# EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

## REPORT FOR SETTING RESPONSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Name</th>
<th>Iasc Óg Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Address</td>
<td>Cromane Community Preschool</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Lake Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cromane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Killorglin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09KY0005</td>
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**Date of Inspection: 10-05-2018**
WHAT IS AN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION-FOCUSED INSPECTION?

The Early Years Education-focused 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-focused Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>10-05-2018</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspection activities undertaken</td>
<td>Observation of interactions during a number of sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meeting with service manager</td>
<td>- Interaction with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meeting with practitioners</td>
<td>- Review of relevant documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Meeting with board of directors</td>
<td>- Feedback to service manager and practitioners</td>
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CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Iasc Óg preschool is a sessional, community service located outside the village of Cromane. Three practitioners provide early education for fifteen children on a daily basis. On the day of the inspection eleven children were present. All three practitioners and a member of the management committee 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; 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 good.
- The practitioners are friendly, welcoming and create a warm atmosphere and caring ethos.
- They provide good guidance and meaningful encouragement towards positive behaviour.
- The children are supported to manage their personal hygiene and they are well able to change their clothes when going outside.
- Snack time is utilised as a social occasion.
- A signing-in chart, a ‘my house’ display, a birthday calendar; and hand and foot prints provide lovely opportunities for the children to develop an appreciation of themselves as individuals and as members of groups.
- The setting has established good links with the local community. Community and family members visit the preschool at different occasions and share their skills and expertise with the children. Every Wednesday, weather permitting a GAA member offers football training to the children.
- Transition times are announced in advance and children engage well in tidying up the environment.

Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to offer more opportunities to the children to manage their own personal care needs. This might include preparing the table for snack time, putting out their own lunch and tidying up afterwards. This will teach self-help skills, competence, and independence and will foster good habits for life. These skills are a pre-requisite for school-readiness.
- The many transitions in the daily routine are not conducive to deep engagement in meaningful play. Long un-interrupted free-play periods indoors and outdoors are needed. These could be interspersed by short, meaningful adult-initiated/led activities, based on children’s interests and themes.

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 fair.
- A broad-based long- and short-term curriculum, based on practitioners’ ideas is documented and implemented. There is no evidence of an emergent curriculum.
- A variety of assessment approaches is used to gather information about children’s achievements and needs. This is too focussed on academic learning outcomes such as letter, sound, colour and
number recognition. A photo album on display details outings and festivities over the last few years for the parents.

- The practitioners currently divide up the children between a general play-room and a so called messy-play room. After forty-five minutes the children tidy up and swap rooms. This is not conducive to meaningful, in-depth engagement in learning. It doesn’t provide agency and choice for the children over their activities. A third room is considered the ‘quiet room’ with a library and soft seating. This is currently only used for adult led activities.
- The children have some access to a well maintained, inviting outdoor play area, weather permitting.
- Children’s emergent literacy and numeracy skills are fostered effectively through a broad variety of songs, finger-games, rhymes, movement games and high quality books and stories. Mark-making opportunities such as painting, chalking and modelling play-dough are available. A lovely ‘height-chart’ is noteworthy. Rote learning and reciting of letters, sounds and numbers happens daily. Worksheets containing number work such as addition, matching, tracing letters and numbers were observed.

**Actions advised**

- Practitioners are advised to gather information about the development and the implementation of an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum. This should be informed by children’s interests, learning dispositions, needs, strength’s and knowledge. Assessment is the best means to provide this information. This information needs to be used to plan the short-term curriculum. The ‘Planning and Assessing’ pillar of the online Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide will inform this area.
- Practitioners are advised to ensure that the children are active agents in choosing and organising their learning and development activities throughout the morning. This can be achieved by using all three rooms during free-play, allowing children decide where and with whom they want to play. This will facilitate a long un-interrupted indoor free-play period. The play value of all environments needs to be maximised. The use of the ‘Environment’ pillar, the ‘Play’ pillar and the ‘Interactions' pillar of the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide, is advised. Completing the audit guides will be particularly helpful.
- Interactive, exploratory play needs to be recognised and become the main medium through which the children learn and develop.
- Organising full rainproof clothing for the children and the practitioners is further advised. This can optimise the use of the outdoor play area throughout the year, regardless of weather.
- Practitioners are strongly advised to refrain from the use of didactic teaching methods. Alternatively, following and extending children’s interests through everyday life situations needs to be the focus for learning.

**AREA 3**

**QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- Currently, children mainly engage in individual and parallel play. This limits social interaction and restricts the use of language and other communication skills.
- The children had a broad range of opportunities to take-turns, make decisions, remember things and develop their senses. Children had a lot of fun; and a wide range of learning and development opportunities were provided. These included counting forwards and backwards, number concepts, literacy skills, whole-body experiences of abstract concepts and developing their physical skills.
- There were some opportunities for children to express their creativity through painting, chalking and working with play-dough. The art and craft work is too product and outcome oriented.
- There is a lot of evidence of children engaging in planting and caring for plants. This gives them a useful awareness of the natural environment and its features. There is the lovely outdoor play area.

**Actions advised**

- More scope needs to be provided for the children to play in pairs and small groups. This will provide more opportunities for the children to practise and refine personal and social skills. These skills include negotiating, cooperating, turn-taking, and problem solving and conflict resolution. This will
also provide rich opportunities for the children to use language to give and receive information, interpret experiences, imagine and recreate roles. It will also help clarify their thinking and feelings.

- The children need to be given more opportunity throughout the day, to develop their capacity to reflect, make-decisions, use judgment and co-construct knowledge. Free-play, meal-time and story-time can be used productively in this regard. One high quality story should be explored with the children interactively over time, through the use of role-play, puppet-shows and story sacks.
- Activities need to provide more opportunity for the children to express their creativity, their own unique ideas, individuality, feelings, opinions and personal experiences. Art and craft activities need to be based on children's interests and current themes. They are best offered in a way which inspires children's creativity. This creativity develops through the process not the product of making art.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The manager engages in local Network meetings and attends monthly committee meetings. Brief and informal verbal reviews of the work of the setting are undertaken daily.
- Leaders promote high standards for the work of the setting. Continuous professional development opportunities are made available.
- Some good, effective two-way channels of communication between the setting and the families have been established. These include a parental handbook, regular information letters, a service face-book page and sharing photographs over social media.
- Transitions into the service from home are managed sensitively and effectively. Gradual settling-in procedures are utilised.

Actions advised

- The service is advised to engage external advisory support, such as ‘Better Start’.
- Effective strategies need to be developed for regular, professional reflection with all team members. The use of a daily diary might aid this process.
- In-depth engagement with all pillars of the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide, starting with curriculum foundation is advised. This will help to establish a clear new vision and direction for the work of the preschool in line with Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.
- The setting is advised to regularly share information on children’s interests, achievements and development with the families in a spirit of transparency.
- Practitioners are advised to be proactive in establishing good relationships with the local primary schools. This will ease the children’s transition from pre-school to primary school.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the service to continue to implement the actions advised above is 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>Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Good</td>
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## Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very good</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good</strong></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><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poor</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.</td>
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