An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION - FOCUSED INSPECTION

REPORT

Service Name	Kiddies Korner
Service Address	292 Sundrive Road Crumlin Dublin 12
DCYA number	09DY0119

Date of Inspection: 08-03-2018

An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

WHAT IS AN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION-FOCUSED INSPECTION?

The Early Years Education-focused Inspection (EYEI) model is used to provide evaluative information, advice and support in relation to education provision in a pre-school service 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 service.

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 service's provision in each area.

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Date of inspection	08-03-2018
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with service manager • Meeting with practitioners	• Observation of interactions during session • Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Feedback to service manager

CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Kiddies Korner is a privately owned, full day and sessional service. The service has been in operation for over twenty-two years. It is located in a private dwelling. It provides a morning Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The pedagogical approach is play based with some elements of Montessori. On the day of the inspection, the practitioner and eight children were present. The owner/manager 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.
- There is a warm and affirming ethos and the children are very comfortable and relaxed in the learning environment.
- The daily routine on display did not reflect the daily routine observed on the day of the inspection. During the inspection, there was an imbalance between adult-led activities and child-initiated activities, with limited opportunities for children to become deeply engaged in their play or to be active agents in their learning.
- Snack time promotes the development of the children's independent skills. Many children perform their own personal care routines independently. The practitioner engages the children in natural, relaxed conversations with some discussion on topics related to health and well-being.
- The practitioner often provides guidance and encouragement towards positive behaviour through the use of affirmation, recognition and praise; respectful child-child relationships are fostered.
- Transitions from one activity to the next over the course of the day are signposted through the use of verbal announcements. On the day of the inspection, it was evident that a small number of children were not aware of the pending change or ready to move to the next activity.
- There is some promotion of the children's sense of identity and belonging. This is evident in the displays of the children's art activities, photographs, a family wall and a birthday chart. Opportunities have been provided for the children to develop an awareness of the local community through a recent visit from a local farmer and through visits from parents who have been invited to share their roles.

Actions advised

- The practitioner is advised to revise the organisation of the daily routine in order to provide the children with ample opportunities to engage in free play. The development of a current visual daily routine will support the children's understanding of the daily sequence of activities.
- To support the children's developing sense of identity and belonging, the practitioner is advised to celebrate the identity of the children in the service through the use of discussion and resources. These resources could include dress-up clothes, books, wall displays and photographs.
- The practitioner is advised to develop more effective transition strategies and to optimise the use of transition times as learning opportunities. Every part of the day, including times of transition between activities, can be used as learning opportunities such as for example, the performance of songs, rhymes or having discussions on the children's play 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 good.
- A play-based curriculum which is aligned to *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is in place. A thematic approach to long-term and medium-term planning is undertaken which incorporates seasonal events and celebrations and there are some links to children's developing interests and needs.
- The practitioner records observations of children's learning using anecdotal notes and an interest board captures information on their daily emergent interests. Individual learning journals are being developed which will be sent home at the end of the year.
- The practitioner engages in building authentic, sustained shared conversations with children and there was some use of open-ended questions. The children are supported to talk about their ideas and to explore links to shared interests or experiences with the practitioner. The practitioner effectively follows the child's lead and often acts as a play partner.
- The indoor environment offers a number of discreet Montessori interest areas, small world materials, puzzles and a painting easel; these support the provision of some opportunities for children to engage in play.

Actions advised

- In order to further develop an emergent curriculum that is responsive to the growing interests, dispositions and needs of the children, the practitioner is advised to incorporate the children's current interests, as captured in the observations, into planning for the next steps in the their learning. The 'Planning and assessing' pillar in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* offers useful guidance in this regard.
- The practitioner is encouraged to plan and predict how children's learning can be scaffolded and extended and their independent problem-solving abilities enhanced. In so doing, the use of 'I wonder' questions and the preparation of some open-ended questions that provoke and challenge children's thinking are advised.
- The practitioner is advised to conduct an audit of the indoor environment with a view to developing the range of interest areas and materials available for children. The 'Learning environment' pillar in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* is a useful resource in relation to this.

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 demonstrate eagerness and enjoyment during their learning activities. They often display sustained interest and engagement. During circle time on the day of the inspection, many children became disengaged due to the didactic nature of this activity.
- During the inspection, it was evident that some of the children experienced success during their learning activities; they shared their accomplishments with both their peers and the practitioner.
- The children enjoy sharing their interests, ideas and opinions with the practitioner and their peers.
- Some free mark-making opportunities are provided for the children to represent their ideas and feelings in a creative way.
- During the inspection, the children's confidence in their abilities to express themselves creatively was evident during collaborative role-play scenarios, including a restaurant role-play activity.
- The children are developing an understanding of, and appreciation for, print. During the inspection, they incorporated mark-making into their play activities and referred to the letters in their name as they wrote their names on a blackboard.
- The children are learning to play together co-operatively in small groups and in pairs. They are developing their understanding of the boundaries and rules of acceptable behaviour. For example, during the inspection, there were many incidences where the children confidently discussed and agreed on the roles in a play scenario and arrived collaboratively at a decision.

Ac*tions advised*

- The children would benefit from greater opportunities to reflect on their learning. For example, after they have played in the morning they could come together to discuss, share ideas and reflect on the activities they were involved in. This could be facilitated through small-group time or at snack time.
- The practitioner is advised to provide increased opportunities for the children to engage in socio-dramatic play, story-telling, songs, rhymes, storytelling, and creative expression. The incorporation of natural materials such as sand, water, playdough, and the provision of materials for free art and mark-making, moving to music and role play are advised.
- It is advised that additional opportunities be provided for the children to engage in large-group, small-group and child-led activities that are appropriate and responsive to their learning needs, as distinct from more adult-led, didactic or testing activities.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- At the time of the inspection, formal team meetings in place were not held. Informal chats are held between the practitioner and the owner/manager to discuss up-coming events or developments in the pre-school room.
- The service has previously engaged with the Better Start Quality Development service to review the learning environment and curriculum.
- On the day of the inspection, there was some evidence of the owner/manager providing good leadership in the promotion of quality provision.
- Good supports are in place to help children settle into the service. Parents and children are encouraged to visit the service in advance of children starting and a handbook with a summary of the most relevant policies is distributed. Information on their child's learning is shared with parents throughout the year through informal discussions at arrival and collection times.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in the service; they are invited to come in and read a story or share their roles with the children. Parents are also invited to attend some events in the service during the year.
- The service has established connections with the local primary schools through the provision of an after-school program.

Actions advised

- The owner/manager and practitioner are advised to formalise their team meetings and to develop a more structured approach to reviewing their practice. The self-evaluation tools in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will support this process.
- The practitioner is advised to formally share the documented observations about the children and the children's learning journals with parents at intervals throughout the year. The eliciting of parental comments and opinions on the materials shared is also advised.
- The practitioner is advised to develop a transition-to-school policy and a programme of activities in order to support the children and families in their transition from the service to primary school.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the service 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	**Very 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.

This was our first inspection and we found it very helpful

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

Area 1

Morning time is Montessori which is child centred uninterrupted blocks of work time where children learn concepts from working with materials in specific areas within the child's reach. They have the freedom to walk around the room and choose their own work. Not all the work is Montessori based but it does involve problem solving, counting etc. A free play picture wall has been added to the daily routine. We have expanded on the children's sense of identity and belonging in the classroom by adding a family wall which includes our own self-made portrait, favourite foods, pictures of their own house, we are also including pictures of the local shops and schools. We are working along with their parents to gather all this information on their individual backgrounds.

Area 2

We are using more circle time and discussions at lunch time to understand their current interests to plan the next steps of learning and activities to do. We are asking a lots of open ended questions throughout the day.

Area 3

We now do more natural discussions and more circle time is now been done after activities to get feedback for the children and to get their ideas of their learning. All doors have been removed from the presses so the children have visual and easy access to the toys and equipment. There is a table with water and cups available all day so the children can access this when needed.

Area 4

We are now enrolled with Dublin City Childcare doing a QAP 16 month course, the whole team are involved and monthly meetings are being held, we have a one to one with the QAP advisor and the management still has one to one with each employee. The management always updates all equipment and materials as needed. We have invited the local police, firemen, dentists, farmers, etc to call to see the children as this makes learning more real and they get real life experience. We have a culture wall added to the room to involve all the children and welcome their identity and belonging. The practitioner meets with the parents several times per year to involve them in the children's learning, showing their work displayed in their individual learning journals. Parents add their own notes and comments. We have a new class phone which we are taken photos, and have a messaging group for parents, these photos are shared every day, tablets are also used to collect photos and information on the children.