An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI)
Final Report

Setting name	Carolines Preschool & Montessori
Setting address	Churchlands East Mayglass Co. Wexford Wexford Y35YP58
TUSLA registration number	TU2015WX024
DCEDIY number	14WX0189
Date of inspection	13-10-2022
Date of issue of report	15-12-2022

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:

- Quality of the context to support children's learning and development
- Quality of processes to support children's learning and development
- Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements
- 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

Dates of inspection	13-10-2022
Inspection activities undertaken • Pre-Inspection meeting with the setting owner/early years educator • Review of setting documentation and records of children's learning and development • Review of the education resources and facilities • Observations of interactions during a session • Interaction with the children • Feedback meeting with the setting owner/early years educator	

Context of setting

Caroline's preschool is a privately owned sessional service. The setting provides a morning session delivering the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection seven children, the owner/ educator and an early learning and care student were present. The owner/educator attended the full feedback meeting and the student attended the feedback meeting briefly. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report; a response for publication 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 was fair.
- The educator knows the children well. The children arrived confidently into the setting and it was evident that the relationships were well established with the children.
- A daily routine was in place which provided opportunity for both indoor and outdoor play. The routine provided was mainly adult-led indoors, incorporating activities which were organised or directed by the educator. There was some opportunity for the children to be autonomous as they made some decisions regarding their play experiences. A visual display of the daily routine was not available to the children to follow the sequence of the day.
- There were a number of transition periods which were at times announced verbally. On occasion transition strategies were used to support children's learning, such as the use of nursery rhymes. There was no visual schedule available for the children to see and follow the sequence of the day.
- During snack time the children sat and ate and engaged each other in conversations. The educator and student did not sit and share the mealtime, however at times the educator supported the discussions by engaging with the children in their conversations.
- The educator supported the children through affirmation and through resolving minor issues between the children. Occasionally, there was use of a more directive approach which limited the opportunity for the children to develop the skills of conflict resolution and problem solving.
- There was some imagery and resources that reflected diversity and the identity and belonging of the child. These items included books, items in the dress up area and posters representing emotions. There was a display in the entrance lobby with photos of the siblings of some of the children currently attending.

Actions advised

- The educator is advised to review the daily routine to ensure adequate time indoors for child initiated play. The development of a display of the daily routine as a visual aid would support children in being able to identify and follow the sequence of the day.
- The educator is advised to review transition strategies to ensure they are optimised for purposeful learning at all times.
- The educator is advised to review their positive behaviour strategies to support children in understanding the rules of play and providing opportunities for children to begin to problem solve independently.
- The educator is advised to implement activities and provide additional resources and imagery that; reflect the children as individuals, as members of the preschool group, and further reflect them as members of their families, the community in which they live and their cultures.

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 was fair.
- There was a curriculum statement in place which identified elements of both a play based and Montessori curriculum broadly informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.*
- There was no long-term medium-term or short-term planning documentation in place. The owner/educator verbalised that the curriculum was organised using themes and at times was responsive to the children's emergent interests. The current theme was Halloween.
- Assessment processes were limited and did not reflect the learning aims of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. Current assessment practices did not provide scope to support the next stages of learning for children. There were some short anecdotal notes recorded and the owner/educator verbalised her intention to complete four developmental checklists over the course of the academic year. Numerous photographs of the children engaged in activities were saved to a digital device. These photographs will be printed and shared with parents at the end of the year.
- On the day of the inspection the educator at times used positive interaction strategies, such as; sitting alongside the children, engaging as a play partner with some use of open-ended questions evident. Occasionally, testing or closed questions were used which limited children's language development and opportunity for expression.
- The indoor environment was bright and inviting and provided opportunities for creative, manipulative and role play.
- The outdoor environment provided additional opportunities for explorative and gross motor play. Children were observed engaging with nature; they engaged with digging, transporting muck and sand, water play and they explored worms. The educator advised there are plans to further extend the outdoor learning environment using additional natural materials.

Actions advised

- The educator is advised to develop and document an emergent and enquiry based curriculum that is fully informed and aligned to the principals of *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.*
- The educator is advised to develop and document long-term, medium-term and short-term plans.
- The educator is advised to ensure her assessment practices inform the short-term plans in respect of the individual children's interests, needs and dispositions.
- The educator is advised to enhance her interactions to ensure the use of open-ended questions that prompt children's thinking and reasoning skills and invite children to share their understanding and knowledge on the subject matter.

Area 3: Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements

- The quality of children's learning experiences and achievements was good.
- The children presented as happy and secure. They had some opportunities to make choices regarding their play experiences.
- At times the children were engaged and motivated in their play activities. This was evident as they engaged in play in the home corner, with cars and in digging and transporting muck and sand.
- The children displayed knowledge in language, math and stem. This was observed when some children counted each other when lining up, referenced 'flying like a kite' when noticing the weather, and when discussing the needs of worms during outside play. There were missed opportunities to explore these understandings with the children in order to further extend children's learning.
- Children shared their success with their peers and with the educator and the student. On the day of the inspection there was no visual imagery of the children's achievements and progression on display in the learning environment.
- There were some art materials freely available in the learning environment. On the day of the inspection the children engaged in a group template art activity and adult directed activities. There was scope to enhance the activities provided to afford the children opportunity for their own creative expression and autonomy over their own learning.

Actions advised

- The educator is advised to develop additional strategies and activities which support children to make their own decisions, enhancing their sense of autonomy in their learning.
- The educator is advised to provide children with additional opportunity to engage in activities that are playful, and support creative self-expression.
- The educator is advised to provide opportunities for children to see themselves as successful learners by making visible to them their achievements and progression. This can be achieved through the development of individual learner journals which capture each child's individual learning journey and reflect the child's own thoughts and words, and through the development of displays of their learning as a group and as an individual in their learning environment.

Area 4: Quality of management and leadership for learning

- The quality of management and leadership for learning was fair.
- A curriculum statement was documented.
- The educator advised she reflects informally on a daily basis. Reflections were not currently documented. The educator has yet to embed a culture of engagement and evaluation with *Siolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Education* and *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.*
- Information in relation to the policies and practice of the setting was available for parents on the setting's website. Information was shared verbally with parents at arrival and collection times about children's learning. Photographs will be provided to parents at the end of the year of the children engaged in activities and the educator emails the photographs to the parents periodically through-out the year.
- The educator expressed her commitment and dedication to her setting and to the families and children that attend the setting. She has completed various training courses, these include a play seminar, behaviour management and play therapy.

- Transitions into the setting were informed by a settling-in policy. Opportunities were provided for parents to visit the setting with their child in advance starting there. A staggered settling-in period was utilised and was responsive to the individual needs of the child. Transitions out of the setting were not developed or documented. The setting has yet to establish formal relationships with the local schools to ensure continuity in children's learning.

Actions advised

- The educator is advised to develop formal self-evaluation and self-reflection practices; using the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide will assist this process.
- The educator is advised to formalise links with parents to ensure the sharing of children's learning on a regular basis; to invite parental commentary on their children's learning and to provide opportunities for setting evaluation.
- The educator is advised to contact Better Start, National Early Years Quality Development service for support in implementing these actions advised.

Summary of overall inspection

Area	Quality level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Fair
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	Fair
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	Good
Quality of management and leadership for learning	Fair

Language used in Early Years Education Inspection Reports

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the setting using the language which is shown below.

Level	Description
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.*