

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Youth Horizons
Setting Address	1-3 Sundale Road Jobstown Dublin 24
DCYA number	10DS0254

Date of Inspection: 10-10-2019



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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

Date of inspection	10-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of relevant documents • Feedback to setting practitioners • Meeting with setting manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with setting manager • Observation of interactions during a number of sessions • Interaction with children 	

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Youth Horizons is a community project that was established in Jobstown, West Tallaght in 1987. The crèche at Youth Horizons was opened in 2003 to meet the needs of young parents returning to education. The setting provides full-time care and a sessional service for children participating in their first and second years of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Eight children and two practitioners, one of whom is the manager, were present during the inspection. 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 very good.
- A caring and welcoming atmosphere is evident. On arrival, parents and children are greeted by the practitioners in a friendly manner.
- Relationships between the practitioners and children are very positive and warm. Practitioners are attentive and sensitive to the children's needs and know them and their families well.
- The daily routine includes opportunities for the children to engage in circle time, table-top and outdoor activities. An adequate period of time is dedicated to free play. On the day of inspection, the visual display of the routine was not followed.
- Snack time is a social occasion, where the practitioners and children engage in natural and relaxed conversations. Children help to prepare for this time by handing out place mats and lunches.
- During the inspection, there was potential to enhance children's awareness and engagement during transitions between activities. Strategies, such as count downs and verbal reminders, were not consistently used to indicate that activities were coming to an end.
- A key worker system is in place. The key practitioners have responsibility for observing and documenting children's learning.
- The children's sense of identity is nurtured in the inclusive learning environment through displays of photographs, children's art work and a helper chart.
- The role and input of parents are promoted and highly valued. Many attend training sessions in the building and make great use of the facilities, such as the kitchen area, where they gather informally. They join their children in the crèche for festive events at Easter and Christmas and celebrate the children's graduation at the end of the pre-school year. On occasion, parents share their interests, such as playing the guitar, with the children. Other links with the community include walks to the playground and visits from members of the local fire brigade.

Action advised

- To supporting the children's predictability of daily events and their management of transitions, the practitioners are advised to follow the displayed daily routine and to be more consistent in their approaches to transitioning between activities.

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.
- A play-based curriculum, with links to *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*, is implemented. The practitioners regularly undertake thematic-based, long-term, medium-term and short-term planning.
- Information on the children's learning is gathered through the use of photographs, anecdotal notes, scrapbooks, developmental reports and observations. In general, the children's skills and the next steps in their learning are not recorded in detail and links between the observations and the learning programme are not made obvious in short-term plans.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are positive and reciprocal. Many children actively seek out practitioners for support.
- Play is the central medium through which children learn and develop. The practitioners encourage the children to actively choose and engage in a variety of types of play. They spontaneously follow the children's play ideas and purposefully engage in their pretend-play activities. There were a small number of examples of the practitioners' effective use of open-ended questioning to scaffold and extend the children's interests.
- The indoor environment is divided into interest areas and the children have daily access to an outdoor area. Some real and natural resources, such as pasta and sand and hairdressing and dress-up equipment, were available. Opportunities for the children to explore, experiment and express themselves through the use of sensory and creative materials, such as junk-art, water, playdough and paint, were limited.
- The practitioners effectively foster the children's early literacy and numeracy skills through the use of rhymes, songs, and regular access to books and mark-making materials.
- The inclusive environment encourages all children to participate at a pace that is suited to their levels of ability. The practitioners work in partnership with parents and have established links with external professionals to support children with additional needs. They also provide support to families through their engagement with Meitheal, a Tusla-led National Practice Model.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to enhance their observation records by including more in-depth information relating to the children's interests, needs and the next steps in their learning. As part of this process, practitioners are advised to use the information from observations to inform short-term plans.
- The practitioners are advised to place an increased focus on the use open-ended questioning to scaffold and extend the children's interests, ideas and their higher-order thinking skills.
- The practitioners are advised to carry out a review of the indoor and outdoor environments using the, *Aistear, Sólta Practice Guide 'Environment Audit'* and to provide a broader range of freely-available, open-ended sensory and creative materials.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is good.
- Many children show enjoyment and good levels of engagement and concentration as they actively participate in their self-chosen activities, such as the matching card game.
- The children's social skills are emerging. Most children refer to each other as friends and children of mixed ages play together in pairs and in small groups. Many of the children demonstrate consideration for others and good sharing and turn-taking skills. For example, they took turns to style each other's hair and many hugs were exchanged. In the case of a small number of children, their abilities to listen, to follow instruction and to share are in the early stages of development.
- The children exhibit age-appropriate, personal care skills. They independently use the toilet, wash their hands and put on and take off their outdoor clothing.

- Many children display effective communication and self-regulation skills and positive behaviour. Some children demonstrate confidence in sharing their experiences and successes and can request help when required. During the inspection, a small number of children found it difficult to express their opinions and feelings during minor social disagreements.
- The children's fine and gross motor skills are developing well. This is evident in their effective use of table-top and construction equipment and their engagement in activities, such as running, cycling, climbing and balancing, while playing outside. There is potential to build on the children's interest in climbing and exploring in the outdoors.
- The children's awareness of their own identity and that of others is emerging. For example, children stood beside each other and discussed who was taller, they referred to family members and drew pictures of their families.

Actions advised

- To build on the children's developing listening and emotional skills, the practitioners are advised to provide small-group opportunities for children to share their thoughts and to discuss their feelings.
- In order to build on the children's independent self-regulation and problem-solving skills, the practitioners are advised to more regularly use the setting's behaviour management and positive reinforcement techniques.
- To support the children's interest in climbing, balancing and exploring, the practitioners are advised to provide additional resources in the outdoor environment.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- Respectful communication between the manager and the practitioner contributes to the professional atmosphere in the setting. An induction programme is in place for all new staff and the manager provides individual ongoing support and supervision for the practitioners.
- The practitioners' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The manager leads by example in working alongside the practitioner. There are opportunities for both the manager and practitioner to lead learning throughout the session. At the time of the inspection, key practitioners completed observations on their groups of children and the manager was responsible for all curriculum planning.
- Weekly meetings provide the practitioners with opportunities to discuss issues and to make changes to the environment. The setting's policy and procedures are regularly reviewed by the management body. The manager uses resources and videos from the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to support practice and to carry out self-reviews.
- The setting has established links with the local childcare committee, Barnardos, Early Childhood Ireland and private consultants for support, advice and training. There is a commitment to continuing professional development (CPD) and practitioners regularly participate in professional training and workshops.
- Parents are often consulted about their children's learning through regular formal meetings and informal discussions. Information is also shared through the parents' handbook, social media and the organisation's website.
- An effective settling-in procedure supports children to transition into the setting. A staggered, settling-in period is facilitated and parents are also encouraged to stay with their children during this period.
- Links with the local primary schools have been established. As the children prepare to move to primary school, children visit the schools sensory garden and the school principal visits the children in the setting. With parents' consent, information of the children's learning and development is shared with the school. The practitioners have begun to use the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment *Mo Scéal* resources.

Actions advised

- The manager and practitioners are advised to extend the role of the key practitioner. In doing so, it is advised that key practitioners become involved in planning for their group of children's learning and development.
- The management committee is advised to review the processes in place to support management and leadership for learning at all levels in the setting.
- To build on the CPD undertaken to date, the practitioners are advised to consider undertaking training on behaviour management.

Summary of Overall Inspection

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

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.