different countries of the children's families.
- To support the inclusion of families, parents are asked to note on the children's registration forms any interests and experiences that they would like to share about the children. Parents and families are also invited into the setting for seasonal events, such as the annual graduation and outing, and the 'World Nursery Rhyme Week'.
- The practitioners have established links with the community. Some activities include visits from the local *Garda*, fire personnel, the public health nurse and the mobile library.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to introduce transition strategies, such as a helper routine and visual cues, to support the children's transitioning and their involvement in tidying up between activities.

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 for the children's learning is informed by the HighScope curriculum and links are made with *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. The practitioners spontaneously follow the children's emergent interests.
- The practitioners undertake long-term and short-term planning to support the children's learning. Short-term plans are based around seasonal activities and the children's interests and learning needs.
- The children's progression in learning and their development are assessed using anecdotal observations, photographs, development reports and Child Observation Records (COR) from the HighScope curriculum. Information documented for each child does not make obvious the link between children's interests and the next steps in their learning. The children's learning journals, containing samples of their work, are compiled at the end of the year. The practitioners plan to complete these on a more regular basis throughout the year.
- Information on the children's learning and development is regularly shared with parents through formal and informal discussions.
- The indoor learning environment is divided into interest areas. All areas are equipped with a variety of freely available, accessible and age-appropriate resources.
- The children have access to an outdoor area and a large hall space. The layout of the outdoor space was in need of development and there was a limited range of outdoor activities provided.
- The practitioners view play as central to children's learning. The practitioners effectively interact with the children to support their emerging play ideas. The practitioners sit at the children's physical level and playfully engage with them throughout the session. For example, they engaged in socio-dramatic play activities with the children as they played with the kitchen equipment and they supported children as they engaged in table-top, jigsaw activities.
- The practitioners provide many opportunities for the children to engage in science, technology engineering, arts and mathematics activities (STEAM). For example, children in their small groups have built structures with wooden bricks, painted toy animals and experimented as they added water and glitter to sand.
- The practitioners effectively foster the children's emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills. This is achieved through the language-rich environment, story time, and a range of high-quality books. The practitioners also effectively model language and regularly use of song and rhymes throughout the session.
- There is an inclusive ethos and children from a variety of backgrounds attend the setting. Links with external professionals to support children and families are well established. The practitioners work in partnership with parents and seek support through the Access and Inclusion Mode (AIM). They engage in the *Meitheal* programme, a Tusla-led initiative to support children and families, and they also involved in the Demonstration Project on In-school and Early Years Therapy Support.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to review their current approaches to documenting the children's learning. In doing so, they are advised to record the information gathered on the children's interests, needs and dispositions and a detailed account of the planned next steps in their learning in a more interconnected manner. They are also advised to progress their plan to compile learning journals throughout the year. The use of the 'Planning and Assessment' pillar from the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will help in the implementation of this action.
- The practitioners are advised to undertake an audit of the environment using the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*, to help guide them in developing the outdoor play area.

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 appear happy and are at ease in their surroundings.
- Many children demonstrated high levels of enjoyment, good concentration skills and motivation as they playfully engaged and participated in both their self-chosen and the adult-led activities.
- During free-play time, the children had adequate time to freely choose and develop their interests and ideas. They skilfully engaged in socio-dramatic play and creative, sensory and fine motor activities. With assistance from the practitioners, they cut up and mashed vegetables, built a house from wooden bricks and completed jigsaws. Some children expressed themselves through the use of mark-making equipment, while others used pretend phones to chat during pretend play games.
- The children's gross motor skills are developing well; they cycled bikes, ran and rolled a large log across the outdoor play area.
- During the adult-led activities, the children had ample opportunities to explore and experiment with the materials. For example, during the sand activity they poured water into individual sand trays and discussed the outcomes. They made observations, such as 'The water has disappeared', and they also used relevant, descriptive words, such as 'sticky', 'muddy', 'floating' and 'sinking', to describe what was happening. Opportunities for the children to develop these ideas were cut short as the children had to tidy up for planning time.
- The children's social and communication skills are emerging. During the session, many children effectively expressed their ideas and views, shared information on their achievements and asked for help when required. The children also have opportunities to plan for and reflect on their own learning. During this time not all children fully participated; some lost interest as they waited their turn to use the planning and reflection books.
- Most children display a positive sense of identity and belonging; this was particularly evident during pretend play. They referred to family members and made reference to likes and dislikes. All children were excited as they sang the 'Hello' and 'Goodbye' song that included all of their names.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to review their plan and recall activities. In doing so, the development of greater engagement levels and involvement of children and a reduction in waiting periods are advised.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent
- A professional atmosphere is evident. The practitioners work in partnership with each other and demonstrate commitment to the setting. There are high levels of staff retention.
- Regular management and staff meetings are facilitated by the management team. These are used as opportunities to share information, to discuss day-to-day operations, policy and issues or concerns that may arise. The manager carries out annual reviews and regular supervision for all staff members in order to affirm good practice and support their ongoing development.
- The manager and practitioners are committed to improving their skills and practice. They have participated in in-house development courses, such as training in HighScope, the Hanen communication programme, *Aistear* and *Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education* workshops and the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) Programme.
- The manager and practitioners are very dedicated to ensuring that a high quality early years programme is provided for the children. To achieve this, they avail of support from the local childcare committee, Tusla, Barnardos and Early Childhood Ireland for advice and training. They also network with other early years settings within the company.

- There are effective systems in place to ensure the smooth running of the setting. These include comprehensive policies and procedures that are reviewed on an annual basis and the roles and responsibilities of practitioners are clearly defined. During the inspection, all practitioners had opportunities to take a lead role in promoting the children's learning.
- Self-reviews are carried out using HighScope methods of reflection. The views of parents are also regularly sought through questionnaires and a suggestion box located in the reception area.
- There is an open-door policy and effective two-way sharing of information between the setting and parents. Information is communicated through regular formal meetings, daily informal chats, displayed notices and telephone calls. Information on policies and procedures is shared in a parents' leaflet and a parents' handbook is being developed.
- Transitions into the setting, between learning rooms and to primary school are managed very well. The manager meets with a team of local professionals to discuss waiting lists and the new intake of children. There is a phased-in approach facilitated for all new children and for children moving between rooms. Children and their parents are invited to visit prior to children commencing in the setting. The practitioners seek 'All About Me' information for each child to help them to get to know each child.
- Links with the local primary school are well established. Teachers from the local primary school visit the setting on an annual basis and practitioners bring the children to visit the school. There are plans in place to provide training for the practitioners to advance their use of the *Mo Scéal* templates, developed by The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

Summary of Overall Inspection

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	**Very Good**
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	**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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

- We were very happy with the overall report. There were a couple of recommendations made and we will take them on board and support the staff in working on these.
- I am grateful for the feedback received.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

- After receiving our report and looking at the recommendations, we met as a team. The staff looked for some support around the recommendations.
- Making links between the children's interests and the next step in their development.
  Our curriculum advisor worked with all staff by putting on a workshop. She also met with them during their planning time to support them in their understanding of this. We recommended to look at it throughout the year at team meetings. We felt this would support staff to have a clear picture of what they needed to do to make sure all children are supported in their development and that their individual needs are being met.
- We also discussed our planning and recall activities and put more transitions in place to support children's individuality. We have had great resources from the Demonstration project around transitions.
- Our outdoor area is being refurbished at the minute and will be finished by the end of mid-term.