EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Listowel Childcare Ltd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Curraghtoosane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ballybunion Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Kerry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09KY0098</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of Inspection: 05-02-2019
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 inspectors 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>05-02-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Inspection activities undertaken | • Meeting with setting manager  
• Observation of interactions and activities during three sessions  
• Interaction with children  
• Review of relevant documents  
• Feedback to setting manager and practitioners |

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Listowel Childcare Ltd was established in 2007. It is a privately managed setting located in a purpose-built facility on the outskirts of Listowel. The setting provides full day care services, a pre-school programme and an after-school programme. The setting provides three pre-school sessions for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. These comprise two morning sessions and one afternoon session. Thirty-nine children, eight practitioners and one post leaving certificate (PLC) student were present on the day of the evaluation. Four of the practitioners present are employed through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). The manager and four early years’ practitioners 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 good.
• The atmosphere in the setting is warm and caring. Children and their family members are welcomed by name on arrival. The practitioners are kind, gentle, supportive and responsive to the children. Many examples of children being affirmed and receiving hugs, smiles and one-on-one attention and support from practitioners were observed. A considerable number of the children seek out the practitioners to share their successes and to ask for support. The children respect the practitioners’ guidance.
• In all sessions observed, the practitioners provided regular timely affirmations, consistent guidance and encouragement with regard to positive behaviour.
• The children appear familiar with aspects of the daily routine, such as the welcome and goodbye rituals and the sequencing of table-top time, snack time and circle time. A visual of the routine is available in each of the rooms. This visual is placed up high and was not utilised on the day of the inspection to support children to know what to expect next or to alert them to any changes in the routine.
• The number of transitions the children experience within the daily routine varies considerably across the sessions. In the main, transitions are managed through the use of verbal cues. The practitioners plan to implement the use of visuals, timers and schedules in all sessions to support children’s transitioning between activities.
• Snack time was utilised effectively to enhance children’s social engagement and as an opportunity to promote well-being and a healthy lifestyle in most of the sessions. A key person approach is used for managing observations; the use of this approach to provide children with time with their key person in smaller groups is at an early stage of development.
• The children are effectively supported to manage their own hygiene and personal care needs. Many examples of the children washing their own hands, looking after their lunch boxes and using tissues appropriately were observed.
• Positive efforts are made to nurture the children’s developing sense of identity and belonging. Local heroes and community workers visit the setting and a number of individual and family photographs, along with samples of the children’s art work and group projects, are displayed. In addition, conversations about children’s lives at home and in the community are introduced and encouraged.
• The practitioners foster an inclusive approach to supporting children with additional needs; they encourage an ethos of inclusion and respect for diversity amongst the children.
Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to provide opportunities for children to engage with their key person in smaller groups. This will support children’s sense of well-being, participation and emotional security and the practitioners’ monitoring of the children’s learning experiences.
- The practitioners are advised to increase children’s awareness of the daily routine and their management of transitions. In so doing, the practitioners are advised to limit the number of transitions the children experience within the daily routine and to introduce a wider variety of strategies to signal changes in activities. Ongoing engagement with the self-evaluation templates and resources available in the ‘Supporting transitions’ pillar of the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will be useful in this regard.

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 good.
- The curriculum is informed by Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. The curriculum statement outlines play as the medium through which children learn, with the inclusion of features of the Montessori Method of education.
- Extensive long-term, medium-term and short-term planning documents are used to guide the implementation of the curriculum. At the time of the inspection, planning did not take due account of children’s varying interests, needs, strengths, prior knowledge or their cultural backgrounds.
- A variety of assessment approaches are used. In the main, these comprise checklists that assess children’s language, social, physical and cognitive development, their progress in colour recognition and their play skills.
- Opportunities are provided for children to engage in self-initiated play in all rooms. The range of play types, the extent of and access to play resources, and the time afforded to child-directed play varied significantly between the rooms.
- The majority of the learning experiences observed during the inspection were adult-initiated, large group or focused table-top activities; this resulted in an imbalance between the provision of adult-led and child-led learning opportunities.
- Children’s access to the outdoors and the promotion of their physical fitness, social engagement and large-motor movement skills are prioritised in the setting. On the day of the inspection, the majority of the children were provided with an opportunity to play outside. The outdoor area supports children’s socialisation, large motor development and exploration. There are plans to make improvements to the outdoor area, including the addition of more open-ended play resources.
- Children’s emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills are supported effectively through the consistent use of discussion, stories, songs and rhymes in all of the sessions.
- Most of the children are successfully provided with open-ended, sensory-rich, exploratory resources, floor space and time to engage in uninterrupted, open-ended, self-initiated play.
- Many natural spontaneous conversations and discussions took place between the children and the practitioners in all of the sessions. Almost all of the practitioners come down to the children’s eye level when talking to them, model appropriate language and position themselves intentionally to support sustained engagement.
- The setting has developed positive links with external agencies to progress and support the learning for children with additional needs.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to implement an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum and to use information from ongoing, regular assessment to inform the next steps in children’s learning in order to support progression. The planning and assessing templates and resources in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will be useful in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to reduce the number of large-group, adult-directed activities within the programme of activities. As part of this process, a collaborative, whole-setting approach to ensuring there is a more appropriate balance between child-directed and adult-directed learning activities is needed.
The practitioners are advised to adopt a more consistent approach to the promotion of open-ended, child-initiated play and enquiry-based learning. Engagement with the self-evaluation tools and resources in the ‘Learning through Play’ pillar of the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will support team reflection on play and the role of the adults.

The practitioners are advised to provide more open-ended art materials, sand, clay and water to the indoor environments and to add more resources that will support exploration, construction, and curiosity to the outdoor area. Engaging fully with the indoor and outdoor environment audits in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide will be helpful in this regard.

### AREA 3
#### QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children appear happy and relaxed in the setting. They competently take the lead during the planned times for free-play indoors and outdoors.
- Most of the children demonstrate the ability to play co-operatively in pairs and in groups. Some rich imaginative play was observed and good examples of children’s ability to persist with tasks. For example, a small number of children were observed persisting with their play intentions, returning again and again to continue their play theme when they had opportunity to do so.
- The majority of the children enjoy sharing their knowledge and thoughts on topics during circle-time and they enjoy participating in the adult-directed, large-group games. The children have limited opportunities to formally plan for, talk about and think about their play experiences.
- The children have opportunity to engage in art and craft projects. These are, in the main, whole-group, pre-determined art projects that are based on the theme or project being explored.
- Most of the children communicate appropriately with each other and they are developing the ability to solve minor conflicts on their own. They are caring and kind and appear to have an understanding of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour in regard to interacting with each other and in using the materials.
- Friendships between the children are evident, especially amongst the older children. Children were observed eagerly engaging and supporting each other during a number of the group games and when playing with blocks and toy animals.
- A number of the children demonstrate a keen interest in books and the majority of the children enjoy participating in discussions, rhymes and songs.
- The children have limited opportunity to be active agents in their own learning, to represent their own ideas and thoughts, or to have choice within the programme of activities.
- Some well-planned strategies are successfully used to communicate with children for whom English is an additional language.

### Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to provide many more opportunities for open-ended process art, in particular three-dimensional junk art and creative expression through music, free drawing, socio-dramatic play and engaging with natural and open-ended resources.
- The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities for the children to be active agents in directing their own learning and to plan for, talk about and think about their play experiences.
- The practitioners are advised to give the children more choice within the programme of activities and more opportunity to participate in small-group learning experiences.
AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The manager and practitioners are committed, open and transparent in their aspirations to improve the learning outcomes for children in the setting. Recent developments include their involvement in a Green Flag project and engagement with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment transition tools. They seek guidance and support through the local county childcare committee and they have engaged with Better Start Quality Development Service initiative.
- Staff are supported to engage in continuing professional development opportunities. A number of staff have completed workshops on mindfulness and play therapy, the manager is currently completing a level 7 qualification in early years education and care and a staff member is participating in the leadership for inclusion (LINC) programme.
- A team approach to planning is encouraged and whole-staff meetings are facilitated. Documentation of the outcomes of these team meetings and the creation of action plans have commenced. At the time of inspection, formal processes were not in place for practitioners and managers to self-review their practice and limited evidence of individual and team reflections on provision was available.
- In the main, the practitioners are clear about their roles and responsibilities and there is some evidence of sharing of the leadership role.
- Information is shared with parents informally and formally. Time is prioritised at arrival and departure time to converse with parents. Information is also shared through emails, texts, one-to-one meetings at the request of the parents and notices in the welcome area. Newsletters, daily sheets and weekly sheets are used to update parents on the topics, songs and stories covered.
- Positive efforts are in place to bring parents and children together in the setting. A recent Christmas event was organised where children and their families came together to participate in an art and craft event and positive links have been established with a local nursing home.
- Positive links with external agencies to support the provision for children with additional needs are well established in the setting.
- The setting has begun to develop links with local primary schools to further support children’s transition to primary school.

Actions advised

- The manager is advised to encourage and support all staff to engage with the National Siolta Aistear Initiative. This will help promote a whole-team approach to improving practice.
- The manager is advised to take a more purposeful approach to staff support and supervision and to facilitate all staff to engage in on-going self-evaluation, team evaluations and annual reviews. Utilising the self-evaluation templates and resources from the pillars of practice in the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide will be useful in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to enhance the sharing of curriculum updates and children’s learning with parents. The ‘Sharing curriculum updates with parents’ and the ‘Sharing children’s learning journals with parents’ templates in the ‘Building Partnership with Parents’ pillar of the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide will support the development of these approaches.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised above is good.
### Summary of Overall Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Good</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Published June 2019
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

Thank you for your report from Factual Verification on DES Inspection of our three Pre-schools in Listowel Childcare. We welcome the balance of feedback and accept the report as a suggested guide to improve our work practice. As this was our first Inspection we now have the foundation to build on a practice that will always consider the best interests of the child to allow for the growth and development of confident competent learners.

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

Following the Report for DES Inspection, a staff meeting was held on 8th of May 2019. At the meeting presentation of the inspection report was shared and analysed. The progress on the implementation of recommendations (as regards DES Inspection) and educators opinions were taken into consideration. Following the meeting an action plan was designed to improve our practice.

List of Actions to be Implemented:

- Involve parents in curriculum sharing
- Provide more opportunities for children to engage with their key-person
- Improve management of transitions in pre-school sessions
- Implement an emergent, enquiry based curriculum
- Allow more child-led activities including child-initiated and enquiry based learning.
- Provide more open-ended materials and more choice within the programme of activities
- Implement learning journals for all children beginning in September 2019

Actions Implemented:

- Aistear Workshops
- Aistear assessment tool document completed by staff
- Project approach in progress