An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Tús an Bhóthair</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Togher Family Centre 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Togher BNS</td>
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<td>Togher</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cork City</td>
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<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09CY0064</td>
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Date of Inspection: 05-12-2019
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>05-12-2019</th>
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</table>
| Inspection activities undertaken | Observation of interactions during a number of sessions  
Meeting with setting manager  
Meeting with practitioners  
Meeting with board of directors (including parent representatives on the board)  
Other  
Interaction with children  
Review of relevant documents  
Feedback to setting manager and practitioners |

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Tús an Bhóthair is an outreach early years setting attached to the Togher Family Centre. It is a HighScope based, sessional pre-school located on the grounds of the Togher Boys Primary school. Four practitioners provide early years education and care on a daily basis for twenty-one children in the morning and another twenty-one children in the afternoon. Two practitioners are employed under Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). On the day of the inspection a student, availing of work experience was also 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 excellent.
- A very caring ethos is prevalent. The atmosphere is warm, inviting and affirming. The practitioners are very friendly and welcoming, they show sensitivity and a very positive regard for the children and their families.
- The well-balanced daily routine very effectively and consistently promotes the children’s physical, social and emotional well-being.
- The children are very active agents in choosing and organising their own learning and development activities.
- Snack time is utilised highly effectively as a social occasion, with the children and key-practitioners sitting in small groups, eating and chatting together. This relaxed mealtime is also utilised very effectively to promote well-being and a healthy lifestyle, through role modelling and by encouraging good habits.
- Times of transition are announced ahead of time to prepare the children for the change in the daily routine. Transitions are fluid and provide positive learning experiences for the children. The children are eagerly involved in tidying, sorting, pairing, cleaning and organising.
- The adult-child relationships are responsive, highly respectful and reciprocal. The practitioners act as role models worthy of imitation and use effective problem-solving and conflict resolution strategies very skilfully to enable the children to become self-reliant and competent.
- The children’s sense of identity and belonging is nurtured highly effectively within an inclusive learning environment. Practice is very child centred and family centred. The respect for and recognition of the uniqueness of each child is remarkable. There are beautiful framed photos of children engaged in play scenes and during the inspection one child went around quietly smiling while looking at them.
- A broad range of displays is provided for the children to develop an appreciation of themselves as individuals and as members of groups. These include a family wall, a big group ‘all about me’ book, a footprint poster, photos of different types of families, and a birthday chart.
- The parents and community members are very actively involved in the daily life of the pre-school. They take part in community walks, parent play days, a range of festivities, parties and parades.
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 excellent.
- Long-term, medium-term and short-term curriculum plans are on display. The daily plans are developed by each key worker, based on the interests and learning dispositions of their group of children. All the practitioners demonstrate knowledge, understanding and confidence in the development and implementation of an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum.
- A variety of assessment approaches is used to gather information about the children’s learning and development. The information documented about each child is compiled in individual folders, which also contain art work and photos. These are available to the children and their families at all times. Assessment practices could be streamlined to generate greater efficiency. High-quality interactions with the children are facilitated. The practitioners know the children very well and actively extend the children’s thinking and language learning during play interactions. Through using a range of appropriate, effective interaction strategies, such as active listening, sustained shared thinking, prompting, asking open-ended questions and scaffolding, they continuously co-construct knowledge with the children.
- The light-filled, aesthetically pleasing and inviting indoor environment offers a very high play value. It is purposefully structured and richly resourced to inspire and develop the children’s curiosity, creativity, imagination and desire for exploration. The children have daily access to an outdoor area, which is a work in progress. During the outdoor time, the children and the practitioners are actively engaged in very active and interactive, and exploratory play.
- Play is utilised highly efficiently as the main medium through which the children learn and develop.
- The children’s emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills are fostered in a very effective manner. High-quality books are interactively explored; songs and rhymes are acted out; Irish is used for everyday things and situations, and the children sing Christmas songs in Irish. An incredibly rich variety of mark-making and art/craft making opportunities is utilised. The children create and recreate an art display with natural materials on an A3 sheet. They paint, draw, use junk, and make murals to create beach and park scenes.
- The practitioners recognise and accommodate diversity in the style, pace and focus of the children’s learning and development.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is excellent.
- The children are motivated, interested and happily engaged in their activities. They are very at home in the setting and show ownership. They are developing their positive learning dispositions such as initiative, resourcefulness, self-reliance, resilience and persistence.
- The children avail of the many opportunities to discuss and share aspects of their learning achievements with others. They have the capacity to reflect, use judgement and make good decisions. They use both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to do this. The children are highly competent language users.
- In particular during the long, uninterrupted free play periods indoors and outside the children develop and refine their personal and social skills. Organising and negotiating their play activities, they self-regulate, solve problems, resolve conflicts, co-operate and take responsibility. They build positive relationships, which enable them to happily play in pairs and small groups.
- The children confidently utilise a range of opportunities to engage with activities that build early positive dispositions towards science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics. The encouragement and support given to the children to be creative, innovative and express their uniqueness in a wide variety of activities is heart-warming.
- The rich variety of construction work which was observed during the inspection is remarkable and exemplary. The children achieved fulfilment, success and mastery during their learning. They are actively enabled to make connections in their learning and transfer their knowledge and skills to new situations.
The children utilise the unique, broad range of opportunities available, to express their feelings, thoughts, ideas and creativity in their individual way through story exploration, making art and craft, mark-making, singing, acting out songs, dancing and free play.

The voices of the children are very visible within the setting. Their art work is displayed in an aesthetically pleasing manner, with some comments about their work noted on some of them.

The children make sense of their world by interacting with others and their environment through playing, investigating and questioning. They engage with, explore and experiment in their environment using their developing physical skills to manipulate objects and materials. They use cameras to capture their own expressions.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.

Management and staff regularly reflect on and review practice and procedures. Monthly whole-staff meetings and two-monthly supervisor meetings ensure that every staff member gets the opportunity to be actively involved in reviewing and planning the setting’s work. The practitioners also engage in short daily group reflection and planning meetings at the end of each session. The outcomes of all meetings are documented in diaries.

An ethos of professionalism, teamwork, collaboration and partnership is clearly evident. All practitioners are aware of relevant, contemporary research, policy and practice developments. The highly effective practice is informed by evidence-based theory and all staff are knowledgeable about children's learning and development.

The leaders are very good role models for the staff, they promote high standards and foster a clear, shared vision and direction for the work of the setting. They use staff self-evaluation sheets and staff and student satisfaction forms on a regular basis.

The strategies in place for professional reflection, mentoring and continuous professional development are commendable. All staff members regularly avail of further training and professional development.

Clear, effective two-way channels of communication between the setting and the families are established. These include daily informal chats, an active open-door policy, an informative notice board, information notes, parental questionnaires, parent-practitioner meetings twice every year, a parent satisfaction survey and the sharing of information via electronic media. Families and practitioners are also involved in a programme which promotes language and communication skills.

The setting has developed an in-depth, informative transition pack and practitioners are very conscious of the importance of smooth transitions into, within and from the setting. Gradual, family-friendly settling-in procedures are in place. Good, meaningful working relationships with the local primary schools are established. The children visit the schools as a group on a regular basis and the teachers visit the children in the preschool.
### 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>Excellent</td>
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<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
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</tr>
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<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 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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

We are very happy with the inspection report. We were very pleased with the final report and the detail noted within it. We are very proud to be providing such a great service. This positive feedback has encouraged us to continue with the good practice already in place and to strive for excellent quality at all times.

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

As stated in Area 2, “Assessment practiced could be stream-lined to generate greater efficiency”.

We have taken this point on board and have discussed it with the team in Tus an Bhóthair. We brought this issue to our full service team meeting. This involves all early years educators and management. We have created a committee to evaluate the different ways in which we could stream-line our assessment processes and hope to have completed our action plans in the coming weeks.

Also stated in Area 2 is that “our outdoor area is a work in progress”. We discussed this with the Inspector and they provided us with great ideas to fully utilize our space. We are currently working on creating a fairy garden for the children to engage with and explore in. We are also creating more areas such as mud play areas and sensory areas. We are hoping to get this completed in the next few weeks as the weather improves.