

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT FOR FACTUAL VERIFICATION

Setting Name	Whitechurch Montessori School
Setting Address	Whitechurch Old School Whitechurch Road Rathfarnham Dublin 16
DCYA number	10DS0252

Date of Inspection: 10-10-2019



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 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	10-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with setting manager/practitioner • Observation of interactions during the pre-school session • Interaction with children

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Whitechurch Montessori School was established in 1998. It is a private setting located in Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin. The setting provides a morning sessional service for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, the manager/practitioner, a practitioner and sixteen children were present. The manager/practitioner attended the post-inspection feedback meeting.

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.
- The practitioners have successfully created a very warm and welcoming atmosphere. Parents and carers enter the setting on arrival and at collection times. They engage in relaxed conversations with the practitioners and information is shared in relation to the pre-school and the home. The practitioners bring the children to a large window to wave goodbye to the parents and carers as they leave the setting.
- The children enter the setting with enthusiasm. They choose from a range of activities. Some of the children bring in items for the nature table and they share them proudly with the practitioners.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are commendably warm and respectful.
- The children's identity and belonging are supported through a photographic display of the children's families, and their individual art work and mark making. The children's comments are recorded on some of their art work. Photographs of the children are included in their individual learning journals. A small amount of resources, which provide opportunities for the children to explore similarities and differences in cultures, are available.
- The practitioners provide the children with clear guidance, encouragement and support. They discuss the importance of being gentle and sensitive to the needs of their friends.
- The practitioners support the children to make connections with each other by providing many opportunities for them to play and spend time together in pairs and small groups. They welcome children into the small groups. They explain to the children that someone would like to join the group and remind them to make space for their friends.
- Transitions from one activity to the next are managed with ease. The children are respectfully consulted during each transition to ensure that they are ready to move to the next activity. Transitions are signalled in advance and a bell is used to signal a change. A visual routine, which is displayed in the classroom, enhances the children's sense of security and their engagement levels during transition times.
- Snack time is viewed as a relaxed and enjoyable time. The practitioners and the children sit together and engage in shared conversations about recent events.

Action advised

- In order to support the children's developing awareness of similarities and differences and a variety of cultures, the practitioners are advised to provide additional imagery and resources that represent children of varying abilities and diverse 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 is very good.
- The Montessori Method is the key curriculum approach used in the setting. There are also ample opportunities for children to engage in free play during the morning.
- Children learn in a range of contexts throughout the morning. A broad range of play types, including physical, creative, sensory and imaginative play, was observed. During the inspection, the practitioners used an interactive approach to recreate the recent storm 'Lorenzo'. They used a parachute with a large group of children to create the sound and movement of the wind. The practitioner then added horse chestnuts to recreate the rain, much to the delight of the children. This provided a valuable opportunity for the children to make sense of recent events in a playful context. The children then discussed their personal and shared experience of the storm.
- Planning is organised on long-term, short-term and medium-term bases. Clear links with *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* are evident. Key themes are identified in the monthly plans and the short-term plans provide further details to guide the practitioners. The practitioners regularly document the children's emerging interests. While there is evidence that the children's interests are used to plan group learning experiences, they are not currently used to plan for individual children's learning.
- The learning programme facilitates children's involvement in various projects which are planned throughout the year. These projects are documented in a large group learning journal.
- A range of assessment methods is in place. These include observations, individual pupil profiles and self-assessment sheets. An individual learning journal, with photographs and samples of the children's art work, is compiled for each child.
- The children's early literacy and numeracy skills are very effectively supported through the use of the Montessori materials and actions songs and rhymes, which are a key feature of the programme. The practitioners also use a range of Irish words, phrases and action rhymes throughout the morning.
- The practitioners very skilfully support and extend the children's learning. They act as effective play partners; they model language and use open-ended questions to encourage the children's thinking. The practitioners consistently use the language of early mathematics in the meaningful context of play. They also use effective strategies to motivate the children's learning. On the day of the inspection, the children and the practitioners rushed to the nearby window when one of the practitioners spotted a squirrel in the nearby trees. This ignited the children's interest in squirrels and other creatures that live in the surrounding environment.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to consistently document the children's interests and to use this information to inform their planning of meaningful, learning experiences and progression for each child.

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 capable and competent. They make many choices in relation to their learning and are deeply engaged and interested in their chosen activities.
- The children present as happy and content and they demonstrate enjoyment in their learning.
- It is evident that the children have developed very positive relationships with their peers. They play together co-operatively and show empathy for others. During the inspection, one child provided reassurance to her friend who could not find her drink.
- The children are curious and interested in the world around them. They demonstrate high levels of creativity. This is evident in their art work and elaborate mark making.
- The children are confident communicators. They express their opinions and ideas articulately and listen intently to their friends.

- The children experience success and mastery. This was evident when one child sorted a variety of buttons into different colours. On another occasion, the practitioner drew the children's attention to a puzzle that had been completed by one of the children. The children stopped to admire the puzzle.
- The children are developing very positive connections with their community. They frequently meet members of the community in the adjoining day centre. In the past, the children have joined with these members to play parachute games and to sing songs. Recent visits from a nurse, members of a nature charity and a farmer with lambs, enhance the children's awareness of the local community. Wooden blocks, with images of local landmarks, provide further opportunities for discussion. The children and practitioners also go on regular walks in the grounds of the nearby church.
- The children are developing their independent skills. Most of the children hang up their coats and put away their belongings independently on arrival and some complete small tasks during the morning. They collect their bags from the hall at snack time and bring them to the table.
- The children are developing positive dispositions for learning. During the inspection, a number of the children persisted in using the hula hoop. They watched each other intently and provided suggestions as to how they might stop the hula hoop from falling to the ground.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities for the children to develop their independent skills and their abilities to manage their personal care needs.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The manager/practitioner and practitioner present as caring and professional.
- The practitioners engage in ongoing reflection on a daily and weekly basis. They reflect on and document each child's progress and achievements at the end of each week. Monthly planning and evaluation meetings are scheduled and detailed plans are developed as a result of the discussions and reviews during these meetings.
- The practitioners recognise the value of engaging in continuing professional development. The manager/practitioner attends bi-monthly professional learning programmes relating to the Montessori Method. She has recently completed training on the *Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines*. In the past, the practitioners have completed training on *Aistear* and on supporting children with special needs.
- The manager/practitioner avails of advice and support from the local county childcare committee. The practitioners have also engaged with the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) to support the participation of children with additional needs.
- The transition from the pre-school to primary school is primarily supported through discussion with the children and with parents. The manager/practitioner visits the local school before the children transition from the pre-school. Currently, there are no structures in place for the formal sharing of information in relation to the children's learning and development with the primary schools.
- Effective channels of communication with parents are very evident. A parents' handbook, with information on the setting, is provided for parents. A registration form is used to gain an insight into children's likes, dislikes, favourite toys and family members. Information on children's learning is shared informally on an ongoing basis. Observations are shared each term and information on the curriculum, along with photographs of recent projects is shared regularly through a computer application. Parent/practitioner meetings are scheduled in February.
- An active open-door policy for parents is in place. Parents are very welcome to stay and play in the setting during the settling-in period. There are also many opportunities for parents and families to come into the setting throughout the year. These include a play at Christmas time, grandparents' day, fundraising events and a graduation event. In the past, parents have visited the setting to share aspects of their cultures, interests and occupations with the children.

Action advised

- In order to further support the transition from pre-school to primary school, the practitioners are advised to build on their current good practices. This could include the provision of additional play resources, stories and projects. Developing strategies to share information, in partnership with parents, about the children's learning and development with the local primary schools will also be beneficial in supporting this transition.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is excellent. The managers/practitioner engaged openly and reflectively during the post-inspection feedback meeting and clearly demonstrated her ongoing commitment to quality practice.

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.

SETTING CONTACT INFORMATION

Setting details	Whitechurch Montessori School
DCYA number	10DS0252
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Owner/manager	Gedingka Fair	*Email	gedingka@gmail.com
Other contact person		*Email	

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