An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Castleview Community Playgroup
Setting Address	Kingswood Community Centre Sylvan Drive Dublin 24
DCYA number	09DS0031

Date of Inspection: 04-12-2018

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 service.

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	04-12-2018
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with setting manager and practitioners • Observation of interactions during a session	• Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Feedback to setting manager, practitioners and directors (parents' representatives) on the board

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Castleview Community Playgroup is a long-established community setting. It has been located in a community centre for thirty years and provides a morning, sessional, play-based learning programme across two rooms. On the day of the inspection, the lead practitioner, two practitioners, a relief practitioner and thirteen children enrolled in their first and second years of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme were present. The three practitioners, the relief practitioner and two parents' representatives of the board of directors 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 good.
- Arrival and home times are parent and child-friendly. Time is taken for conversations with parents and for the mutual sharing of information relating to children's well-being.
- A daily routine is on display and visible to the children. Transitions are signalled by the practitioners using verbal reminders, a timer and singing a tidy-up song. On the day of the inspection, a small number of children struggled to move easily from one activity to the next.
- Throughout the session, the practitioners offer praise and encouragement to the children by using positive phrases and affirming gestures. They provide effective and consistent guidance to support positive behaviour among children.
- Secure and supportive relationships are fostered between the children and practitioners. A key person approach is in place. In this setting, the key person is rotated every three months among the staff. The key person has responsibility for a small group of children, documents their learning and takes them for focused days in a small room in order to support the needs of each group.
- Children's identity and belonging is reflected in the display of their individual handprints and their photographs on the family wall. 'Happy Christmas' greetings in the family languages of the children are displayed at the front door. During the inspection, there was limited reflection of the range of cultural diversity within the rooms.
- Parents are provided with many opportunities to be part of this setting. They go on trips planned by the parents' committee, take part in fundraising events and visit for the Christmas party and end-of-year graduation. A few parents have also visited the setting to share their work experiences. These include a nurse and a fireman.
- Arrangements are in place for the children to learn about their local community. They go on walks with the practitioners and their parents to the local park for the teddy bears' picnic and they have had visits from the lollipop lady to discuss road safety.

Actions advised

- To build on the positive relationships already in place with the children and parents, the practitioners are advised to revise the key person approach. In so doing, it is advised that the same person remain with her group of children for the time they are in the setting. This will support the strengthening of connections between the key person, children and their parents.

- The practitioners are advised to extend the children's awareness and understanding of the daily routine. The addition of photographs of the children and 'Now and Then' cards will support children in their transitions between activities.
- To enrich the children's experience and understanding of cultural diversity and to support an inclusive environment for all children, it is advised that the practitioners reflect the breadth of diversity of cultures present in the setting and within the community. This could be achieved by using displays, props and books and by frequent conversations on different languages, and cultural celebrations.

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.
- There is a play-based curriculum in place that is aligned to the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.* A curriculum statement, linked to *Aistear,* reflects the long-term aims for the setting. The practitioners undertake medium-term planning that is thematic-based and this plan is broken into weekly topics and activities. At the time of the inspection, the medium-term and short-term plans did not reflect *Aistear* and children's individual emergent interests had yet to be incorporated into the short-term planning.
- The practitioner's record the full group's learning experiences in a group learner record, comprising photographs and descriptions of activities linked to *Aistear*. This is shared with parents to inform them of the activities undertaken.
- Each child has an individual copy, managed by the key person, containing the child's work, drawings and photographs.
- The key person maintains anecdotal notes and monthly detailed observations on the children's learning. These include clear planned next steps for their progression.
- The practitioners use calm, positive tones when interacting with the children. Occasionally, some missed opportunities for the practitioners to extend the children's thinking, language acquisition and problem-solving skills were observed.
- The indoor environment consists of two small play rooms. Play is valued by the practitioners and a variety of suitable resources are available to the children in both rooms. On a daily basis, children are divided into two different groups for specific activities with the practitioners.
- Twice a week, the smaller room is used by a key practitioner with her group of children. This allows them to have quiet time in a smaller room.
- The setting does not have access to an outdoor area. A hall in the community centre is available daily for physical play. Children are provided with hoola hoops, ride-along toys and *Buntús*, a physical activity programme, is used on occasions. On the day of the inspection, children waited while the practitioners set out the equipment. A small number became distracted and did not engage with the materials provided.
- The practitioners promote the children's emergent literacy and numeracy skills using everyday activities, songs and rhymes. They ask the children to count with them when going to the hall, they discuss the children's ages using their fingers as visual aids, and talk about running slowly and faster during play in the hall.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to ensure that planning incorporates *Aistear* and includes a clear cycle of progression for children who will be attending for both years. The addition of the children's individual emerging interests in the short-term plans is advised.
- The practitioners are advised to consistently use approaches, such as open-ended questions and prompts, in their interactions with the children.
- Practitioners are advised to develop clear plans for the use in the hall in facilitating children's learning and development. This could include preparation of the area in advance with the children, and the formulation of a list of physical activities and a variety of energetic games to be played with the children.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children demonstrate enjoyment and engagement in their self-selected activities. At the time of the inspection, a small number of children became distracted and disengaged during the large-group activities, such as circle time and the storytelling activity.
- The children play well together and some nice friendships are being developed. Children are beginning to understand the social rules of the setting and children display kindness and consideration to each other.
- Children have opportunities to make choices and to organise their own learning. For example, they negotiated extra time for tidying up in advance of going to the hall and selected free play over story time.
- Children are encouraged to take part in the tidy-up routine and the practitioner selects a child to be the line leader for going into the hall.
- Many children are developing good early mathematical knowledge, such as recognising, naming, and discussing comparative sizes and shapes.
- The promotion of the children's sense of identity and belonging is evident in the displays of art work and the photographs on the family wall. The displays in the pre-school rooms focus predominantly on adult-planned projects and generic craft activities, with very few examples of children own creative and imaginative art work.
- Children eagerly and confidently share their news during circle time and discuss family members and their lives outside the pre-school with the practitioners and their peers.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to develop practices to further promote the children's independence and their sense of responsibility. This could include extending the helper routine, which could be planned in advance with the children, and the inclusion of additional jobs throughout the session.
- The practitioners are advised to review their approaches to catering for the varying needs of the children present. In so doing, the provision of different learning activities and experiences for younger children and for children present for a second year may be considered.
- The further promotion of children's creativity and imagination and their voice in their learning are advised. As part of this process, a reduction in the use of stencils and template-based activities and the addition of the child's comments on their art work would be beneficial.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The practitioners come together each month for formal staff meetings; they discuss the learning programme and plan for the month ahead. Decisions taken at these meetings are documented.
- The practitioners have been working together for a number of years and there is evidence of good teamwork and collaboration. There is clarity around the roles and responsibilities of practitioners in the setting and evidence of sharing of the leadership role.
- The role of manager is rotated each year among the practitioners and support and information on training is accessed from Early Childhood Ireland and the local childcare committee.
- The practitioners share information on the children's learning with parents informally at arrival and collection times. The setting has begun to use computer technology to inform parents of upcoming events. A parents' notice board at the entrance to the room displays upcoming topics and recent photographs of children engaged in activities. .
- An information meeting is held with parents in the summer term and parents and children are invited to visit the setting. At the start of the year, reduced hours are offered to support children's smooth settling-in and parents are invited to stay until their child is settled.
- The practitioners use uniforms from local schools in their discussions with children about their move to primary school. The setting has developed informal links with the local primary school. A policy on transitions from pre-school to primary school has yet to be developed.

Actions advised

- To develop their approaches to the review of practice, the practitioners are advised to use the self-evaluation tools in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*. This will assist in affirming quality practice and in identifying areas for improvement.
- The practitioners are advised to develop a parents' handbook. This can be used for sharing the setting's curriculum and the learning programme provided underpinned by *Aistear* with parents and the local community.
- It is advised that the practitioners further develop procedures to support the children's transition to primary school. The development of a policy on transitions and formal links with the school is advised. The use of the 'Supporting Transitions' document in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will assist the practitioners in this process.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The three practitioners, relief practitioner and two representatives from the board of directors attended and engaged professionally in the post-inspection feedback meeting. The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is good.

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	**Good**
Quality of management and leadership for learning	**Good**

Language used in Early-Years Education-focused 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.

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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report.

Kingswood Community Playgroup welcomed the DES inspection as it proved an opportunity for us as the playgroup leaders to reflect on and make improvements to our practices and daily activities. We are delighted that you observed the relationship between the children and practitioners as being secure and supportive. We are also pleased that you have noted the good communication and relationship with our parents as this is, an important aspect of our community playgroup. We have taken on board the actions advised and are using the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide to assist us.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection **activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

Area1

We have revised our key person approach, and every child now has the same key person for all their time in the playground. We are replacing our routine with a more child friendly version reducing the size so that it can all be at the child's height and replacing cartoon figures with photos. This will be used every day to indicate change of activities. We are actively seeking props and photos for display, to better represent our inclusive environment. We have engaged with our parents to help with this and a mother has come to the playgroup to sing songs with her child in their first language.

Area 2

Our weekly plans have been revisited to include links to Aistear and the children's emergent interests. We are using more open ended questions during our conversations with children and have visual reminders of this for the adults. A plan has been put in place where the children warm up, play energetic games, and then have the use of the equipment while using the PE hall.

Area 3

To further promote the children's independence and sense of responsibility we have engaged with the children to extend our list of jobs to include room leader, lunch helper and lucky last. We will review how we can better engage children who are distracted during the more formal activities, taking their age and development stages into account. We have contacted our County Child Care Committee for advice on a second year strategy. We have removed all templates and stencils from the playgroup, and include the children's words on their artwork, where possible. We are also expanding our junk art activities.

Area 4

We find the self-evaluation tools and this report to be very useful for identifying and focusing on areas for improvement and are committed to continually referring to these. We are developing a Parents handbook, and a policy on transitions, with the help of the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide.