

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Woodberry Play/ Pre-school
Setting Address	Woodberry Skeheenarinky Burncourt County Tipperary
DCYA number	09TS0045

Date of Inspection: 11-10-2019



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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(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 setting's provision in each area.

Early-Years Education Inspection

Date of inspection	11-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-inspection meeting with the setting owner/ lead practitioner • Evaluation of a morning session • Interaction with the children • Review of available records of children’s learning and development

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Established in 1996, Woodberry Play/ Pre-school is a private sessional pre-school setting. It operates from self-contained indoor and outdoor learning environments adjacent to a rural private dwelling. An afternoon session is offered on two days each week. On the morning of the inspection, the owner/ lead practitioner, two assistant practitioners and thirteen children were present. 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 is very good.
- A very caring and warm atmosphere is successfully cultivated in the pre-school.
- Practitioners foster positive, respectful and trusting relationships with the children. The children appear very secure and regularly call on practitioners to join in their play.
- Lunch time is a relaxed and social experience. The practitioners and children sit together engaging in conversations. This supports children’s positive sense of well-being.
- The daily routine provides significant periods of free play. This enables children to make decisions about their learning and fosters creativity.
- The effective use of songs and props support smooth transitions, as children move from one part of the routine to the next.
- The practitioners use their knowledge of children and their families to good effect; conversations recognise each child’s uniqueness. At the time of the inspection, the environment did not sufficiently reflect the identity of children and their community.
- A suitable variety of resources provides opportunities for children to understand and respect difference in culture.
- Regular nature walks to a local stream nurtures a connection to the natural environment.

Action advised

- In order to build children’s sense of identity and belonging, practitioners are advised to review how the children and their community is represented within the environments. The children should see themselves, their families, interests and local community clearly to further promote reflection and affirmation.

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.
- A play-based curriculum is broadly linked to the themes of *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. This effectively supports children's learning and development.
- The documented weekly plan is flexible to allow for a response to the daily spontaneous interests of children. At the time of the inspection, these interests were not noted and used to inform and develop planning.
- A limited range of information is gathered about children's learning experiences. The practitioners complete four learning records for each child per year. Documented information about children's learning is only shared with parents at the end of their second year of pre-school.
- The practitioners demonstrate a suitable balance between speaking and listening during interactions with the children.
- Play is valued and well supported as a medium for learning. Practitioners frequently join as play partners and, in doing so, effectively support and extend children's learning and development.
- The indoor learning environment is comprised of two interconnecting rooms. These spaces offer children stimulating materials that support their learning through play and exploration. Some distinct areas are created with accessible materials. There is scope to develop an area with accessible mark-making materials.
- Songs and rhymes are regularly introduced to children and these appropriately support language development. A wide variety of high quality books is available throughout the environment; and this places a strong emphasis on engaging children in print rich materials. The small number of over formalised abstract writing exercises do not support children's meaningful understanding of literacy and mathematical concepts.
- The practitioners are open to working with outside agencies in support of the engagement of children with additional needs in their early learning.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the varying interests of children be gathered and utilised to develop planning for an emergent curriculum.
- Practitioners are advised to document information about children's learning experiences more regularly. The learning journal format can be used to document a description of the experiences using photographs and/or written notes. The practitioners' need to provide an analysis of the learning by referring to the child's dispositions, skills, understanding and attitudes. This information can inform the next steps for the child's learning and development.
- In order to promote children's capacity for creative expression, it is advised that mark-making materials be made more accessible. The provision of an interest area for children to freely engage in open-ended, process focused exploration of suitable materials, such as paints and glue, 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 present as happy, interested and engaged in their playful learning. On the day of the inspection, they demonstrated enjoyment in using the small world toys, socio-dramatic materials and running in the outdoors.
- The children have many opportunities to make decisions and choices about their learning. They demonstrate a growing ability to play co-operatively. In the outdoors, a group of children engaged in a counting game with rules.
- The children are developing an increasing awareness of their own abilities. A few missed opportunities to enable children to be responsible for their needs were noted.
- Children show a strong sense of who they are. They openly share interests and personal experiences from home.

- The children present as confident communicators. They ask questions, negotiate and share information to clarify their thinking, and express their ideas. They are familiar with a wide selection of songs and rhymes.
- Children demonstrate an evolving understanding of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour leading to positive engagement with their peers. A number of children competently used sand timers to take turns.
- The children display a strong interest in books. During free play, many children explore books independently and with a practitioner.
- The children control their fine and gross motor skills to manipulate materials. In the outdoors, children use sand and engage in planting activities.

Action advised

- Practitioners are advised to encourage and facilitate children to develop their capacity for independence in managing their needs.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The practitioners informally reflect on practice and engage in regular discussions about children's experiences. This approach to reflection could be significantly enhanced through the use of *Síolta; the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*.
- Communication with parents consists of verbal interactions and informal sharing of information on children's daily experiences. Sharing children's individual learning folders at the end of the two year pre-school cycle does not sufficiently involve parents in their child's learning.
- The practitioners portray a strong commitment to providing quality learning experiences for children through play. A professional approach is adopted. They work very effectively as a team.
- The owner/ lead practitioner is responsible for documenting the weekly plan and sharing it with the team.
- Appropriate settling-in procedures are in place. Individual meetings with parents facilitate sharing of information about the setting and this helps to build relationships. The afternoon session, offered for two days, purposefully provides an introduction for children to the routines and environment before moving to the five day morning session.
- Transitions are effectively managed for the children moving to primary school. Visits are arranged and some information is shared with one local school.

Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to formalise their approach to self-evaluation and provide opportunities to reflect on and review practice, policies and procedures in the setting. The on-line tools from the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* would assist in identifying strengths and areas in need of further improvement.
- It is advised that the practitioners strengthen communication with parents by providing regular opportunities for two-way communication regarding the children's learning. The ongoing sharing of the documented learning stories will support their involvement in their child's learning.
- The practitioners are advised to develop processes for sharing information regarding the children's learning with primary schools to support continuity of experiences during the transition.

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	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.