

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

**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<b>Setting Name</b>	Dunard Community Pre-School
<b>Setting Address</b>	St Gabriel's National School Cowper Street D07 CX50 Dublin 7
<b>DCYA number</b>	09DY0004

**Date of Inspection: 13-01-2020**



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agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills

## **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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	13-01-2020
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with setting manager and practitioners</li><li>• Meeting with member of board of directors and manager</li><li>• Observation of interactions during a session</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interaction with children</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Feedback to setting manager and practitioners</li></ul>

### CONTEXT OF SETTING

Dunard Community Pre-school is a community-based setting located in a primary school in Dublin 7. It was established over thirty years ago. The setting provides a pre-school session for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, nineteen children, two practitioners, one of whom is the manager, and an assistant employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), were in attendance. An assistant employed under a community employment programme was also present. 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 good.
- The practitioners have created a pleasant and caring atmosphere. The children and their parents are warmly welcomed as they arrive in the setting.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are respectful. The children are secure in these positive relationships and they enthusiastically share their interests with the practitioners. A key person approach has yet to be implemented. This approach is one in which each practitioner develops a secure relationship with a small group of children and acts as a link between the pre-school and the parents of these children.
- The daily routine consists of an effective balance of small-group and large-group activities and children make independent decisions in their learning.
- The children are aware of the sequence of the daily activities. The practitioners use some props to inform children of impending changes in activities. During a few transitions, a small number of children experienced periods of inactivity as they waited for the next activity to begin; the visual schedule was not used to promote their awareness of changes in the routine.
- The practitioners provide the children with sensitive encouragement and meaningful praise for their efforts in activities.
- The practitioners promote children's self-care and self-help skills. On arrival, children hang up their coats, self-register and put their lunches away.
- The practitioners use a small amount of images to help foster each child's sense of identity and belonging. These include the family wall and displays of the children's achievements. There is limited representation of people and places from the local community to support children's sense of identity and belonging.

#### *Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to implement a key person approach. The tip-sheet 'Using a Key Person Approach' in the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* will support the implementation of this action.
- The practitioners are advised to develop further strategies to promote children's engagement and learning during transitions. To this end, the use of a broader range of strategies, including playful games, action songs, rhymes and the use of a visual schedule, may be of benefit.
- The practitioners are advised to create displays of people and places in the community. These can be used as resources during activities to help raise children's awareness of people and places of interest in 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 good.
- The play-based curriculum is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Planning for children's learning is predominantly thematic and based on the practitioners' ideas. The practitioners have yet to use the children's emergent interests to inform their short-term plans. At the time of the inspection, the setting's curriculum statement did not reflect the programme on offer.
- The practitioners conduct termly checklists and have recently commenced the use of observations linked to the themes of *Aistear* to record children's progress and development. They compile samples of children's artwork and photographs of their engagement in activities into individual and group learning books. The findings from these assessments approaches are not used to inform the next stages in children's learning.
- During the inspection, there were a number of occasions when the practitioners' interactions supported and encouraged children in their learning. As they sat alongside the children, they used a small number of open-ended questions to extend their thought processes and learning.
- The practitioners demonstrate a heightened awareness of the importance of providing activities to promote children's physical development. Children have access to an outdoor area, as well as the school hall, where they engage in active physical play.
- The indoor learning environment contains a range of interest areas. The majority of materials are easily assessable and available for children to explore. There is a small variety of real and open-ended materials to help children move their play to a higher level of learning.
- The practitioners effectively support and foster children's early language and literacy development. Throughout the session, they skilfully used rhymes, songs and everyday conversations to encourage children's language use. There is a print-rich environment and a good variety of freely available and accessible books for children to enjoy.
- The practitioners promote an inclusive learning environment. They have accessed support through AIM to promote children's participation in the ECCE programme. During the inspection, they sensitively encouraged children's involvement in activities, particularly during circle time.

#### *Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to assist them in the development of a curriculum statement and policy in line with the ethos of the setting and the programme on offer.
- The practitioners are advised to extend their planning and assessment approaches. In so doing, the inclusion of the children's emergent interests, learning dispositions and their individual needs in the short-term plans is advised. In addition, an increase in the frequency and breadth of their assessments is advised.
- The practitioners are advised to use the audit tool in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to review and enhance the availability and range of real and open-ended materials. This will help children to engage in play that reflects their lives at home.
- The practitioners are advised to review their roles as play partners with the children and to promote and extend their learning through the regular use of thought-provoking and open-ended questions and probing commentary.

### AREA 3

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

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children demonstrate interest, fun and enjoyment in their learning. Some children display positive learning dispositions, such as persistence and resilience. This was particularly evident during their enthusiastic participation at circle time.
- Many children are developing appropriate social and emotional skills, such as relationship building, turn taking and problem solving. They co-operated and collaborated as they played in pairs and in small groups. A few children required the practitioners' support to resolve minor disagreements.
- Many children demonstrate positive self-esteem and view themselves as competent learners. On many occasions, they experienced success during activities. A few children excitedly shared their achievements with others. At the time of the inspection, formal opportunities for children to review their learning with others were not a regular feature of the ECCE programme.
- The children have some opportunities to explore and experiment in their learning. Children were observed discussing their heart rates and checking how fast their hearts were beating after an action song. There is potential to build on these experiences and to extend their natural curiosity.
- Throughout the pre-school year, special events are facilitated to help raise children's awareness of others in the community. These events include visits from the lollipop lady and the children's participation in a community event at Christmas.
- The children have ample opportunities to develop their gross and fine motor skills during meaningful learning experiences. For example, they engaged enthusiastically in manipulative play and demonstrated high levels of fun in their physical play.
- During the inspection, there were a few instances when children engaged in everyday conversations with the practitioners; they discussed shapes, their ages and compared their heights. These conversations support children's awareness of early mathematical language and concepts.

#### *Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to provide opportunities for children to think about and reflect on their learning. This could be achieved through small-group discussions facilitated by key practitioners and regular opportunities for children to review their individual and the group learning books.
- The practitioners are advised to provide more opportunities for children to explore and experiment. This could be facilitated through planned learning experiences that nurture their inquisitiveness, their sense of enquiry and their exploration of a broader range of sensorial and natural materials.
- The practitioners are advised to develop further strategies to support children to independently deal with minor social disagreements.

## AREA 4

### QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork and co-operation among the practitioners. Their commitment to the children and the families who attend the setting was clearly evident.
- The practitioners hold daily and weekly informal discussions on the learning activities and the children's progress. Formal self-review and professional reflection are not a regular feature of the practitioners' practice.
- Practitioners participate in regulatory and accredited training. A practitioner is currently participating in the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) programme and a practitioner is undertaking further accredited training in the early years.
- Currently, formal support and supervision meetings for practitioners are not facilitated.
- The practitioners exchange information on the children's learning with parents on a daily basis. In addition, a social media application is used to update parents on practical issues. Plans are in place to implement formal meetings between the practitioners and parents to discuss their child's progress. The children's individual learning books are sent home throughout the pre-school year. The parents' handbook does not include information on the curriculum.
- The practitioners have established strong links with staff of the primary school in which the setting is situated. The children are invited to school events and the principal of the school visits children in the pre-school room. With parents' permission, the practitioners complete an information sheet on the children as learners which is shared with the teacher of junior infants.

#### *Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to develop formal review and reflective practices. The self-evaluation tools in this guide will help them to identify effective practice and areas in need of improvement so as to enhance children's learning and development.
- The board of management and the manager are advised to introduce regular, formal support and supervision meetings. These meetings can be used to review the practitioners' roles and responsibilities with regard to the key person approach and their everyday practices in relation to educational activities.
- The practitioners are advised to review the parents' handbook to include updated information on the curriculum. This will increase parents' awareness of their child's learning.
- The practitioners are advised to use the information and the transition template from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment *Mo Scéal* transition templates to assist them in 'telling the story' of the children as learners. This resource can be used to promote positive transitions and continuity of learning experiences for children between the setting and primary schools.

### 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>Good</b>
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	<b>Good</b>
Quality of management and leadership for learning	<b>Good</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 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.***

**Area 1:**

- We now ring the bell and set a five minute timer that the children can all clearly see. This is to signal a change in activity. We also have a visible 'what we are doing now' board with pictures that we change throughout the day. We have added a book that includes places in the community and we are currently making a people in the community book. This is located in our library.

**Area 2:**

- We use more open ended questions and have these displayed around the room for staff. We have discarded themes and are now following the children's lead. We have welcomed parent's participation in these activities. We had a restaurant event and the parents made a dish with the children at home. These were all taste tested at lunch in 'our restaurant'. This is something that we will continue to do to help with linking children's home life and school.

**Area 3:**

- We have given the children tools to resolve their own conflict. This has been facilitated through timers to help with sharing and conflict over toys. We only step in as a last resort. As already mentioned we now help to create planned learning opportunities with the children.

**Area 4:**

- Management has printed out and researched more on the Aistear Practice Guide Templates as per the recommendations and plan to implement them into daily/weekly practice.