An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI)
Final Report

Setting name	Little Rose Montessori School
Setting address	93 Rosehill Wicklow Town County Wicklow A67YW62
TUSLA registration number	TU2015WW247
DCEDIY number	13WW0217
Date of inspection	28-04-2023
Date of issue of report	27-09-2023

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	28-04-2023
Inspection activities undertaken • Pre-inspection meeting with the setting owner/manager • Review of setting documentation and records of children's learning and development • Review of the education resources and facilities • Observations of interactions during two sessions • Interaction with the children • Feedback meeting with the setting owner/manager and early years educator	

Context of setting

Little Rose Montessori School is a privately-owned sessional setting in an adapted residence in County Wicklow. The setting was established in 2013 and provides one morning and one afternoon pre-school session through its participation in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, a total of ten children and two educators were present. The owner/manager and one educator attended the feedback meeting. 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 very good.
- The homely atmosphere was commendably inviting and warm. Parents engaged in familiar, friendly conversations with the educator at drop off and collection times.
- The daily routine was well paced and flexible to the needs and interests of the children. The educators made conscious efforts to settle the children by engaging with them in playful activities when they arrived.
- The children were actively involved in organising the routine of the day. They were observed collectively deciding when to transition to snack time.
- The transitions within the daily routine were minimal. Those that occurred were managed effectively with verbal prompting and some songs. The children actively participated in the transitions and demonstrated initiative and eagerness to assist educators with tidying up.
- Snack time was a relaxed and social occasion. The children sat together and engaged in conversation with their peers and educators. The educators extended children's thinking and communication skills with the use of rich language when identifying healthy eating habits and during discussions about children's home life.
- Children's diversity was recognised in the small world toys, artwork, family photographs and multi-language welcome sign. Parents were consulted on key words in children's home languages and efforts were made to use *Lámh,* a key sign communication support.
- The children have had some opportunity to get to know local community helpers such as a firefighter and member of *An Garda Síochana* that had previously visited the setting.

Action advised

- The owner and educator are advised to further develop how they recognise and represent the local community in the learning programme and the physical environment. For example,

including a photographic display of local landmarks and the community at children's eye level.

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 very good.
- A play-based curriculum underpinned by the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* was evident. The educators also incorporated materials from the Montessori Method of Education.
- A thorough curriculum planning cycle was documented and organised into medium and short term plans. These plans took account of children's emerging interests and needs and provided reflections on learning activities and events.
- The lead educator used a variety of meaningful, strengths-based assessment approaches to gather information about the children's learning experiences and achievements. Regular photographs and videos were captured and shared with parents and individual learning journals captured observations and anecdotal notes related to children's interests, development and learning experiences.
- The learning environment supported children to engage in many types of play including; physical play, sensory play, socio-dramatic play and small world play. The indoor environment also provided Montessori materials and mark-making resources that were freely accessible to the children.
- The lead educator effectively promoted literacy and numeracy through story reading, counting songs and rhymes and the use of open-ended questions during circle time and snack time.
- The educators' interactions with the children were positive. They stimulated their engagement in play and extended the children's language skills during the sensory activity by encouraging the children to discuss what they had created.
- The educator's and owner/manager's efforts to create an inclusive environment were commendable. They supported the meaningful participation of all children with respect and sensitivity. The setting was availing of support from the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) and the educator fulfilled the role of Inclusion Co-ordinator having completed the *Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years* (LINC) course.

Action advised

- The owner/manager and lead educator are advised to develop the long-term curriculum plan ensuring that it outlines, in broad terms, the long-term aspirations for children's learning and development. Emphasis on children's dispositions, skills, knowledge and understanding is advised.

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

- The quality of children's learning experiences and achievements was very good.
- The children were highly engaged in play throughout the morning and showed particular enjoyment in the engagement of the educators as play partners. Some children were also observed playing co-operatively with one another in the home corner and outdoors.
- The children's template artwork, photographs of their learning experiences and a group friendship wreath were displayed in the learning environment. The friendship wreath described agreed interactions in the setting. This demonstrated the high expectations the educators had for the children and the effective consultation used to promote positive behaviour.
- It was evident that children's voices and cues were respected and acted upon. They decided when to have circle time and when to prepare for snack time.

- The children used language that demonstrated their growing understanding of their personal well-being. For example, during a movement break some of the children were overheard speaking about their breathing and their energy.
- During snack time conversation, some of the children confidently recalled and discussed a previous learning experience about frog spawn. The educator supported this discussion by referencing the relevant photographs in one of the children's individual learning journals.
- The children demonstrated an awareness of the natural world during conversations about "No mow May" and how it was important not to cut the grass for the bees. The also confidently discussed and sang songs about Australian wildlife during circle time.
- The children demonstrated many positive learning dispositions. This was particularly evident through sustained engagement in child-led play, while in the indoor learning environment and during the planned group movement activity.

Action advised

- The owner and educator are advised to reduce the use of template-based art activities and instead promote and support the children to enjoy creative experiences with no pre-defined end product.

Area 4: Quality of management and leadership for learning

- The quality of management and leadership for learning was very good.
- The owner/manager and the educators demonstrated a professional, cohesive and considered approach to delivering high-quality, inclusive early years education. Although the owner/manager was not involved in the direct care and education of the children, she provided daily telephone and email support to the educators and parents.
- The owner/manager and the lead educator planned for the early years provision with monthly team meetings, as well as regular informal conversations and sharing of ideas.
- The educators accessed and used some of the resources from the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to review and plan the curriculum and service provision.
- The owner/manager and educators demonstrated a commitment to upskilling and continuous professional development with recent courses completed in *Hanen* encouraging language development and *Lámh* the Irish key sign communication support.
- Information regarding the setting and the children's day-to-day experiences was shared with parents through formal and informal means of communication. These included a parent's handbook, a weekly virtual newsletter and the sharing of regular photographs via a messaging application. Parents were formally invited into the setting for seasonal celebrations and upon request the parents could meet with the lead educator to discuss their child's learning and development.
- The owner/manager and educators sensitively supported the children's transition into the setting through planned visits at appropriate times and by gathering information about the children's likes and needs in advance of their start date. The settling-in period was adapted to meet the needs of each child.
- The educators prepared the children for the transition to primary school by sharing information about school readiness with the parents. The owner/manager had established relationships with the local schools and principals.

Action advised

- The owner and educator are advised to enhance their transitions practice for children moving on to primary school by including photographs and artefacts from the local primary school such as school uniforms. The use of the '*Mo Scéal'* reporting templates from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is further advised to support the children's transition to primary school.

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

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.*

The following resources can be used by ELC settings in their quality improvement:

Aistear Siolta Practice Guide

Department of Education Insights – Quality in Early Years Education webinars