An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Kilmacanogue Playgroup Ltd.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Kilmacanogue National School</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kilmacanogue North</td>
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<td>County Wicklow</td>
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<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>09WW0024</td>
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Date of Inspection: 22-10-2018
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 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.
CONTEXT OF SETTING
Kilmacanogue Playgroup is a private setting. It has been located for twenty-eight years in a prefabricated building in the grounds of Kilmacanogue National School. It offers a morning, sessional play-based learning programme to children in their first and second years of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. On the day of the inspection, nineteen children, one of the owners and a relief practitioner were in attendance. The owner and the relief practitioner attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. 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 a warm, welcoming atmosphere in the setting. It is evident that practitioners know the children and their families well and time is taken to chat to them at arrival and collection times.
- A flexible daily routine is in place but is not visible to the children. A variety of effective strategies are used to support children’s transitions from one activity to the next. These include verbal reminders, counting down the minutes and all singing the tidy-up song.
- Secure and supportive relationships are fostered between the children and the practitioners. Consistent meaningful praise and encouragement is offered to all children. This supports and motivates them in their learning.
- During the session observed, the practitioners provided guidance towards positive behaviour and supported children to negotiate their disagreements using calm, positive tones. They also offered children words to help them to express themselves.
- Snack time is valued as a social occasion. On the day of the inspection, practitioners chatted with children about the foods they liked to eat and the pets they had at home.
- The uniqueness of each child is reflected in the birthday display and the children’s self-portraits.
- Parents visit the setting for the Christmas party sing-a-long and the end-of-year party. In the past, parents have brought lambs and goats to visit the pre-school.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to develop a visual daily routine, by adding photographs of the children engaged in activities, and to display it at a height accessible to them.
- The introduction of a key person approach is advised. The benefits of this approach include the identification of a designated practitioner who has responsibility for a small group of children and for gathering and sharing information on these children’s learning with their parents.
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.
- There is a play-based curriculum in place that is aligned to the principles of Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. A large wall display with photographs of the children engaged in activities links children's learning to Aistear's themes.
- The practitioners use a resource file that includes seasonal themes, art and craft ideas and weekly topics. These are rotated every two years. Planning for an emergent curriculum has yet to be developed.
- Practitioners use a monthly observation template linked to Aistear, which broadly outlines the children's learning. At the time of the inspection, the next steps for the children's progression were not recorded.
- The practitioners use calm, positive tones when interacting with the children. They respond to children's requests promptly and use open-ended questions to promote children's thinking and their problem-solving skills.
- Play is promoted within the setting and practitioners take part in children's play when invited. On the day of the inspection, a practitioner took part in the hairdressing activity. She followed the children's play ideas and offered additional resources to support them in their play.
- The indoor area is divided into some interest areas, such as a home corner and a construction area. There are adequate table-top activities and jigsaws available to the children. At the time of the inspection, the range of resources and the layout of the room limited children’s play opportunities.
- Children have access to a large outdoor area. It includes provision of opportunities to develop children's physical skills through planting, digging and water play at the mud kitchen. Practitioners bring the children to visit a 'secret garden' attached to the school.
- There are many examples of the children's art work, with their comments added, displayed in the room.
- Children's emergent literacy and numeracy skills are effectively supported through the use of everyday experiences, mark-making materials and songs and rhymes.

Actions advised
- To support the development of the setting’s long-term, medium-term and short-term planning, including incorporating the children's emergent interests, practitioners are advised to avail of the templates in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide
- The practitioners are advised to adapt their current observation template and to include the next steps for progression in children’s learning. It is advised that the key person shares these observations regularly with parents.
- To enhance the indoor play experiences for the children, it is advised that a review of the environment be carried out using the ‘Environment Audit’ in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide. This will support the practitioners in placing an emphasis on accessible resources.

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 enjoyment and pleasure in their activities. Their positive learning dispositions, such as resourcefulness, confidence and perseverance, help them to feel confident in their learning abilities. On the day of the inspection, children were observed mixing colours to get the colours they wanted.
- On the day of the inspection, there was an imbalance between large and small-group activities. This led to some of the children finding it difficult to make choices and to concentrate on activities.
- The children are learning to play co-operatively; there is evidence of strong friendships being developed. In collaboration with the children, a list of classroom rules has been developed and is on display within the room.
The children are supported by the practitioners to express their feelings and to discuss being either happy or sad when resolving disagreements.

The majority of children are in attendance for a second year and are eager to assist the new children to understand the rules of the setting. A number of children were observed helping children new to the setting to put on their scarves and to complete activities.

Children’s sense of identity and belonging is reflected in the height chart, the display ‘Where we live’ and in their individual scrapbooks that are compiled with the practitioners. The scrapbooks include photographs and samples of the children’s art with their comments added.

Children take an active part in the tidy-up routines and a child-helper display details children’s specific jobs. This helps children to feel connected to their group and helps build their independence and self-help skills.

The children are developing an awareness of the natural environment and take part in planting activities both indoors and outdoors.

In previous years, there were visits to the setting by a local farmer to show kid goats and lambs. At the present time, there is no planned programme to support children’s understanding of the local area and the people who work there.

**Actions advised**

- The reduction in whole large-group activities and the addition of more regular, focused, small-group activities led by the key person are advised. This will support differentiation in learning activities and offer the key person greater insight into the children’s interests and learning needs.
- To develop children’s awareness of their local community, the practitioners are advised to invite local people to come and share their work experiences. In addition, it is advised that photographs of the local areas of interest for the children are displayed on a map within the room.

### AREA 4

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The practitioners chat informally every day and at the end of the week they discuss the activities for the following week.
- The relief practitioner has been working as a volunteer in the setting for a number of years and there is evidence of good teamwork and collaboration between the practitioners.
- The owners receive support and mentoring from Early Childhood Ireland and the local childcare committee.
- The owners are committed to their ongoing professional development and have recently attended workshops in Diversity and Equality and Child Protection. The relief practitioner is completing a QQI level 5 major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.
- The practitioners use various approaches to share information with parents. A parents’ book provides information on settling into the pre-school and includes links to *Aistear* and *Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*. Parents receive a monthly newsletter and social media and the parents’ notice board at the entrance to the room is used to update parents on forthcoming events. Information on the children’s learning is shared informally at arrival and collection times and a formal meeting with parents is held in January.
- A parents’ information meeting is held before children start in the pre-school and children are invited to come and visit before they start. A settling-in period, encompassing shorter hours, is organised to help children settle into their new environment.
- Practitioners discuss with the children their move to primary school. Children visit the adjacent school to post their letters to Santa and during the summer term the practitioners bring them on walks to visit their new classroom.

**Actions advised**

- It is advised that regular, formal staff meetings be introduced in order to undertake planning for children’s learning and to plan for upcoming themes and topics. It is advised that the decisions and agreed actions of these meetings are documented.
- The practitioners are advised to avail of the self-evaluation templates in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to support them in their professional self-reflection practices and their review of policies and procedures.
The practitioners are advised to develop a policy and procedures to support children's transitions from pre-school to primary school. The addition of a transition box that includes samples of the school's uniforms and photographs of the layout of the school will help in the discussions about the move from pre-school to primary.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the setting to implement the actions advised is good as demonstrated by the owner’s expressed commitment to providing a quality learning experience for the children during the post-inspection feedback discussion.
### 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>Very 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Provision</th>
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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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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 the inspection report, we feel that the content was fair and we are happy to take on board the actions advised in order to provide the children with the best possible learning environment.

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

- Visual daily routine has been developed and is displayed at child height.
- Key person approach has been introduced and is being used.

Area 2

- Long term, medium term and short term planning are being reviewed and we will take into consideration the templates in the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide.
- We are currently adapting our observation template to include next steps for progression in children’s learning. These have been shared with the parents and we will continue to do this.
- After reviewing our room layout using the Environment Audit in the Aistear Siolta Practice Guide we have created a book/reading area for the children where resources are more accessible to the children and allows children to have a quieter area to relax in.

Area 3

- Our regular small group activities are now taking place with the Key person.
- Family members and members of our local community are invited to share their experiences with the children. A map of the local area is displayed in the room along with photographs of local areas of interests.

Area 4

- Formal staff meetings take place at the end of each week to plan for children’s learning and future themes and topics. Meetings are documented weekly.
- Policy and procedure for children’s transition to primary school has been developed.
- A Transitions Box is being developed and will be used in addition to supports we already have in place to help children when moving from preschool to primary.