EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Ollies Montessori</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>St Oliver Plunkett’s GAA Club</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glenariff Road</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Navan Road</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dublin 7</td>
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<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09DY0215</td>
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Date of Inspection: 05-06-2019
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

Date of inspection: 05-06-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Meeting with setting owner and practitioners</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Interaction with children</td>
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<td>- Review of relevant documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Feedback to setting owner and practitioners</td>
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CONTEXT OF SETTING

Ollies Montessori is a private setting which is based on the Navan Road, Dublin 7. It provides a morning session and an afternoon session for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, thirty-four children and three practitioners, one of whom is the owner, were present. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report; a response for publication was not received from the setting.

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 very good.
- There is a very caring and affirming atmosphere in the setting. The practitioners interact warmly with parents and children on arrival and at departure times.
- The interactions between the practitioners and the children are notably responsive and reciprocal. The practitioners’ consistently affirming and gentle tones contribute to the very authentic relationships that exist between the practitioners and the children. This highly effective practice helps to promote the positive relationships that are evident among the children themselves. The use of a key person approach has yet to be introduced.
- The daily routine includes appropriate opportunities for children to make independent decisions in their learning. During the inspection, the activities facilitated were predominantly large group and individual learning experiences.
- The practitioners’ use of verbal reminders to advise children of pending changes in activities ensured that children had sufficient time to finish off what they doing before they started the next activity. There is potential to maximise the use of transition times as learning opportunities for children.
- The children are encouraged to become competent in managing their own self-help needs. For example, children hang up their coats on arrival, put their lunches away and enthusiastically take on the role of class helper.
- The practitioners successfully foster the children’s sense of identity and belonging. There are a significant number of displays, including the family walls, the photographs of the children engaged in activities, and the many collages of the children’s individual creations.
- During the pre-school year, special occasions are organised to bring the children, their parents and the practitioners together. These include the annual sports day, the Christmas concert and trips to places of interest.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to review the daily routine to ensure the provision of a greater balance between whole-group and small-group learning activities. It is further advised that transition times are optimised as learning experiences for the children. In so doing, greater use of songs, rhymes and stories during these times will be of benefit.
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 curriculum is informed by Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and the Montessori Method of education. The owner and practitioners acknowledge that they are on the journey in the implementation of a blended curriculum to support children's learning and development. This will include a balance of an emergent, play-based curriculum and the Montessori approach to early education.
- The practitioners use a variety of assessment methods to document the children's learning and development. These include termly checklists of children’s participation in Montessori exercises, occasional narrative observations and observations linked to the themes of Aistear. Some of the observations are placed in the children's individual learning books.
- There were a number of examples of practitioners’ use of good interaction strategies to enhance children’s learning. There included the practitioners’ effective use of open-ended and thought-provoking questions to extend the children’s learning and their thought processes.
- The indoor learning environment is well organised and promote children's active participation in their learning. There are defined interest areas which encourage children's purposeful play experiences. Overall, there is a wide variety of play materials available for children to enjoy, with a small range of real, sensorial and open-ended resources.
- The value the practitioners place on the benefits of play in children’s learning is commendable. Children are provided with ample opportunities to enjoy a variety of play experiences. These include physical play, constructive play, socio-dramatic and imaginative play.
- The practitioners effectively encourage the children’s early language and literacy skills. On the day of the inspection, there was good use of songs and rhymes to foster these emerging skills. The practitioners also facilitated children’s understanding of Irish as a means of communication, through the use of appropriate action games.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to use the templates and information in the ‘Planning and Assessment’ pillar from the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to further develop planning and assessment practices that involve all practitioners. In so doing, the consistent use of children’s emerging interests and their individual learning needs to inform short-term plans and to guide the next steps in children’s learning is advised.
- The practitioners are advised to provide additional sensorial, real and open-ended materials for children to use. The use of the environmental audit tool in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide 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 very good.
- The children are enthusiastic and eager to join their peers and the practitioners as they arrive in the setting. On the day of the inspection, they demonstrated fun and enjoyment in their learning activities. This was particularly noticeable during the free-play element of the sessions.
- The children are provided with many opportunities to experience high levels of success. During the racing activities, they displayed a sense of pride in participating and completing the various races. A few children independently shared their achievements with the practitioners. At the time of the inspection, formal opportunities for children to share their achievements and learning with others was not a regular feature of the daily programme.
- The children demonstrate a number of positive dispositions towards learning, such as resilience, curiosity, the ability to problem solve and to be creative. For example, a group of children persevered and demonstrated their determination to succeed at the fishing game.
• The children are developing the social skills necessary to help them to respond appropriately to social situations. These include the ability to co-operate, to take turns and to negotiate. During socio-dramatic play in the home area, two children worked collaboratively and decided on the roles they would take on during their play scenario.

• Throughout the pre-school year, members of the community are invited to the setting to share their skills with the children. These visits are captured in many of the displays on the walls and in the class learning journals. This practice raises children’s awareness of the roles of members of the community.

• On the day of the inspection, many children demonstrated their capacity to express themselves creatively. This included their mark-making achievements, their participation in the Irish-dancing activity and their building creations. The children’s learning journals contain a number of their mark-making achievements.

**Action advised**

• The practitioners are advised to provide regular opportunities for children to formally share their learning and achievements with their peers and the practitioners. This could be facilitated at snack time and through the provision of opportunities for children to review their learning journals.

**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 professionalism and partnership between the owner and the practitioners. The practitioners have daily informal discussions and, from time to time, evaluations of activities are conducted. The owner and the practitioners have yet to use the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide as part of their review practices.

• There is clarity regarding the practitioners’ roles and responsibilities with regard to educational activities. This is evident during the well-organised sessions. There is potential to implement formal support and supervision meetings for all staff.

• The practitioners use a number of noteworthy approaches to communicate with parents regarding their children’s learning. At the annual new parents’ meeting in September, information on the curriculum and practical issues are shared with parents. The children’s learning journals are sent home throughout the pre-school year and parents are encouraged to record their comments about their child’s achievements.

• The practitioners use a number of commendable strategies to help children to experience smooth transitions into the setting. Prior to commencing the setting, children are invited to attend and meet the practitioners. Generally, at the start of the pre-school year, parents are invited to stay until their child has settled.

• Links have been established with the principal of a local primary school. The principal and teacher of junior infants visit the setting to meet the children. At the time of the inspection, the practitioners were committed to completing the Mo Scéal transition templates from the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide so that, with parental consent, they might share information on children’s learning and development with primary schools.

**Actions advised**

• The practitioners are advised to use the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to aid them in the further development of formal review and reflection practices. This could commence with a review of the benefits of the implementation of a key person approach. This approach is one in which each practitioner develops a close secure relationship with a small group of children and acts as a link between the pre-school and the parents of these children.

• The owner is advised to implement formal support and supervision meetings for all staff. These meetings can be used to identify opportunities for practitioners to participate in continuing professional development, such as training in the use of Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. Participation in this programme would support the practitioners as part of their continuing professional development.
CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is very good.

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>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>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>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Language used in Early Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</th>
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<tbody>
<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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