An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

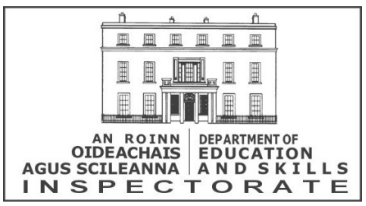
Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Report

Rosie and Jim's
10DL0129

Main Street
Castlefinn
County Donegal

Date of Inspection: 30th November 2017



CONTEXT OF SETTING

Rosie and Jim's, established in 2010, is a private, sessional pre-school situated in the rural village of Castlefinn, County Donegal. The pre-school offers one morning session to children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection there were twenty children, one leader/owner and two assistants present. The owner and one of the assistants attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, and the response submitted on behalf of the setting can 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.
- There is a warm, caring atmosphere within the setting and the practitioners are very familiar with the children and their families. A morning welcoming system is in place which ensures that the children and their parents are greeted by a designated practitioner.
- The daily routine is visually displayed to support the children's awareness of play experiences. Although a variety of learning opportunities are highlighted within the daily routine, there is scope to provide further prolonged periods of play to support the children's engagement.
- Snack promotes a personable and social experience where children and practitioners sit together, conversing naturally. This promotes a positive sense of belonging and emotional security for the children.
- Transition strategies such as the use of verbal cues and a musical triangle assist the children to become aware of tidy-up, engaging them purposefully at this time. The home-time transition observed was lengthy on the day of inspection, with children not purposefully engaged as they waited for their parents' arrival.
- There is a key-person approach established in the setting to foster secure relationships between practitioners and their key group of children. This supports sensitive interactions and focused observations of the children during play.
- Practitioners have established effective measures to encourage the children to independently resolve any minor conflicts that might arise through use of a 'beeper' and timers which promote turn-taking during the session.
- The children's identity is respectfully promoted in the setting. Their uniqueness is celebrated in the variety of photographs on display as well as in the allocated area for their paintings, labelled *'Our Special Gallery'.*
- The setting is integrated within the local community. The parents' newsletter highlights how practitioners value parental contributions, inviting them to become involved in monthly walks and to share their skills with the children.

Actions advised

- It is advised that practitioners review the outline of the daily routine to promote further prolonged periods of play during the session. This will benefit the children's sustained engagement in play thereby extending their learning experiences.
- It is advised that the length of the home time transition is reviewed so that the children are encouraged to remain actively engaged in activities with minimal waiting time, thereby ensuring that purposeful learning is continually promoted.

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 good.
- There is a broad-based curriculum in place informed by *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.* Plans are structured on a long, medium and short-term basis with some of the children's learning needs noted to inform activities.

- Practitioners regularly review the plans to evaluate the effectiveness of activities offered. Planning themes are pre-determined with little influence from the children's enquiries.
- There is a range of approaches to assessment utilised including a child profile, snapshot observations and a settling-in review. Practitioners share the children's observations with parents regularly. Opportunity is provided for parents to comment on the children's learning within the specified *'Parent's Voice'* template.
- Interactions between practitioners and the children are respectful and playful with warm tones used during conversations at the child's level. These discussions provide minimal opportunities for open-ended questioning to support the children to reflect further on their play experiences.
- The indoor environment is well-defined with a variety of areas for children to experience, with multi-sensory play highly valued among the opportunities provided. There is scope to develop the play areas further with additional well-resourced, open-ended materials and experiences.
- Practitioners utilise the large parachute and 'Bizzy Breaks' programme indoors to enable physical activity.
- Emergent language is fostered through songs and rhymes, with mark-making materials on offer at the easel and at an accessible writing trolley. A large book area offers a relaxing space for children to choose their preferred books Practitioners use some mathematical language and extended vocabulary, although this is not maximised upon.
- Practitioners promote an inclusive approach to learning. They use observations to support the children's learning and development and utilise knowledge gained from the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) training to further this practice.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the children's enquiries and emerging interests are used by practitioners to inform planning. This will create a more balanced and tailored approach to the learning activities provided.
- It is advised that practitioners review their facilitation of play to maximise opportunities for children to plan, talk and think about their experiences. Strategies such as open-ended questioning and modelling of reflective thinking will benefit this process.
- It is advised that practitioners provide well-resourced, open-ended play opportunities to extend the children's curiosity and exploration in play both indoors and outdoors.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is good.
- Children demonstrate interest in creative and multi-sensory activities such as painting at the easel, sand and water play and role-play in the home area.
- Children use their initiative during free-play to choose and organise their preferred learning experiences.
- Children are developing a good awareness of feelings through the natural discussions that occur and the use of visual props, encouraging the use of emotional language.
- Children experience success through the display of their photographs and artistic creations. Although children have access to their individual scrapbooks, they are not utilised for reflecting on the children's learning and developing capabilities.
- Children demonstrate confidence in their fine-motor skills, such as when cutting and undertaking table-top activities. The development of the children's gross-motor skills was not maximised during inspection, with minimal opportunities provided for strong physical movements. Although there is a defined outdoor play area, this was not used by the children during inspection.
- Children are developing a strong sense of identity within the pre-school. They confidently describe their interests and personal experiences. They are developing an appreciation of the roles of adults within the community as visitors attend the setting periodically to share their skills with the children.
- Children share interests in role-play situations within the home corner and in small world play. There were missed opportunities to extend these shared experiences through further investigations and additional opportunities for problem-solving.
- Children are learning about the world and have engaged in planned experiences such as science experiments within a space theme to develop their knowledge and understanding.

Actions advised

- It is advised that children have the opportunity to reflect on their learning, using their own judgements, decisions and discussions to develop an awareness of their growing capabilities. Continual access to their unique scrapbooks will support this.
- It is advised that children have daily access to the outdoor play environment to develop gross motor skills and confidence in their physical development.
- It is advised that children have more opportunities to problem-solve, to explore and to collaborate to share interests. Opportunities to extend responses in relation to *'I wonder why'* questions will promote a stronger sense of enquiry.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- Practitioners engage in informal review having recently discussed and amended their method of planning. Organised formal review to improve practice has yet to commence.
- Practitioners are professional and collaborate well as a team. There are clear roles and responsibilities established, which supports a smoothly facilitated session.
- Practitioners respect the views of parents and parents are continually informed of practice in the setting through frequent newsletters, letters, displays of photographs and social media. A book lending scheme promotes communication and provides a continuity of literacy experiences for the children.
- Parents are invited to share experiences such as the 'Bake Sale' and the Christmas event with the children. There are plans in place to formally meet with parents in the final term with regard to their child's learning and progression.
- Transitions into the setting are promoted by offering an 'Open day' and a visit to the pre-school prior to the settling-in period. Parents are provided with an information pack and a child profile form. This provides practitioners with useful information with regard to the child's unique interests and backgrounds.
- The practitioners have developed professional relationships with the local primary school. An annual questionnaire is compiled using questions from the children which is posted to the school with a reply returned by the junior infant teacher.
- Although an annual report is compiled by the practitioners summarising the children's learning, this information is not shared with the local primary school.

Actions advised

- It is advised that practitioners develop a more systematic approach to the documentation of self and professional review to support ongoing, improvement in experiences for children. Going forward, the involvement of parents in review will enhance this process.
- It is advised that practitioners further develop professional relationships with local primary schools by sharing information with regard to the children's learning to support their transition to primary education.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is very good given the strong commitment from the manager and staff to the children in their care.

Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

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	**Good**
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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report.

I accept the outcome of the inspection and recognise changes need to be implemented in the four areas.

Area1: Highlights the good work we are doing as well as showing where improvements could be made on the day of inspection.

Area2: We acknowledge that more influence from the children is essential when planning to fully engage them through experience and activities. There are improvements to be made to encourage high order thinking which wasn't observed on the day of inspection. We do feel that we have good resources in the setting although we do believe that more natural risk taking materials could be introduced to maximise learning experiences.

Area3: We acknowledge that continuous access and reflection is needed to reflect on experiences, although we do this we could expand on it. We acknowledge on the day of the inspection enquiry based questions were not observed.

Area4: We acknowledge that although we do meet regularly informally discussing all matters that we need to formally document this.

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

Area1: We are already promoting further prolonged periods of free play and have adapted our time plans accordingly. We have also implemented a new approach in our transition times from pre-school to home time and the children are purposefully engaged at all times.

Area2: We have included even more emerging interests from the children into our plans and this will be an ongoing process throughout the year. We have displayed open ended question phrases in the setting in order to encourage and promote higher and questioning. The setting is gradually adding more real life, natural play resources to the areas to maximise experiences.

Area3: Although children already have access to their scrapbooks, we aim to encourage more reflection on learning experiences on an ongoing basis. Although we were not observed on our outdoor area on the day of the inspection, we do use this on a daily basis and we will continue to do so to maximise the development of gross motor skills which we believe are extremely important.

Area4: We aim to have formal meetings as a team to promote self and professional reflection and this is already underway and very successful. We have been in contact with the local primary schools to promote even further relationships and to ensure a smooth transition for the children.