**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>St. Vincent’s ECDS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Ballyfermot Primary Care and Mental Health Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ballyfermot road</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dublin 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09DY0160</td>
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**Date of Inspection: 19-02-2019**
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.
Date of inspection: 19-02-2019

Inspection activities undertaken

- Meeting with setting manager
- Meeting with practitioner
- Observation of interactions during a number of sessions
- Interaction with children
- Review of relevant documents
- Feedback to setting manager and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

St. Vincent's ECDS is a community run part-time and sessional setting. It is located on the grounds of a primary care campus. It provides three morning sessions and one afternoon session of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, twenty-eight children were present with three practitioners and two students. The manager and the three practitioners attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. 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.
- There is a caring, warm and relaxed feeling in the setting; the children and parents are personally greeted upon arrival which creates a welcoming atmosphere. This relationship building is effectively supported through the key-person approach in operation.
- A well-balanced, child-centred daily schedule is in place, which the children are very familiar with. There is a visual display in each of the rooms at child height.
- It is evident that the children are viewed as active agents in their own learning. They are afforded ample opportunities throughout the session to make decisions which are affirmed and encouraged by the practitioners.
- Large group meal time occasions are provided in a dining room and children are afforded ample opportunity to be independent in the associated tasks. For example, they pour their drink and cereal, they hand out the bowls and cups and they spoon their own portions of dinner. The snack time occasions are very social with children chatting to one another and the practitioners who sit and eat with them.
- The practitioners often provide support and encouragement towards positive behaviour through positive affirmation and guidance. They foster respectful child-to-child relationships and use the High Scope conflict resolution steps consistently and effectively.
- Transitions between activities over the course of the session are minimal and seamless. Effective and consistent use of a count-down cue, a bell, songs and movement activities support children’s learning at these times.
- Recognition for the uniqueness of the child is promoted through various displays such as the family tree, classroom helpers, and the birthday chart. The use of name and symbol labels on each child’s storage cubby, the choice board and the helper roles support the children in self-identifying and in feeling part of the pre-school group. The setting has yet to explore cultural diversity.
- An emphasis is placed on developing strong connections with the families of each child. This is developed through the key-worker system and through the provision of numerous activities that parents are encouraged to engage with. These include regular information sessions and a stay and play day. In addition, parents are encouraged to share their roles and family backgrounds. Recently some community helpers visited the children, such as the guards.
**Action advised**

- It is advised that the practitioners plan and provide for resources, activities and interactions that will support the children to gain a deeper sense of identity and belonging as an individual and within the group, to explore cultural diversity and to make more visible the links with the local community.

**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.
- The setting has implemented the High Scope approach to its curriculum which is aligned to the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. There is evidence that the practitioners are developing their understanding of an emergent curriculum, as identified in some of the documented small group plans. There is scope to strengthen this practice.
- Approaches to assessment are very good. The practitioners record observations of children’s learning and development using the High Scope Child Observation Record (COR). The individual learning journals include anecdotal notes, photographs, samples of the children’s work and the *Aistear Learning Record*. These often outline the next steps in children’s learning. Such assessment information could be used to inform the short-term planning more consistently.
- The practitioners view the children as competent and capable learners. During the inspection, they frequently engaged as the children’s play partner, and they supported and scaffolded their thinking and reasoning. On some occasions they asked open-ended questions that challenged the children’s thinking and supported them to make predictions and comparisons. The practitioners skillfully moderated their interactions to suit the individual child, using alternative strategies such as modelling, replicating and re-stating children’s actions. Additional one-to-one learning activities are provided to support children’s learning and development.
- The practitioners very effectively support the development of the children’s language, literacy and numeracy skills, through conversations, storytelling, music and movement activities, rhymes, and through the use of alliteration and symbols.
- The indoor environments are bright, inviting and presented in a very attractive manner. There are defined interest areas within which all of the materials are accessible to the children, and displayed in a way that promotes their independence. These areas provide many opportunities for creative expression and promote various types of play such as socio-dramatic play, construction, mark-making, and play with manipulatives. Materials which promote multi-sensory experiences such as sand, water, playdough, and painting are also fully accessible to the children.
- The outdoor area is used on a daily basis and provides opportunities for the children to engage in purposeful play such as construction, free mark-making, sensorial and imaginative play and to develop their gross motor physical skills.

**Action advised**

- The practitioners are advised to optimise their use of the records of the individual child’s developmental needs and interests and the identified next steps in their learning to consistently and directly inform their planning processes. This will enable them to strengthen their emergent curriculum, and to customise the curriculum in a way that is responsive to each individual child. Additional guidance is available in the ‘Planning and Assessing’ pillar in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*.

**AREA 3**

**QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- Children display eagerness and enjoyment on arrival and throughout the day. They have autonomy and agency, and they make many decisions about their activities, the materials, their play partners and where they will play.
- The children are confident in expressing their thoughts and opinions. Their views are sought in relation to their favourite play materials or areas.
Children demonstrate motivation, perseverance and confident dispositions as they engage in risky and collaborative play in the indoor and the outdoor area. This was noted during the inspection when they climbed on the large blocks to view the room through coloured kaleidoscopes, and when they built a line of blocks causing them to fall on one another in a domino effect.

On the day of the inspection the children experienced success in their chosen activities. They are enabled to some extent to develop an awareness of their changing abilities and progression in their development through their reflection on their recent activities with the practitioners, and through the feedback from the practitioners. There is scope to further strengthen this through reflection on the learning journals.

The children are developing the ability to play co-operatively and are establishing friendships. This was apparent during the inspection, when they acknowledged friendships with their peers and also in their ability to take turns and to resolve the minor conflicts which occurred.

The children enjoy sharing their successes, similar experiences, interests, ideas and opinions with the practitioners and their peers. They engage in discussions about their creations and their free mark-making.

The children are displaying awareness of numeracy and print. This was evident when they counted items, compared their written numerals with printed numerals and looked at their name and symbol.

*Action advised*

To further support the children to view themselves as capable and confident learners, it would be beneficial to provide them with regular opportunities to reflect on their individual learning journals. It would be beneficial also to include annotations of their thoughts and opinions on the visual imagery of their achievements and in the individual learner journals.

**AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- The team have regular formal discussions on a monthly basis. These meetings are used to develop their curriculum, review individual child development needs and to reflect on their practice. There is evidence of review documented through the annual use of the High Scope Program Quality Assessment tool (PQA), and Síolta.
- The team is committed to providing a quality learning experience for the children. They are currently engaged in the Síolta accreditation process.
- There is a professional ethos in the setting, with a focus on development and research. The setting is part of a research programme in conjunction with Trinity College and takes students from various third level colleges. There is a clear sense of effective teamwork and shared leadership.
- Parents are encouraged to engage with activities and to attend various events throughout the year. A parent’s room is provided where parents can review the policies and information leaflets. There is a parents’ noticeboard and a parents’ handbook is provided. Parents are provided with an information session prior to their child starting at the setting, and the parent and child are encouraged to visit the setting. The settling-in period is facilitated based on the child and family needs. There is a parental advisory committee which meets to review and develop practice.
- The children’s progress is shared with parents informally each day and through two formal progress meeting. The individual learning journals are available for parents to view, they are reviewed with parents at the progress meetings, and they are sent home at the end of the year. Parents’ opinions are sought twice a year and are used to inform practice. The learning stories and the group learning journals are on display; these keep parents updated on the curriculum experiences.
- The children’s transition from pre-school to primary school is supported through the development of the relationship with the local schools. The junior infant teacher and the principal from some of the schools visit the setting to chat with the children. The children engage in some activities to familiarise themselves with the school. They go for a walk to the primary school, a photographic display of the school is developed, and school uniforms are introduced into the dress-up area. The practitioners use a transitional document to share the strengths of the child with the school, subject to parental approval.
CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to continue to implement the actions advised above is excellent.
## Summary of Overall Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Very good</td>
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<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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## Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Provision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.</td>
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