EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION REPORT

Setting Name: Klear Adult Education Centre
Setting Address: Grange Park View
               Kilbarrack
               Dublin 5
DCYA number: 09DY0333
Date of Inspection: 01-10-2019
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 inspictions 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>01-10-2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspection activities undertaken</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interaction with children</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with setting manager/practitioner and member of the board of management</td>
<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Meeting with practitioners</td>
<td>• Feedback to setting manager/practitioner, practitioner and members of the board of management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observation of interactions during a session</td>
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**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Klear Adult Education Centre is a community adult education centre which is based in Kilbarrack, Dublin 5. The centre has been in operation for nearly forty years. It offers a range of adult education classes and a childcare service for students and families in the locality. The childcare service provides part-time care and a morning pre-school session for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, thirteen children, two practitioners, one of whom is the manager, and an assistant employed under a community employment programme, were present. 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 fair.
- The practitioners have created a welcoming atmosphere in the setting. On the day of the inspection, children were eager to greet their friends and play together.
- The setting does not use a key-person approach. This approach is where each practitioner is allocated a designated group of children and has responsibility for planning and documenting the learning for this group of children. The key person also acts as the main link between the setting and the home.
- Generally, interactions between the practitioners and the children are pleasant. During the inspection, there were many instances when the practitioners’ encouraging comments to children for their efforts in activities were noted positively. There were a small number of occasions when practitioners’ responses to children’s were overly firm.
- The daily routine includes predominantly adult-initiated and adult-led, whole-group experiences. There is no schedule on display in the pre-school room to inform adults or children of the daily activities.
- On the day of the inspection, changes in activities were announced by the practitioners without advance notice. This resulted in many children having insufficient time to finish what they were doing before they started the next activity. Some transitions were overly long, with prolonged waiting periods before new activities began.
- The practitioners support the promotion of children’s management of their self-care needs; a recent learning activity on germs focused on encouraging handwashing and appropriate personal hygiene practices.
- Snack time is used as an opportunity to promote children’s social interactions skills to a degree. On the day of the inspection, while the ‘class helper’ gave out the lunches and the practitioners remained close by the table, children were told where to sit and who they were to sit beside.
- There are a small number of displays to support children’s sense of identity and belonging. These include the recently created friendship tree in the lobby, and the birthday balloons and children’s names on their coat hooks. There is no visual representation of the local community in the setting,
Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to review the daily routine to ensure there is a balance between child-initiated and adult-initiated activities. The provision of regular, planned small-group and individual learning experiences that build on children’s individual interests and learning needs will be beneficial.
- Practitioners are advised to develop strategies to foster children’s awareness and management of times of transitions. In so doing, the use of songs, rhymes, playful activities and a visual child-friendly schedule is advised. The tip sheet on transitions in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will provide additional guidance in this regard.
- 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 ensure they consistently use positive and affirmative language in their interactions with the children.
- The practitioners are advised to create more displays in the pre-school room that foster the children’s sense of identity and belonging. These include displays that promote the children’s understanding and awareness of people and places of interest in 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 fair.
- The setting’s play-based curriculum is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.
- Planning for activities incorporates seasonal events, practitioners’ ideas and suggestions from a commercial folder. The practitioners use themed planning boxes which contain resources linked to the monthly topics to guide children’s learning. The use of planning documentation is not a feature of the practitioners’ practice.
- The lead practitioner conducts all assessments undertaken on children’s learning. At the time of the inspection, it was envisaged that the frequency of the observations on children would increase to one learning observation per child each month. A class learning book is used to record children’s participation in activities. This book and the children’s individual learning folders, that include templates that children have completed, are shared with parents on occasions during the pre-school year.
- The indoor learning environment contains a range of interest areas. On the day of the inspection, there were a small number of occasions when children could not follow through on their play ideas due to restrictions on the use of the play space and on moving materials from one interest area to another. The practitioners demonstrate an awareness of the need to enhance both indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- The children are provided with a limited time to engage in sustained play experiences. Practitioners sit alongside children during their learning experiences and comment on what they are doing. During the inspection, there were many occasions when opportunities to deepen children’s learning during naturally occurring playful interactions were missed.
- Practitioners promote children’s language through storytelling and rhyming activities. During the inspection, a story linked to a colouring-in activity was read.
- The children are learning in an inclusive learning environment; practitioners have established links with external agencies to support children’s participation in the ECCE programme.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to develop formal planning approaches that incorporate long-term, medium-term and short-term plans reflective of a play-based curriculum. It is also advised that they ensure that plans are differentiated to cater for children’s emerging interests and their individual learning needs.
- It is advised that all practitioners become involved in the assessment and recording of children’s learning. As part of this process, the use of findings from a variety of assessment approaches to inform the short-term plans is advised. The templates and advice on planning and assessing in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will assist practitioners in this regard.
The practitioners are advised to increase the time allocated to child-initiated free-play. Practitioners are encouraged to become play partners with the children and to extend their use of prompting and thought-provoking questions so as to enhance children’s learning.

The practitioners are advised to reorganise the indoor learning environment in order to maximise the play space available for children’s participation in small-group, play experiences. Building on their informal discussions to improve the learning environment, the use of the audit tool in the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide will assist practitioners in their plan to further promote children’s freedom of movement from one interest area to another.

**AREA 3**

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

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is fair.
- The children present as safe and secure in the setting.
- On the day of the inspection, children participated in a significant number of adult-led learning activities. While many children demonstrated the capacity to make decisions in their learning, there were several occasions when their choices were redirected by the practitioners.
- The majority of the children displayed appropriate social skills; they took turns in their play and worked collaboratively with their peers. There were a few instances when children required the support of the practitioners to help resolve minor issues of social conflict.
- On a small number of occasions, children demonstrated fun in their learning, an example of this was their counting of the blocks during circle time. A few children also displayed positive learning dispositions, such as persistence.
- During the inspection, children were seated for the majority of their learning experiences. There were limited opportunities for hands-on learning through children’s active participation and exploration of open-ended materials.
- Children are provided with some opportunities to express their creativity through mark-making and art activities. During the colouring-in activity, they received instructions on how to colour the template picture and there was an over-emphasis on children colouring within the lines.
- As part of the centre’s recent Diversity Day, parents cooked dishes from their cultures to share with the children. The manager reported that plans are in place to invite members of the local fire brigade to visit the setting as part of Community Week. In the past, the guards and a local dentist have visited the ECCE room. These practices help to raise children’s awareness of others in the community.

*Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to make decisions in their learning and that their choices are respected and fulfilled.
- The practitioners are advised to refrain from using colouring-in templates as a basis for art and craft activities. To develop children’s creative skills, practitioners are advised to provide a variety of mark-making opportunities and free process art and craft experiences. Children’s art may also be displayed at their eye level to celebrate each child’s achievement.
- The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities for children to actively explore and experiment in their learning. A greater provision of sensorial, real, natural, and open-ended materials will assist and support children to investigate and clarify their thinking.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is fair.
- There is a sense of teamwork and co-operation between the practitioners and management. During the inspection, a strong sense of commitment to the children and the families who attend the setting was evident.
- Formal self-evaluation is not a feature of the practitioners’ practice. The practitioners have daily informal planning and review discussions. There are monthly informal staff meetings. The manager meets with a member of the board of management twice a month to provide updates on the setting’s operation.
- Staff appraisals occur approximately once a year. Practitioners participate in regulatory and organisational training on topics such as First Aid and national funding schemes. The practitioners and members of the board of management present at the feedback meeting expressed an interest in availing of mentoring and external advisory supports in order to improve learning experiences for children.
- The practitioners share information on children’s learning with parents at arrival and collection times. During social occasions organised by the practitioners, parents have opportunities to view their child’s individual learning folder and the class learning book. Practitioners will facilitate individual meetings with parents to discuss their child’s progress, if requested.
- There is a family noticeboard in the lobby. This contains information on the setting’s curriculum. The noticeboard is also used to share information on courses for parents, as well as information leaflets on child-related topics.
- Before children commence in the pre-school, they are invited to visit the ECCE room to meet the practitioners and other children. Parents receive a copy of the setting’s parent handbook.
- Some links have been established with the principals of the local primary schools. With parents’ consent, the practitioners will share information on children’s learning with the principals.

**Actions advised**
- The board of management and practitioners are advised to develop formal self-review and professional reflection practices. The use of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will help to identify areas in need of improvement and the formulation of a plan of action.
- The practitioners are advised to avail of external support to improve the quality of children’s learning experiences. To this end, the setting’s participation in the Better Start Quality Development (mentoring) Service would be of benefit.
- The practitioners are advised to develop further strategies to regularly share children’s learning and progress with parents. The use of the self-evaluation tool in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will assist in this regard.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is 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>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children's learning and development</td>
<td>Fair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
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<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Fair</td>
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</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very good</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good</strong></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><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poor</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.</td>
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Published November 2019
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 staff are disappointed with the quality level attained in the inspection. However, we accept the findings as fair and accurate and welcome the advice and signposts for improvement, which will enhance our practice and the developmental needs and educational experience for each child attending the service.
- We are pleased to see that the Inspection also noted positive findings.

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 – Content of Learning and Development

- We are pleased the Inspection found positively on the warm and friendly welcome the children received on the morning of the Inspection.
- We are happy that the inspection noted the practitioner’s promotion of the children’s management of their self-care needs.

Actions/Plans to address issues as advised:

- Daily schedule is now on display in the pre-school room as well as in the corridor outside.
- Key-person approach will be in place without delay.
- Daily routine has been reviewed and a new system incorporating a balance between child and adult initiated activities is being put in place.
- The Aistear tip-sheet on transitions is being utilised to better develop children’s awareness and management of transition times.
- An in-service on the use and development of a prompt sheet, to explore positive and affirmative phrases and suggestions will be held to promote good communication with children.
- Action has been taken to further foster the children’s sense of identity, for example, photos are now placed over the children’s names on the coat hangers.
- Photos of local people and places of interest in the local community are now on display in the children’s room.

Area 2 – Processes to Support Children’s Learning and Development

In terms of quality of processes to support children’s learning and development we note the inspection comment that our children learn in an inclusive learning environment.

Actions/Plans to address issues as advised:

- We will ensure that planning documentation of activities will become routine, encompassing long-term, medium and short-term plans.
- The play space has been re-organised to allow for more in-door free play and room for the children to move from one area of interest to another and so giving more time to these activities.

Area 3 – Quality of Children’s Learning Experiences and Achievements
Recognition that our setting is safe and secure is most encouraging.

**Actions/Plans to address issues as advised:**

- Sensorial, real, natural and open-ended materials will be sought and provided to support the children in exploration and experimentation.
- The children’s work is now displayed at eye level. A wide variety of mark-making opportunities are now available to the children.

**Area 4 – Quality of Management and Leadership for Learning**

Our strong sense of commitment to the children and the families who attend was noted positively.

**Actions/Plans to address issues as advised:**

- The application has been made to ‘Better Start – Quality Development Mentoring Service’ to provide support to enhance the quality of the children’s learning experience.
- The management will develop formal self-review and professional reflection practises.
- The practitioners are presently utilising ideas and methodologies in *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide* to help them develop further strategies for good practice.