EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Name</th>
<th>Myshall Montessori</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Address</td>
<td>Myshall Community Centre</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Myshall</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Carlow</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09CW0047</td>
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Date of Inspection: 28-05-2018
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 service 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 service.

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 service’s provision in each area.
Early-Years Education Inspection

Date of inspection 28-05-2018

Inspection activities undertaken
- Meeting with setting owner/practitioner and early-years practitioner
- Observation of interactions and activities during a pre-school session
- Review of educational resources and facilities
- Interaction and discussion with children
- Review of relevant setting documentation
- Review of records of children’s learning and development
- Feedback discussion with setting owner/practitioner and early years practitioner

CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Myshall Montessori School was established in 2009 and provides a morning sessional pre-school programme for children enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The owner/practitioner, an early-years practitioner and fourteen children were present on the day of the evaluation. 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 very caring and genuinely welcoming atmosphere in the service. Positive, responsive and respectful relationships were evident between practitioners, children and parents. A highly effective open-door policy is in operation and this facilitates informal communication between all stakeholders at arrival and departure times.
- Snack time is unhurried and relaxed and used effectively to enhance socialisation and friendships among children. They were observed enthusiastically discussing recent trips to local beaches, and sharing information about their home lives. An effective healthy eating policy is in place.
- The practitioners support children’s independence and self-care skills; the children are encouraged to put on and change clothes and clear up after activities. Many opportunities for children to contribute to the daily room routines were observed.
- The daily routine effectively balances structure and flexibility and opportunities for daily indoor and outdoor play. There is an effective balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated play and activities.
- Transitions were clearly announced and signalled by the practitioners during the pre-school session. Some children became unfocused at these times. This could be avoided by children being more active during transitions and being allowed pursue their own emerging interests.
- The children’s developing sense of identity and belonging is nurtured very effectively and their viewpoints are actively sought and responded to authentically. The children participate in the community through the ‘Tidy Town’ competition, nature walks and hosting visits by local community members. The setting also supports children to engage in some intergenerational learning opportunities and activities with members of the community’s bowling group who convene weekly in the adjacent hall. There are limited visual and photographic representations on display for children to reflect on this rich aspect of their learning.

Action advised
- It is advised that practitioners display a child friendly daily routine chart at children’s eye level. Transition times need to be more active and allow children pursue their emerging interests.
- It is advised that more images be displayed which celebrate children’s learning, their families and community events. This will help children develop a greater sense of self and belonging.
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 practitioners have a tradition of using the Montessori Method of education. In recent years, they have reviewed their practices to strengthen the play-based and emergent curriculum approaches. This allows children to lead their own learning. The curriculum is fully aligned to Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.
- The curriculum is planned thematically for the year. Themes are organised into weekly curriculum plans. The practitioner’s record children's current interests, achievements and development as they are observed during the pre-school session. This information is often used to directly inform short-term planning for next steps on a whole group and individual level. There is potential to develop emergent learning and inquiry.
- The children’s achievements are recorded regularly in observations which are compiled over the school year. The practitioners create a learning journal for each child which contains photographs, observations and work samples which are linked to the aims and learning goals of Aistear. These are easily accessible to the children; and parents are encouraged to review and contribute information to them regularly. Children comment on their own work and learning, but there is scope to develop this further.
- The outdoor play environment is spacious, well planned and resourced to promote a wide variety of sensory play experiences. This includes large sand and water areas; and areas to grow plants and nurture an interest in the natural environment. The indoor room is bright and very well equipped with suitable resources which are accessible to the children. The room offers some defined interest areas to promote participation and peer interactions. Some areas do not provide enough space for children to engage in a wider range of play types. There is scope to provide for more multi-sensory and quiet play opportunities. Current plans to provide an additional room will address this need.
- The practitioners used many highly effective strategies to motivate, engage and extend the children’s play and learning. They play as partners with the children and adapt their interactions effectively to match individual abilities and needs.
- The children are learning in an inclusive environment. The service is linked with the Health Service Executive (HSE) Early Intervention Team and The Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). This facilitates access to assessment and support for children with possible additional needs.

Actions advised
- It is advised that practitioners develop the emergent and inquiry-based curriculum. Children’s emerging interests and self-evaluations need to inform short-term planning for whole group and individuals.
- Practitioners are advised to develop the learning environment. Defined areas need to support multi-sensory and quiet play opportunities to a greater extent. The use of the online Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will assist with this action.

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 well settled in the service and are focused and engaged in their play and activities. They display enthusiasm and enjoyment in their interactions with peers.
- Many children were observed engaging with early mathematical concepts in their play and conversations with practitioners. For example, they ordered animals by size and colour, compared quantities such as 'more or less animals' and classified farm machinery.
• They invite other Children to join in their play, share materials and help each other to develop pro-social skills. They express their feelings and articulate their needs during activities.
• They make choices and follow their intrinsic interests during free play time. The children demonstrate the capacity to be creative and imaginative during their free play and large group learning activities. There is scope for greater exploration and manipulation of more open-ended materials during small-group learning activities.
• The children often experience a sense of success in their learning and confidently call attention to what they have achieved and completed.
• They are developing independence and good self-care skills; and many take pleasure in completing necessary jobs to care for the pre-school environment.
• The children are given opportunities to discuss and share aspects of their learning and to make connections between new learning and what they already know. For example, at outside time several children recalled the sequence of events involved in making an “ocean game” together. There is potential to extend the children’s opportunities to reflect on their learning during the day.

**Actions advised**

• It is advised that practitioners restructure small group activities to allow children reflect upon and discuss their learning. The purpose and rationale for these activities need to be based on children’s previous interests and learning experiences. The key person approach will facilitate this and help consolidate learning.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

• The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
• There is a very professional ethos in this service. The practitioners display confidence and competence in their practice. They also engage with parents and professional colleagues with openness and warmth.
• There is a culture of self-reflection and informal planning for quality improvement measures. The practitioners engage in daily review, reflection and regular team planning. At the time of the evaluation this process was informal and not documented or linked to Aistear and Síolta.
• The effectiveness of shared leadership in this service is highly commendable. The practitioners have worked as a team for an extended period of time. They share leadership and contribute individual expertise to the development of the curriculum programme.
• The practitioners are actively engaged in continuous professional development and in maintaining their current understanding of effective practice. Recent training undertaken includes National Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programmes.
• The way parents and families participate in the programme of activities is commendable. They have been involved in music sessions and mindfulness activities.
• Staff efforts to foster two-way communication with parents are praiseworthy. Information on children’s learning and development is regularly shared and the setting operates a closed social media group. The change in curriculum direction and programme ethos could be more clearly articulated for parents.
• Transition to primary school is supported through reciprocal visits to and from the local school.

**Actions advised**

• A more formal system to document the outcomes of self-review is advised. The use of the online Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will assist in this regard.
• It is advised that the pre-school curriculum be documented in a clear statement. This needs to be linked to Aistear and shared with parents.
CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The owner/practitioner and early-years practitioner engaged fully in the feedback discussion following the evaluation. The capacity of the service to continue to implement the actions advised above is very good.
## 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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## Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision 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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