**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Little Einstein’s Montessori</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>71 Bruach na Habhainn</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quin road</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ennis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Co. Clare</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09CE0134</td>
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Date of Inspection: 22-05-2019
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>22-05-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Observation of interactions during the pre-school session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pre-inspection meeting with setting manager</td>
<td>• Post-inspection feedback meeting with setting manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interaction with children</td>
<td>• Review of relevant documents</td>
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CONTEXT OF SETTING

Little Einstein’s Montessori is a private setting that has been in operation for eleven years. It is located near Ennis, County Clare and is managed by a sole practitioner. The setting provides a sessional pre-school to children participating in the first and second year of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the morning of inspection, one practitioner and eleven 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 good.
• The parents and children are welcomed into the setting and informal information and stories are exchanged between parents and the practitioner. Respectful relationships effectively support the children to settle in to their learning environment. The practitioner warmly greets each child and offers encouragement and support as they organise their play.
• Flexible routines provide opportunity for consultation between the children and practitioner as they move through the daily routine. The children are encouraged to be actively involved during times of tidy-up and by completing helper tasks. Visual supports have not yet been established which reinforce the way the children anticipate their routines and choices.
• Mealtimes are a social occasion where the children and practitioner come together for shared discussion. On the morning of inspection, the practitioner effectively consulted with the children about their preferences for mealtimes; this led to an enjoyable outdoor eating experience.
• The practitioner demonstrates sensitivity and warmth in her responses to the children. Secure relationships are in place as she prompts the children to work together and interact with their peers. She is affirming in her interactions and is aware of all of the children and their needs.
• The children have good opportunity to see their arts and crafts exhibited in the learning environment along with displays that depict their birthdays and individual facial features. Further development of materials, displays and play props that depict the individual lives of children and their families would be beneficial.
• Parents are invited in to the setting for seasonal celebrations at Christmas and Halloween. There is scope to strengthen links with parents and the wider community during the pre-school year.

Actions advised

• It is advised that the practitioner develop visual reinforcements for the children to actively engage with during their daily tasks and routines. Creating visual representations of the daily routines, problem-solving solutions and a helper rota will support the children to actively participate and make independent choices about their participation within these routines.
• It is advised that the practitioner enhance how the play materials, props, displays and books represent the children’s individual contexts. This will help the children develop an appreciation of themselves, others and their communities.
• It is advised that the practitioner make efforts during the year to strengthen links between the setting and the community. This can be achieved through the planning and addition of community events and experiences to explore with the children.

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 in place is informally organised through conversations with the children about their ideas and learning preferences. At the time of inspection, a broad-based curriculum had not yet been documented. The practitioner reports that she has begun to familiarise herself with the themes and learning goals of Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. A seasonal theme of the month is organised and shared with the parents.
• Information about the children’s learning is gathered informally as the practitioner interacts with the children during their play and makes notes detailing their words and descriptions on their paintings and drawings. A variety of assessment methods has not yet being documented to inform the progression of the children’s learning and development.
• The practitioner effectively supports and encourages the children through her interactions. She listens and converses with the children as she expands on their language and communication efforts. She effectively organises group games and facilitates enjoyable, playful learning experiences.
• Through natural discussion during play, the practitioner effectively prompts mathematical thinking and the use of literacy practices. She encourages the children to count the pots required for painting and chairs for outside. She reflects on the meaning of displays and written notes on their paintings.
• The learning environments, both indoors and outdoors, are well-laid out. Materials and resources are well-presented and accessible to the children. Areas of interest effectively categorise the different types of play materials. A dedicated painting and messy play area offers the children access to paint, sand and water. Montessori materials are available on the shelving in the room and the practitioner reports that these materials are used as the children wish.
• The practitioner makes good efforts to support inclusive practice. She liaises with parents and external agencies regarding children with additional needs. She has completed the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) training programme and utilises tailored equipment to support the inclusion of all children.

Actions advised
• It is advised that the practitioner develop a curriculum that is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. This curriculum needs to cater for the development of children’s skills, attitudes, knowledge and dispositions on a long, medium and short-term basis. The Planning Pillar of the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide provides useful guidance and examples and ideas for practice.
• It is advised that the practitioner establish the practice of observing the children’s developing needs, capabilities and interests with a view to identifying their progression in learning. This can be achieved through developing a range of observation methods that collectively build a rich picture of each child’s learning journey. The self-evaluation tool on Planning and Assessing using Themes from the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide provides useful reflective prompts that can contribute to the development of this action.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

• The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
• The children are settled and engaged in their learning through play. They express their play preferences as they begin to choose materials and areas of interest to interact with. The
practitioner negotiates with children who respond flexibly in order to accommodate other children who also wish to engage with the same materials.

- They demonstrate good communication skills and the capacity to verbally reflect and think-out-loud. They share stories and ideas with their peers during group conversations and during play. There is little opportunity for the children to monitor and reflect on their own learning progression as individuals using meaningful documentation.
- They show good capacity to self-regulate and to explore the rationale behind engaging in positive behaviour. On the morning of inspection, the children were observed talking to their peers about appropriate behaviour and what could happen if they didn’t interact with the chairs and materials safely.
- They enjoy coming together for story-time and engaging in small group play experiences. The children work well together and co-construct their play scenarios, describing their interests and investigations with each other.
- The children respond well to the spontaneous questioning on numeracy and literacy during the routines of the day. A more strategic approach to the organisation of targeted experiences that stimulate meaningful exploration of mathematical and literacy concepts would benefit the children.
- They enjoy outdoor play and engaging in group games. On the morning of inspection, the children were observed eagerly engaging in a group parachute game; they effectively initiated an investigation as they thought about what would happen to various different resources when thrown up by the parachute.

**Actions advised**

- It is advised that the children be involved in the establishment of individual learning portfolios. These portfolios will provide opportunity for the children to consistently reflect on their learning progression, successes and achievements throughout their time in the pre-school.
- It is advised that a strategic approach to the development and exploration of literacy and numeracy concepts be established for the children. A review of the learning environment and its resources in line with the development of an organised curriculum will support this action.
- It is advised that learning experiences be facilitated for children based on their differing needs, capabilities and stages of development. The development of a holistic curriculum approach that strategically caters for the mixed-age group will support this action.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- As a sole practitioner, the manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the setting while also being the lead practitioner with the children. The development of a broad-based curriculum through on-site support would benefit practice within the setting. This would also enhance the experiences of the children across the two pre-school years.
- Through the completion of the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) training programme, the manager reports that she has moved her practice towards a play-based approach. On the morning of inspection, the manager expressed her intention to engage with workshops on the use of Aistear with her local County Childcare Committee.
- She is aware of the *Aistear Siolta Practice Guide* but has yet to systematically embed the use of the guide to enhance self-evaluative and reflection practices.
- The main method of communicating with parents during the year is through an online social media messaging service and the use of newsletters. Policies and procedures are shared through a parent’s information handbook at enrolment. Informal conversations with parents occur on a daily basis. Consistent sharing of the curriculum and individual children’s learning and progression would strengthen a collaborative approach to building partnerships with parents.
- The manager uses a transitions flower to document the strengths of the children who are transitioning from pre-school to the primary school setting. This flower is shared and discussed with parents while discussions are organised with the children that focus on their feelings about moving to primary school. Photographs and sample uniforms are used to support this discussion with the children.
Actions advised

- It is advised that the manager avail of external mentoring supports that provide on-site mentoring. Better Start National Early Years Quality Development provides this Service. This will support the development of a broad-based curriculum that adheres to the principles of Aistear and Síolta.
- It is advised that the manager engage with the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide and establish self-evaluative review processes around the curriculum and her practice.
- To develop and enhance a strong partnership with parents, the manager is advised to complete a reflective review using the Parents Pillar self-evaluation tool from the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide. This will support the identification of areas for development and create an action plan for improvement.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is good. The manager readily engaged in the post-inspection feedback discussion and demonstrated commitment to the on-going improvement of the children’s learning and development.
### Summary of Overall Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Good</td>
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### Language used in Early Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</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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*Published November 2019*
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1   Observations on the content of the inspection report.

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:
1. Visual pictures of children are now in place to help them with daily routines.
2. Children’s visual displays are always on the wall.
3. Unfortunately as child ratio for events is 1-3 it is not possible to bring the children out of the setting.

Area 2:
1. Have been on to better start as government do not fund for training days didn’t even know until day of inspection that this is possible.

Area 3:
1. At the end of the year each child bring home their own scrapbook with all there arts/crafts and work they have done throughout the year. This has been done in my service for the last 10 years, Scrapbooks weren’t available on date of inspection as children had already brought them home.

Area 4: Waiting on Better start to call back.