An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Clonroche Community Playschool</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>St. Aidan’s National School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clonroche</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Co. Wexford</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09WX0041</td>
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Date of Inspection: 13-11-2019
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

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**Inspection activities undertaken**
- Meeting with setting manager/practitioner and practitioners
- Observation of interactions during the pre-school session
- Interaction with children
- Review of relevant documents
- Feedback to setting manager/practitioner and practitioners

**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Clonroche Community Playschool was established in 2009. It is located in a national school, in the rural village of Clonroche, Co. Wexford. This community setting provides a morning sessional service for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, the manager/practitioner, two practitioners and fourteen children were present. The manager/practitioner and two practitioners attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. 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.
- The practitioners have created a warm and relaxed atmosphere. The children enter the setting with great enthusiasm. The practitioners greet them individually and invite them to play in an area of their choosing.
- The practitioners have developed very positive relationships with the children and their families. Parents and siblings come into the setting on arrival and at collection time. The atmosphere is relaxed and unhurried. The parents chat to the practitioners while the children’s younger siblings explore the pre-school environment.
- The children’s sense of security and their engagement throughout the morning are supported through the use of a visual routine which is displayed in the learning room.
- The children’s identity and belonging is effectively supported through the photographs on their coat hooks and a number of photographic displays. A family tree, with photographs of the children’s families, is displayed, along with the children’s individual art work and mark making. The children’s photographs and names are also included on their placemats and on their learning journals. The children’s locality, including a café and the local greengrocers, is reflected in the play areas.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are consistently kind and respectful. For example, a practitioner courteously asked a small group of children if she could take a photograph of their play for their learning journals.
- The practitioners foster positive relationships between the children. They encourage them to play in pairs and small groups.
- The practitioners provide the children with advance warning of the upcoming transitions from one activity to the next. The duration and nature of the some of the transitions, such as handwashing before snack time, resulted in inactive waiting periods for the children.
- The practitioners use a key-person system for the recording of observations for their key groups of children.
- Snack time provides an opportunity for relaxed conversations and social interactions. The practitioners sit and eat their snack with the children. The children are encouraged to take out a book as soon as they have finished their snack.

*Action advised*

- The practitioners are advised to review some of the times of transitions with a view to optimising them as learning opportunities. The use of the key-person approach may assist in this regard.
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.
- Play is the central medium for learning in the setting. The children have many opportunities to engage in rich, play-based learning experiences. A range of play-types was observed, including imaginary play, socio-dramatic play, creative play and sensory play.
- The practitioners set high, yet realistic expectations for the children. They plan for learning on long-term, medium-term and short-term bases. The plans are linked to Alstear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. The long-term plans identify a range of skills, knowledges and dispositions to be developed throughout the year. The medium-term plans outline themes and goals for each term. The children’s emerging interests are included in the weekly, short-term plans. This information is used to plan meaningful learning experiences for the children.
- The practitioners use individual journals to document the learning and progress of each child. The journals include learning records, with photographs and descriptions of the children’s learning, examples of their mark making and the children’s comments. The information gathered is used to identify the next steps in the children’s learning. The journal is sent home to parents regularly and they are invited to sign it, make comments and include photographs if they wish. This creates a strong link between the setting and the home. For example, a parent included a variety of photographs of her child engaged in activities at home, along with comprehensive information on the child’s interests and recent experiences. The children’s group learning experiences are documented through the use of photographs in a large floor book that is shared with parents.
- The practitioners are very skilled in supporting and extending the children’s learning. They act as engaged and interesting play partners. This was evident during block play when a practitioner encouraged the children to predict what might happen if she were to let go of the tall tower of blocks that she was holding. The children’s language was consistently extended through the use of words, such as ‘winch’ and ‘combine harvester’ during play. A range of interactive strategies has been introduced to support children’s learning. A small amount of formal teaching was observed during the inspection.
- The indoor environment is structured to ignite the children’s curiosity and promote their engagement. The interest areas include a grocery shop, which is modelled on a greengrocers in the local community, and a café. These areas are well resourced with materials which support the children’s early literacy and numeracy skills, such as shop signage, notebooks, calculators and telephones. Plates, cutlery and real cooking utensils, along with menus are included in the café area. The children’s early literacy and numeracy skills are also effectively supported through books, resources in the play areas and through songs and rhymes. During the inspection, a practitioner and a small group of children used stones with pictures to tell the story of ‘The Three Little Pigs’.
- The practitioners plan interesting projects for the children. A recent example of this is a project about space. One of the practitioner’s family members sent photographs and videos about his work in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to share with the children. There are plans in place for him to visit the children to discuss his occupation in the coming months.

Action advised
- The practitioners are advised to substitute the use of formal teaching strategies with more playful, interactive learning approaches.
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 very content and secure in the setting. They demonstrate significant enjoyment in their learning.
- It is evident that the practitioners value and respect the children’s voices. The children choose songs from the song board to sing during circle time and make many choices in relation to their engagement in activities throughout the morning.
- The children are making sense of the world through their play experiences. One child was observed to take care great care in washing a baby, remarking that ‘We need to be very careful when washing babies’.
- The children are very articulate. They communicate their ideas and opinions confidently. They also engage in purposeful writing in the play areas. For example, they wrote down pizza toppings in the café.
- The children have developed very positive relationships with their peers. They play together cooperatively and it is clear that they enjoy each other’s company.
- The children are developing many positive dispositions for learning. They display imagination and resourcefulness. This was observed when some of the children took the cutlery and food from the café to bring to another area where their friends were planning a picnic. During this time, the children skilfully designated different roles in their play. For example, they decided that they needed a doctor when a baby became ill at the picnic.
- The children are developing very positive connections with their community. The local shopkeeper, a public health nurse, a postman, a farmer and teachers from the primary school in which the setting is located have visited the setting. The children also visited a park that recently opened in the vicinity and a Garda station.
- The children are developing their independent skills. They take responsibility for some small tasks during the morning, such as giving out paintbrushes and lunch boxes. Some of the children told the practitioners that they would like a job at tidy-up time. The practitioners complete the majority of tasks at snack time and tidy up time.
- The children are developing their creativity. They recently engaged in a process art, group project with a parent who is a local artist. Their creation is displayed in the learning room.

Action advised
- The practitioners are advised to provide increased opportunities for the children to develop their independent skills by allocating a range of tasks throughout the morning. A visual helper system would assist in this regard.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The manager/practitioner and practitioners present as a very professional and committed team. They are highly reflective in their approaches and are open to new learning.
- The manager/practitioner and practitioners demonstrate the ability to develop comprehensive plans that provide effective learning experiences for the children. Planning meetings are scheduled each Friday. Evaluation and reflection on the learning programme generally happens on an informal basis during their daily discussions.
- The manager/practitioner and practitioners demonstrate a very positive attitude towards engaging in continuing professional development. They have recently completed a range of professional learning programmes, including the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) programme, and training on the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines and Lámh, a manual sign system. The impact of this learning is very much reflected in the practitioners’ professional approach to providing quality experiences for children.
The manager/practitioner and the practitioners have built very effective partnerships with parents and families. An active open-door policy is in place. There are many opportunities for parents to spend time in the setting. Recently, parents were invited to accompany the children on a visit to the local park. Parents and extended family members are also invited to share their interests and occupations with the children throughout the year.

Communication with parents happens in a number of ways. A newsletter with information on the setting is provided each month. Information and photographs are also displayed in the entrance hall where parents can view them. The children’s individual learning journals are shared with parents on a termly basis and there are many opportunities for the parents and practitioners to discuss the children’s learning on an informal basis.

The manager/practitioner avails of advice from local county childcare committee and an external support agency. The practitioners have engaged with the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) and made links with external professionals to support the participation of children with additional needs. The practitioners also provide parents with information on relevant parent workshops in the local area.

The transition from the pre-school to primary school is very effectively supported. The manager/practitioner has made good links with the principal and teachers in the school in which the pre-school is located. The teachers and the principal visit the children during the year and the children’s older siblings frequently come into the setting. There are many opportunities for the children to attend events in the school hall. The pre-school and the primary school collaborate to plan a joint Christmas concert. Items, such as a school uniform and school bags, are also included in the play areas during the last term. The practitioners plan to use the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Mo Scéal transition document to share information on the children’s strengths and interests with the primary school.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to use the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to further enhance their existing self-review and evaluation processes.
Summary of Overall Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
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Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

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