EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Narnia Nursery School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Hazelwood Lodge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper Kilmacud Road</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dublin 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09DR0035</td>
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Date of Inspection: 22-11-2019
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 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>22-11-2019</th>
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| Inspection activities undertaken | • Review of relevant documents  
• Feedback to setting manager and practitioners |

CONTINUITY OF SETTING

Narnia Nursery School was founded in 1990 and is located in a residential area in South County Dublin. The setting provides full day and morning pre-school sessions for children from the local community and surrounding areas. Five practitioners, one of whom is made available through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), provide Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to thirty children participating in the ECCE programme. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report, and the response of the setting will 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 children’s learning and development is excellent.
• A very caring and welcoming atmosphere is evident. The practitioners greet children, parents and family members warmly. Time is allocated for meaningful, relaxed conversations and for the sharing of information. Children are greeted in both English and Spanish.
• Relationship are positive and kind. The practitioners relate to the children in a respectful, affirmative and responsive manner.
• The daily routine offers the children many positive learning experiences. There is time allocated for indoor and outdoor free-play periods and small and large-group activities. The children demonstrate familiarity with the documented routine and they referred to it on many occasions throughout the session.
• Transitions are well managed. The practitioners effectively use verbal reminders, the visual of the daily routine, and songs to indicate pending changes in activities. The children transition calmly from one activity to the next.
• Snack time is a relaxed social occasion. It is successfully used as an opportunity to promote healthy eating and the children’s independence. Children wash their own hands, help set up for meals, choose their snacks and pour their own drinks.
• A key-worker system is in place. Each practitioner has responsibility for observing and documenting learning for a small group of children and for sharing information on the children’s learning with parents.
• The practitioners use highly-effective behaviour management techniques to support the children’s self-regulation skills. These include the acknowledgement of children’s positive engagement in activities and the use of conflict resolution strategies to help the children to independently resolve minor social disagreements.
• The practitioners successfully support the children’s sense of identity and belonging. This is evident in their use of photographs, art displays, birthday charts and children’s ‘All about me’ information. Hand prints are also exhibited in the colours of the flags of the different countries of origin of children’s families. Children also have an opportunity to bring a teddy home for the weekend. Parents document teddy’s adventures in photographs and share it with the setting. The photographs are compiled and arranged in a book format.
• The practitioners invite parents to seasonal events, such as the end of year graduation, Christmas and fundraising activities. Parents are also welcomed to share their professional experiences and interests with the children. These visits are photographed and documented in book format. Invites are also extended to professionals working in the community to share their experiences. Visitors have included a musician, an archaeologist, a pet shop owner and members of the Gardai and St John’s ambulance.
AREA 2

QUALITY OF PROCESSES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The quality of processes to support children’s learning and development is very good.
- Provision for the children’s learning is informed by the HighScope curriculum and is aligned with Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. The practitioners spontaneously follow and photograph the children’s emergent interests.
- The practitioners engage in long-term, medium-term and short-term planning to support the children’s learning. Information on the children’s learning and development is recorded using broad-based observations, photographs and ‘Star Activity Books’. Information regarding the children’s next steps in learning is noted, although this information is not made obvious in short-term plans. The children’s individual ‘Activity Books’ containing samples of their work are compiled at the end of the year. Currently, children are not involved in this process.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are positive and reciprocal. The practitioners sit with the children at their physical level and support them to initiate and lead their own learning. The children actively seek out the practitioners for support.
- Play is central to the children’s learning. The children are given adequate time to play and to develop their interests and ideas. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-led activities.
- A bright, safe and secure indoor learning environment is divided into discrete interest areas. These include house, construction, table-top and book areas. During the inspection, the children had some access to freely-available sensory and creative equipment and resources.
- The children have daily opportunities to play outdoors and to engage with the natural environment.
- The practitioners support the children’s emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills through their modelling of language in everyday conversations and the use of books, stories and songs, some of which are sung in Spanish. Lámh, a manual sign system, is taught to all children and used to support children with communication difficulties.
- The practitioners adopt an inclusive approach to promoting children’s participation in the learning activities. This includes linking with parents, supporting referrals and establishing links with external agencies. They also provide one-to-one support for children and avail of support under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to review their approaches to observing, documenting and planning for the next steps in children’s learning. The ‘Planning and Assessment’ pillar of the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide will support this action. The practitioners are also advised to develop individual ‘Activity Books’ in collaboration with the children throughout the year.
- The practitioners are advised to develop clearly-defined, sensory and creative interest areas to support the children’s imagination, creativity and problem-solving skills.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of children’s learning experiences and achievement is very good.
- The children demonstrated enjoyment, motivated and high levels of concentration and persistence. Examples of children’s sustained interest in activities were noted during the mark-making and dough-making activities. In addition, a child demonstrated persistence and determination as he thoroughly dried the climbing frame.
- The children’s understanding of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and their self-regulation skills were very good, and they have begun to name and express their feelings. Many good friendships have been established and children are happy to play co-operatively in small groups and pairs.
- The children’s developing communication and social skills are commended. They confidently introduce themselves and can ask and answer questions in context. They display very good turn-taking and sharing skills; they regularly use ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ when requesting and receiving items from others. For example, a child asked ‘Can you pass me the water please?’ and said ‘Thank you’ when it was passed to her.
• The children’s skills and confidence in planning and initiating activities are commended. This is evident as they take part in plan-do-review activities and in their use of equipment independently.
• Many children demonstrated highly-developed imaginative skills. For example, some children became teachers and encouraged the practitioners to plan activities of interest. Another child referred to painting a brain as she painted a forehead on her portrait of a friend. On a small number of occasions, some of the children’s interests were not extended by the practitioners.
• The children are developing their fine motor and gross motor skills. This was evident in their effective use of table-top and mark-making equipment and when they engaged in outdoor activities, such as cycling and climbing.
• The children’s emergent literacy and numeracy skills are developing. The children have a good understanding of the meaning of symbols as a form of communication. They independently chose books, used mark-making materials and drew pictures to share their news with the group.

**Actions advised**
• The practitioners are advised to increase their use of open-ended questions to encourage the children’s higher-order thinking skills and to build on their interests and ideas.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

• The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
• The practitioners present as a professional team and a strong ethos of collaboration is evident.
• Regular meetings take place. During these meetings there are opportunities for the practitioners to share information and to discuss the day-to-day operation of the setting. Time is also provided to enable practitioners to plan for and document the children’s learning. An induction programme is in place for new practitioners, and the manager has recently introduced individual supervision meetings for all staff.
• The manager and practitioners demonstrate a very good awareness of the importance of self-review and reflection and use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to support this practice.
• There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for practitioners. All practitioners had an opportunity to lead learning at different stages during the session. The role of the AIM support person is currently not used in an integrated way.
• The practitioners have established links with the local county childcare committee, Early Childhood Ireland and support services for external advice, support and training. The management team supports and facilitates opportunities for practitioners to participate in continuing professional development and training.
• The practitioners have established effective channels of communication with parents. Parents are consulted on their children’s learning and development through daily conversations, the ‘Star Activity Books’. Formal parent meetings are held at the request of parents. Other information, including the setting’s policies and procedures, is shared through the parents’ handbook, email, information evenings and newsletters.
• An effective settling-in policy supports the children’s transition into the setting. Parents and children are invited to visit and a phased settling-in approach helps the children to settle.
• The practitioners prepare the children for primary school through discussions and planned activities. Information on the local schools is shared with parents and they are also encouraged to attend a talk on transitions given by the local childcare committee. The National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) *Mo Scéal* resources are used to share information with the children’s schools.

**Actions advised**
• The practitioners are advised to review and to integrate further the role of the AIM support practitioner.
• To enhance the current sharing of information with parents, the practitioners are advised to offer formal meetings for all parents to share and receive information on their children’s learning and development.
### 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>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children's learning and development</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
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### Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Description</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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

We feel our setting is well represented in the report. Recognition of our hard work and the quality of care we provide for the children is greatly received. The report has given us guidance and clear ideas on how to progress.

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

- It was refreshing to hear the praise for our observations. We have taking on board the constructive feedback regarding the children’s individual ‘special books’ we plan to do for the children.
- We are happy to work on our sensory and creative areas, as well as focus on the use of more open-ended questions.
- We found the information regarding the role of the AIM support practitioner extremely helpful and have implemented changes to the way we operate the role.
- We have restricted time to offer 1:1 meetings for all our 120+ families. However, we are always communicating with our families both face to face and via email, and are readily available to meet with any family should the need arise. Perhaps in the future this could be reviewed as it is something we would love to have time to do.