

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Charlesland Park Nursery
Setting Address	292 Charlesland Park Greystones County Wicklow
DCYA number	11WW0183

Date of Inspection: 28-11-2019



An Roinn Oideachais
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	28-11-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Feedback to practitioners in each room• Feedback to setting owner, manager and lead practitioner

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Charlesland Park Nursery is one of four privately-owned and managed settings. This setting was established in 2015. It is located in a purpose-built premises in a residential estate in Greystones, County Wicklow. The setting provides full day and after-school care and four morning sessions for children enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The manager, four practitioners, a practitioner employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), and forty-seven children were in attendance during the inspection. 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 good.
- There is a friendly and caring atmosphere. On arrival, children and family members are greeted by all the practitioners in a relaxed and friendly manner. The practitioners make good efforts to engage with parents and family members at arrival and collection times.
- The daily routine includes time for the children to engage in Montessori work, free play, circle time, outdoor play and adult-led activities. On the day of inspection, there was some unnecessary waiting periods for children as they waiting for all sessional ECCE children to arrive and join the group. This was followed by a large group circle time and resulted in many children becoming distracted and disengaged.
- The practitioners provide the children with opportunities to freely move between the Montessori and play rooms and they are encouraged to freely choose activities of interest. The period of time allocated to free-choice activities varied between rooms.
- Snack time is a relaxed social occasion. The practitioners sit with the children and constructively engage in general conversations.
- In some instances, the practitioners use verbal cues and timers to inform the children that activities are coming to an end. A small number of children found transitions between activities a little difficult.
- A key-worker approach is in place. Each key worker has responsibility for observing and documenting the learning of a group of children.
- The children's uniqueness is represented in their photographs, birthday charts and samples of their art work. The practitioners support the children's community and cultural awareness through the planned activities and the use of pictures, maps and books. Parents are invited to read stories, to teach the children Spanish words, to share cultural information, and to attend the graduation and Christmas events.
- The setting has made good links with the community. People working in the community, such as a *Garda*, a pet shop owner and a bee keeper, have visited the children. A musician and teachers of drama, yoga and Spanish visit regularly and engage the children in these activities. Children march in the St. Patrick's Day parade and go on an annual outing at the end of the year.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to organise the children into their key-groups for arrival and circle time activities.
- To further support the children's movement between rooms and their deeper engagement in activities of choice, the practitioners are advised to have an agreed approach to the amount of time afforded to free-choice activities in all of the rooms.
- All practitioners are advised to use verbal and visual cues to give children a longer period of notice that the countdown to a transition in activities has started. This will support the children's awareness and management of transitions from one activity to the next.

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 for the children's learning is informed by the Montessori Method of Education and *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- The practitioners engage in thematic long-term, medium-term and short-term planning. The link between children's interests and their next steps in learning are currently not made obvious in planning documents.
- Various assessment approaches are used to document the children's learning. These include photographs, anecdotal notes and observations. Many of the observations focus on what the children have yet to achieve.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are positive. The practitioners know the children well. They sit at the children's level and spontaneously follow their interests.
- The practitioners view the children as capable and confident learners. They acknowledge the importance of play as central to the children's learning. Adult-led activities are offered as a free choice during free-play time.
- The learning environment consists of an outdoor area and four learning rooms. Two of these rooms are well organised and resourced as Montessori spaces; the other two rooms offer the children opportunities to engage in a range of pretend play activities. The arrangement and storage of sensory and creative materials in the play room does not fully support the children's independent use or engagement with the materials.
- The children have regular access to the outdoor area. On the day of inspection, the provision of resources to support children's physical development, such as climbing and balancing materials, and to build their awareness of nature and the natural world was limited.
- The practitioners effectively promote the children's emergent literacy and numeracy skills. This is achieved through the language-rich environment and opportunities for the children to engage with mark-making activities, stories, rhymes and songs throughout the session. There was some evidence of the use of work sheets to promote children's literacy and numeracy skills.
- The practitioners adopt an inclusive approach to supporting children with additional needs. They liaise with parents and external professionals. They have engaged with the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) to support children in their learning. A member of the team has also completed the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) programme.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to develop their observation and planning practices. In so doing, the development of a more strengths-based approach to recording observations, including notes on the planned next steps in children's learning, and the use of this information to inform short-term planning are advised. The 'Planning and Assessment' pillar in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will be a useful resource to support this action.
- The practitioners are advised to undertake an audit of the indoor and outdoor learning environments using the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*. In doing so, the development of the sensory and creative areas to include more open-ended and freely available resources, such as glue, paint, playdough and water, is advised. The practitioners are also advised to provide more age-appropriate gross motor climbing equipment and pen-ended, real and natural resources for children outdoors.
- The practitioners are advised to discontinue the use of worksheets to promote children's literacy and numeracy skills.

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 demonstrate enjoyment in their learning and present as happy and relaxed in the environment.
- The children initiate and lead their own learning effectively and freely choose to engage in adult-directed art activities. In some instances, opportunities for the children to fully explore and experiment with the materials during adult-directed activities were limited.
- The children displayed highly-developed imaginations and praiseworthy levels of motivation and persistence. They also displayed natural curiosity and a sense of wonder as they playfully engaged in activities. For example, they built hiding places with blocks, role played as pirates, constructed sand castles with their peers and used the Montessori practical life resources of water, pasta and rice in a sensory activity.
- Most children's social, communication and listening skills are developing well. Many children are chatty and can capably ask and answer questions. Many also display significant strengths in their abilities to share and to take turns. For example, when decorating boxes a small group of children successfully and independently negotiated and took turns as they glued circles and placed them on the box.
- Most children display positive personal and social skills; they effectively express their feelings, share their experiences and they ask for help when needed. The children's self-regulation skills are emerging. A few children found it difficult to express their feelings when minor social disagreements occurred. The practitioners tended to resolve these small disagreements for the children.
- The children's awareness of their own identity and that of others is emerging. During the inspection, they made many references to their families, their likes and dislikes; they confidently introduced themselves and took great pleasure in singing the naming song.
- The children's emergent literacy and numeracy skills are developing well. Many children displayed an interest in mark-making activities, they freely chose books and enjoyed the story and rhyme times.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to develop strategies to enhance the children's independent, self-regulation skills. This can be achieved by regularly encouraging them to express and understand feelings as small disagreements arise.
- The practitioners are advised to be more consistent in their approaches to providing the children with opportunities to explore, experiment and express themselves, particularly during the adult-led creative and sensory activities.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management for leadership and learning is very good.
- The respectful communication and collaboration between the owner, the manager and the practitioners contribute to the professional atmosphere in the setting.
- Regular meetings, daily chats and individual support and supervision meetings are used as opportunities to share information and to discuss day-to-day operational issues and concerns.
- The practitioners occasionally reflect on practice using the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*.
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Each practitioner has opportunities throughout the session to lead learning and the manager works alongside the practitioners in the learning rooms.
- The manager has established links with the local childcare committee, St Nicholas Montessori Teachers' Association and private consultants for training and support. The manager and practitioners' network with practitioners from the other branches of the company so as to support each other and to share ideas.
- The owner encourages the manager and practitioners to engage in continuing professional development. They have completed training courses in *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and *Síolta: the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*.
- A parent handbook and noticeboard, social media and a computer application are means by which information is shared with parents. Information on the children's learning and development is also communicated regularly with parents through the use of photographs, group and individual learning journals, and through formal and informal chats.
- An effective settling-in policy supports the children's transition into the setting and between rooms. A phased settling-in approach, where parents are welcome to stay with their children until they are fully settled, is encouraged.
- The practitioners prepare the children for primary school through discussions, planned activities and school uniforms are also added to the dress up area. Teachers from the local primary school visit the setting and observe children's friendships within the group.

Actions advised

- The practitioner are advised to regularly use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to support their reviews and reflections on practice.
- The management team is advised to develop and document a curriculum statement and transition policy in the parents' handbook. The use of the 'Curriculum' and 'Transitions' pillars from the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* and the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) *Mo Scéal* resources will support the implementation of this action.

Summary of Overall Inspection

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