An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	C.J Playschool
Setting Address	St. Joseph's Pastoral Centre Summerhill Road Glasthule Co. Dublin
DCYA number	09DR0053

Date of Inspection: 14-03-2019

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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	14-03-2019
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with setting co-managers and practitioners • Observation of interactions during the pre-school session	• Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Feedback to setting co-managers and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

CJ Playschool was first established in Glasthule in 2005 and moved to its current location in St. Joseph's Pastoral Centre in 2008. This private setting provides a morning sessional service for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The setting is managed by two co-managers, who also work as practitioners. On the day of the inspection, both co-managers/practitioners, two practitioners and twenty-two children 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.
- A pleasant and relaxed atmosphere has been very successfully created. The environment is bright and inviting.
- The children and their families are warmly welcomed into the setting. The children enter the setting with enthusiasm and it is clear that the practitioners know them very well. A key-person approach, whereby one practitioner works closely with a small group of children, is in place. This supports nurturing and responsive relationships,
- Interactions between practitioners and children are very warm and respectful. Relaxed two-way conversations occur spontaneously throughout the morning. The practitioners consistently use warm and encouraging tones to affirm the children and to recognise their efforts.
- The children's sense of identity and belonging is well supported through the many photographs on display that show their engagement in activities. Their uniqueness is also reflected in their individual art work. There is potential to enhance the representation of the children's families and cultures in the setting.
- The children engage freely and with interest in their chosen activities. They make many choices in relation to their learning throughout the morning.
- Transitions in the setting are signalled effectively by the adult. The practitioners adopt a playful approach to tidy-up time, which is very successful in encouraging the children to play an active role during this time. On the day of the inspection, the duration some of the transitions was overly long and this resulted in inactive waiting periods for some of the children.
- The children are developing their independence and personal care skills. They put away their belongings on arrival and manage self-care routines, including handwashing and wiping noses. A helper system is also in place which provides opportunities for the children to carry out tasks throughout the morning.
- Snack time is viewed as a relaxed social occasion where the children and the practitioners sit together and engage in conversations.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to review the management of transitions, particularly during the transition from tidy-up time to snack time, in order to optimise these times as learning opportunities and to enhance the children's engagement levels. The use of the key-person approach with small groups of children during transitions may be beneficial in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to further reflect the children as members of families and the wider community and their cultural diversity in the setting.

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 recognised as the central medium for learning in the setting. The children have ample time to engage in self-directed free-play.
- A curriculum statement, with clear goals for the children's learning, has been developed. The curriculum is guided by long-term, medium-term and short-term plans. Links to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* are evident. The short-term curriculum plans are informed by the children's interests. The practitioners reflect on the short-term curriculum plans at the end of each week and document the findings of this reflection.
- A number of effective assessment methods are in place. These include individual observations, individual learning journals and a group learning journal. The children's comments and mark making are regularly included in the group learning journal. On the day of the inspection, one child drew an elaborate picture of a leprechaun in this journal and his comments were carefully transcribed by the practitioner.
- A number of projects which were planned in response to the children's interests are documented, through photographs and the children's comments in the group learning journal. A recent food tasting session detailing the children's taste preferences has been documented in this way. The celebration of cultural events, such as Chinese New Year, are also documented in the group learning journal.
- The indoor environment is well resourced and provides for a variety of play types, including construction play, imaginative play and sensory play.
- The children's early language, literacy and numeracy skills are supported effectively through the use of songs and rhymes and a wide range of books, puzzles and games.
- The children have regular, direct access from the pre-school room to a paved outdoor area. On the day of the inspection, the children did not play outdoors due to inclement weather. As an alternative, the children were brought to a large hall in the centre where they engaged in physical play activities. The children have regular access to this indoor space.
- The practitioners engage a range of very effective strategies to support the children's learning and to extend their thinking. They join in the children's play when invited. In one example, the practitioner very successfully supported the children's learning during a shop game. She extended their language by including vocabulary, such as expensive and cheaper, and helped the children to make signs for items that were for sale in the shop. During the inspection, a small amount of direct teaching of days of the week and numbers was observed during a large group activity.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to increase the use of more playful, interactive teaching and learning approaches and to decrease the use of more direct and formal teaching.

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 are active agents in their learning. They make many choices throughout the morning and deeply engage in their chosen activities.
- The children demonstrate positive dispositions for learning, such as curiosity, resilience and resourcefulness.
- The children are skilled communicators. They express themselves confidently and articulately and engage in animated conversations with their peers and the practitioners.
- The children experience success and mastery during their learning activities. They proudly share their creations. On the day of the inspection, one child showed his friends an elaborate tree house that he had built with blocks.
- The children collaborate with the practitioners in the development of the curriculum. They actively contribute their ideas and thoughts and it is evident that their voices are heard, respected and acted upon.

- Positive, caring relationships between the children and their peers are very evident. They demonstrate an understanding of the rights and views of others.
- The children are developing a very positive awareness of their local community. They frequently meet members of the community in the coffee dock in the pastoral centre. On the day of the inspection, many of the children asked the window cleaner questions about his work as he cleaned the windows in the setting. The children also visit the local library and post office, and a *Garda* has visited the setting.
- The children are motivated and interested in their learning. They use their individual learning journals to discuss aspects of learning with their key practitioner. In this respect, the children are developing the capacity to reflect on their learning and to make connections between past, present and future learning. There is potential for the practitioners to build on this throughout the morning.
- The children play together co-operatively and collaborate to develop and expand on their play ideas. They invite their friends to join in their play and together they develop intricate play stories. On the day of the inspection, a small group of children set up a shop. They invited other children to help in the shop and to buy their goods.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to provide further opportunities for the children to extend their existing knowledge and thinking, through the use of more open-ended questions and discussion.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The co-managers/practitioners and the practitioners are very committed, professional and reflective in their approach.
- Effective structures are in place to support self-review practices. Team meetings are conducted each month and agreed actions are documented and progressed accordingly.
- Support and supervision by managers of practitioners currently happen on an informal basis and are not documented.
- Continuing professional development is highly valued in the setting. In recent years the setting has engaged in the Síolta Quality Awareness Programme. The practitioners have also completed training on the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines and professional learning programmes on play, Lṃh and communication with parents. One of the co-managers/practitioners has recently completed the Leadership for Inclusion in Early Childhood (LINC) Programme.
- The setting avails of supports from the local county childcare committee and other external agencies. One of the co-managers/practitioners plays an active role in a local network for early years' professionals.
- Effective strategies are in place to engage with parents. A parent handbook which provides information on the curriculum and practices in the setting is provided to each parent. Monthly newsletters are also shared with parents. Parent/practitioner meetings are conducted on an annual basis. The setting has an open door policy and many informal opportunities for discussion are provided.
- Parents are invited to accompany the children on walks during Road Safety Week and to share their experiences, cultures and languages with the children. Parents are also invited to attend the Christmas play, where they have the opportunity to meet with the practitioners and other families.
- Transitions into and out of the setting are managed effectively. A settling-in policy is in place to support the children's transition into the setting. Parents and their children are invited to attend an open day, to meet the practitioners and become familiar with the environment. Registration forms are completed for each child. These forms include details about the child's likes, dislikes, favourite songs and nursey rhymes and family members.
- Parents are provided with information on the transition from pre-school to primary school. A 'Transition to primary school child snapshot form' is completed for each child and given to the parents. In the past, the practitioners have brought small groups of children to visit a local school. There is potential to build further on the practices which support the transition from pre-school to primary school.

Actions advised

- The co-managers are advised to conduct individual support and supervision meetings on a more formal basis.
- The practitioners are advised to build on their current practices to support the transition from pre-school to primary school. This could include the provision of play resources and the establishment of links with local schools, where possible.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is very good. This was evident in the manner in which the co-managers and practitioners engaged in open and reflective dialogue during the post-inspection meeting.

Summary of Overall Inspection

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	**Very good**
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	**Very good**
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	**Very good**
Quality of management and leadership for learning	**Very good**

Language used in Early Years Education Inspection reports

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.

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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

- This was our first inspection and we are happy with the report and the feedback received from the inspector.
- We have taken the advice of the report and as practitioners are willing to meet the developing and growing needs of the setting and the children within it.

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

Area 1

- The transition from free play to snack time has been changed as suggested, so that we now have three small group tables with a key worker at each table. This we feel will initiate free talk in circle time and will also help to enhance the children's self-esteem, as well as to encourage the children to take responsibility for themselves by cleaning down their tables, washing their hands and getting their own bags and their lunches from the fridge.
- We have encouraged the children to bring in family photographs from home so that we can set up a group family tree for everyone to see. This includes pictures of themselves, mum, dad, granny, dogs, cats and friends.

Area 2

- Learning through playful interactions has been encouraged by the introduction of small clip boards in the home corner, construction area, the library and the table top activity area as well as encouraging the children with the support of the practitioners to express themselves through junk art and board games.

Area 3

- Through listening to the children the practitioners have extended the children's play by putting in place items to support particular themes or events going on in their play (i.e. a large dice was purchased for the board game, so that all children could see the numbers on it and join in more freely with the games)

Area 4

- We have conducted individual support and supervision meetings since this report was conducted.
- In order to support the transitions from our setting to school we have contacted the Vice Principal of the local junior school and with the support from them we have gotten photographs of different areas and aspects of the school yard and classrooms, which we have put on display. We have also put school jumpers which are part of the local school uniform in our dress up area.