### EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

#### REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Yellow House Montessori</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>North Street</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skibbereen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Cork</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09CC0198</td>
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</tbody>
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Date of Inspection: 18-01-2019
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>18-01-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Observation of interactions during one session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with setting manager</td>
<td>• Interaction with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meeting with practitioners</td>
<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Feedback to setting manager and practitioners</td>
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CONTEXT OF SETTING

Yellow House Montessori, located in Skibbereen town, is a private setting which was established in 2009. The owner of the setting operates a second setting a few doors down the street; practitioners work collaboratively across the two settings. The setting provides a morning pre-school programme for children enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The evaluation was conducted during the morning pre-school session. Two practitioners and fifteen children were present. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report; a response 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 is very good.
• A pleasant and friendly atmosphere is evident in the setting; children are greeted warmly with a handshake on arrival.
• The setting operates an effective open-door policy and parents appear very comfortable and relaxed spending time sharing information and conversing at arrival and collection times.
• Children are aware of the typical sequence of events in the pre-school session supported with the display of the routine in pictures and words. Periods of time are allocated for indoor and outdoor free play. On the day of the inspection, time allocated for indoor free play was distributed across three separate periods. This arrangement inhibits the development of rich extended play sequences and activities.
• Transitions during the pre-school session are very clearly announced by the practitioners. The children are respectfully given time and the autonomy to complete their play.
• The practitioners are skilful in how they give praise and encouragement to the children. They consciously name the positive behaviour observed making it very meaningful for the children involved.
• A table is prepared for snack time in the centre of the room, and a table cloth and flowers decorate the space. Children gather here four at a time, collect their lunch and eat together. The positioning of the table means it is a hub of activity, fast paced movements of children who remain active in play pass by continuously. As a result, the children who are eating appear distracted and anxious to enter back into play.
• The children’s developing sense of identity and belonging is nurtured in a thoughtful manner. The practitioners know each child and their family and engage in conversations with them about their lives outside the setting. There are photographs of the children’s families, samples of the children’s self-portrait line drawings and photographs of the local community displayed in the playroom.

Actions advised

• It is advised that the daily routine be adjusted to provide the children with a minimum of one hour of uninterrupted active free play and learning in the indoor learning environment.
• Practitioners are advised to revisit the current structure of snack time. This time should provide opportunities for children to relax and engage in social discussion with practitioners and their peers.
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.
- There is a very effective blend of the Montessori Method of education and a play-based curriculum in place. There is close alignment to the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- Planning is organised on long, medium and short term bases. Themes are linked to seasons, celebrations and on occasion they are linked to the emergent interests of children.
- Information about the children’s learning experiences and achievements is recorded by the practitioners in a variety of ways. Methods include an online application, group learning stories illustrated with photographs, photographic displays capturing events and activities in the preschool and individual learning portfolios for each child. At the time of the inspection it was noted that the observations recorded on the online application are at times repetitive and don’t explicitly record the children’s individual learning dispositions and personal learning motivators.
- The practitioners have used the space available to effectively provide distinct interest areas which support a variety of play and learning experiences. There is ample supply of socio-dramatic and open-ended materials available for the children to explore and investigate in most areas.
- An easily accessible, enclosed outdoor space provides for a range of activities to promote the children’s physical and gross motor development.
- The practitioners display very skilful interactions to support and extend the children's learning as they play and converse with them. Strategies such as open-ended questioning around the children’s play ideas, using rich vocabulary and discussing why things happen were skilfully used throughout the session observed.
- The children are learning in an inclusive environment. The setting has participated in training to support children who speak English is an additional language. The practitioners very effectively adapt their interactions and levels of support to match each child’s developmental level and needs.

*Actions advised*

- To further embed an emergent curriculum, it is advised that the practitioners expand on their responsiveness to the children’s current interests and incorporate these into short-term planning.
- It is advised that the information gathered on the children through the use of the online application could further highlight children’s interests and learning dispositions and be used to a greater extent to support planning for the next steps in learning.

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 were highly motivated and purposefully engaged during the session observed. They made many choices and decisions about their play and learning activities.
- The children demonstrate enjoyment in their play. They display interest when exploring the well-presented mark-making area, water and playdough areas.
- Children are developing a positive understanding of their identity as competent learners. They are developing personal responsibility in using personal areas for belongings and by independently organising their play.
- Many of the children demonstrated a heightened interest in exploration, experimentation and enquiry as they worked with the open-ended sensory materials available to them. The materials and resources provided for sensory and explorative play are somewhat limited in some areas, particularly in the large scale construction area.
- Children are developing the ability to play co-operatively and demonstrate the ability to resolve minor conflicts collaboratively with their peers. During the inspection, a small group of children played a game with rules when outdoors, running up, around and then down the slide. It is evident that the children’s physical skills are developing well.
• Children communicate their thoughts, needs and ideas confidently to their peers and practitioners. The children’s voices are acknowledged as they share personal experiences, make requests and frequently engage in role-play with their peers.
• Many of the children are developing skills to negotiate with peers in play situations and there were many instances of children working cooperatively to achieve a shared objective such as developing dramatic play with detailed story lines in the reading area.

Action advised
• Practitioners are advised to provide a permanent construction area and a wider range of materials to support exploration as well as early mathematical and scientific enquiry in this area. These could include recycled materials and blocks of various sizes.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING
• The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
• There is an ethos of collaboration and partnership between the practitioners in the setting. The manager promotes a supportive approach by organising frequent opportunities for the staff to meet within the setting and also with practitioners of the second setting. The practitioners record minutes of these meetings. They are aware of the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide, and would benefit from using this to inform the topics of their meetings.
• The manager and staff value opportunities for continuing professional development to promote quality experiences for the children. They have availed of training in the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) Programme.
• Parents are provided with a comprehensive information pack as well as regular newsletters. A parents’ wall is available in the lobby, outlining general information and displaying examples to highlight the children’s learning experiences. It would be beneficial for parents to be made aware of current themes and interests being explored.
• Parents are informed about their child’s experiences in pre-school through access to the online observation platform and are presented with an end-of-year scrapbook with their child’s work prior to their transition to school.
• The transition to primary school is supported through planned activities in the lead up to the end of the ECCE programme and past pupils have visited the setting to share their experiences with children. The manager highlighted this as an area for future further development.

Actions advised
• It is advised that the manager and practitioners use the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to further develop their review, self-reflection and quality development processes. This will provide a platform to guide the setting to support practice improvement thereby enhancing the children’s learning experiences within the setting
• The setting is advised to introduce strategies to support the sharing of current emergent themes and short-term planning with parents. In doing so, the setting will increase opportunities to support children in connecting their learning from the setting to that which occurs at home.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE
The manager and the practitioner, through their engagement in professional dialogue around the key findings of this inspection report, demonstrate very good capacity to implement the actions advised above.
## Summary of Overall Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Very good</td>
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<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
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## Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.</td>
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