### EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Sundays Well Montessori Pre-school Ltd.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>CBS Blarney Street, Scoil Cholmcille,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blarney Street, Cork City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>18CY0168</td>
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**Date of Inspection: 19-09-2018**
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(s) 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>19-09-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Interaction with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Meeting with owner and practitioners</td>
<td>● Observation of interactions during a session</td>
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**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Sundays Well Montessori Pre-school is an urban, privately owned pre-school. The owner/manager, together with one other practitioner provide early year’s education for a maximum of fourteen children in the morning and fourteen children in the afternoon. On the day of the inspection thirteen children were present during the morning session, as well as thirteen in the afternoon session. The owner/manager and the practitioner attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, and the response submitted on behalf of the setting can 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 very good.
- A good, clear, daily structure provides security and clarity for the children. Currently there is a divide between free play, when the children are not allowed to use the Montessori materials and Montessori work time, when all other equipment and materials are not to be used. Adult initiated/led arts and craft activities are offered as choice activities parallel to Montessori work time.
- Snack time is utilised very well as a social occasion, as well as to promote a healthy lifestyle and well-being. A lovely, relaxed atmosphere, conducive to small group conversation is created.
- The practitioners are warm, welcoming and sensitive and they show a very positive regard for the children and their families. A caring ethos and a friendly, affirming atmosphere are palpable.
- Some transition times, such as tidy-up time are utilised well by the children as positive learning and development experiences. There are some inactive waiting times at the tables and sometimes when the children are required to stand in a line.
- The relationships between the practitioners and the children are very respectful, responsive and reciprocal. Good, clear guidance towards positive behaviour is provided. Affirmative feedback and encouragement are a regular feature of the responses to the children.
- Children’s sense of identity and belonging is nurtured very well. A broad variety of opportunities is provided for the children to develop an appreciation of themselves as individuals and as members of groups.

**Actions advised**

- Practitioners are advised to consider amalgamating free play and Montessori work time. This would provide more agency and autonomy to the children to follow their intrinsic motivation, interests and unique learning dispositions.
- Practitioners are advised to avoid inactive waiting times and requiring the children to stand in lines. Working on more fluid transitions and avoiding too many transition times throughout the day is advised. It would be beneficial to utilise songs, rhymes, finger- and/or sensory-games during these times.
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 very good.
- A broad-based, long-, medium- and short-term curriculum informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework is documented and implemented. Children’s emerging interests are clearly acknowledged and followed on a daily basis. This is currently not clearly visible in the curriculum plans.
- A variety of assessment approaches is used to gather information about children’s learning experiences and achievements. These include photographic evidence of learning activities and learning stories, which are electronically shared with the families. Twice a year individual parent-practitioner meetings are held to further share and discuss information.
- High-quality interactions with the children are facilitated. The practitioners engage and motivate the children very well in their learning and development, in a very respectful and caring way. Many appropriate interaction strategies are utilised to facilitate a broad range of learning experiences.
- The indoor environment is richly resourced and meaningfully structured to provide various learning and development activities. The children have daily access to an outdoor space, which is part of the primary school yard.
- The children’s emergent language and literacy skills are fostered through songs, rhymes, games, stories and books and the materials and resources which are available to the children. The children can freely avail of a broad variety of mark-making opportunities throughout the day. Activities such as sponging, free-drawing and painting, gluing leaves and working with play-dough are very thoughtfully and meaningfully organised and presented to inspire children’s interest and creativity. Some efforts are made to develop the children’s early mathematical and numeracy skills.

Actions advised
- Practitioners are advised to make emerging interests clearly visible in the curriculum plan, so that it is obvious to the reader, how they influence the short-term curriculum plan. The plans need to be displayed for the parents.
- Practitioners are encouraged in their efforts to secure a more age and developmentally appropriate, natural outdoor play environment.
- Practitioners are advised to become more conscious of using mathematical language and concepts linked to everyday situations.

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 clearly enjoy their activities. They are motivated, interested and engaged.
- The rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour are overall understood by the children and they show some capacity for self-regulation. Conflict situations are often resolved by the practitioners.
- The children express their feelings, thoughts, ideas and creativity through a variety of media. This includes making art, mark-making, interactive role play and exploratory play.
- The voices of the children are visible within the setting, including in the documentation of their comments on their art work and in their learning records.
- The importance of spontaneous child-initiated/led play is recognised and supported. The children utilise the opportunities provided to them to interact with, explore and make sense of the world. There is potential to provide additional opportunities for the children to develop and refine their physical skills and to nurture their interest in the natural world.
Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to utilise the ‘Interaction’ pillar of the online Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide. In particular, the practitioners need to familiarise themselves more with conflict resolution strategies, to support the children in becoming more autonomous and self-competent in resolving their conflicts.
- The outdoor environment in particular, needs to offer rich opportunities for the children to develop and refine their physical skills, strengthen their core-muscle, and to develop and refine their sense of balance and spatial awareness. It needs to offer a challenging, sense-rich play space where children can manipulate objects, investigate and explore, and make sense of the natural world around them.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- Planning, review and evaluation are informed by Siolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. Effective strategies and procedures are in place to promote professional reflection, to mentor and support the practitioners and to support their continuous professional development.
- The manager is an active member of a local network group.
- A praiseworthy ethos of professionalism, teamwork, collaboration and partnership is evident.
- The stated philosophy and vision of the setting is clearly evident in the practice.
- There is clarity around the roles and responsibilities of practitioners with regard to educational activities.
- Practitioners demonstrate thoughtfulness and reflection in all aspects of their practice. This is evident in the room layout and the material currently on offer to the children within the room. As the children are quite young the more advanced Montessori material is not on display, but more practical life material is.
- It is evident that practice is informed by evidence-based theory and that the practitioners are knowledgeable about children’s learning and development.
- Very effective two-way channels of communication are established between the families and the practitioners. These include an informative parental handbook, informal daily chats, parent-practitioner meetings and daily sharing of photos and learning stories via electronic media.
- Transitions into and from the setting are managed effectively and sensitively to ensure continuity of experiences and progression in learning for the children.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to continue to implement the actions advised above is excellent.
### 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>Very 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>Excellent</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<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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*Published May 2019*
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

We are happy with the content of the report. It is clearly structured. It is very informative and clearly explains the actions advised, something we are working on and will continue to do so.

With regards to the actions advised, we feel they are accurate and fair. We were given great advice/tips from our inspector on how to build on these points and found them very beneficial.

We are happy with our overall result. We always aim to achieve a high standard service for all children, families and staff. We feel the correct level of quality was given to us and we aim to grow and develop on these actions going forward.

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

We have combined Toy Time and Montessori work time to create Free Play. It allows the children to choose their own material to play with, when they want to. It allows for smoother running of the classroom, with less transitions. We feel for safety reasons for the monthly fire drills and our access route to our outdoor area we will continue to keep them in a line. However, in the classroom we are using songs, books, stories, to create more fluid transitions.

Area 2

We are working on our emerging interests within the curriculum plan. We record our evidence of these and we will use the Aistear/Siolta Practice guide Learning Record Template. They provide another form of evidence for observations, including a photograph. Our outdoor area is an area we know can be improved. We try and use the area we have as best as we can. The children use outdoor material such as bikes, trikes, scooters, balls, bubbles and hula-hoops. We also have a planting area which the children really enjoy. It creates opportunity for exploration.

Area 3

We have now come up with different conflict resolution strategies and use these instead. It gives the children more opportunities to problem solve. However, we do encourage the children to always ask us for help if needed. We are building on our outdoor area over time.

Area 4

We now provide more outdoor materials/objects for the children to investigate and explore.

Area 4

We are very happy with the level of quality we achieved in this area.