

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills**

**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION - FOCUSED INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<b>Service Name</b>	Hillview Childcare
<b>Service Address</b>	Hillview Family Resource Centre 33/34 Hillview Grove Dundrum Dublin 16
<b>DCYA number</b>	10DR0192

**Date of Inspection: 25-05-2018**



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agus Scileanna  
Department of  
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## **WHAT IS AN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION-FOCUSED INSPECTION?**

The Early Years Education-focused Inspection (EYEI) model is used to provide evaluative information, advice and support in relation to education provision in a pre-school service 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(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 service's provision in each area.

## Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

<b>Date of inspection</b>	25-05-2018
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with service manager</li><li>• Meeting with practitioners</li><li>• Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interaction with children</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Feedback meeting with the service manager</li></ul>

### CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Hillview Childcare is located in a converted flat in a large housing estate in Dublin 16. It was established fifteen years ago. The service provides a morning, sessional pre-school play-based learning programme, for children enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The service provides for children who are in the first year and second of the pre-school programme. Many of the families from this local community present with particular needs and these are addressed with great sensitivity in this pre-school service. The service has been going through a number of transitions and this has resulted in a change of staffing. On the day of the inspection, nine children, the lead practitioner, assistant practitioner and a relief member of staff were present. The manager and the lead 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, the setting chose to accept the report without response.

### 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.
- There is a warm, welcoming atmosphere evident. The service has established positive, respectful relationships with children and their families. Practitioners show an appreciation of and interest in family situations and demonstrate in-depth knowledge of each child and his/her family.
- A large daily routine is visible to the children. During the session, the lead practitioner signals upcoming changes in the routine using verbal reminders and a bell. Adequate time is offered to children to complete an activity before moving on to the next activity.
- A key person approach is very effectively used by the practitioners to support the development of secure relationships with the children. This approach is one in which the practitioner develops a close relationship with the child and acts as a link between the pre-school and the parents. In this service the key person approach is used for the taking of observations on children's learning and for facilitating focused small-group activities. On the day of the inspection, practitioners were observed taking notes of children's learning and some of their individual comments during the session.
- Practitioners regularly offer meaningful praise and encouragement to the children by using positive phrases and affirming gestures.
- The practitioners actively model and provide effective and consistent guidance to support positive behaviour among children. This was evident when they were encouraging children to play cooperatively together and to be kind to their friends.
- The uniqueness of children is reflected in the birthday display and the children's photographs on their coat hooks. At the time of the inspection, the cultural diversity of children present in the service and community is reflected through small world figures.
- A number of approaches are used to invite welcome into the service. A breakfast for new parents is held in September and parents are invited to the Christmas party, the end-of-year graduation and a summer outing.

- The pre-school programme includes experiences that allow the children to develop an awareness of their local community. The pre-school has had visits from the local Garda and they have gone on walks to visit the local fire station.

*Action advised*

- Practitioners are advised to reflect the diversity of children and families attending the service and within the local community in the physical environment. This could be done by using a map of the world, displaying flags of the different countries and discussing family 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 very good.
- There is a play-based curriculum in place that is aligned to the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Planning for the curriculum is based on adult-selected themes and topics divided into long-term, medium-term and short-term plans. The individual children's emergent interests were not included in the short-term plans at the time of the inspection. A planning board, supports the practitioners in aligning their plans to the themes of *Aistear*.
- The lead practitioner effectively records the learning experiences for the whole group of children in a group learner record; this comprises photographs, descriptions of activities, the children's own comments on their learning and links to *Aistear*. This is available to parents to view at the entrance to the room.
- Each child has an individual learning journal containing his/her unique learning story. Practitioners carefully annotate the children's work, drawings and photographs in the portfolios. Observations on the children's learning are included and shared with parents at the end of each month and their comments are invited.
- A developmental checklist is used on the child's birthday to record children's progress in their physical, intellectual, emotional, and social and language development. An observation template linked to *Aistear* is used on a monthly basis and the next steps for the children's progression are included.
- On the day of the inspection, positive, supportive interactions were evident between the children and the practitioners. Practitioners used open-ended questions and prompts to promote children's thinking and language skills. For example, when playing with the sand, they used questions such as, 'What do you do when you go to the beach?' and 'What does it look like?' when discussing the fire station.
- Play is the method of teaching and learning and very much valued in this service. Both the small indoor and outdoor environments offer children a variety of opportunities for different types of play.
- The pre-school room is divided into discrete interest areas such as a home corner, book area, small world play and construction area. Each area has a range of accessible play resources.
- Children access the small outdoor area on a daily basis. It has recently been redeveloped to include a large sand area and sensory area with water wheel and mud kitchen.
- The practitioners focus on the appropriate use of songs, rhymes, games and everyday activities to support the development of children's emergent literacy and numeracy.
- The practitioners have developed professional relationships with the relevant external agencies in order to support children with additional needs. There are systems in place for the mutual sharing of information with parents of children with additional needs.

*Action advised*

- It is advised that the practitioners extend their current approaches to planning by developing a clear cycle of progression for children who will be attending for both years. The addition of the individual emerging interests of the children into the short-term plans is advised.

## **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 are happy and show real enjoyment in their play activities. The positive learning dispositions shown by the majority of children help them to achieve mastery and success within their learning experiences.
- Children have many opportunities to make choices and to organise their own learning. For example, they choose whether to bring their paintings home or place them in their learning journals and they make decisions about staying indoors or going outside.
- The children are learning to play co-operatively together and are beginning to understand the social rules of the service. On the day of the inspection, a few children occasionally demonstrated difficulty in expressing their needs, turn-taking, and sharing. The practitioner effectively supported them to negotiate their disagreements and engaged them in playing together.
- A recent theme on the local community has resulted in the compilation of a photograph album with photographs of local people and areas of interest to the children; these include the staff, the maintenance man from the resource centre, the local playground, park and shopping centre.
- The children are developing a sense of their own identity as members of a family and this is reflected in the photographs on the 'Family Wall'. Children are encouraged to bring in items from home that they were observed talking about in 'Show and Tell'. This approach creates a valuable link between the child's home and the pre-school.
- Children take part in the tidy-up routines and are selected by the practitioner to be the line leader and to give out the lunch boxes. This helps children feel connected to the group and helps build independence and self-help skills.
- The uniqueness of each child is reflected in the photographs the examples of their art and drawings on display and their individual cubby holes where they can place their favourite items.
- Children's self-expression is reflected in the activities such as music, dance and painting provided. Children demonstrate great enjoyment in the singing of songs and rhymes and playing with the musical instruments.

#### *Actions advised*

- It is advised that the practitioners enhance the children's sense of identity and belonging and connection to the group by further developing the child-helper list that identifies helpers for snack and line leader. An option could be adding a list of specific jobs for children throughout the session and to display this at child height.
- The practitioners are advised to develop procedures in consultation with the children that will support the development of their understanding and ability to play socially together and to resolve conflict. The children will develop a sense of ownership and commitment to following their self-chosen rules.

## **AREA 4**

### **QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- Weekly pre-school staff meetings are held to plan and review any issues, and decisions taken are recorded. The lead practitioner meets with the childcare manager once a week to discuss plans and upcoming events.
- Recent changes in staffing and practice have resulted in a newly appointed lead practitioner.
- While the staff have only been working together as a team for a short while, there is clarity around the roles and responsibilities. The lead practitioner provides a good role model for the staff and there is evidence of good teamwork and partnership.
- The service is committed to providing a quality pre-school experience and is currently completing their engagement with the Better Start Quality Initiative. One of the changes resulting from this involvement has been the development of a cosy quiet book corner for the children.
- The manager accesses support and information from the local Childcare Committee and Early Childhood Ireland and private consultants.
- The service has recently introduced in-house training for all staff and this has included a recent workshop on the topic of 'Inclusion' in early educational contexts.
- The childcare manager offers job chats to staff every three months and a formal appraisal every year. This process affirms good practice and supports ongoing improvement.

- The manager and staff show an understanding of the families in their local community and this is evidenced in the range of supports offered to parents such as parenting courses, counselling and cookery classes.
- At the start of the year, parents are given an information pack on the service's policies and procedures. An information board for parents is at the entrance to the room and social media is used for sharing upcoming events.
- New parents are invited to an open day at the end of the summer term and to complete an 'All about Me' form on behalf of their children. This helps the practitioners to get to know their child. Parents are invited to be part of their child's settling-in.
- Practitioners prepare children for their move to primary school by discussing their upcoming move. At the time of the inspection, the service had not developed any formal links with local schools. The practitioners share a transition passport with parents containing relevant information about their children's interests and learning; they are invited to share this with the local school.

*Actions advised*

- The practitioners are advised to avail of the professional self-evaluation tools in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to support them in their professional reflection. These could also support them in their 'job chats' and appraisals.
- It is advised that the practitioners further develop procedures to support the children's transition to primary school. The development of clear policies and procedures to support children's transitions into primary school is advised. The use of a 'transition box' to support them in their discussions with children is advised.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The childcare manager and the lead practitioner attended the post-inspection feedback meeting and engaged in the co-professional dialogue. They professed their commitment to creating a quality learning environment for the children and families in the local community. The capacity of the service to continue to implement the actions advised above is very good.

### Summary of Overall Inspection

<b>Area</b>	<b>Quality Level</b>
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of management and leadership for learning	<b>Very good</b>

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

<b>Excellent</b>	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.
<b>Very good</b>	Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.
<b>Good</b>	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.
<b>Fair</b>	Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.
<b>Poor</b>	Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.