An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Our Lady of the Wayside</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Bluebell National School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bluebell</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dublin 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>17DY0712</td>
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</tbody>
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Date of Inspection: 07-12-2018
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.
DATE OF INSPECTION

07/12/2018

Inspection activities undertaken

- Meeting with setting manager
- Meeting with practitioners
- Observation of interactions during a number of sessions
- Interaction with children
- Review of relevant documents
- Feedback to setting manager and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Our Lady of the Wayside is a community-based setting providing a morning pre-school service through its participation in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. It is located on the grounds of the Bluebell National School. It is part of a group of community settings. On the day of the inspection, eight children were present in the pre-school room inspected together with the manager/practitioner and a practitioner. The manager and one practitioner attended the 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 good.
- There is a friendly and relaxed atmosphere in the setting. Parents and children are greeted warmly on arrival by the practitioners.
- The practitioners are calm, responsive and affirming in their interactions with the children
- There is an established daily routine in operation through which time is allocated for free-play time, circle time, and lunch time. Currently there is an imbalance between child-initiated and adult-initiated activities.
- During the inspection visit, there were occasions when transitions between activities were signposted verbally with a five minute cue to the upcoming change. This practice was not consistent and the majority of transitions were announced in the moment with no time for children to prepare for the upcoming change.
- Snack time promotes the meal as a social occasion for the children. There is scope to develop this meaningful occasion; practitioners could partake in this mealtime alongside the children.
- Effective praise and encouragement are regular features of the practitioners’ responses to the children. The practitioners often foster respectful child-to-child relationships, referring them to one another to assist each other or share their stories and achievements.
- Some steps have been taken to support the children’s sense of identity and belonging. The children have attended the school fair and local Christmas lights ceremony. There is a birthday display and some photographs which display the children’s engagement with activities. There is currently no visual representation of the children, their families, their culture or the community connections in the learning environment for the children to review and to reflect upon.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to revise the organisation of the daily routine in order to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated activities.
- The practitioners are advised to develop transition strategies to ensure that transition times are clearly signposted, and that these times are utilised more effectively as learning opportunities. In particular, practitioners should use visual and auditory cues to support children to transition effectively from one activity to the next.
- The practitioners are advised to further support the social aspect of the snack time routine by partaking in the mealtime with the children.
To further support the children’s developing sense of identity and belonging and to make the service’s links with the local community visible, the practitioners are advised to celebrate the identity of all of the children in the setting through discussions, resources and visual displays.

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 which is aligned to Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework is in place. There are monthly plans documented. The plans are thematic, and incorporate seasonal events, celebrations and the practitioner’s ideas.
- There are some observations undertaken which document information about the child. These observations do not reflect a holistic view of the child, and this information is not used to inform planning for the children’s learning. The practitioners intend to develop individual learning journals for each child; at the time of the inspection their artwork was being collected.
- The practitioners use a number of effective interaction strategies such as, naming and affirming children’s actions and ideas, introducing descriptive words into the conversations, engaging as a play partner and asking some open-ended questions that promote the children to problem solve independently. The practitioners often follow the children’s lead in play. This was observed when a practitioner drew puddles on the floor in response to the children making umbrellas with construction materials.
- The indoor environment is very well resourced and has some defined interest areas, including a home corner and an art area. Some materials are inaccessible to the children due to the lay-out of the environment and there are many duplicate plastic items.
- The practitioners encourage the children to sing songs during circle time, to engage in movement activities and to share their ideas during large group games.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to continue to develop their procedures for gathering assessment information through documenting regular observations which focus on identifying the child’s strengths, interests, needs and dispositions. The information gathered in this way needs to be used to inform the short-term planning for the next steps in the children’s learning. Additional guidance on planning for and assessing children’s learning is available in the ‘Planning and Assessment’ pillar in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide.
- The practitioners are advised to audit the indoor environment with a view to reducing the amount of plastic materials and developing the range of open-ended natural materials, and interest areas. The ‘Learning environment’ pillar in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide is a useful resource in relation to this.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children present as confident and self-assured individuals, who enjoy their learning experiences. On the day of the inspection, the children were observed to organise their own play activities and were demonstrating engagement and curiosity while exploring a treasure box.
- The children are developing friendships. Some children understand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and they demonstrate an evolving capacity for negotiation and collaboration. They express their feelings and the practitioners support the children to share these with one another.
- The children have some opportunities to represent their ideas and feelings in a creative way, through sand and playdough. There is some engagement with colouring templates which limits children’s creativity, self-expression and free mark-making.
- There are some opportunities for the children to see themselves as active learners who experience and achieve success and reflect and discuss past learning experiences. This was facilitated by the practitioners through discussions on the recent school fair and on a recent learning activity.
- The children have some opportunities to engage with number and mathematical concepts. This was observed when they counted items and referenced the shape of some items.
**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities for the children to reflect on their learning and past experiences. To this end, it would be beneficial to include in the environment additional visual imagery and displays of the children's achievements and recent learning activities, to provide children with regular opportunities to develop and review their learning journals, and to facilitate discussions about their recent learning activities.
- The practitioners are advised to enable the children to express themselves creatively through enhanced engagement with materials for process art, painting and free mark-making.
- The practitioners are advised to provide additional play opportunities for the children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through the use of symbols, print and numbers.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The manager has regular, formal meetings with the managers of the other community settings within their network on a monthly basis.
- The team meet formally once a month to develop the monthly curriculum and share ideas informally on a daily basis. The *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* is not used as a basis for these meetings.
- There is a professional ethos in the setting with the manager providing good support to staff. There is evidence of good teamwork with clarity of roles.
- There are good supports in place to help children settle into the setting. These include an information day for parents to attend, with a summary about the provision distributed to parents. Parents and children are encouraged to visit the setting in advance of the children starting. An open-door policy is in place and parents are encouraged to visit at any time. Parents are invited to participate in activities in the service such as at Christmas time and the end-of-year celebration.
- Information is shared with parents periodically during the year through informal discussions at arrival and collection times. Children’s learning journals are developed in June each year and they are sent home at the end of the year.
- As the setting is established in a school, strong connections have been developed with the school. The school principal visits the setting regularly and the children attend numerous events throughout the school year. During the month of June, the practitioners plan a program of events to support the children’s transition to primary school.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to engage with the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* with a view to developing formal reflective practices and to identify plans for improvement.
- The practitioners are advised to develop and add to the children's learning journals throughout the year and to share them with the parents at intervals throughout the year. Eliciting parental comments and opinions on the materials shared is also advised.
- The practitioners are advised to avail of external supports to develop practice and to embed *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is good.
## 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>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
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<td>Good</td>
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## Language used in Early-Years Education-focused 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>
</tr>
<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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