## EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

### REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Clever Clogs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Aston Village Educate Together National School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dunlin Street</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aston Village</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drogheda</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Louth</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>13LH0170</td>
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**Date of Inspection:** 16-05-2019
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

Date of inspection: 16-05-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-inspection meeting with the setting manager</td>
<td>Review of relevant setting documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversations with the early years practitioners</td>
<td>Review of records of the children’s learning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of interactions and activities during two pre-school sessions</td>
<td>Post-inspection feedback discussion with setting manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of educational resources and facilities</td>
<td>Post-inspection feedback meeting with the setting manager and the early years practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction and discussion with the children</td>
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CONTEXT OF SETTING

Clever Clogs was established in 2013 and is located in two classrooms in Aston Village Educate Together National School, Drogheda. The setting provides two morning pre-school sessions for children enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The setting also provides part-time care and after-school care for school-aged children. The setting manager, five early years practitioners and thirty-two children were present on the day of the inspection. 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 notably warm and welcoming atmosphere in the setting.
- The practitioners operate an effective open door policy. Parents are relaxed and very comfortable coming right into the pre-school rooms, chatting and playing before saying goodbye to their children. The practitioners’ relationships with parents are very professional, positive and sensitive. The setting operates a key person system and parents are fully aware of who their child’s key person is.
- Relationships between the practitioners and the children are positive and attentive. The practitioners praise the children’s efforts and achievements throughout the pre-school sessions.
- There is a consistent daily routine in place in both pre-school sessions and the children are very familiar with it. Time is allocated to free play indoors and outdoors, circle time, small group activities and snack time.
- The practitioners place great importance on supporting the children to be independent and to develop competence in self-care skills.
- The children’s developing sense of identity and belonging is effectively supported through frequent conversations and some photographic displays in the pre-school rooms. People from the local community visit the children, such as the Garda and the local lollipop person. Parents and family members are regularly invited into the setting to share celebrations and events with the children. Recently, parents cooked food typical of their home cultures and brought it into the setting to share with the children, each other and the staff.

Actions advised

- To further nurture the children’s developing sense of identity and belonging, it is advised that the practitioners introduce activities, displays, artefacts and resources that will support the children to explore who they are as individuals, as a pre-school group, as a member of their family and as a person in their community. It is also advised that the children’s individual creative art and mark-making is displayed in the playroom.
- To further strengthen relationships and support consistency of experiences, it is advised that the practitioners explore the benefits of maintaining their key person system across the two year ECCE programme.
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 practitioners implement a play-based curriculum which is aligned to Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.
- The children’s progression in learning and development is observed and recorded in a variety of ways through: monthly narrative observations, checklists and a learner journal containing samples of the children’s work. Poster displays and a room learner journal are also maintained illustrating group learning activities.
- Planning for the curriculum is theme-based and drawn from a standard curriculum folder. The practitioners in individual rooms report that they add activities of current interest to the children to this standard curriculum. The children’s emerging interests are not yet recorded and used to inform short-term planning for the children’s next steps in learning.
- The indoor learning environments are large, bright and well-maintained. Interest areas for different types of play are somewhat established in both rooms. It was observed that provision of resources and materials is limited and that they are predominantly toy and plastic.
- The outdoor play space is large and provides for some types of play. As in the indoor environment, resources and materials are rather limited.
- The practitioners use many effective strategies to support the children’s learning and development. They focus on the children, work at their physical levels, engage with them as play partners and sometimes extend their thinking and vocabulary.
- Strategies used by the practitioners to support the development of the children’s early literacy and numeracy skills are playful and meaningful. The practitioners support the children to count in real situations. Songs, chant and rhymes are used throughout the session.
- The children are learning in an inclusive environment. The setting has successfully accessed support from the Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) for children in both pre-school rooms.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to record notes or anecdotes of the children’s current interests, achievements and developmental needs as they are observed during the session. These observations can be included in the children’s learner journals and linked to Aistear.
- It is advised that the practitioners develop a short-term planning system to provide playful learning experiences based on observed and recorded current interests, achievements and developmental needs.
- To further support the children’s engagement in self-initiated play and learning, spark their imagination and prompt creativity, it is advised that the range of play resources be widened to include open-ended, real, recycled and natural materials, props and tools.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children are very well-settled in the setting. They arrive in the morning eager to begin play and to engage in conversations.
- The children are developing the skills to make choices and decision about their play and learning activities during daily indoor and outdoor free-play periods. They display dispositions of motivation and concentration in their self-chosen activities.
- Many of the children in both pre-school rooms, engaged for extended periods of time in sensory play, physical play and body movement. They enjoyed climbing, balancing, jumping and using sand and play dough. It was observed that at times the availability of resources to support this play and learning was not sufficient.
- The children are enjoying free, creative mark-making using pens and paper inside and using chalk to mark-make on the ground outside.
• The children express great enjoyment in their participation in songs, chants and rhymes.
• In both pre-school rooms, there is a wide range of stages of language development among the children and there are many children whose home language is not English. Communication and language development is a learning priority for the children in this setting.
• Instances of social conflict, in line with typical pre-school development, were observed in both pre-school rooms. Increased support from practitioners in these situations would greatly support the development of the children’s social and emotional skills.
• The children in this setting are learning and achieving in line with their developmental capacities.

**Actions advised**

• To further support the children’s communication and language development, it is advised that circle time be conducted in small groups (possibly key groups) and used as an opportunity to discuss and converse about topics that are currently of interest and meaningful to the children.
• It is advised that a jobs board is created to support communication and allow the children to ‘read’ what their job for the day is and take independent responsibility for it.
• It is advised that the practitioners begin to consistently use conflict resolution and problem solving strategies to support the children’s social and emotional development.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

• The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
• There are clear and professional structures in place in the setting. Roles and responsibilities are defined and equitable.
• A strong and positive sense of team work was evident on the day of inspection.
• The staff articulate agreed aims and goals for the children’s learning and development. These have not yet been documented in a curriculum statement.
• The manager encourages staff to reflect and plan for improvement. This is currently conducted informally.
• A system of annual staff appraisal has been established and the manager actively supports staff to maintain their continuing professional development.
• Information about the setting is shared with parents during an open day and through a handbook.
• Information about each child’s individual progression in learning and development is shared with their parents through regular informal conversations. The children’s learner records are presented to parents at the end of the pre-school year.
• The setting has established very positive relationships with the school in which it is located. The children have ample opportunities to visit the school classrooms and play yard. The principal and teachers of junior infants visit the children in their pre-school rooms. Sometimes information is shared informally to support some children’s transition between settings.

**Actions advised**

• It is advised that the practitioners document the broad-based goals for children’s learning and development which underpin the setting’s curriculum. The ‘Curriculum Foundations’ pillar in the online *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* provides information and guidance on this action.
• Building on the informal quality improvement practices currently in place, the manager is advised to create regular time for the practitioners to engage in self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The online *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will guide and support this action.
• It is advised that the practitioners share recorded information about the children’s progression and achievements in learning and development more regularly with their parents.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The manager and all early years’ practitioners attended and engaged very professionally and positively in the feedback discussion following the inspection. This, coupled with the up-coming on-site mentoring support from Better Start, indicates that the capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is very 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>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Good</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</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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</table>

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