An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Manorcunningham Community Childcare</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Ray</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manorcunningham</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Donegal</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09DL0108</td>
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Date of Inspection: 14-03-2019
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>14-03-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Interaction with the children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feedback discussion with the setting manager and the practitioners</td>
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**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Manorcunningham Community Childcare is a community-based pre-school setting. It is located in the rural village of Manorcunningham and offers two concurrent morning pre-school sessions to children participating on the ECCE Programme. On the day of the inspection, one manager, two pre-school leaders and three practitioners were present, facilitating two sessions to a total of nineteen children. The full team attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. 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.
- There is a very warm, caring and respectful atmosphere in the setting. This is created by the personable exchanges between the practitioners, the children and their families upon arrival.
- The daily routine along with the highly responsive interactions between the well-positioned practitioners and the children supports their social and emotional development.
- Transitions are effectively managed and smooth. Practitioners use auditory and visual cues to enable the children to process upcoming changes in the routine.
- Snack time promotes a pleasurable and relaxed experience between the practitioners and the children. The children’s self-help skills are effectively nurtured at this time.
- Practitioners successfully promote a problem-solving approach to conflict resolution with the children. They use soft tones of voice and positive body-language during sensitive interactions.
- There is a key-person approach in place within the setting. Parents and children are informed of the assigned groups through photographic displays highlighting the children and their designated key practitioner. Parents are initially informed of this approach during the annual parents’ evening.
- The setting utilises the mobile library service regularly and welcome parents to use the service with their child on these days. There are occasions throughout the year when some parents share their skills in the setting. There are few organised events within the setting which bring the children, their families and the practitioners together.
- Each room has a wealth of visual displays showcasing the uniqueness of each child through family photographs, individual creations and annotated children’s voices.
- Practitioners know the children very well and utilise knowledge about their family backgrounds to make meaningful connections to their play experiences.

**Action advised**

- It is advised that the practitioners create further opportunities to involve parents frequently in experiences within the setting to extend the children’s sense of 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.
- There is a broad-based curriculum in place informed by Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. Plans are structured on a long, medium and short-term basis. Practitioners continually evolve the structure of the plans to present appropriate information. There is scope to make more visible links to the children’s evolving interests and their observed learning needs within the planning to capture the variety of adult and child-led experiences on offer.
- Practitioners record snapshot observations and learning stories regularly. They complete individual portfolios for each child which they share with the parents termly. Parents complete a ‘parents’ voice’ document each term which is placed in their child’s individual portfolio. Parents are provided with termly meetings to discuss their child’s progress.
- Some practitioners use open-ended questions occasionally in both rooms to encourage the children to extend their thinking. They use modelling and scaffolding during interactions to effectively support the children.
- The indoor environment within both pre-school rooms is well-defined and resourced to accommodate learning in a variety of contexts. Multi-sensory experiences and outdoor play are highly valued and time is offered daily for extended play experiences.
- Emergent language is fostered through the daily use of story, songs and opportunities for the children to participate in drama. Story-sacks are used to enhance literacy and parents are involved in this experience as the children have the opportunity to use them at home.
- The practitioners promote an inclusive environment where all children are successfully encouraged to engage in play activities. The manager has completed the Leadership for Inclusion (LING) Programme and in collaboration with the practitioners, parents and external specialists has developed useful strategies to support all learners within the setting.

Actions advised
- It is advised that practitioners make visible links within the curriculum plans to the children’s evolving interests and next steps in learning using recorded observations to inform experiences.
- It is advised that the practitioners further develop their use of open-ended questioning to enhance the children’s problem-solving skills and to develop sustained shared thinking with the children.

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 enjoy a varied range of activities during each session such as outdoor play, role-play, fine-motor activities and sensorial play.
- Children are motivated and interested in the experiences on offer and it is clearly evident that their voices are heard and respected.
- The children are beginning to develop the language of feelings, supported through discussion and the use of visual displays. They are developing strong friendships and demonstrate the ability to play co-operatively with their peers.
- Each child has an individual portfolio which is readily available for the child to access. The portfolio contains regular observations, photographs of play activities, samples of artistic creations and parents’ voice templates. The range of information contained within the portfolios does not consistently capture the children’s individual interests, their voices and the next steps in learning.
- The children proudly share their learning achievements during the sessions and are developing increasing confidence over their fine-motor skills.
- Children highlight strong communication skills with frequent opportunities provided to share their views and opinions with the practitioners and their peers in both rooms. During the inspection, children from one of the rooms confidently acted out the story of ‘Goldilocks and the Three Bears’ with great enthusiasm.
The children are making sense of the world through many discussions and explorations with magnets, magnifying glasses and regular access to the outdoor environment. Practitioners have previously utilised some open-ended materials to broaden the children’s creative explorations. The children’s use of open-ended resources was limited during the inspection.

**Actions advised**

- It is advised that the information contained within the children’s individual portfolios highlight progression in learning, their evolving interests and frequent annotations of the child’s voice on work samples.
- It is advised that the children have further opportunities to develop investigative play through open-ended, creative and authentic materials in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- The manager promotes high standards and a clear vision for the work of the setting. She supports the practitioners in each of the rooms on a daily basis and provides formal opportunities for appraisal and supervision.
- There is a strong ethos of professionalism, teamwork and dedication among the practitioners. The manager and practitioners meet frequently throughout the year to reflect and focus on improvement practices.
- The setting has received mentoring support from both the Better Start Access and Inclusion Model and the Quality Development Service to enhance evaluation and strategic development using the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide.
- The manager values parental input and obtains parental views through an annual survey regarding the services provided within the pre-school.
- The manager has established appropriate systems for the smooth organisation of educational experiences through the provision of daily non-contact time and frequent staff meetings. These opportunities are used by practitioners to plan activities, update portfolios and to reflect on research.
- Parents are highly valued in the setting and are regularly informed of its work. There is a well-designed entrance hall which effectively provides a broad range of information for the parents. Newsletters containing information regarding schematic play behaviours has resulted in some parents sharing photographs of play observed in the home environment.
- The settling-in process commences with an annual registration evening where parents and children attend to view the setting’s facilities. A parents’ evening is held the night before the ECCE Programme commences to inform parents of the general practices within the setting and to provide a parental handbook to support the children’s settling-in experiences.
- There is a transition policy in place within the setting. The manager has established good relationships with the local primary schools. She provides photographs of each school to the children and arranges teacher visits to the pre-school. The practitioners complete transition statements and parents pass them on to the various primary schools.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

Given the clear commitment to ongoing improvement in the quality of provision demonstrated by the manager and practitioners, the capacity of the service 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>
</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>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 happy that this Report highlights many areas of high-quality and exemplary practice in Manorcunningham Community Child Care Centre.

- The feedback and advised actions are welcome and have focused our attention to exploring new ways to enhance quality in our service for the benefit of our children and their families.

- It is evident from this report that parents are highly valued in our pre-school and that we recognize and promote the right of parents to be actively involved in their children’s education in the setting and the home environment.

- The report acknowledges that practitioners respect children as equal partners and regard children as capable and competent learners.

- The report acknowledges the strong ethos of professionalism, teamwork and dedication among the team of Early Years Educators at Manorcunningham Community Child Care Centre.

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

Actions completed

- The manager has consulted with the early year’s team, management committee and parents for suggestions to create further opportunities to involve parents more frequently in experiences within the setting to extend the children’s sense of belonging. In addition, the team referred to numerous DES inspections, consulted with other services and referred to the Aistear -Siolta Practice Guide for ideas.

- Following the inspection, the manager applied to Better Start to re-engage with quality mentoring support to further enhance parental involvement. However due the high standard of practice observed during our earlier engagement with Better Start the service was not considered a priority at this time.
The following actions have been included in our quality annual review

- Once the children have settled in September, we will invite parents to regularly attend stay and play sessions
- We have planned to invite parents to share lunch / breakfast with the children at the end of each term.
- We will follow up on the information parents have provided regarding their skills and invite them to share their skills with the children
- We have planned an earlier parent-teacher meeting in term 1 and children will be welcome to attend with parents

Area 2

1. Since the inspection, practitioners are implementing a new planning approach that make visible links within the curriculum plans to children’s evolving interests and next steps in learning. Daily observations will inform group and individual planning experiences for the children.
2. The team intend to display photographic evidence with their plans to demonstrate how children’s interests have been supported and extended. This documentation will be displayed at children’s level. The manager will support staff in implementing these changes
3. We are mindful of how open-ended questions promote children’s curiosity and their ability to develop their own theories. Practitioners will continue practicing this pedagogical skill and use it more frequently and effectively.

Area 3

1. The team puts in a huge amount of time and effort into documenting rich portraits of children’s learning. We do however recognize that there is room for improvement and from September 2019 we intend to be more consistent in recording children’s emerging interests, their progression in learning and to record more detailed and more frequent information of the child’s voice on their work samples
2. We recognize the benefits of providing children with opportunities for open-ended play and have received quality support from Better Start to enhance this area of our practice. Since the inspection we ensure children have regular access to more open-ended materials in the indoor and outdoor environments