

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Daisy Chain Montessori and Childcare Ltd
Setting Address	Fortfield Square College Drive Terenure Dublin 6 D6W DH33
DCYA number	09DS0173

Date of Inspection: 25-11-2019



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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 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

Date of inspection	25-11-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Feedback to manager and practitioners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with management• Observation of interactions during two sessions• Interaction with children	

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Daisy Chain Montessori and Childcare is one of four privately-owned and managed settings. The setting was established in 2006 and is located in Terenure, Dublin 6. It provides full time, part-time and sessional care and education to children enrolled in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the morning of the inspection, twenty-five children and three practitioners were present in the two sessions. 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 excellent.
- The practitioners have created a friendly and caring atmosphere. There is an open-door policy and parents are welcomed in the setting; the practitioners know the children and their families well and relationships are positive and sensitive.
- A key person approach is in operation. Each key practitioner has responsibility for observing and documenting learning for a small group of children and for sharing information on their learning with parents.
- The documented daily routine includes time for the children to engage in a range of activities. These include circle time, small group activities, story time and outdoor play; an ample period of time is allocated for children's engagement with Montessori materials and free-play activities. The children showed familiarity with the daily sequence of events. For example, a child informed his friends that he would 'have snack and then go home' when he had finished playing with the sand.
- Snack time is a positive learning experience for the children. In preparation for snack, some children and a practitioner set the table with place mats and plates, and the assigned helpers distribute the lunch boxes. The practitioners sit and engage in many conversations with the children during this time.
- Transitions between the daily activities are smooth and calm; the practitioners use advanced notice, a timer and a bell to support the children's highly-effective management of transitions between activities.
- The practitioners successfully use behaviour management techniques, such as calm tones and constructive commentary and praise, to promote and encourage the children's positive behaviour and participation in activities. A 'Buddy system' is also in place to support children in building friendships with their peers.
- The practitioners very effectively nurture the children's sense of identity and belonging. This is achieved through the use of songs and rhymes, photographs and art-work displays, helper and birthday charts, and a family tree. Children are also encouraged to bring items from home for show and tell. The display of both photographs and self-drawn portraits of all children is commended. The portraits are completed in September and again in June and are used to support children's sense of themselves.

- The practitioners successfully promote diversity and provide opportunities for the involvement of community and families in the setting. Parents are invited to festival and sports day events and they are encouraged to share their interests, cultural experiences and information with the children. For example, a parent who is a musician has played for the children, and people working in the locality, such as the lollipop man and the local *An Garda*, have visited. The children also go on outings and walks around the locality.

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 practitioners are in the process of developing an emergent, play-based curriculum informed by the Montessori Method of education, with links to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- The practitioners engage in long-term, medium-term and short-term planning. Planning is predominantly thematic, based around Montessori work, seasonal events and general learning goals.
- Information on the children's learning and development is gathered through anecdotal notes, observations and checklists. Photographs and samples of the children's work are gathered in group and individual learning journals.
- The practitioners regularly use many suitable strategies to scaffold and extend children's learning. They engage with children at their physical level, and spontaneously follow their interests. They use soft and encouraging tones, some open-ended questions and offer ongoing support as they respond to their needs.
- The environment is well maintained, safe and inviting. The children have daily access to the outdoor play area where they have opportunities to develop their gross motor skills. The indoor environment is set out into discrete areas of interest. These include sensory and creative activities and well-resourced Montessori, table-top, construction and pretend play areas.
- The practitioners' use of a timer to afford opportunities for all children to engage with sensory and creative activities limits their sustained engagement and completion of all activities.
- The practitioners effectively foster the children's emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills. This is achieved through the print-rich environment and the use of songs, rhymes, books, Montessori materials and a range of mark-making resources.
- The practitioners promote an inclusive environment. They link closely with parents and external agencies to support children with additional needs and they have availed of support under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are completed for all children with additional needs.

Actions advised

- To support the advancement of an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum, the practitioners are advised to use their recorded information on the children's interests and the next steps in their learning to inform the short-term plans. The use of the 'Planning and Assessment' pillar in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will assist in the implementation of this action.
- The practitioners are advised to make freely available a wider variety of sensory and creative resources in the indoor and outdoor environments. In addition, they are advised to discontinue the use of a timer to regulate the amount of time children may engage in these activities.

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's sense of well-being is evident in their high levels of engagement, confidence and enjoyment in their learning.
- The children are persistent and confident in making decisions and show good initiative in choosing activities of interest. During free play, they actively explored and engaged in many Montessori, table-top, mark-making, sensory and creative activities; their engagement in socio-dramatic play was limited.
- The children display effective social and communication skills. Many demonstrate the ability to play together and to ask for help as required. Throughout the session, as the children shared their successes and engaged in open discussions, the practitioners made notes of this information.
- The children display positive behaviour and age-appropriate self-regulation skills; they co-operate well with the practitioners and many children are confident in expressing their feelings.
- The children demonstrate the ability to take care of their own personal and care needs. They use the toilet and wash their hands independently and are happy to take on helper roles.
- Some children demonstrated their capacity to solve problems independently. For example, a child spilled a glass of water; she got a tissue and successfully and cleaned the spill.
- The children's fine and gross motor skills are developing well. They confidently cycled bikes, climbed and completed Montessori activities, such as pouring, filling and spooning, with precision.
- The children's sense of self is emerging. They confidently introduce themselves and discuss their families, likes and dislikes on many occasions.
- Children show a very good early understanding of numeracy and problem-solving abilities. For example, a number of children named and manipulated shapes as they made boats.
- The children's interest in technology is emerging. For example, a child asked for the camera to take a photograph of his work and then proceeded to also take pictures of his friends.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to encourage the children to initiate and self-direct their learning through the use of more open-ended, socio-dramatic during the ECCE hours. This can be achieved by encouraging the children's pretend play through playful engagement with them.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- There is a professional atmosphere and a positive sense of team spirit. The manager and practitioners work in partnership with each other and have developed strong relationships. There is clarity around the practitioners' roles and responsibilities and all have opportunities throughout the day to lead learning.
- The practitioners' move from a predominately Montessori-based curriculum to a more play-based approach is strongly evident in practice. The owner ensures the staff are actively involved in all policy changes.
- Regular meetings and daily discussions are used as opportunities to reflect on practice and to plan and discuss issues and concerns. The practitioners actively use the resources in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*.
- The manager has established links with St Nicolas Montessori, the local childcare committee, Early Childhood Ireland and Barnardos for external support and training. The owner and practitioners also engage with other early years professionals through their affiliation with network groups.

- The owner and practitioners are committed to improving their skills. The owner has completed a Train the Trainer course and the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) in Early Years programme. Information obtained from courses is used to provide in-house training for the practitioners. All practitioners are encouraged to share information from training courses they attend with the full group.
- Significant channels of communication have been established with parents. Information on the children's learning and development is regularly shared both formally and informally during daily chats, open nights, and at parents' meetings. Information is also communicated through the parents' handbook, newsletters, phone calls and social media. Policies and procedures are translated for parents for whom English is a second language.
- The Manager and practitioners have established a consistent approach to settling children into the setting. They obtain 'All About Me' information on each child from parents before children enrol. A phased, settling-in period is facilitated where parents are welcome to stay with their children until they are fully settled. Photographs of new children are displayed and each child's key worker is introduced to his/her parent. The same procedure is followed when children are moving between groups within the setting.
- To support the children's transition to primary school, the practitioners engage them in group discussions and stories regarding the move, and uniforms are placed in the dress-up area. The practitioners have established very good links with the local primary school. To support the sharing of information on the children's learning the *Mo Scéal* documents developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) were introduced last year.

Summary of Overall Inspection

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Excellent
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	Very Good
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	Very Good
Quality of management and leadership for learning	Excellent

Language used in Early-Years Education 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.