An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills  

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION  

REPORT  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Giggles Community Childcare</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Mullingar Road</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ballivor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Meath</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09MH0117</td>
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Date of Inspection: 31-01-2019
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>31-01-2019</th>
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</table>
| Inspection activities undertaken | Interaction with children  
Review of relevant documents  
Post-inspection feedback meeting with company representative, setting manager, setting supervisor and ECCE practitioner. |

| Pre-inspection meeting with setting manager  
Observation of interactions during the two morning ECCE sessions |

CONTEXT OF SETTING
Giggles Community Childcare has been in operation in Ballivor, Co. Meath since 2004. The setting is part of the Crann Support Group. There are two pre-school rooms in the setting; one located in the main building and the second an outdoor pre-school on the grounds of the setting. The setting provides care and education for local children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Both pre-school settings were visited on the day of the inspection. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, and the response submitted on behalf of the setting can 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 an open-door policy in the setting and children and parents are welcomed into the setting by their key-workers. The relationships between practitioners and children are respectful and practitioners are responsive to the needs of children.
- Parents spend time in the environment settling their children into their play and sharing information with practitioners.
- There is a planned routine which children are familiar with. There are short opportunities during the daily routine for free-choice play with various transitions to other activities. Transitions between activities are instant rather than phased and accordingly, children take time to adjust to the change in routine.
- Snack time is a social occasion during the daily routine and the practitioners sit with children during this time discussing healthy eating. On the day of the inspection the practitioners shared photographs of one child’s culture and home city with the group.
- Most children are independent during snack time and have good self-help skills which are effectively supported. The children brush their teeth after snack; this promotes healthy habits.
- The children hear praise and encouragement during the day. The practitioners resolve conflict instantly for children and children currently do not engage in problem-solving scenarios.
- There are good displays which nurture individual and group identity within the setting including family walls, displays on coat hooks and art displays. The children visit local areas in the community and there are visitors to the setting. Visual resources to support the development of children’s awareness of cultural diversity and of their local community are not yet included in the environment.

Actions advised
- It is advised that the practitioners reduce the number of transitions during the daily routine, and use timers and verbal props to signal transitions. These actions will support preparation for transitions and offer more prolonged play periods which the children can conclude in a more gradual and phased manner.
- It is advised that practitioners model and provide guidance towards positive behaviour. This will give children more ownership of their decisions.
- Building on the existing individual and group displays, the addition of resources to represent the various community visits and children’s cultural awareness is advised.
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 in place is play-based and is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. This is evident in the daily activities and experiences of the children.
- The current curriculum plans are organised with thematic long-term and medium-term plans.
- There are short-term plans in place which focus on breaking down themes. There are a few examples of links to emergent interests. Planning is linked to *Aistear* learning goals and themes. The practitioners review and document the activities they plan in a group learning journal.
- The practitioners use an information technology software system to record observations. These observations document the activities, future plans and links to *Aistear*. The software links to a social media application which shares these observation with parents.
- Play is the main medium for learning with short free-play periods where children can pursue their interests. Planned activities are led by the adults, and children contribute their ideas within the activities as they take place. The majority of activities are currently adult led and organised. Children are exposed to a variety of play opportunities throughout the day including construction play, role-play and sensory play.
- The indoor environment is laid out with various interest areas and it offers a good range of resources. The setting has an outdoor pre-school which offers children a variety of experiences to learn in a natural environment surrounded by open-ended materials. On the day of the inspection children enjoyed engaging in a dramatic activity where they took on the roles of the “three billy goats gruff”.
- Interactions between practitioners and children are playful and practitioners use instructions to guide and promote children’s understanding of concepts and learning. Open-ended questions and commenting are currently under-utilised by the practitioners.
- The practitioners have created an inclusive environment. Support is available under the Access and Inclusion model (AIM), and one practitioner has completed the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) in the Early Years programme. All children are encouraged to mix socially and there is some use of home languages to support children who have English as an additional language.

**Actions advised**

- It is advised that practitioners continue to develop their planning processes with a stronger focus on extending the emergent interests of children and their developmental needs. This will support children to take more ownership of their learning experiences.
- The practitioners are advised to provide additional time for an extended purposeful free-play period where children lead the activities and experiences. This will give children time to become engrossed in their play and exploration and will also support learning and development in a meaningful and concrete way.
- Practitioners are advised to extend the use of open-ended questions and commenting and to scaffold the children’s learning to a greater extent. This will extend the children’s speaking skills and vocabulary and will deepen their learning and knowledge.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children are happy, safe and secure within their learning environment.
- The children have access to sensory exploration and messy play. On the day of the inspection they engaged with playdough, sand, natural materials and mud. They enjoyed these experiences, and returned to these forms of play throughout the day.
- The outdoor pre-school offers children extensive opportunity for gross motor play and risk-rich learning opportunities. The children have access to loose parts, natural materials and climbing apparatus throughout this area.
Songs and rhymes are planned for within the daily routine and children enjoy singing songs. Some children participated in recall time at the end of the day; they informed the practitioners about their favourite part of the day. This is currently not recorded by practitioners or shared with parents.

There is evidence of many template-based activities in the individual learner journals and on display throughout both learning environments. These types of activities are limited in scope.

Throughout the inspection process children were observed to play individually, in pairs and in small groups. The practitioners used their key-worker groups for small group work and some large group learning also took place.

Practitioners read stories to children at the end of the day and children enjoy listening to fantasy stories. The current book areas do not attract the children and these areas were not utilised on the day of the inspection.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to provide more opportunities for children to engage in planning and to self-reflect on their own learning. This will support them to take ownership of their learning and to develop their unique interests and skills.
- The use of templates and workbooks to promote early pre-writing skills, and as a basis for creative work needs to be discontinued. In place of this approach, practitioners are encouraged to provide more opportunities for the children to engage in expressive process art, junk art and painting at easels.
- More comfortable, attractive and inviting book areas need to be developed to encourage the children to engage informally with books on a regular basis.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- There is a professional working ethos evident in the setting. The practitioners welcome visitors to the setting.
- The practitioners have an awareness of *Siolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education* and this is reflected in the setting's policies and procedures.
- The setting receives support and training as part of the Crann Support Group. There are a number of staff meeting during the year, group training days and regular support and supervision sessions. These support the good teamwork which the setting has established. The manager delegates tasks and responsibilities to the supervisor and other ECCE practitioners.
- Over the past few years the setting has focused on developing and reviewing the outdoor pre-school. They have recently extended the creative play and snack space in the outdoor area. The *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide* is not currently used to support or document this work.
- All practitioners participate in continued professional development relevant to their work and the needs of the children in their care. The practitioners have completed continued professional development including a programme relevant to inclusion, *Siolta* workshops, Healthy Ireland Smart Start and relevant compulsory training. The setting is also involved in 'Tiny Talk', a speech and language initiative in their area.
- There is a variety of communication channels established with parents in the setting including a parent handbook, a website, daily informal meetings and formal meetings where necessary. The setting uses a social media application to share photographs and observations; this is very effective. The parents share comments and photographs of the setting through the application.
- The children's transition to primary school is supported by a visit from the school teacher who talks to the children about the transition to school. The setting manager also visits the school principal to share information regarding the children moving to school. The practitioners have a formal parent teacher meeting at Easter to discuss the children's school readiness. The children would benefit from more play opportunities to discuss the transition to school.
Actions advised

- It is advised that the practitioners use the *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide* as a resource for supporting self-reflection and to document changes and development in the setting.
- Alongside the strategies already in place to support the children’s transition to primary school, the setting is encouraged to develop further play opportunities during which they can explore and discuss the transition to primary school. The *Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide* pillar of practice ‘Supporting Transitions’ will be useful in this regard.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to continue to implement the actions advised above is very good. The owner and practitioner communicate well with each other and work together in the interests of the children. This will support the implementation of the actions advised.
## 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>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>Very good</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### 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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*Published May 2019*
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report

The practitioners have implemented the majority of the advice given in the report and implemented the suggestions. The practitioners are dedicated to developing and supporting children’s learning and development in a meaningful and concrete manner and the practitioners view the inspection as a positive experience which will enhance the quality of the service provided by the centre and furthermore enhance the children’s experiences and deepen their learning when attending the pre-schools.

The Aistear Siolta practice guide are printed and are available in both preschools to view.

We have added a school uniform in the dress up area and got school bags so children can explore the transition to school. Transition from Preschool to Primary School by Dr. Mary O’Kane is available for staff to read and staff are encouraged to implement the techniques which encourage children’s transition to school.

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

We are using egg timers and there are 2 buzzer timers on order; a bell is in use for children in the outdoor pre-school. This encourages children to take turns during transitions. There is a visual display of our daily plan which will help children transition.

The indoor pre-school has increased the amount of time for free-play during the session. The outdoor pre-school maintains an hour and twenty minutes free play in the morning.

Positive behaviour sessions are planned as part of learning goals and the daily plan; we use are our Feeling Dolls and Books to encourage positive behaviour also.

Building on our existing connection to the village i.e. our library visits, walk and community speakers coming to visit us, we have introduced a visual display of our community in each pre-school setting for the children.

Area 2

We have increased the space on our planning templates for children’s emergent interests.

There is extended free-play time in the indoor pre-school as well as introducing recall time, and outdoor preschool has introduced Fridays solely as a child-led day, this will be referred to as the day children are now the teachers.

We are adapting and using more open-ended question in class.
Area 3

Recall time at end of day is being practiced in the indoor pre-school. The outdoor pre-school are sharing their findings of recall time with parents by displaying their findings on their parent notice board.

The use of templated and workbook practice is discontinued, the few templates used are from children requesting to colour pictures in the library. Free hand drawing and pencil work is being practiced and encouraged.

There is a paint easel in the indoor pre-school and more junk art available. The outdoor pre-school are using trees and fences as easels and using the sidewalk for chalk use, the natural environment is being used for art activities using natural resources which was not seen on day of inspection.

A book area has been improved adding a book stand and cushions so the area is more cosy and inviting.