An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>St Catherine’s Community Services Centre</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>St Joseph’s Road</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rathnapish</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Carlow</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09CW0028</td>
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Date of Inspection: 03-12-2019
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>03-12-2019</th>
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| Inspection activities undertaken | Interaction with children
• Meeting with setting manager
• Observation of interactions during the morning session
• Review of relevant documents
• Feedback to setting manager and practitioners

CONTEXT OF SETTING
St Catherine’s Community Services Centre has been in operation since 1975. It is community setting which caters for children in the local area. There is one room dedicated to providing care and education to children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection there were five children and two practitioners in the ECCE room. 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 very good.
• A warm and welcoming atmosphere is evident as parents and children are greeted with respect at arrival and departure times.
• The setting has a key-worker system in place. This supports practitioners to build sensitive, respectful and caring relationships with the children in their group. Information about this system is shared with parents.
• There is a highly effective free-play period which ensures that children are active in their learning and have choice throughout the day. The practitioners verbally notify children of upcoming transitions and sing songs during transition periods. The use of visual aids would enhance this experience for children who speak English as an additional language.
• The practitioners plan and prepare snack time for the children. They set up the table and clean up afterwards. It is a social occasion; the practitioners sit with the children and encourage healthy eating, and they discuss various topics. This learning experience could be extended.
• There are very good displays which support individual and group identity within the setting. There are some visual resources relating to the cultural diversity in the setting and to the local community. Parents and community members visit the setting throughout the year to share skills and knowledge with the children.

Actions advised
• It is advised that the practitioners use visual displays and props to prepare the children for transitions between activities. This will enable children to engage and understand the changes taking place in the environment and daily routine.
• It is advised that the practitioners increase the learning opportunities during snack time. Children need to be encouraged to prepare snack, serve themselves, clean up and take on a helper role. This will support their independence and self-help skills.

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 curriculum in place is an emergent curriculum with play-based learning at its core. The practitioners offer an extensive choice of play to the children including construction and sensory play which children have a strong interest in. The children enjoy moving around the environment to access the different types of play available to them.
• The setting has a written curriculum statement which supports the implementation of long-term, medium-term and short-term plans. The practitioners review and document their planning on a continuous basis. Planning blends themes and emergent interests.

• The practitioners complete group and individual learning journals which document the children’s skills and dispositions and plan for the next stages in their learning and development. There are well documented observations which demonstrate the children’s progress and their ongoing interests in learning.

• All indoor environments are well laid out with defined interest areas. The environments offer a range of resources including some real-life equipment. All materials are accessible to the children. The outdoor area offers children risk, challenge and physical development.

• Lots of conversations take place between the children and the practitioners throughout the session. Circle time supports singing and discussion of themes. There is potential to further extend the opportunities for the children to develop their language skills. The practitioners are present and available to the children in the indoor environment. They engage in the play experiences, and they support and extend learning. While children explore the outdoor environment the practitioners predominantly supervise play. At times, they engage with the children to sing and use the wheeled equipment. There is potential to extend the interactions during outdoor play.

• The setting provides an inclusive environment with a strong focus on supporting children with additional needs. Children with additional needs access support through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

**Actions advised**

• The practitioners are advised to continue to develop and extend the opportunities for the children to develop their language skills. To this end, they are encouraged to use play experiences to introduce new concepts, to ask open-ended questions and to increase commenting and language input. Visual aids and displays could be used to support and embed this practice.

• Building on the good interactions between practitioners and children in the indoor environment, it is advised that similar interactions take place in the outdoor area. Practitioners need to plan more purposefully for activities in the outdoor area. They also need to encourage the children to participate in play, support conflict resolution and extend the opportunities for language development in the outdoor environment.

**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 developing their abilities and confidence within their secure and happy learning environment.

• The children enjoy socialising in a range of groups and on the day of the inspection children from all rooms in the setting met in the outdoor area. They also enjoy playing in pairs and small groups throughout the daily routine. The children are developing their social skills as they learn to take turns and share.

• The children have access to mark-making materials and sensory resources. On the day of the inspection, they demonstrated great interest in pasta and rice play. Following this, they set up finger painting and they explored the consistency and texture of the paint.

• The children are encouraged to talk about their feelings and emotions. The practitioners support these conversations and explore different ideas and concepts within these conversations.

• There are some resources to support the children’s understanding of cultural identity. These are found within the book area and on some visual displays. There is potential to expand this practice and to make it unique to each child in the setting.

• Each child’s learning journal contains a range of art work and photographs which document and celebrate their achievements and experiences. These are accessible to children and parents on a shelf in the room. There is potential to extend the use of these journals.

• The practitioners plan the environment and activities to ensure children have hands-on learning experiences. They introduce and explore concepts using concrete materials. Children request other materials that they want to explore and play with.
**Actions advised**

- The children would benefit from further opportunities to explore their individual culture and diversity within the pre-school environment. To support this, the practitioners could gather information from parents about their culture and include relevant activities in the short-term planning. In addition, it would be beneficial to audit and enhance the various interest areas, so that they reflect these cultures. Practitioners need to ensure that this is done in a meaningful and authentic way for all children and their families.
- The practitioners are encouraged to extend the use of the individual learning journals to include the child’s own reflections and recollections of their experiences. These journals could be sent home on a termly basis and parents could be encouraged to provide feedback and comments. In addition, children could be encouraged to mark make on their journals.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- The setting has engaged with Better Start, the National Quality Development Service. Through this professional development the setting created observation stations, streamlined their planning and observation processes, and audited their environments. To support this work the practitioners engaged with the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* and this resource now guides their reflective practice.
- The manager values continuous professional development and encourages practitioners to engage in training relevant to their work. All staff have regular support and supervision meetings where training needs are identified and discussed. There are regular meetings including planning meetings, staff meetings and support meetings.
- There are extensive communication methods in place to support parents. The practitioners offer practical support for parents; they assist them to translate documentation and to complete childcare forms. There are strong links within the community centre to support this excellent practice and organised information events take place for parents. The practitioners pride themselves on the continuous verbal information shared with parents to support them to understand and be aware of their child’s development. An open-door policy supports this work.
- The setting has a settle-in policy which provides parents with a handbook, a verbal meeting to share information, a gradual settle-in time and daily feedback and updates.
- The practitioners currently complete a postcard to primary school which parents share with teachers to support the child’s transition to school. They use various resources and materials to create a school interest area in the room each year. The practitioners plan to further develop this positive work and to generate more links with the local schools.
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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Excellent</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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

St. Catherine’s Community Services Centre concurs that the contents of the inspection report are an accurate representation of the daily running of the ECCE Room. We found the inspection process to be a positive and engaging experience for both the children and the Early Years Educator. We feel that this inspection will be beneficial to our practice as we strive to continue to provide the highest quality education and care for all children attending our service. It will also support us in ensuring that each child is given positive and meaningful opportunities and experiences, which will enable them to become confident and competent learners.

The actions advised in this report have been taken into consideration as we work towards and continue implementing them into our service.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection

On completion of the inspection process, the following advised actions have been implemented:

- The use of visual aids for transitioning between activities and environments.
- Snack time is now more child led, with the children working as a team to prepare the tables for snack time and service themselves independently.
- Using the Hand Model we are providing more opportunities to enhance the children’s language skills, both in the indoor and outdoor environments.
- We are now more conscious of providing more purposeful activities in the outdoor area.
- As we have a diverse cohort of families, we have introduced more geographical areas that reflect our children’s culture and diversity.
- Working in partnership with both staff and parents, helps us to identity events and cultural celebrations of the children in the setting.
- The children’s learning journals are now displayed in a more focal area, providing the children with the opportunity to engage with them more, thus providing time for reflection and recollections of their experiences as well as opportunities for mark making. Parents will be encouraged to take the journals home and provide feedback and comments on their child’s learning. Information and ideas will be suggested to the parents for when the journals are taken home.