**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Name</th>
<th>Ardmore Community Preschool</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Address</td>
<td>Ardmore Estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passage West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Cork</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09CC0300</td>
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**Date of Inspection: 18-09-2017**
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 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 Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with service manager</td>
<td>18-09-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with practitioners</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Meeting with board of directors (including parent representatives on the board)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Other</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interaction with children</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Feedback to service manager and practitioners</td>
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</table>

CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Ardmore Community Preschool is an urban service, offering one morning and one afternoon ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) session. Twenty-two children attend in the morning and fourteen attend in the afternoon. All of the children in the afternoon session only started pre-school two weeks prior to the inspection. Most of the morning group of children were in their second year. On the day of the inspection there were seventeen children present in the morning and nine in the afternoon. A total of five practitioners, three in the morning and two in the afternoon offer early years education. The main inspection took place during the morning, with a brief visit to the afternoon session. Four practitioners and two management committee members 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 fair.
• A caring ethos is evident. Practitioners show a positive regard for the children and their families.
• Children are well supported to manage their own hygiene and personal care needs.
• Respectful child-child relationships are fostered and some good guidance and encouragement towards positive behaviour is provided.
• Snack time is utilised as a social occasion with children sitting together and chatting. Practitioners currently sit separate from the children. There is a high percentage of children whose first language is not English. Therefore, utilising these opportunities for small group interaction, be it verbal or non-verbal would be beneficial.
• Some transitions are announced ahead of time to give the children the opportunity to prepare for the change and finish what they are doing. Children could be given additional support to make transitions between activities and this would promote their independence.
• The daily routine is displayed in writing for the parents. It offers quite a good balance between adult initiated/led and child initiated/led activities. It also provides some balance between physically active times and more physically inactive concentration times. On the day of the inspection, adult initiated, instructed and directed activities were more prevalent than child initiated/led, physically active times.
• Some opportunities are provided for the children to develop an appreciation of themselves as individuals and as members of a group. These opportunities include a birthday calendar, a welcome display in the hall way and a helper chart. As the year progresses, a family wall is developed.
There is some evidence of children’s uniqueness and individuality being recognised and fostered.

**Actions advised**

- Practitioners are advised to create a relaxed, family-type meal time, which is conducive to small group conversation, the establishment of a healthy life-style and the promotion of well-being. Practitioners sitting, eating and conversing with the children during the meal will enable that process. This can also replace the review circle as children and practitioners can reflect during the meal-time instead.
- It is advised to review transition procedures, to ensure seamless transition times, which support positive learning experiences for the children in all instances. For example the children who are finished tidying up could go straight to wash hands, get their lunch bags and sit at their chosen place at the table.
- Management and practitioners are advised to review the daily routine to provide children with uninterrupted child initiated/led, exploratory, physically active free play periods. These can be interspersed with short adult initiated/led activities. These activities should be based on current themes and children’s interests, such as arts and crafts, experiments, making play dough, gardening, song, dance and drama. They can be offered in parallel to free play as a choice activity so that interested children can participate, while the others continue learning through play.
- To aid children’s sense of identity and belonging further, practitioners are advised to have children’s pictures beside their coat hook when they first start attending the setting. Displaying the daily routine in picture sequence at child level is further advised; this will support the children’s developing independence and sense of belonging within the setting.

**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, long term, medium term and short term curriculum is documented and implemented to support children’s learning and development. There is good evidence that practitioners have been involved in the development of an emergent, interest-based curriculum. Individual interests are noted on the back of the short-term planning sheets together with a reflection on how activities went.
- Individual ‘special books’ as the children call them, are compiled over the course of the year, containing a range of free-style art and template art. These are taken home several times during the year. Developmental check-lists are filled in and a development template is completed at the end of the year. The outcomes of these observations are discussed with the families twice a year.
- Some very good, high quality interactions with the children were observed.
- The indoor environment is well maintained, safe and inviting. It is purposefully structured to develop children’s curiosity, imagination and desire for exploration. The play value of the outdoor environment could be improved.
- The environment provides for a variety of types of play. These include construction play, dress-up, role-play, table-top activities and messy play.
- Diversity is recognised within an inclusive environment.

**Actions advised**

- Practitioners are advised to make the emergent curriculum visible on the weekly curriculum plans. These should be displayed in the hall for parents to see and so promote connection between home and the setting.
- Practitioners are advised to engage with the ‘interaction pillar’ as well as the ‘play pillar’ of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*. This engagement should focus on developing further the
range of interaction strategies and methodologies, which facilitate children’s learning experiences during free-play and activities. Active listening, asking open-ended questions, prompting, scaffolding, thus co-constructing knowledge together with the children is advised.

- All the materials need to be accessible and made available to the children throughout the session to provide inspiration, choice, agency and autonomy. Utilising the ‘environment pillar’ and completing the ‘environmental audits’ of the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will inform ideas to further develop the play value of the outdoor area.
- Practitioners are advised to provide time, space, resources and an atmosphere that encourages children’s playful exploration and interactive engagement.
- Currently, there is a very diverse group of children enrolled in the setting. Practitioners are advised to further develop strategies to affirm diversity in the style and pace of children’s learning and development. This could include encouraging children to share their experiences of their culture, fostering and inviting the use of children’s mother-tongue and offering resources and materials representing diversity.

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, interested and show enjoyment during most of the activities. The predominance of adult initiated/led activities that required sustained attention and concentration was challenging for many children.
- There is some evidence of children developing their capacity to play cooperatively in pairs and small groups.
- Children use both non-verbal and verbal communication skills to give and receive information, to negotiate, reflect and interpret experiences.
- There is some lovely evidence in children’s folders and in the group learning folder, of process art and children’s free expression of creativity.

Actions advised
- Children’s learning dispositions, such as initiative, self-reliance, self-confidence, resourcefulness, resilience and persistence need to be fostered to a greater extent throughout the morning.
- Practitioners are encouraged to provide greater opportunities to make decisions, use judgement and talk about themselves and their interests. This can be facilitated by inviting children to name their feelings, thoughts and ideas. Children should be further encouraged to follow their own lines of enquiry, by themselves, with their peers or with the help of a supportive practitioner.
- Practitioners are advised to create an atmosphere where children can engage in explorative, interactive free play and develop core learning dispositions and skills. These include problem solving, conflict resolution, negotiating, turn-taking, co-operating, and clarifying their thinking and feelings through imaginative play.
- Practitioners are advised to offer further scope for children to express their creativity, uniqueness and individuality through art and craft activities, mark-making, junk-art, messy-play, role-play, imaginative play and interactive exploration and extension of high quality stories.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- Management and practitioners have daily informal chats as well as more formal reflection and planning meetings twice a week over the short lunch break. Outcomes of those meetings are not documented.
• Practitioners use reflection sheets for the activities they provide, which is good practice.
• The manager uses a very good, effective, child-centred approach in her work with the children. This needs to be modelled and established throughout the setting.
• There is some evidence of staff and management availing of continuous professional development over the years.
• A broad variety of two-way channels of communication between the setting and the families has been effectively established.
• Effective settling-in procedures are in place to aid the sensitive transition of children into the setting. Good connections to the local primary schools are established, with principals and infant class teachers visiting the setting, talking to the practitioners to gain information about prospective pupils.

Actions advised

• Regular formal staff meetings are advised to provide opportunities for sharing ideas for the improvement of daily practice, policies and procedures. The outcomes of these meetings need to be recorded to allow for review of the agreed actions and their progress over time.
• Support and supervision of staff could be improved and regular staff appraisal meetings are advised.
• Management and practitioners are advised to engage with the first principle of Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and work with the ‘curriculum foundation’ of the online Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide. This is with a view towards clearly defining the ethos and mission statement of the setting.
• Effective strategies need to be put in place for professional reflection, mentoring and the participation of all staff members in continuous professional development.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is good.
### Summary of Overall Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report.

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

We have taken on board the recommendations of the inspection and have since broken up the tables at lunch time to create smaller groupings which aids conversation and reflection about the day.

We have implemented the environment pillar of Aistear, Siolta Practice guide and have further developed our outdoor play area.

We have posted our weekly curriculum on the notice board outside of the classroom.

Management and practitioners have begun documenting both our daily interactions and the outcomes of our meetings.

We also continue to participate in continuous professional development and training. Within the last year, we have completed courses in the following areas: Equality and Diversity, Child Protection, First Aid, and one of our staff members started the Leadership for Inclusion programme in September 2018.

We are always striving to enhance our learning and offer the best service possible to our children and their families.