An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Sunny Lane Crèche Westbury Ltd.
Setting Address	Westbury Corbally Co. Clare
DCYA number	18CE0244

Date of Inspection: 30-05-2019

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agus Scileanna
Department of
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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	30-05-2019
Inspection activities undertaken • Pre-inspection meeting with setting manager • Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents	• Observation of interactions during a number two pre-school sessions • Post-inspection feedback meeting with setting manager

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Sunny Lane Crèche, Westbury Ltd is a private full day-care setting which has been in operation since October 2018. It is located in a shopping area in Corbally, Co. Clare and is part of a chain of two settings that offer full-day, part-time and sessional services to children and families. Two rooms provide a sessional pre-school to children participating in the first and second year of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The Montessori room caters for children in their second pre-school year and the Pre-school room caters for children eligible for their first pre-school year. On the morning of inspection, two practitioners and six children were present in the Montessori room; while one practitioner and nine children were present in the Pre-school room. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report; the setting chose to accept the report without response.

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.
- A welcoming atmosphere is in place as the children and families arrive to the setting. The practitioners have strategically made very good use of the corridor areas to nurture a sense of belonging for the children and families. Dual-language greetings, photographs and individual coat spaces greet the children to their respective rooms.
- The children spend the majority of the daily routine engaged in free-play time; this gives the children autonomy and control over their play experiences both indoors and outdoors. A variety of group learning experiences are also facilitated by the practitioners and the children have choice to engage with these or to organise their own learning. The daily routines are displayed for the children in each room using text and images.
- The practitioners initiate the transitions within the daily routine using verbal reminders and consultation with the children. A more consistent approach to implementing strategies that encourage the active involvement of the children would benefit these transition experiences.
- The practitioners nurture respectful relationships with the children. They very effectively respond to the children's expressions and thoughts and strategically use the valuable knowledge they have about each child's family context and interests to spark discussion and reflection.
- The practitioners make very good efforts to utilise their positions within the community. Regular walks are organised to the local amenities, which include the supermarket and post-office. Visitors from the community are also invited in to the setting and special days are organised during the year for parents and grandparents to join the children.
- The individual identity of the children is celebrated through family photographs, dual-language greetings and the display of their arts, crafts and learning stories. Adding resources to the various interest areas would enhance the children's appreciation of themselves and others during their free-play time.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the practitioners develop consistent strategies that support smooth transitions within the daily routine.

- It is advised that the practitioners strengthen their approach to recognising and supporting the identity and belonging of individual children. This can be achieved through the addition of play props, books, displays and dual-language supports that represent children's family, community and individual identity.

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.
- A broad-based curriculum is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and *Síolta*. Both rooms have developed a detailed long-term plan that is aligned with both of these frameworks; this is on display for parents to view.
- Planning for the children's learning is organised on a long, medium and short-term basis. The practitioners use a thematic approach to develop ideas and learning experiences based on seasonal events and the interests of the children. These themes are made visible in the setting using poster displays, sample craft work and photographs. A reduction of template-focused activities to accompany the exploration of these themes would enhance the emergent and inquiry-based approach to exploratory learning.
- The children's learning and progression is monitored and frequently documented using individual learning portfolios, art and craft folders and anecdotal notes added to short learning stories. This documentation collectively builds a rich picture of each child's learning journey; while narrative observations highlight their progression and mastery of skills, attitudes, knowledge and dispositions.
- The practitioners effectively support and stimulate the children during their interactions. Using open-ended questions and comments the practitioners encourage the children to share their thoughts and use language and communication skills to converse as part of the group and as individuals.
- Both rooms are similarly laid-out and divided into areas of interest. The outdoor learning environment is situated adjacent to the main building and is currently under development. There are limited resources outdoors but the practitioners encourage the children to bring materials from the indoor rooms to enhance their outdoor play.
- Learning through play and playful activity is effectively prioritised as the practitioners organise and facilitate learning experiences based on the themes being explored. There is scope to develop the areas of interest and their resources to maximise opportunities for the children to independently explore a range of mathematical and scientific concepts within their play.
- A print-rich environment is evident in both rooms with displays, signs and books for the children to use. Meaningful symbolic literacy props and mark-making materials, linked to the children's lives, would enhance these play areas.

Actions advised

- It is advised that practitioners reduce the use of template-focused activities and worksheets when exploring new themes and ideas from the curriculum.
- It is advised that practitioners develop the areas of interest and resources available in the learning environments. Through this review the practitioners need to develop how the children are encouraged to engage with materials that prompt mathematical and scientific thinking and exploration during their play.
- It is advised that the practitioners extend the opportunities for mark-making and symbolic use of literacy practices and concepts within the learning environment. Adding meaningful literacy resources that are linked to the everyday lives of children will support this.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children are settled and engaged in their learning. They eagerly interact with their peers and the practitioners on arrival and frequently refer to the daily routine chart throughout the day. They

are consulted on their preferences during the day and share their thoughts effectively. On the morning of inspection, the children in the Montessori group agreed to have their lunch later in the day as they went on a walk around the local area to view the traffic lights as part of a road safety theme.

- The children demonstrate good capacity to reflect and use judgements during their conversations both indoors and outdoors. There is scope to increase purposeful opportunity for the children to express a range of positive learning dispositions in their play.
- They are interested in each other and enjoy coming together for meal-times. The younger children effectively use their developing verbal and non-verbal communication skills while the older children talk about their food and share stories from their lives.
- They enjoy accessing the outdoor learning environment and on the morning of inspection, a few children exercised their natural curiosity to search for bugs outdoors. There are limited opportunities for this type of natural investigation while the outdoor area is being developed.
- The children co-operate effectively with their peers and negotiate well when it comes to turn-taking. Children with English as an additional language demonstrate good understanding of communication skills and respond using gestures when expressing their needs.
- All children have a strong connection with their practitioners and these relationships provide a secure base from which to confidently engage in play and pro-social skills. Increased opportunity for the children to express their individual preferences and interests as part of their learning documentation would benefit reflection on and review of their learning successes and achievements.

Actions advised

- It is advised that children be given more opportunity as part of the outdoor learning environment to explore and practice their investigative learning skills. Adding areas and resources that prompt the children to practice scooping, pouring, mixing and experimenting will benefit their developing play skills during their independent outdoor play. The Learning Environment Pillar of the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide provides useful examples and ideas in this regard.
- It is advised that the children have more opportunity to engage in organised, well-thought out learning experiences that stimulate the development of problem-solving skills. These opportunities can also be linked to the areas of interest where the children can then practice these skills with their peers.
- It is advised that children be allowed greater autonomy over their individual learning portfolios. This will ensure that these valuable records of documentation reflect the comments, expressions and individual interests of the children rather than being limited to completed templates and worksheets.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The manager of the setting is supportive and encouraging in her leadership style. She acknowledges that the setting is in a phase of development after opening its doors at the beginning of this pre-school year. The addition of self-evaluative practices using the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* will support the development of the setting.
- The manager supports the practitioners informally on a daily basis and gives hands-on support within the rooms across the full day-care setting. Once a month, the manager purposefully spends time in each room to observe and listen to the needs of the practitioners and children.
- Within each pre-school room, the practitioners have autonomy over the development of their curriculum for each group of children. The development of a shared approach across both pre-school rooms would benefit consistency and continuity; and would help build on previous learning experiences as the children transition through the setting.
- As a growing setting, at the time of inspection, one full team meeting is organised to discuss the plans for the year ahead. The manager prioritises a strong sense of teamwork and organises team building exercises to strengthen the communication links between practitioners.
- Continuous professional development is prioritised. One practitioner is currently engaged with the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) training programme and the practitioners regularly consult with their local County Childcare Committee to avail of training supports on *Aistear* and *Síolta*. As Early

Childhood Ireland members, they also attend training supports that suit the needs of the children in the younger rooms and pre-school rooms.

- Parents receive a detailed handbook on enrolment with important information about the setting's policies and procedures. The parents are made aware of their child's individual learning portfolio and are welcome to view these at any time. Parents receive regular updates through email and text format while daily conversations and strategic noticeboards and displays share further information about the events in the setting.
- As the children prepare for the transition to primary school, the practitioners discuss this significant change with them. Individual conversations are held with parents regarding their child's transition and information leaflets are shared about this move. The local bus driver who may drop some children to their new school is introduced to them as part of the pre-school annual tour.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the practitioners review the curriculum as a whole across both pre-school years. This will ensure a more co-ordinated approach to the development of children's learning goals and experiences for both age groups.
- It is advised that practitioners and management collectively establish self-evaluation practices using the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide*.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is very good. The manager openly engaged in the post-inspection feedback discussion and demonstrated a clear vision for the improvement of the children's learning and development experiences.

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