



**Early Years Education-focused Inspection
Draft Inspection Report for Factual Verification**

<i>Name of Setting</i> <i>Maureen's Playgroup</i>	<i>Identifier number</i> <i>09DS0027</i>
<i>Address of Setting</i> <i>84 Turret Road,</i> <i>Palmerstown,</i> <i>Dublin 20.</i>	<i>Date of visit</i> <i>02 June 16</i>

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Maureen's Playgroup is situated in the suburb of Palmerstown, Dublin 20. It is in operation for twenty-nine years and engages in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme in a one room setting catering for twenty children in two sessions daily. On the day of inspection there were nineteen children present at the morning session. The owner/lead practitioner and two assistant practitioners were also present on the day of inspection.

QUALITY OF CONTEXT TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The quality of the context to support children's learning and development is excellent.
- The setting is characterised by a warm and friendly atmosphere in which families are affirmed and welcomed. An open-door policy and key worker system are in place and these support positive two-way communication with children's parents.
- The quality of the relationships fostered between the practitioners and children is highly commendable; they are respectful and affirming.
- Children are viewed as active learners and the organisation of the setting is highly supportive of children making their own choices. This is further characterised by the calm, free-flow manner in which learning experiences are organised together with the carefully prepared environment.
- The routine of snack time facilitates the promotion of wellbeing and the development of very good social and self-management skills for children. This is characterised by rich conversations connecting prior experiences at the service such as growing lettuce which was used to make their lunch that morning.
- Children's sense of identity and belonging is nurtured through an "Ode" to children on the wall, the display of birthdays and photos of engaging with activities. Practitioner birthdays are also celebrated at the service. Family photos with children's comments are placed in a 'special book' for each child which they take home at the end of the year.
- Opportunities are provided which bring together families, children and practitioners at Open Days, Halloween, Christmas, school tours and at a graduation ceremony.
- The service has engaged in visits out and visits in from the local community.

AREA 2:

QUALITY OF PROCESSES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The quality of the processes to support children's learning and development is very good.
- The curriculum is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and short term, medium and long-term planning is evident. Planning takes account of children's interests and dispositions.
- Information on children's learning is carefully documented and strategies for assessment include detailed strengths-based observations which are fully informed by Aistear. A 'Special Book' is also compiled and regular photos of activities taken and displayed.
- The indoor environment is purposefully structured into different areas facilitating choice and includes a very inviting reading area with armchairs and throws. The play areas are alternated to provide variety for the children in their experiences.
- The outdoor area facilitates choice and independent learning through the opportunities provided for various types of play. The children have created a vegetable garden. Circle time takes place outdoors at the decking area weather permitting.
- An appropriate range of books are available to the children and these are fully accessible and rotated regularly. Some use of labelling is evident and an appropriate range of literacy and numeracy resources are provided.
- The practitioners use a range of interaction strategies to facilitate a broad range of learning experiences.
- The development of children's emergent language and numeracy skills is scaffolded through the use of songs, rhymes and stories, including in the Irish language. Conversations between practitioners and children are rich and open ended.

Actions advised

- Ongoing opportunities for children to engage in mark making is advised and extension of labelling would support the development of children's literacy skills.
- Consideration should be given to developing displays of children's work in the room.

AREA 3:

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of children's learning experiences and achievements is very good.

- The children demonstrate high levels of engagement in and enjoyment of their learning activities.
- Children interact very positively with adults and other children and demonstrate very good co-operative skills.
- Children enjoy a variety of rhymes and songs, singing as they play.
- The children understand the rules of the service, listen, take turns and self-regulate throughout the morning.
- Children take pride in their learning, evident in their discussions about their vegetable garden and the careful tending of it.
- Children make connections between prior knowledge and experiences and new learning. They support the learning of each other and congratulate the achievements of each other.

Action advised

- Practitioners are advised to build on current practice to increase children's awareness of their local community and the roles within it.

AREA 4:

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of the management and leadership for learning is very good.
- An ethos of teamwork and professionalism is evident at the service. Formal meetings are held monthly to discuss curriculum and provide opportunities for staff to self-review. Policy reviews are carried out yearly with input from staff and a key worker system is in place.
- The service engages with their county childcare committee and voluntary organisations and are committed to continuing this professional development into the future.
- Communication is fostered between families and the setting both formally and informally. Examples of communication strategies used include the provision of an open day, termly newsletter, policies and procedures for the service and the sharing of observations. Photographic displays on the window of the service give vision to parents of their children's experiences at playschool.
- Very detailed information about each child is requested from parents in an 'All About Me' record and this is used purposefully to support transitions into the setting. Informal and formal links are in place with the local primary school to support transitions from the setting. Children are further supported in the transition to primary school, with books on the topic which are brought home by the children and discussions on starting school.

Actions advised

- The development of a transitions policy would build on the current good practices in place around transitions.
- Future setting reviews would benefit from involvement of parents and being informed to a greater extent by *Siolta: the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The manager and staff demonstrate very good capacity to implement the actions advised in this report.

Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Excellent
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	Very Good
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	Very Good
Quality of management and leadership for learning	Very 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.