An Roinn Oideachais

Department of Education

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	The Kiddies Day Centre
Setting Address	8 Clonsilla Road Blanchardstown Dublin 15 D15PW99
DCEDIY number	09FL0267
TUSLA REG NO.	TU2015FL305

Date of Inspection: 25-11-2021

This inspection took place in the context of public health restrictions necessary to limit the spread of Covid-19

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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	25-11-2021
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with setting manager • Observation of interactions during a number of sessions	 • Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Feedback to setting manager and practitioner

CONTEXT OF SETTING

The Kiddies Day Centre is an early learning and care setting located in Blanchardstown, Dublin 15. It offers part-time, full-day care and two morning sessions for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). Due to Covid-19 restrictions and the introduction of pods, the children attend either the Jungle room or the Montessori room. The Jungle room adopts a play-based curriculum and the Montessori room uses a blend of a play-based curriculum and elements of the Montessori Method of early education. On the day of the inspection, two practitioners and fifteen children were present. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report, and the response of the setting will 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 fair.
- The children are welcomed by the practitioners. On the day of the inspection, at arrival the children were eager to greet their friends and play together.
- Generally, interactions between the practitioners and the children are pleasant. There were a small number of occasions when the practitioners' guidance to the children towards appropriate behaviour was overly firm.
- Snack time is used as a social occasion: the children sit together and converse with each other.
- The daily routine is predominantly adult-initiated with limited opportunities for the children to make independent decisions in their learning. There is no visual schedule on display in either learning room to inform adults or the children of the daily activities.
- Transitions are managed in the majority of instances through the practitioners' use of verbal cues. There were many occasions when minimal lead-in periods were provided to prepare the children appropriately for subsequent activities.
- The children's sense of identity and belonging is supported to some extent. There is a small amount of displays showing their achievement, a family wall in one of the rooms and photographs of a few of the children on the door in the other room. There is no visual representation of the local community in the setting.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to ensure they consistently use positive and affirmative language when supporting and encouraging the children towards appropriate behaviour.
- The practitioners are advised to review the daily routine to ensure there is a suitable balance between child-initiated and adult-initiated activities. The provision of meaningful opportunities for the children to make independent choices in their learning is central to this.
- The practitioners are advised to develop strategies to foster children's awareness and management of times of transitions. The tip-sheet on transitions in the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* will provide additional guidance in this regard.

- The practitioners are advised to create more displays in the pre-school rooms to help foster an inclusive learning environment. These displays can be used as resources during learning activities to help raise the children's awareness of people and places of interest in their locality.

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 fair.
- Planning for children's learning is informed by the practitioners' ideas, the seasons and festivals. The practitioners use generic planning templates which make brief connections to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.* The children's interests are not reflected in these plans.
- The practitioners use a small variety of assessment methods to record aspects of the children's learning. Evidence of the children's learning experiences is placed in their individual learning folders. The findings from assessments are not used by the practitioners to inform planning for the next stages in the children's learning.
- During the inspection, the provision of brief periods of free play was noted. There was insufficient time for the children to move their play to a higher level to promote enquiry-based learning.
- The practitioners use some positive interaction strategies, such as thought-provoking commentary to extend the children's learning. In a few instances, interactions between the practitioners and the children were overlooked as opportunities to deepen individual children's understanding.
- The children have access to an outdoor learning environment where they can engage in a variety of play experiences. On the day of the inspection, there were no sensorial resources available to support children's engagement with the play kitchen.
- The layout of the indoor learning environments is similar with a few interest areas. Generally, the majority of materials and resources are easily accessible to the children. In the Montessori room, there is a small range of Montessori materials for children to engage with. Resources linked to the theme of month were available in both the learning rooms for the children to enjoy. Overall, there is an insufficient supply of real, sensorial and open-ended materials for the children to explore.
- The practitioners' use of rhymes, storytelling and conversations that support the children's language and literacy development was positively noted. The practitioners have sourced a small number of books in some the children's home languages to promote an inclusive environment.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to further develop their planning and assessment approaches to ensure that provision is more responsive to the children's emergent interests and their individual needs. The practitioners' use of the templates and resources in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will support this action and the provision of differentiation in learning experiences.
- The practitioners are advised to use the audit tool in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to review and enhance the layout of the indoor and outdoor learning environments, including the breadth of real, open-ended, natural and sensorial materials.
- The practitioners are advised to increase the time allocated to child-initiated, free play and to strengthen their roles as play partners in helping to extend children's thinking and free-play experiences. The tip sheet 'Thinking Together' from *the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will assist in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to ensure that all the children have opportunities to experience the stories and symbols in their home language and culture.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is fair.
- The children present as safe and secure in the setting. Some children display positive learning dispositions such as persistence.

- There were a few occasions when the children demonstrated fun in their learning, such as, their enthusiastic participation in chasing the bubbles during outside time. There were a significant number of times when the children did not appear engaged or motivated in their play.
- Many children are developing the confidence to be competent communicators. They take turns in conversations and talk about their personal experiences. Formal opportunities for the children to share their learning has yet to be included as part of the learning programme.
- The children have limited opportunities to express their creativity through mark-making and art activities. There is an overuse of templates which hinders the development of the children's unique creative skills and their self-expression.
- The children are developing positive social skills and demonstrate their ability to play cooperatively in pairs and in small groups. During the inspection, while many children demonstrated an appropriate capacity in their self-care and self-help skills, mealtimes could have been optimised as opportunities to enhance these evolving skills.
- The children show confidence and co-ordination over their fine motor skills. They experience a sense of success through their engagement with the manipulative resources, such as, small construction materials, puzzles and the Montessori practical life materials.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to ensure that the children have additional opportunities to actively explore and experiment in their learning. A greater provision of activities where they can be purposefully engaged and motivated in their learning will be central to this.
- The practitioners are advised to provide regular opportunities for the children to share their learning with their peers and the practitioners. Opportunities to review and independently add their achievements to their individual learning folders will assist in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities for the promotion of the children's independent and self-help skills.
- The practitioners are advised to significantly reduce the use of colouring-in templates and work sheets as a basis for mark-making and creative activities. The provision of a wider variety of mark-making opportunities and free process art is advised. Displaying the children's creations at their eye level and recording their comments on their creations will assist in this regard.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is fair.
- Periodically, there is a whole-setting staff meeting. Notes of these meetings are documented. The management team and practitioners have yet to use the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* to help them in evaluative and reflective practices.
- On the day of the inspection, the organisation of the sessions did not promote smooth and fluid learning experiences for the children. Both practitioners were observed engaging in administrative tasks and answering the main door to the setting. This had an undesirable impact on the morning's activities and on the interactions with the children.
- During the closure of the setting due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the practitioners attended workshops relevant to the early years. Those present at the feedback meeting articulated an interest in engaging in the Better Start Quality Development Service programme.
- The practitioners share information with parents on their child's day via a social media on-line application. Individual meetings between the practitioners and parents to discuss their child's progress are facilitated, as required. It was reported that due to Covid-19 restrictions, the practitioners have not been able to send the folders home as frequently as they had done previously. Parents receive a parents' handbook when their child commences the setting. Information as to how the curriculum is informed by *Aistear* is not included in this handbook.
- Towards the end of the pre-school year, the practitioners facilitate playful activities with the children to explore moving on to primary school. It was reported that the practitioners use the *Mo Scéal* transition templates to tell the story of the children as learners which they give to parents to share with primary schools.

Actions advised

- The management team and practitioners are advised to develop formal, systematic planning and review practices. Regular opportunities for practitioners to meet as a team and their use of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* are advised. This will help them to develop an action plan to address agreed prioritised areas for improvement. This could commence with a review of the parents' handbook.
- The practitioners are advised to progress their aspiration to avail of mentoring through the Better Start Quality Development Service to help strengthen learning outcomes for the children.
- The management team is advised to implement regular support and supervision meetings for practitioners. This will promote clarity around their roles and responsibilities with regard to leadership for learning and the day-to-day work of the setting.

Summary of Overall Inspection

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	**Fair**
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	**Fair**
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	**Fair**
Quality of management and leadership for learning	**Fair**

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.

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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.

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

We have employed a new staff member to take over the running of one of the ECCE rooms and we are already implementing some of the recommendations highlighted in the report