

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<b>Setting Name</b>	Busy Kids Crèche
<b>Setting Address</b>	Hansted Road Adamstown Lucan County Dublin
<b>DCYA number</b>	09DS0067

**Date of Inspection: 16-10-2019**



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## **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 inspectors 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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	16-10-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with practitioners from each learning room</li> <li>• Review of relevant documents</li> <li>• Feedback to area manager, setting manager assistant manager and practitioners</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with the settings area manager and assistant manager</li> <li>• Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</li> <li>• Interaction with children during a number of sessions</li> </ul>	

### CONTEXT OF SETTING

Busy Kids Crèche Lucan, was established in 2003. It is one of a group of four privately-owned settings. The setting is located in a purpose-built facility in a residential area in Adamstown, Lucan. It provides after-school, full-day and part-time care, and four morning sessions for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. During the inspection, there were ten practitioners, three of whom are support practitioners employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), and seventy-seven children in attendance in the four rooms. Many of the children are enrolled in their first and second years of the ECCE programme and English is an additional language for a significant number of the children. 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 the children's learning and development is good.
- A friendly atmosphere is evident in the setting. The morning open-door policy supports the informal sharing of information between the parents, family members and the practitioners.
- The daily routine includes time for the children to engage in free play, large-group activities and outdoor play. The routine was visually displayed for children in some of the learning rooms. During the inspection, an adequate period of time was not consistently dedicated to free play across all of the learning rooms. The duration of large-group time and circle-time activities was overly long in some instances for the children's current stages of development and attention levels.
- There was some valuable use of strategies, such as verbal reminders and song-singing, to support the children's awareness and management of transitions between activities. A small number of children were unsure of the daily sequence of events and found the movement between activities difficult.
- Snack time is a pleasant occasion; the children sit together and chat socially with their peers. During this time the practitioners move around the room; they help children to open their lunch boxes and maintain a written record of what each child eats.
- Many children perform their personal care routines, such as washing their hands, preparing for snack time and putting on and taking off their coats and shoes, with little assistance.
- Relationships between practitioners and the children are respectful and kind. A key-worker system is in place. Each key worker has responsibility for observing and documenting the learning of a small group of children. The room lead has responsibility for planning the next steps in all children's learning.
- The children's uniqueness is represented in the displays of birthday charts, family walls, and their handprints, art work and photographs. Parents are invited into the setting for the end-of-year graduation, Christmas festivities and fundraising activities. A small number of the older children visit the playground on occasion. Overall, opportunities to build children's awareness of the local and wider community are limited.

#### *Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to develop an agreed approach to the organisation of the daily routine and the management of transitions in all of the rooms. In doing so, practitioners are advised to increase the duration of free-play time to at least one hour per day and to decrease the time allocated to circle time. In addition, the use of visual displays of the routine, and audio and visual strategies to give advance notice to children of the movement between activities is advised.
- The practitioners are advised to optimise the use of the key person approach in undertaking curriculum planning for small groups of children, in the sharing of information with parents and in the organisation of small-group activities, such as snack time, circle time and story time.
- The practitioners are advised to enhance the connections between the pre-school and the local community. This could include extending invites to parents and members of the local community to share their expertise and experiences with the children.

## **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 fair.
- A play-based curriculum, with links to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*, is implemented in the setting. The practitioners spontaneously follow the children's interests during activities.
- The lead practitioners engage in medium-term and short-term planning to support the children's learning. Curriculum planning is based on themes, with some weekly activities planned around the children's interests.
- The children's learning and development are recorded through the use of monthly observations, photographs, some anecdotal notes and group learner journals. A broad-based reference to the next steps in children's learning is recorded in the observations. Links between this information and the planned activities are not explicitly made obvious in planning documentation.
- During the inspection, the practitioners sat and engaged with the children during their self-selected, table-top activities. Overall, there were a small number of examples of the practitioners' scaffolding and extending of the children's learning and there were some missed opportunities to support peer interactions and the children's thinking skills.
- The indoor and outdoor areas offer opportunities for the children to engage in a range of self-chosen, gross motor and fine motor activities. The provision for natural, sensory and creative activities varied across the learning rooms. Children have daily access to two outdoor areas where they engage in gross-motor activities, such as climbing, cycling and running. There are plans in place to develop the outdoor areas. Opportunities for the children to engage with open-ended play resources and materials were limited.
- The practitioners view play as central to the children's learning. During the inspection, some of the adult-led activities were overly directed and prescriptive.
- The ethos of the setting is one of inclusiveness. The practitioners' link with parents and external support agencies to support the children's additional needs and they also avail of support under AIM. At the time of inspection, there were no individual learning plans in place to support children with learning needs.

#### *Actions advised*

- Practitioners are advised to review their approach to curriculum planning and the documentation of children's learning. In doing so, their observations should place additional emphasis on planning for the next steps in children's learning and this information should then be used to inform short-term plans. The practitioners are also advised to develop individual learning journals, in collaboration with the children. The 'Planning and Assessment' pillar in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will be a useful resource to support this action.
- The practitioners are advised to build on their interactions skills and to be more consistent in their approaches to playfully engaging with the children during pretend-play activities. It is also advised that during adult-led activities the practitioners provide the children with more autonomy over their use of materials. This will support the promotion of children's creative and exploration skills.

- To support the children to develop their ideas and higher-order thinking, the practitioners are advised to use more open-ended questions, such as ‘Why?’ and ‘How?’ to scaffold and extend children’s learning.
- The practitioners are advised to undertake an audit of the environments using the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to guide the further development of the outdoor play area and to enhance the indoor play areas.
- The practitioners are advised to contact the local county childcare committee to seek advice, training and support in relation to the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). This will help to build the practitioners’ capacity in relation the creation of individual learning plans and the use of AIM support in the learning environments.

### AREA 3

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

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- In general, the children appeared happy and comfortable in their surroundings. They demonstrated good levels of engagement, concentration and persistence. This was evident as they actively engaged and participated in both self-chosen and adult-led activities.
- In the main, children’s social skills and their sense of self are developing well. For a small number of children, their ability to play co-operatively, to positively engage with their peers and to express their opinions and feelings are in the early stages of development. As a result, these children demonstrated lower levels of engagement in learning.
- The children are developing an awareness and appreciation of diversity and difference. Diversity is promoted through the use of a small number of books, flags and welcoming words. The cultural diversity of the full range of children and their families is not fully reflected in the environment.
- The children display confidence in their gross-motor and fine-motor abilities. They confidently engaged in mark-making and table-top activities, and independently climbed and balanced on the climbing apparatus in the outdoor area.
- A small number of children displayed natural curiosity as they explored the vegetables and searched for spiders. There were missed opportunities by practitioners to explore and extend these interests with the children.
- Some children were happy to share their experience and achievements with others; during the inspection, opportunities for them to share information with the practitioners and the wider group of children were limited.
- Many children demonstrate strengths in the development of their emergent literacy and numeracy skills. Some demonstrated an interest in mark-making, while others showed an understanding of early mathematics. There is potential to provide additional opportunities for the children to further develop these skills.

#### *Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to place a greater focus on providing encouragement, guidance and affirmation for the children regarding their positive behaviour, including their sharing and turn-taking skills. The practitioners are also advised to place a stronger emphases on supporting the children’s emotional development through their recognition and naming of children’s emotions, acknowledging their successes and providing opportunities for them to share their learning with the whole group.
- The practitioners are advised to further support the children’s awareness and appreciation of the range of cultural diversity in the setting. In so doing, practitioners are advised to make visible all children’s home languages, and to provide additional resources and books that represent all children’s cultures.
- To enhance the children’s language development and pre-literacy and numeracy skills, the practitioners are advised to more regularly model language in general conversations and to use visual props for children for whom English is an additional language and children who experience communication difficulties. It is further advised that a broader range of real-life equipment, such as rulers, measuring tapes and weighing scales, and mark-making materials are made available to the children.

## AREA 4

### QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is fair.
- A professional ethos is evident in the setting. During the inspection, relationships between the practitioners and the management team were positive. There were limited opportunities for whole-staff team meetings and supervision and support meetings with individual practitioners were not facilitated on a regular basis.
- There is clarity around the roles and responsibilities of practitioners and each practitioner had opportunities to lead learning during the sessions. Currently, opportunities are not provided for all practitioners to contribute to planning for the next steps in children's learning or to formally review or reflect on practice. A Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) co-ordinator has yet to be appointed.
- The practitioners have established links with the local childcare committee for support and training and have previously received some support through the Better Start Mentoring programme. Opportunities exist to reengage with support from Better Start. From time-to-time, the practitioners participate in mandatory and accredited training and continuing professional development (CPD) to support children's learning and development.
- The setting use a range of strategies to communicate with parents. These include, seeking the parents' views through the use of a suggestion box, informal chats, newsletters and noticeboards. Information is also shared through the parents' handbook, social media and on the setting's website. The practitioners' observations on the children's learning and development are not regularly shared with parents.
- Transitions into the setting are managed well. 'All About Me' information is sought for each child upon registration. Parents are encouraged to settle their children into the setting on a phased-in basis. A transition policy is not in place and links with local primary schools have not been established to support the children's transition. The practitioners prepare the children for primary school through the use of discussions.

#### *Actions advised*

- The management team is advised to introduce regular whole-staff team meetings and individual supervision opportunities for all practitioners; this will support the development of professional collaborative planning and evaluation practices and leadership for learning
- The management team and practitioners are advised to use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to support their self-review and reflections on practice. They are also advised to define the roles of the LINC co-ordinator and AIM support practitioners.
- The practitioners are advised to establish formal meetings with all parents in order to facilitate the sharing of information about the children's learning and development.
- The practitioners are advised to develop a transitions policy to support the children in moving to junior infants in primary school. The establishment of formal links with the local primary school is also advised. The practitioners are advised to refer to the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) *Mo Scéal* resources and the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* pillar on 'Transitions' to support the implementation of this action advised.
- The management of the setting is advised to seek the support of Better Start the National Early Years Quality Development Service to assist the members of the team in the implementation of the actions advised in this report.

### Summary of Overall Inspection

<b>Area</b>	<b>Quality Level</b>
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	<b>Good</b>
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	<b>Fair</b>
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	<b>Good</b>
Quality of management and leadership for learning	<b>Fair</b>

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

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

# APPENDIX

## SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

### ***Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report***

- The Management and team from Busy Kids were satisfied with our first Early Years Inspection experience.
- In the next few months we will focus on improving our education practice as we set about to implement the recommended actions for each of the four Areas in the 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.***

- Dividing the children into smaller groups at circle time and for small group activities has made a very positive difference. This has also allowed us to develop the key person approach. Key practitioner invite their children for small group work or small circle time. Each key practitioner member has the opportunity to do this throughout the week. Children have the opportunity to participate at any time with any key practitioner. For example, choice is given and if a child chooses not to participate with the key staff, they are invited for the next one with the other staff.
- We have begun to reflect on the daily routine and the management of transitions in all of the rooms. We have extended the time allocated for free play and in doing so we have improved the balance between adult initiated and child led emergent interests.
- Our teams have begun to use the self-reflective audit tools using the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide to guide them further.
- In our staff meetings we hope to work together as a team to review the development of the curriculum with the help of the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide.
- We plan to use Aistear to inform our curriculum and to incorporate children's varying interests into our planning. This will also allow us to further develop the emergent curriculum. We will engage with our team at staff meetings to explore actions advised to enhance children's learning and development.
- We plan on doing a review on the outdoor space and hope to use a holistic approach in order to help with each child's overall development. Some examples include, providing loose parts and open ended resources for use to enhance a play based emergent outdoor environment.
- We will further develop the transitions policy to include transitions from preschool to primary school.
- Management plan to follow up with Better Start Quality Development Service for support on recommendations from the report.