

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

**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<b>Setting Name</b>	Fairview Crèche and Montessori
<b>Setting Address</b>	22 Addison Rd Fairview D03V308 Dublin 3
<b>DCYA number</b>	09DY0065

**Date of Inspection: 28-01-2020**



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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>	28-01-2020
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interaction with children</li> <li>• Review of relevant documents</li> <li>• Feedback to setting manager and a practitioner</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with setting manager and a practitioner</li> <li>• Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</li> </ul>	

### CONTEXT OF SETTING

Fairview Crèche and Montessori is a private setting in Fairview, Dublin 3. It provides full time and part-time care, and two morning pre-school sessions for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, there were sixteen children and three practitioners present, including a practitioner employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). 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.
- There is a pleasant and warm atmosphere in Fairview Crèche and Montessori. The practitioners effectively use gentle and friendly tones in their exchanges with the children.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are positive and respectful. The children are secure in these relationships and engage enthusiastically in spontaneous conversations with the practitioners about their lives. The practitioners use elements of a key person approach. 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 includes ample opportunities for children to make independent choices in their learning. The practitioners acknowledge and support these decisions. During the inspection, the children participated in predominantly child-initiated activities. There were a small amount of adult-initiated, large-group activities, including circle time and snack time.
- The practitioners use verbal reminders to inform children of pending changes in activities. On the day of the inspection, some transitions were overly long and a small number of children became disengaged.
- On many occasions, the practitioners were positive and encouraging of the children for their efforts in activities.
- The practitioners use some good strategies to foster children's sense of identity and belonging. These include the use of images, such as the family wall in one of the pre-school rooms, the birthday balloons and displays of the children's achievements.

#### *Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to review the organisation of the daily routine to ensure there is a greater balance between child-initiated and adult-initiated activities and to provide additional time for small-group learning experiences. The provision of learning experiences facilitated by the key person that focus on the children's individual interests will assist in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to optimise the use of transition times as learning opportunities for the children. To this end, the more regular use of songs, rhymes and playful activities during these times may be of benefit. It is further advised that practitioners create a visual schedule to help children to predict the sequence of events.
- The practitioners are advised to create additional displays in the pre-school rooms that foster the children's sense of identity and belonging. These may include images of the children and their families and displays of people and places of interest in the locality. These can be used as resources during activities to strengthen the children's understanding of the local community.

## 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.
- Provision is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. The practitioners are in the early stages of implementing a blend of a play-based curriculum and the Montessori approach to early education.
- Long-term plans are similar in both sessions. They incorporate themes, seasonal events and the practitioner's ideas. The children's emergent interests are not used to inform the brief short-term plans.
- The practitioners use a small number of assessment methods to record the children's learning and development. These include development checklists and learning stories linked to the themes of *Aistear*.
- The practitioners promote the children's early language and literacy skills; during the inspection, there were a small number of activities provided to support these evolving skills. These included a story-telling activity and spontaneous conversations when the practitioners wove extended vocabulary into their discussions with the children. There is potential to build on these effective experiences.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are positive and meaningful. During the sessions, there were many occasions when the practitioners progressed children's thinking and their interests in learning. There were a small number of instances when the practitioners used more closed and testing questions as they worked alongside the children.
- The children have regular access to an outdoor area; it offers a variety of opportunities to support their physical play and elements of socio-dramatic play.
- The indoor learning environments are inviting and well-maintained. There is a good range of easy accessible Montessori and manipulative materials for children to enjoy. The current layout of the rooms and the availability of materials and resources for free-play time restrict children's participation in meaningful, socio-dramatic play and imaginative play experiences.
- The children are learning in an inclusive learning environment, the practitioners have accessed support through the AIM to support children's participation in the ECCE Programme.

#### *Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to further develop their approaches to planning and assessment to ensure that these practices are more aligned with *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. 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 to assessment is advised. The use of the templates and advice in the 'Planning and Assessing' pillar of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will support the implementation of this action.
- The practitioners are advised to use the audit tool in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to guide the development of the learning environments. The provision of appropriately laid out and resourced areas that are fully accessible to children and contain a greater variety of real, natural and open-ended materials is advised.
- The practitioners are advised to build on their use of more open-ended and probing questions to extend and deepen children's thinking and learning skills.
- The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities for children to participate in language-enriching activities. More regular story-telling, rhyming and singing activities will assist in this regard.

### 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 and fun in their learning. During the inspection, they were eager and keen as they participated in activities, such as the sensorial activity and the small construction play activity.
- The children experience achievement and success in their learning. During the inspection, children confidently shared their accomplishments with the practitioners and their peers. For example, a child enthusiastically informed a practitioner that she had completed a 'difficult puzzle'. The practitioner's effective acknowledgement of this achievement supported the child to see herself as a competent learner.
- Children are provided with opportunities to express their creativity. They participated in mark-making activities and explored a small amount of malleable materials. The practitioners include the children's comments on their creations and achievements.
- The children are developing positive social skills and they are learning to build relationships with others. On many occasions, the children took turns, co-operated and collaborated with their peers. A few children required the support of practitioners to help them to resolve minor social disagreements.
- A number of children are capable of making connections with their prior learning experiences. For example a few children recalled that the role of a scarecrow was to scare the bird away; they had previously participated in a learning activity about spring, and birds eating seeds and crops.
- Occasionally, the practitioners facilitate visits from members of the local community to support children to develop an awareness of others in the community.
- The children are provided with some opportunities to explore and discuss the natural environment. During the inspection, there was an animated discussion between a few children and practitioners about which parts of the country had snow. There is potential to build on these experiences to strengthen children's awareness of their world.

#### *Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to provide children with more opportunities to explore and experiment. This could be facilitated through small-group learning experiences led by the key practitioners that build on their inquisitiveness and their sense of enquiry.
- The practitioners are advised to develop further strategies to support children's awareness and independent management of their self-regulation skills.
- The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities for children to maximise their awareness of their local community and the roles of different people within the community.

## AREA 4

### QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- There is a sense of teamwork and collaboration between the manager and the practitioners. Their commitment to the children and the families who attend the setting was positively noted.
- The practitioners have recently commenced formal planning strategies. Currently, there are no opportunities for the manager and practitioners to formally reflect on and review their practice.
- Significant importance is placed on continuing professional development. The practitioners have attended a variety of training programmes. These include the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) programme, Hanen Teacher Talk, and training on sensorial play facilitated through their local county childcare committee. In addition, plans are in place to facilitate an in-house training session on Lámh, the Irish Sign Communication System.
- A number of good strategies are used to share information on children's learning with parents. These include the daily sharing of information and the use of a social media application. Individual meetings between the practitioners and parents are facilitated to discuss their child's progress as requested. The children's learning books are sent home at the end of the pre-school year.
- Parents receive a parents' handbook prior to their child commencing in the setting. At the time of the inspection, there was no information in the handbook on the blended curriculum approach used in the ECCE sessions.
- The practitioners use a number of effective strategies to support the children transitions into and from the setting. These include sensitive settling-in practices and established links with a local primary school. Plans are in place to enhance the sharing of information on the children as learners with teachers in the primary schools with parental permission. To this end, the practitioners plan to use the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment '*Mo Scéal*' transition document for all children.

#### *Actions advised*

- The management team and the practitioners are advised to implement formal self-review and professional reflection practices. This could be achieved through the introduction of regular staff meetings and support and supervision meetings. The use of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* as part of these meetings will help to affirm areas of high quality practice and assist in prioritising areas in need of further improvement.
- The practitioners are advised to update the information on the curriculum in the parents' handbook. In addition, they are advised to share the children's learning books and assessments with parents on a regular basis. These actions will also increase parents' awareness of, and involvement in, their child's learning.
- The practitioners are advised to progress their plans to use the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's '*Mo Scéal*' transition document for all children. This will support continuity of learning experience 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:

- The routine has been revised.
- Visual Schedule made and transitions are quicker and accompanied by songs
- Family wall created and community wall being worked on

Area 2:

- ECCE teachers are attending Dublin City Childcare Committee course on Aistear for 15 hours
- Staff are working on more open-ended and probing questions to help deepen children's thinking and learning skills.
- Staff are including more storytelling, rhyming and singing activities to promote more language – enriching activities

Area 3:

- Routine adjusted to include small group learning experiences by key practitioners
- Community wall and guest speakers

Area 4:

- Team meetings have been introduced each term
- We have updated the parent's handbook. The children learning books have been sent home on a regular basis and parents have been included in their child's learning.
- We will use The National Council for Curriculum and Assessments 'Mo Scéal' transition document for all children