An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI)
Final Report

Setting name	Skerries Crèche
Setting address	28 Balbriggan Street Skerries County Dublin K34FY91
TUSLA registration number	TU2015FL268
DCEDIY number	19FL0647
Date of inspection	03-03-2023
Date of issue of report	19-06-2023

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:

- Quality of the context to support children's learning and development
- Quality of processes to support children's learning and development
- Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements
- 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

Dates of inspection	03-03-2023
Inspection activities undertaken • Pre-inspection meeting with the setting owner/manager • Meeting with relevant early years educators • Review of setting documentation and records of children's learning and development • Review of the education resources and facilities • Observations of interactions during one pre-school session • Interaction with the children • Feedback meeting with the setting owner/manager, deputy managers and early years educators • Individual feedback to the early years educators	

Context of setting

Skerries Crèche is a privately owned full day care and pre-school setting, located in Skerries County Dublin. The setting provides one morning pre-school for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme. On the day of the inspection, the owner, lead educator and one early years educator as well as eleven children were present. The lead educator attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. The early years educator, two deputy managers and owner were also present for various parts of the meeting. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report; a response 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 was good.
- The educators were warm and caring in their interactions with the children and affectionate exchanges occurred throughout the session.
- There was a written daily routine on display outside the room, which outlined the activities on offer to the children each day.
- 'Tea time' supported the development of the children's independence as they managed their lunch boxes and bags. A helper role system was used to promote the children taking responsibility.
- Transitions were managed using verbal cues and the effective use of a timer supported the children's understanding of the time remaining before changing to the new activity.
- There was a key person policy in place, which outlined the educator's responsibilities for recording observations on a designated group of children.
- The educators guided the children during times of disagreement around resources and offered alternative toys to resolve the conflict.
- The children's identity and belonging was supported by lovely photographic displays. Some of the children's home languages were represented. Some of the children were unaware of the significance of these in the room.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the educators further develop the key person approach to include opportunities for small-group activities with their designated children. This will further support relationship building and the acquisition of knowledge regarding their learning.

- The educators are advised to develop strategies that support the children to independently problem solve on occasions of disagreements during play. This will support the development of their social skills and build relationships with their peers.
- It is advised that the educators develop rich and meaningful opportunities for the children to develop an appreciation of diversity and their own cultural heritage. Having opportunities for the parents, families and children to attend events and activities in the setting will further nurture a sense of identity.

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 was good.
- Planning sheets were on display outside the room, which summarised each monthly theme under the headings of long, medium and short-term. The monthly themes for the year were outlined as well as some topics that the educators wished to cover with the children.
- Observations on the children's physical, intellectual, social and emotional learning were conducted on a monthly basis by each of the educators. The majority of these observations were conducted by the educators as the children engaged in planned art activities.
- The educators supported the children's self-help skills through daily helper roles that were visually displayed using the children's photographs.
- On occasion, during the session, open-ended questions and some mathematical vocabulary were used to support the children's language development.
- The indoor environment, which was upstairs, was divided into two rooms. A room for arts and crafts along with a playroom containing defined interest areas such as table top play, a kitchen and a dolls house.
- During outdoor play, basins of water, sponge rollers, paintbrushes, small marker cones, an outdoor house and stepping stones were available to the children.
- The educators used circle time to introduce songs to the children and to engage them in discussion.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the educators develop the planning to explicitly demonstrate how the children's interests and progressing learning needs are being supported and extended through the activities and experiences on offer. Evaluating the plans each week to determine the impact on the children's learning and to extend their play ideas will support this process.
- The educators are advised to record observations that represent the holistic nature of the children's learning. Including the children's voices and conversations, as well as images to represent their learning experiences, will support the development of a richer picture of their learning.
- It is advised that the educators develop the indoor and outdoor learning environments to include a broader range of authentic, open-ended and inviting areas of play for the children to explore. Using the self-evaluation tool for the learning environments on the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* will support reflection and development around this action.

Area 3: Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements

- The quality of children's learning experiences and achievements was good.
- The children engaged for long periods of time with the play dough, craft table and with the water and paintbrushes outside.
- Some of the children were developing the ability to play co-operatively; others required more frequent support from the educators. One child demonstrated the ability to negotiate and provided creative ideas to interest another child during play, 'how about we could be chefs?'

- The children had the opportunity to experience mastery and success in some activities such as the table-top puzzles, the outside stepping stones and when painting. During the circle-time activity an educator used a sticker chart to incentivise the children's positive behaviour.
- Some of the children liked to share their successes with the educators and their peers. The majority of the children communicated confidently during the inspection, sharing stories about their families, teddy bears and their mark-making creations.
- The children each had a folder containing their artwork, crafts and drawings. These were stored on an accessible shelf in the craft room.
- The children enjoyed singing songs during circle time. One child demonstrated an awareness of sign language by modelling it to the group at this time.
- The children were learning about the natural world as they cared for the pre-school pet fish, explored spring themed activities and went on walks to the local beach.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the educators develop further opportunities for the children to experience competency, autonomy and success during activities. This will effectively support more intrinsic motivation and achievement.
- The educators are advised to develop portfolios of learning for each child so that they can come to appreciate their unique learning journey, their individuality and achievements.
- It is advised that the educators provide the children with opportunities to explore, experiment and investigate using a broader range of open-ended materials. Encouraging problem-solving skills by using open-ended questioning with the children will support the development of their higher order thinking.

Area 4: Quality of management and leadership for learning

- The quality of management and leadership for learning was fair.
- Staff meetings were held when needed and a total of three were conducted to date this year. Minutes of the staff meetings highlighted agenda items such as the general running of the setting, policies and procedures, themes for planning and upcoming events.
- The educators participated in mandatory training and the owner previously expressed an interest in obtaining external mentoring support from Better Start Quality Development Service.
- The educators were clear about their roles and responsibilities and worked collaboratively throughout the session.
- The children in the pre-school room were generally registered with the setting on a full-time basis when they were babies, therefore settling-in processes, specific to the pre-school room did not occur.
- The parents had an opportunity to engage in informal discussion with a designated educator at arrival and collection times. The setting regularly provided the parents with photographs, using an electronic application, showing the activities that their child participated in. The children's observations were not shared consistently with the parents.
- The owner reported that informal communication between the pre-school and the local primary schools had become more frequent in recent years.

Actions advised

- The owner/manager is advised to obtain mentoring support from the Better Start Quality Development service to embed quality improvement in the setting's practices. Developing ongoing opportunities for the educators to engage in reflection and self-evaluation as a team will support continuity and quality development.

- It is advised that the owner/manager provides opportunities for the staff to engage in ongoing continuing professional development. Engagement in the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years Programme would support the development of inclusive and professional practices in the setting.
- The owner/manager is advised to develop regular opportunities for the parents to be consulted about and involved in their child's learning and progression. Sharing the children's observations with their parents and welcoming parental comments would benefit this practice.
- It is advised that the pre-school develops stronger professional links with the local primary schools. Completing the *Mo Scéal* transition report in partnership with parents and subsequently sharing these with the primary school with parental consent will support the children's continuity in learning.

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	Fair

Language used in Early Years Education Inspection Reports

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the setting using the language which is shown below.

Level	Description
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.*