

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

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Little Peoples Place
Setting Address	Clonark Clonfulla Athlone County Roscommon
DCYA number	18RN0091

Date of Inspection: 02-10-2019



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 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	02-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interaction with children• Review of relevant documents• Feedback to setting manager and practitioners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with setting manager• Observation of interactions during two sessions	

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Little Peoples Place is a privately-owned and operated setting located outside the rural village of Clonark. It provides sessional and after-school services. Two morning sessions are offered through the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Both of these rooms were visited for the purposes of the inspection. On the day of the inspection, a total of twenty-two children and three practitioners, one of whom is the setting manager, were present. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the 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 and welcoming atmosphere in the setting. Children and parents are individually greeted by practitioners on arrival.
- The daily routine offers a variety of experiences which promote children's learning and development. Children demonstrate great familiarity with the routine and move seamlessly between areas and learning experiences.
- Snack time is viewed as an opportunity to promote the children's self-help skills and independence. The children are provided with appropriate responsibilities during the organisation of this time. For example, the designated helpers hand out the children's lunches while the practitioners and the children discuss what they have brought to eat.
- The practitioners use many very effective transition strategies to prepare children for a forthcoming change in the routine. These include the use of verbal reminders and the singing of songs to inform the children that movement between experiences and/or areas is about to happen.
- Relationships between the practitioners and the children appear very secure. The practitioners are consistently kind and caring in their engagement with the children. They show sensitivity to each child, offering assurance, support and guidance as needed.
- Meaningful recognition and encouragement are regular features of practitioners' responses to the children. Practitioners are very effective in naming children's positive behaviours and actions; this makes children very aware as to why they are receiving such positive feedback.
- The practitioners place a strong emphasis on the promotion of children's sense of belonging. Various photographs of the children and their families, along with children's creative mark-making achievements, are displayed throughout the environment. These visuals support and strengthen children to feel that they are welcome and belong in the setting.
- Many connections have been made between the setting and the local community. Visits to the post office provide children with an insight into the local amenities in their community. Various community members also regularly visit the setting to share their skills, professions and achievements. These include members of *An Gardaí*, a dental nurse and the local Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) team. Representation of the commendable links that have been established with the local community are not evident in the environment.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to introduce visual representations of the local community and its members throughout the learning environments. The children would also benefit from opportunities to create and use photographs, drawings and maps to support them to explore, share and discuss their local surrounding and its key landmarks.

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.
- The setting operate a play-based approach to supporting and extending children's learning and development.
- The curriculum is linked to the themes of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Planning for curriculum implementation is organised on long-term, medium-term and short-term bases. It mainly focuses around seasons and adult-chosen pre-determined themes, such as autumn and colours. While the practitioners respond to some of the children's emerging interests in practice, these developing interests are not planned for, recorded or extended in the curriculum plans.
- Practitioners complete observations of children's learning experiences and achievements on a monthly basis. These observations are compiled in individual scrapbooks which provide a snapshot of children's learning and development. The practitioners share the scrapbooks with parents at the end of each month.
- The practitioners facilitate many effective interactions with children. This was illustrated during the inspection when the practitioners followed the children's lead, listened attentively to them and regularly promoted their independence.
- The indoor environment is well maintained and safe. A variety of multi-sensory learning experiences are available and easily accessible and help to support children's sensorial play. Some areas within the environments are not clearly defined.
- Daily opportunities are provided for children to explore the outdoor learning environment. This inviting space provides a variety of play experiences, including sensory play, socio-dramatic play and construction play. Many effective risk-rich opportunities are also available to support and promote children's ability to overcome challenge, to persevere and to develop their gross motor skills.
- Inclusive practices have been adopted by practitioners to support the inclusion of children with additional needs. The setting manager and practitioners work closely with parents to ensure that consistent strategies are used both at home and in the setting. The setting has been proactive in availing of a mentor from the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) and also regularly liaises with external agencies to optimise support for children with additional needs.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to use the information they have gathered from their observations to inform the short-term curriculum plan. This will support the delivery of an emergent curriculum that is both current and reflective of the children's interests, skills, learning dispositions and strengths.
- Practitioners are advised to review the indoor learning environment and to create further clearly-defined interest areas to strengthen and enrich children's learning experiences. The addition of more open-ended, real and natural materials will benefit the opportunities and possibilities the environment has to offer.

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 present as happy and content in the learning environment.
- Children have great autonomy to make decisions about their learning and during their learning experiences. It is clear from their high levels of engagement that the children value this freedom. This is particularly apparent in the outdoor environment where the children remain deeply interested in and motivated in their playful learning encounters.
- Many children work well together. During the inspection, several children were observed playing co-operatively in a small group as they dug for dinosaurs in one of the many sensory areas outdoors.

- Children demonstrate a sense of success as they engage with various resources and in a range of activities. They regularly call on a practitioner and/or their peers to share and discuss their achievements.
- The majority of children show an increasing confidence and co-ordination over their gross motor skills. They test their abilities and challenge their potential as they climb ladders, swing on the ropes and balance on the seesaw.
- Many children demonstrate very effective communication skills. They express themselves both non-verbally and verbally as they communicate with others. During the inspection, children explained what they were involved in, asked for help and sought the attention of a practitioner for support and guidance.
- The practitioners facilitate opportunities to support and promote children's early literacy skills through the provision of mark-making materials, some exposure to print and a selection of books.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to enhance the ways in which children's early literacy and mark-making skills are being developed. For example, the provision of a more print-rich environment, a broader selection of accessible and inviting books and mark-making materials will enhance the opportunities available to support children's early literacy skills.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The setting manager and practitioners meet each week to discuss and reflect on the learning programme. A strong focus of these meetings is around the support of children's needs.
- An ethos of teamwork and professionalism is clearly evident among the owner and practitioners. They work well together and maintain regular communication with one another throughout the morning.
- The clarity of the roles and responsibilities of each of the practitioners supports the smooth organisation of the setting. During the inspection, one practitioner took a group of children outdoors while the other practitioner remained indoors to prepare the environment and to support the children who preferred to stay inside.
- The setting manager and practitioners have been proactive in availing of continuous professional learning opportunities in relation to enhancing inclusive practices within the setting. The manager has completed the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) programme and all practitioners have participated in the Teacher Talk Training Series, as part of the Hanen Programme.
- Various communication strategies are used to inform parents of the policies, procedures and curriculum in operation in the setting. These include newsletters, the regular sharing of the children's journals, a parent noticeboard and daily informal discussions.
- The owner and practitioners recognise the importance of supporting children's transition from the early years setting to primary school. They have developed links with the neighbouring school and information is shared, with parents' permission, about the child. The principal visits the setting each year and engages in conversations with the children. Visuals of the local schools and the inclusion of the additional resources help to prepare the children and promote their familiarity with the new learning environment.

Actions advised

- The manager and practitioners are advised to use team meetings to share their observations with each other. In doing so, practitioners can plan and prepare for the learning and development of all children in the setting. These meetings can also be used to establish formal self-evaluation practices.
- The manager and practitioners are advised to enrol and participate in the newly-developed 'Aistear and Play' workshops. This will support the manager and practitioners in their commitment to remain up-to-date and current with best practice in the sector.

Summary of Overall Inspection

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Very good
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	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 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.