An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Smart Kidz Pre-school</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Scurlough Bush</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oylegate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enniscorthy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Wexford</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>17WX0221</td>
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Date of Inspection: 11-03-2019
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 owner and practitioners
- Observation of interactions during a session
- Interaction with children
- Review of relevant documents
- Feedback to setting owner and practitioners

**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Smart Kidz Pre-School, established in 2017, is a private setting located in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford. It provides a morning session for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, sixteen children and three practitioners, one of whom is the owner, were present. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report, and the response of the setting will be found in the appendix of this report.

**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 very, friendly and affirming atmosphere in the setting. The children present as safe and secure in the learning environment.
- It is clearly evident that the practitioners know the children well. Their courteous and responsive interactions with the children contributes to the very warm relationships that exist amongst the practitioners and the children. This highly commendable practice promotes the positive relationships which exist between the children themselves.
- The daily routine provides ample opportunities for children to make independent decisions in selecting and organising their learning. The structure of the session is effectively organised to promote children’s active participation in meaningful, learning experiences.
- The visual schedule on display at children’s eye level reflects the well-established daily routine. The practitioners use a bell and verbal reminders to inform children of upcoming changes in activities. These practices help children to predict changes in the daily routine. During the inspection, the transition to and from play-time to lunch-time was overly long and a few children became distracted in the activity.
- The practitioners’ use of affirming language and their guidance and encouragement to the children for their efforts in activities is noteworthy.
- There are some very good strategies in place to foster children’s sense of identity and belonging. These include the use of imagery and photographs and visits to the setting from parents and members of the community to help raise children’s awareness of members in the community.

**Action advised**

- The practitioners are advised to build on the strategies that they use to help children experience smooth and fluid transitions. The use of songs, rhymes and playful activities will 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.
- An emergent, enquiry-based curriculum is implemented and it is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- Planning for the progression of children’s learning frequently incorporates their individual emergent interests. The practitioners use a wide variety of methods to gather information on the children’s learning experiences and their achievements. This is realised through the practitioners’ purposeful use of learning observations together with their anecdotal notes and photographs capturing children’s critical achievements, along with samples of the children’s art work. These valuable findings are recorded in the children’s individual learning books.
- The practitioners’ highly effective interactions with the children are noteworthy. At the time of the inspection, examples included the practitioners joining the children in their play in a very sensitive and skilful manner and their consistent weaving of new vocabulary and thought-provoking comments into spontaneous conversations to support children’s higher order thinking.
- Throughout the setting, the learning environments are spacious and inviting, with very well-organised and clearly defined interest areas which are equipped with appropriate materials for the children to explore and experiment with.
- The commendable provision of open-ended play opportunities supports children’s participation in meaningful learning experience in line with their interests and needs. On the day of the inspection, children had sufficient opportunities to engage in uninterrupted, child-initiated play both indoors and outdoors. The practitioners facilitate meaningful play experiences for all children in a variety of contexts.
- The practitioners promote the development of children’s emergent mathematical understanding in rich meaningful contexts. During the inspection, they modelled mathematical language as they counted with the children and discussed mathematical concepts, such as height, quantity and shape. At the time of the inspection, there was potential for additional everyday resources to be used to strengthen these developing skills.
- Children are encouraged to express themselves and their creativity in a variety of ways. The practitioners provide opportunities for children to experience free, creative art activities linked to the child’s individual interests and the theme of the week. There is a notable supply of high-quality books for children to enjoy.
- The children are learning in an inclusive environment. This is evident through the practitioners’ praiseworthy accommodation of the pace and focus of children’s learning and development.

*Action advised*
- The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities to extend the children’s emerging mathematical understanding. The provision of everyday materials, such as rulers, measuring tapes, calculators and weighing scales will further support these developing skills.

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 clearly demonstrate very high levels of motivation, enjoyment and fun throughout their learning activities. During the session, children frequently displayed sustained interest and engagement along with positive learning dispositions. They persisted and co-operated as they collaborated in their play.
- The children exhibit a positive attitude to appropriate risk-taking and problem solving. During the inspection, these evolving skills supported a sense of belief in their capabilities. An example of this was evident during a sorting and classifying activity where the children became the teacher with the sensitive support of a practitioner.
- A significant number of the children confidently verbalise their achievements to each other and the practitioners. The children’s learning journals are readily available and easily accessible for them to review. At the time of the inspection, formal opportunities for children to share their learning and achievements was not a regular element of the daily activities.
The children display very good social skills; on many occasions they negotiate and take turns during activities, such as feeding and burying the toy animals during the sensorial sand-play.

Many of the children demonstrate a very good understanding of the rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour. On the day of the inspection, a small number of children were sensitively supported by the practitioners to help resolve minor issues of social conflict.

The children are provided with very good opportunities to develop an awareness of the natural environment. On the day of the inspection, children enthusiastically took turns to pet and feed the three lambs that the owner is minding for a local farmer.

The children’s growing awareness of members of the community is effectively nurtured and fostered. Throughout the pre-school year, parents and members of the community visit the setting to share their skills with the children.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to provide formal opportunities for children to discuss and share their learning and achievements. The use of small-group activities facilitated by the key worker, where children can discuss and review their learning journals with their peers and the practitioners, will help children to recall their learning.
- The practitioners are advised to use a broader range of strategies to support the children in the development of their self-regulation skills and their ability to independently resolve minor social conflicts.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- There is a very professional ethos of collaboration and teamwork in Smart Kidz Pre-school. The owner/practitioner is proactive in promoting high standards and demonstrates a clear vision for the working of the setting.
- The practitioners’ engagement in self-review and professional reflection is exemplary. They engage in daily informal reviews to monitor the impact of the activities provided on children’s learning and to discuss any required adaptations. At the regular staff meetings, the practitioners use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to plan for and reflect on practices and procedures.
- The practitioners’ commitment to their professional upskilling is significant. They regularly participate in continuing professional development opportunities. In addition, they share their learning from their further training programmes at the staff meetings to inform their practice and to support the provision of high quality learning experiences for the children.
- The practitioners use a number of excellent approaches to share children’s learning and progress with parents. Photographs of the children engaged in activities are displayed on the ‘Parents’ Noticeboard’. Formal opportunities are organised for parents and children to review the child’s learning book together. One-to-one parent-practitioner meetings are facilitated to discuss each child’s learning and progress. At the time of the inspection, the setting’s ‘Parents’ Handbook’ was being updated to fully reflect the curriculum on offer.
- The practitioners’ effective use of a range of appropriate strategies that support children’s transitions into and from the setting is highly commendable. Prior to the children commencing in the setting, they are invited to visit to meet the practitioners. Towards the end of the pre-school year, the topic of moving to primary school is explored using photographic displays of the different primary schools in the locality.
- The owner/practitioner accompanies children to the open day in primary schools. Visits of teachers from the local primary school are also facilitated to promote continuity of children’s learning experiences. At the time of the inspection, the practitioners were recording relevant information regarding children’s learning in ‘Mo Scéal: Moving from Pre-school to Primary School’ templates. This practice supports the sharing of information with primary school to ensure continuity of experiences and progression in children’s learning.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is excellent.
### 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>Very Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Excellent</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>
</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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

- We are very happy that the inspection report recognised our warm and friendly atmosphere as we strive to create a home away from home environment for the children where they can truly be themselves with supportive adults on hand to enhance their learning.
- It also acknowledged our professional ethos for collaboration and teamwork, our highly effective interactions and the wide range of open ended play opportunities we provide.
- We were particularly pleased with our excellent result for management and leadership for learning as we put strong efforts in to ensuring the quality of our work as a team and our practices with children. The report outlined our commitment to self-review, reflection and upskilling through CPD and how we involve parents continuously in our setting in an excellent manner.
- We are happy to take on board any suggestions advised.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

1. To help build on our strategies for smooth and fluid transitions we have introduced a clean-up song and splits the group so two bathrooms are now used to shorten the transition time to snack. This is working very well.
2. To further facilitate mathematical understanding we have pooled together the resources we have on one shelf which include our Montessori materials, weighing scales, calculator, rulers and moved the measuring tapes up beside our height chart as suggested. We have also added additional rulers and calculators so more children can use them.
3. We have added small group time to our daily routine before snack and at the end of each day to allow children to develop bonds with their key worker and create opportunities for children to develop their higher order thinking through reflection on their learning journals. We can really see the benefit of doing this.
4. We have broadened our range of strategies to support the children in independently solving minor social conflicts as suggested.