An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Wonder Years
Setting Address	5 Baron Park Clonmel County Tipperary
DCYA number	09TS0017

Date of Inspection: 15-06-2018

An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

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:

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	15-06-2018
Inspection activities undertaken • Pre-inspection meeting with setting manager / lead practitioner • Observation of interactions during the sessional service	• Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Post-inspection feedback meeting with setting manager and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Wonder Years is a private, sessional pre-school and after-school setting located in a building adjacent to a residential dwelling in Clonmel. It has been established for approximately twelve years and is managed by the owner /lead practitioner. On the day of the inspection, the owner, two practitioners and twenty children were present. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this 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 warm and welcoming atmosphere evident in the setting. One practitioner was positioned at the door during arrival and departure times engaging in a friendly manner with children and their families.
- The key person approach in place contributes positively to children's secure relationships with practitioners. Each practitioner observes and plans to meet the learning and development needs of a small group of children.
- There is very good use of meaningful comments which affirm and acknowledge children's efforts in their learning.
- The daily routine offers children a suitable balance of activities and routines that promote learning through play. On the day of the inspection, the choice for children to go outdoors during free play was decided by the practitioners.
- The children's understanding and appreciation of their community is successfully nurtured. There are curriculum activities and organised visits to the library and other local sites. Parents are invited to join in these pre-school activities.
- Children's identity as learners is successfully promoted through the prominent display of their art work.

Action advised

- Practitioners are advised to enable children to independently make the choice to play in the outdoors during free play. A child-led check in system to identify the maximum number permitted in the outdoors would be helpful 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 good.
- The curriculum effectively reflects a learning through play approach informed by the principles of *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- Play enables purposeful learning and development for children. A variety of play activities is provided including socio-dramatic and creative play.

- Practitioners interact with children in a respectful way. They engage children in their learning through the use of open-ended questions leading to enhanced understanding.
- At the time of the inspection, planning for children's learning and development consisted of monthly and weekly activities based on broad seasonal themes. In some instances, the children's emergent interests informed plans.
- A suitable balance of adult-initiated and child-initiated activities is provided.
- The practitioners record detailed observations of their key children on a regular basis to identify next steps in their learning. There are individual scrapbooks for each child with photographs of experiences, samples of mark-making, and notes on their interests. The scrapbooks are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school year; and include some details about children's learning.
- The indoor learning environment is comprised of two connecting rooms arranged into distinct areas. These areas offer resources that stimulate and support children's learning. Children have access to a designated area for painting. There was access to a small amount of kinetic sand and water.
- The compact outdoor learning environment provides children with a number of learning opportunities. These include climbing on the raised slide platform, exploring sand and using their gross motor skills with bikes and balls. There were limited materials available to use with the kitchen and house.
- The regular use of songs, rhymes and moving to music within the routine encourages language and literacy development.
- The practitioners reported on a partnership approach to working with parents to supporting children with additional needs. They display an openness to working with outside agencies to optimise the available supports.

Actions advised

- It is advised that a long-term curriculum statement and medium-term plans informed by *Aistear* are developed to underpin short-term planning. The practitioners are advised to take greater account of children's emergent interests within short-term planning.
- Practitioners are advised to further develop the scrapbooks by including the observations recorded to provide greater detail of children's learning dispositions, values, skills and understanding.
- It is advised that children have access to a broader range of sensory rich natural materials within the learning environments.

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 display positive well-being in their learning. They show concentration and energy in their play.
- They are developing good control and co-ordination over their fine and gross motor skills.
- The children confidently communicate with peer and practitioners; sharing their personal stories, listening and taking-turns in conversations.
- On a few occasions, children demonstrated independence in routines and problem solving. These routines included moving their chair and tidying up.
- The children demonstrated a very good understanding of the setting's boundaries around behaviour. This was illustrated on the day when the noise levels increased and children referred to using their indoor voices.
- The children experience meaningful activities that develop their understanding of mathematical concepts. They were observe to engage in a movement activity to represent different numbers with their bodies.
- Children can manipulate materials to engage, explore and experiment in their learning environments.

Action advised

- Practitioners are advised to enable children to find their own solutions to problems that arise in play and take greater responsibility for their needs within the setting.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- A professional approach with an ethos of teamwork is evident in the setting.
- The weekly team meetings and daily informal conversations are used to structure communication between staff and organise curriculum activities.
- The practitioners engage in self-review leading to quality improvement initiatives. The owner/ lead practitioner reported on a review which led to greater focus on child-initiated learning within the curriculum.
- The views of parents and children were gathered in the setting's proposal to reduce the use of plastic within lunches.
- There are effective strategies in place to foster partnership and communication with parents. One staff member is responsible for updating a notice board for parents. At the time of the inspection, the opportunity for parents to meet formally with practitioners was not developed.
- The owner/ lead practitioner reported on disseminating information to parents to support the transition to primary school; and links have been developed with two local schools. The children are involved in a small number of activities that encourage reflection on going to primary school.
- Highly effective procedures are implemented to facilitate a smooth transition for children when starting in the setting. The parents are invited into the setting to get information on the policies and procedures and the broad plans for the curriculum.

Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to share information on children's learning and development on a formal basis with parents. Opportunities for parents to meet with their child's key person is advised.
- It is advised to develop additional resources to support the transition to primary school.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is very good.

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	**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-focused 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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