**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>St. Ailbe’s Pre-school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting Address</strong></td>
<td>Hillview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Road</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cashel</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Tipperary</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DCYA number</strong></td>
<td>09TS0028</td>
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**Date of Inspection:** 14-09-2018
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>14-09-2018</th>
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</table>
| Inspection activities undertaken | Interaction with children  
Review of relevant documents  
Post-evaluation feedback meeting with setting owner |
- Introductory meeting with setting owner / lead practitioner  
- Observation of interactions during the morning session  
- Interaction with children  
- Review of relevant documents  
- Post-evaluation feedback meeting with setting owner |

CONTEXT OF SETTING
St. Ailbe’s Pre-school is a private sessional pre-school setting. It has been established for twenty-six years and operates from self-contained rooms adjoining a dwelling in Cashel. A small number of children attending have English as an additional language. The owner/ lead practitioner, a relief practitioner (covering an absence) and ten children were present on the morning of the inspection. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this 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 very good.
- There is a very warm and friendly atmosphere in the setting.
- The practitioners embody the setting’s caring ethos in their interactions with children and their families. Parents are welcomed into the setting at arrival and departure times.
- The children frequently receive affirming comments that recognise their positive behaviour and learning efforts.
- There is a well-structured and familiar daily schedule in place. The majority of transitions within the routine are managed effectively and support positive experiences for children.
- A suitable balance of child-initiated and adult-initiated play-based activities are provided. In some instances, children did not have sufficient time to choose their preferred play materials.
- There is a small variety of materials available to reflect difference in culture and race, such as, reading materials and small world figures.
- There is evidence that activities are planned throughout the year to build children’s understanding and appreciation of their uniqueness. At the time of the inspection, there were some opportunities for children to engage in activities and materials that reflected the variety of home cultures and connection to their local environment.
- Very good opportunities are provided for children to gain an understanding of the roles of workers in their community; there have been visits from a dental nurse, a postman and library staff.

Actions advised
- Practitioners are advised to further enable children to make choices in their learning. This could be achieve by allowing additional time and encouragement for children to independently make decisions about the materials they would like to explore.
- It is advised that additional materials and activities be included to represent each child’s cultural background and the local environment within Cashel.
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.
- The service has a play-based curriculum which is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. Elements of an emergent curriculum follow the seasonal events with some incorporation of children’s interests.
- A yearly plan and short-term plans which link directly to the daily activities are documented. The broad yearly plan reflects the play-based ethos of the service.
- A suitable range of assessment approaches is in place documenting each child’s learning journey. The portfolios effectively capture the voice of the child and identify learning goals achieved.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments are neatly arranged and suitably resourced. The majority of materials and resources within both environments are accessible to the children. There is a small area off the main play room that offers access to painting materials. There are very good opportunities for children to explore and investigate with natural materials outdoors. Children did not use the outdoor space during the inspection as not all children had outdoor footwear.
- There is a strong emphasis on the centrality of play to the learning and development of children. The children have access to a range of types of play and can competently engage in play scenarios with their peers. They are supported to play alone, in pairs and in groups.
- Practitioners naturally support the children’s use of language, literacy and mathematical skills in a variety of meaningful contexts that are embedded into the children's daily experiences.
- Good quality interactions occur between the practitioners and the children during the day that facilitate and support enriching play and learning. In some instances, practitioners used open-ended questions to encourage children to talk and think about their play.
- Practitioners work in partnership with parents and link with outside services to support children with additional needs. Visual props are available to enhance communication with children using English as an additional language.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to reflect the children’s emerging interests in their planning and to use these to inform daily activities and service developments. This will support the children to take more significant ownership of their learning interests and needs.
- It is advised that a greater variety of open-ended questions are used during interactions. Using questions, such as, ‘Tell me more about…’, ‘How did you…’; ‘I wonder why…’ inquire into children’s thought process and require a more detailed response.

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 appear contented and display enjoyment in their learning experiences.
- The children are motivated and interested in the wide variety of play experiences on offer to them throughout the session. They engage in experiences such as making puzzles, hammering tacks and painting, which all promote the development of fine-motor skills.
- The children demonstrate dispositions such as initiative, self-confidence and creativity as they construct with stickle bricks and explore playdough.
- On some occasions, children took responsibility during the routines, for example, to tidy up play materials.
- The children experience achievement within the setting. A pre-school “photo book” is available to the children exhibiting their learning experiences throughout the previous year.
- Very good opportunities are provided for children to talk about past experiences leading to deeper understanding and richer learning outcomes.
Throughout the inspection, children expressed themselves in a variety of ways. They used their developing communication skills to interact with peers during cooperative play. For example, a small group of children engaged in a role play in the kitchen area selling fish.

The use of song and rhymes is highly effective in developing children’s familiarity of the positive behaviour boundaries in the setting.

A number of projects throughout the year introduce activities to build children’s understanding of the natural environment, science and living things.

**Action advised**

- Practitioners are advised to enable children to take more responsibility within the setting. For example, during the lunch time routine, the children could be allowed to select their own plate and get their lunch bag.

### AREA 4

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The owner/lead practitioner engages in regular reflection to support professional practice; she maintains a reflective journal for this purpose.
- She demonstrates a good understanding of the standards of *Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*. At the time of the inspection, evaluation of quality practice and provision was not informed by *Síolta*.
- Appropriate systems are in place for the smooth organisation of the educational experiences and activities. The staff meets daily to reflect on children’s experiences and a team meeting is held once a week to plan curriculum activities.
- There is a professional ethos evident in the service. Engagement in workshops and training is encouraged to support the maintenance of high standards in the quality of the service provided to the children and their parents.
- The practitioners nurture a partnership approach with parents; they encourage informal communication and are available daily to listen and share information. In addition, information on the policies, curriculum and upcoming events are shared through letters and through social media.
- Transitions into and from the service are managed effectively to support continuity in children’s learning and development. The practitioners facilitate parents and children visiting the service to build familiarity and request information that is sensitively used to plan for their child’s needs.
- Links have been established with one of the local primary schools; information is shared to ensure continuity of experiences. A number of curriculum activities are planned on the topic of ‘going to school’; suitable props such as school uniforms are used to encourage discussion.

**Action advised**

- The practitioners are advised to formalise their reflective diaries in order to further develop ongoing self-review of all areas. This will lead to improvement plans informed by *Síolta*. The self-evaluation tools contained in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* are a practical resource in relation to this.

### CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The owner/lead practitioner attended the post-evaluation feedback meeting. The capacity of the setting 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>
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### Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality 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>
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<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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