An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Listowel Pre-school</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>26 Convent Street</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Listowel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County Kerry</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09KY0085</td>
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Date of Inspection: 20-03-2019
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 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

Date of inspection: 20-03-2019

Inspection activities undertaken
- Meeting with setting manager and practitioner
- Observation of interactions during the morning session
- Interaction with children
- Review of relevant documents
- Feedback to setting manager and practitioner

CONTEXT OF SETTING
Listowel Pre-school is a privately managed setting that has been in operation since 1989. It is located in a modified house in Listowel. It provides a morning and an afternoon session for children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the morning of the inspection, thirteen children and two practitioners, one of whom is the manager, were 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.
- The practitioners have very successfully created a warm, caring and affirming atmosphere for families and children. Parents and children are greeted individually on arrival; time for informal conversations is prioritised and children appear confident and eager to share their stories with the practitioner’s.
- The routine and the organisational procedures support the children’s physical, social and emotional development very effectively. The children are very familiar with the daily routine and they are fully supported to be active agents in their learning.
- The practitioners are particularly respectful, responsive and calm in their interactions with the children. They listen attentively to their stories, they are alert and interested in their play intentions and they encourage positive, peer-peer relationships. The children are secure and comfortable in their relationships with the practitioners; they confidently seek out help, support and physical comfort as needed.
- The practitioners provide the children with authentic and timely praise and encouragement. They come down to children’s level, they use clear language and they give reasons for the boundaries on the use of specific play materials and they support children’s engagements with each other.
- The strategies in place to support children to develop a positive sense of identity and belonging are commendable. Various cultural and community events are celebrated, families and community heroes visit the setting to share their skills, and attractive, up-to-date, informative, photographic displays are accessible to parents and children.
- Transitions are managed effectively using verbal cues to prepare children for upcoming changes. The children have plenty of time to finish what they are doing and they are supported very successfully to have a purposeful role in the preparation of activities. The practitioners demonstrated an awareness of the potential of adding further strategies, such as timers and visuals, to support the children before and during transitions.
- The children are very well supported to manage their own personal hygiene and care needs. Snack time encourages children’s sociability, independence and healthy eating very successfully.
- Diversity is clearly valued and affirmed. The practitioners make every effort to recognise the uniqueness of each family unit. They work closely with the children’s families and outside agencies and have added photographs, books and resources that depict the children’s lives and the broader community.
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.
- Provision for children's learning and development is underpinned by Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. It successfully promotes and values a child-centred, play-based approach, to learning.
- Planning is organised on a long-term, medium-term and short-term bases. Regular planning meetings, weekly reflections, a detailed planning folder and a board detailing children's emergent interests successfully support the implementation of the plans. A recent community racing event fuelled a big play interest for a number of the children. This was capitalised on by practitioners through the addition of materials, books and the use of small group discussions.
- Varied approaches are used to gather information about the children's learning experiences and achievements. The practitioners use developmental checklists, and strengths-based methods, such as observations, learning stories and anecdotal notes with clear links to Aistear. There is scope to provide further clarity on how the information gathered is used to inform and progress the next steps in individual children's learning.
- Play is valued as the children's main vehicle for learning. This is fully supported through the purposefully arranged and well-resourced indoor and outdoor environments and the large block of uninterrupted time for open-ended, child-initiated, spontaneous play. The practitioners encourage the children's play interests and they are enthusiastic with a sense of enjoyment as they engage with the children.
- The indoor area is inviting, bright, and very spacious. It includes three interconnecting rooms which have been purposefully created into various learning areas. The learning areas are well resourced and encourage children's choice and engagement in a wide variety of types of play on their own, with peers and with the practitioners.
- The children have regular access to a safe outdoor space that offers a rich variety of play experiences to promote learning and development.
- The practitioners involve and motivate the children very successfully. They engage in active listening, authentic natural conversations and they ask appropriate, open-ended questions to extend children's thinking and curiosity. They follow the children's lead in play, give timely guidance and direction and provide gentle prompts and reminders about specific rules.
- The children's emergent language, literacy and mathematical skills are successfully supported within the programme of activities. A diverse range of books and puppets is accessible to the children and regular opportunities for small-group board games, storytelling, mark making and singing of songs and rhymes are prioritised.

Action advised
- To build on the very good practices in planning, the practitioners are advised to consistently utilise the information from their observations and assessments to inform and progress the next steps in the children’s learning. This will support continuity in their learning and development

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 demonstrate high levels of engagement and enjoyment in their learning and a positive sense of well-being. The children are given choice; they take the lead and instigate their own purposeful learning activities. They make decisions and eagerly participate in their self-directed games and in the small-group games facilitated by the practitioners.
- The children appear very confident and are developing a strong sense of their own identity and belonging. The attractive photographic displays, the strong links with the local community and families and the addition of resources that reflect their play interests and daily lives support this successfully. There is scope to provide further opportunities for children to talk about, plan and review their own learning in greater depth.
• The children are very capable and competent in looking after their own personal belongings and hygiene needs. They also take ownership and responsibility for cleaning up the room, setting up activities and organising chairs for circle time.

• The children are very good communicators. They initiate natural conversations with each other and the practitioners; they listen to each other and share their thoughts during small-group discussions. They ask ‘I wonder why?’ questions, they make requests and they use language to share their feelings, imagine and to take on roles in their play. They have lots of opportunities to engage in informal writing and to participate in stories.

• Many children appear to have well-developed, positive pro-social skills. Strong friendships are evident. The children actively participate in resolving minor social conflicts, they negotiate roles during play and they co-operate during clean-up time and in preparing the room for activities.

• The children demonstrate a growing understanding of mathematical concepts and the meaning and uses of symbols, pictures, print and numbers as a means of communication. They confidently make use of the labelling on resources to sort the materials, to recognise their name and to count how many children are in attendance each day. They refer to the displays when discussing and sharing their knowledge on healthy eating and the fruit they bring for their lunch. They utilise the resources purposefully to sort, measure, match, construct, write and participate in number board games.

Action advised
• The practitioners are advised to provide increased daily opportunities for children to discuss, plan and recall their learning and achievements. Utilising the learning journals and capturing, to a greater extent, the children’s thoughts and opinions about their learning experiences and creative representations will be beneficial in this regard.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

• The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.

• A real sense of professionalism, teamwork and shared responsibility is evident. The session observed was very well organised; the practitioners have clear procedures in place for planning and implementing the curriculum. They document their daily and weekly discussions meetings and they use these to inform planning and improvement practices. The self-evaluation tools in the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide are not being utilised for practice review and improvement purposes.

• The stated philosophy and vision of the setting is mirrored successfully in the practice of the practitioners. There is scope within the curriculum statement and parent information booklet to include further information on the value of play and links to Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

• Commendable effort and commitment to improving quality are evident. The practitioners are members of a national childcare organisation, they engage with the local childcare committee and they participate in continuing professional development. They have received a Healthy Ireland Smart Start award, a Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) award and one of the practitioners is participating in a level 8 programme in Early Childhood Studies.

• Parents and families are proactively consulted and informed about the policies, procedures and the children’s learning experiences. They receive regular newsletters and photographs of the group learning experiences and children’s play interests.

• The manager and the practitioners have established, positive links with the local community. Many local heroes and parents are invited to share their skills and knowledge and the children and practitioners participate in a number of community and cultural events throughout the year.

• Transitioning into the pre-school is effectively supported through an appropriate, child-centred transition policy. A ‘Getting to know your child’ form and settling-in strategies ensure a smooth transition for children and their parents.

• A commendable effort is made by the practitioners to support children transition to primary school. In collaboration with two local schools, a bus is organised to bring the children to visit the schools, meet the teacher of junior infants, to see the classroom, and the yard. The children also stay to have a snack and engage in small-group discussions with the school children.
**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to engage systematically with the self-evaluation templates in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*. These will help strengthen all review and evaluation practices.
- The practitioners are advised to update their parent handbook to include information on the programme of activities, the curriculum approach, the value of play and links to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is very good. The practitioners engaged very professionally and reflectively in the post-inspection feedback session.
### 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>
</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>Very good</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

- We wish to respond to the findings of this inspection by firstly affirming that as a group, the teachers in our setting believe in high quality, child-led and inclusive practices. We value diversity and inclusivity, believing the acknowledgement of the importance of Family is key to a child’s success.
- We are proud of the content of this report and we endeavour to implement the recommendations that have been outlined.

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

- We will continue to support and plan effectively around our children’s interests and wishes and will actively build on our planning processes based upon this inspection outcome, using the child’s opinions and input.
- We will engage further and use all the available self-evaluation tools to strengthen practice.
- We are currently reviewing and revising our parent handbook to reflect our program and our links to Siolta and Aistear.