An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Vicarstown Playschool
Setting Address	Killeen Vicarstown County Cork
DCYA number	09CC0132

Date of Inspection: 01-10-2018

An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
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(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	01-10-2018
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with owner and practitioners • Observation of interactions during a session	 • Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Feedback to owner and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Vicarstown Playschool is a rural, privately owned pre-school. The owner and one practitioner provide early years education to a maximum of nineteen children during a morning session. On the day of the inspection sixteen children were present. The owner and the practitioner 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 good.
- A very caring ethos is prevalent. The practitioners are sensitive and warm and they clearly have a positive regard for the children and their families.
- The daily routine consists of too many transitions and of too many adult-initiated/led, whole-group activities in which all the children have to participate.
- Snack time is utilised as a social occasion, with all the children sitting, eating and conversing with each other. There is scope to utilise this time for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and overall well-being.
- The children are interested and eager, and they engage very well in tidying up the room after play time, by sorting, pairing, matching, cleaning and organising the materials and the environment.
- Caring and respectful child-to-child relationships are fostered very well by the practitioners. They also model and provide meaningful guidance and encouragement towards positive behaviour.
- Particularly during the adult-initiated activities, such as painting and singing, recognition, affirmative feedback and encouragement are a regular feature of the practitioner's responses to the children.
- Some lovely opportunities are provided to bring family members, practitioners and the children together in the setting. Family and community members frequently visit the setting to share their expertise and interests with the children.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to change the daily routine to provide a longer indoor free play time, where children can be active agents in choosing and organising their own learning and development activities. During this time practitioner-initiated/led arts and craft activities or experiments can occasionally be offered parallel to free play, as a free choice to children who are interested. All the toys, resources and materials need to be available and accessible to the children during this time.
- Practitioners are advised to sit, eat and communicate with the children during the snack time. Creating a relaxed, family-type mealtime atmosphere and letting the children decide who they want to sit with, is further advised.

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, medium-term and short-term curriculum is documented, displayed and implemented. This curriculum is based on practitioners' ideas. There is no evidence of an emergent curriculum.
- Developmental checklists and generic learning stories, based on an adult-initiated/led activity, are filed in a group folder in children's individual subfolders. Each child has the same learning story. Photos of the children engaging in activities are shared electronically with the families on a regular basis.
- Practitioners' interactions with the children are supportive, respectful and motivating. During free play periods the practitioners mainly supervise. They do not utilise the opportunities to co-construct knowledge with the children or to optimise the benefits of adult/child interactions.
- The environments are well maintained and safe. They offer a broad variety of play options and the play value of the outdoor environment is high. The children have daily access to the outdoor play area.
- Practitioners show some awareness of the importance of free play for children's learning and development. They offer half an hour indoor free play at the beginning of the day and approximately forty-five minutes outdoor free play at the end of the morning.
- The children's love for language and literacy is fostered through the provision of high quality books, daily story time and the daily use of a broad variety of songs, rhymes and games.
- The practitioners show cognisance of the importance of promoting children's individual, unique creativity. The children are enabled to decide on the themes of their paintings, to choose their play engagement during free-play times and to choose songs and rhymes at circle time.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to seek advisory support, such as through 'Better Start' regarding the development and implementation of an emergent curriculum. In-depth engagement with the 'Planning and Assessment' pillar of the on-line *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide* is further advised.
- Child-initiated/led, interactive, exploratory play needs to be recognised and utilised as the main medium through which the children learn and develop throughout the day. Practitioners need to follow children's interests and line of enquiry and facilitate play in order to co-construct knowledge with the children.
- Practitioners are advised to more consciously use interaction strategies, such as active engagement in play, active listening, prompting, scaffolding, asking open-ended questions and sustained shared thinking.
- Practitioners are advised to work with the 'Play' pillar, the 'Interaction' pillar and the 'Environment' pillar of the *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide* to gain more knowledge and confidence in implementing a play-based curriculum.

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 motivated, engaged and interested in their learning activities. They demonstrate enjoyment and creativity in their learning.
- Particularly during free play times the children play co-operatively in pairs and small groups.
- During free play periods, it is evident that children's personal and social skills such as self-regulation, negotiation, conflict-resolution and turn-taking are developing.
- Information documented about children's learning is very generic and does not reflect their achievements in a range of connected learning experiences, nor their individual interests, learning dispositions or approaches.
- Verbal and non-verbal communication strategies are used by the children to share their thinking and feelings.

- The children have some opportunities to engage in activities which enable them to represent their ideas and feelings through various media and play activities, such as construction play, socio-dramatic play and messy play.

Actions advised

- Information documented about children's learning and development, needs to be strength-based, focussing on their interests, learning dispositions, knowledge, skills and achievements. Based on these individual assessment outcomes, the individual and/or group curriculum needs to be developed.
- A broad variety of activities, such as free painting, free-drawing, junk-art, play-dough, messy play, construction, role-play need to be readily and consistently available and displayed in an attractive and inviting manner for the children throughout the day.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The practitioners convene forty-five minutes before the children arrive in the morning to plan practice and to write observations. Daily informal reflection of practice takes place at lunch time.
- An ethos of team work and collaboration is evident.
- Practitioners participate in continuous professional development. In recent years a number of courses have been completed including in diversity and inclusion, oral language, child protection and welfare, and a seminar relating to the well-being of early years professionals. Some good meaningful two-way channels of communication between the setting and the families are established. These include a parental information pack; daily, friendly, informal chats; the use of electronic devises to share information and observations being sent home once a term.
- Transitions into and from the setting are managed effectively and sensitively. Good relationships with the local primary schools are established. Principals of the schools visit the setting and interact with the children. The practitioners take the children to school open-days and to school concerts.

Actions advised

- The management and practitioners are advised to regularly and formally review practice and engage with relevant material, such as all areas of the *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide* to improve learning experiences and outcomes for the children.
- To support further and sustained improvements in the setting, engagement with 'Better Start' is advised.
- Practitioners are advised to seek and participate in further professional development opportunities, in particular in the areas of 'emergent curriculum' and 'play'. Participation in the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) programme is recommended.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to continue to implement the actions advised above is good.

Summary of Overall Inspection

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	**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 Eileen Murphy of the above named Pre-School would like to acknowledge receipt of my report. Within the report I can relate to a number of practices that I have in place and I will take the Actions that are recommended and as advised as a constructive criticism. My practice is that of forty years and it is also emerging.

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

The children in my care have a curriculum and care plan as per the training we have received. The changes that are recommended will be worked on through our active engagement with the CCC and Better Start.

I will look at the time frame of training with LINC and my Leader will participate in this. I will also seek the support of my County Childcare Development Worker to access and participate in Better Start.