An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Midleton FRC</th>
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</table>
| Setting Address  | Community Building  
|                  | Youghal Road  
|                  | Midleton  
|                  | County Cork  |
| DCYA number      | 10CC0345     |

Date of Inspection: 18-12-2019
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

Date of inspection | 18-12-2019
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**Inspection activities undertaken** | **Observation of interactions during a number of sessions**
- Meeting with setting manager | - Interaction with children
- Meeting with practitioners | - Review of relevant documents
- Observation of interactions during a number of sessions | - Feedback to setting manager and practitioners

**CONTEXT OF SETTING**

Midleton FRC is an urban, community setting. Two practitioners and a manager provide early years education to fifteen children in a morning session and to nine children in an afternoon session. Two out of the nine children in the afternoon group participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The inspection took place during the morning session, at which eleven children were present. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report; a response was not received from the setting.

**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.
- A very warm, welcoming atmosphere is created. The practitioners show sensitivity and a positive regard for the children and their families. The ethos is very caring. This is reflected in the very meaningful, informative, evidence-based and easy-to-understand philosophical statement, which is on display for the parents.
- The daily routine plan is on display in picture sequence at child height in the main play room. Overall the very well-balanced daily routine consistently promotes the children’s physical, social and emotional security, together with their learning and development. Table-top activities, as well adult-initiated/led arts and craft activities are scheduled as whole-group activities. They need to be incorporated and offered on an optional basis during free-play periods.
- During the free-play periods, the children have complete agency in choosing and organising their learning activities. One lovely example is the autonomous, confident manner in which the children put on their apron, organise their painting materials, paint their pictures and tidy up by themselves afterwards.
- A beautiful, relaxed, family-type mealtime is enjoyed. All the children and the practitioners sit, eat and chat together. The practitioners are consciously well positioned, so they don’t have to get up during the meal to help the children, but can reach everybody at their table if necessary.
- Transitions are fluid and times of transition are utilised very effectively to support continuous, positive learning experiences for the children.
- Relationships between the practitioners and the children are responsive, highly respectful and reciprocal. Very good guidance and encouragement are provided to support caring and respectful child-child relationships.
- The children’s sense of identity and belonging is nurtured very effectively. Practice is child-centred and the uniqueness of each child is recognised and celebrated. Family and community members regularly visit the setting to share their expertise and interests with the children. They have helped to do up the garden; and they play in a band for the Christmas concert. A local fireman; a Garda and neighbours join in the summer festivals.
- Very good, meaningful, aesthetically-pleasing opportunities are provided for the children to develop an appreciation of themselves as individuals and members of groups. These include a family wall, signing-in spaces above the coat hooks, and a well-designed birthday ‘clock’ display. This ‘clock’ features the twelve months in names and numbers arranged clock-wise in a circle and the children’s photos attached under them.
**Actions advised**
- Practitioners are advised to change the daily routine slightly, to offer table-top activities and arts and craft activities optional, parallel to free play.
- The practitioners are advised to intervene constructively and consistently to support the children to establish good habits for life, in particular with regard to establishing good practices that are respectful of their environment, the use of materials and resources.

**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.
- A broad-based curriculum, informed by and linked to *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is documented and implemented. It is evident that the practitioners are skilled and competent in the development and implementation of an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum.
- A variety of assessment approaches is used to gather information about the children’s learning and development. The information documented about the children’s learning reflects their development with due regard for their individual interests, needs and learning dispositions.
- High-quality interactions are facilitated. The practitioners know the children well and actively extend their thinking and learning during play. They use appropriate interaction strategies, such as active listening, prompting, asking open-ended questions and scaffolding to co-construct knowledge.
- The indoor and outdoor environments are well maintained, safe and inviting. The indoor environment is well resourced to inspire a range of play and exploration. The children have regular access to the outdoor areas. On the day of the inspection, the children were eagerly engaged in the sand play around the little sand table outside, which got very crowded. It was noted also, that the mud kitchen had no earth. The play value of both the indoor and the outdoor area has scope to be further developed.
- Child-initiated /led, exploratory, active and interactive play is skilfully utilised as the main medium through which the children learn and develop.
- The children’s emergent language, literacy and numeracy skills are fostered very effectively and age appropriately. A rich range of art and craft work and mark-making opportunities is available to the children at all times. The children regularly enjoy songs, rhymes and whole-body movement, action songs. High-quality stories are interactively explored on a regular basis. The practitioners ensure, that there is a suitable balance between speaking and listening and actively encourage an expanded use of vocabulary and language during interactions.
- The practitioners recognise and accommodate diversity in the style, pace and focus of the children’s learning and development.

**Action advised**
- The practitioners are advised to create more clearly defined play areas, such as a home corner; a construction area; a designated art area; a cosy, inviting library and a messy play area in the indoor environment. The outdoor area needs more versatile, manipulative, open-ended, natural, sense-rich materials and resources to inspire exploratory, active and interactive play. As the children love working with the sand, a big, well-resourced sandpit and mud-play area would be beneficial. The ‘Learning Environment’ pillar of the online *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* provides useful information and ideas in this regard.

**AREA 3**

**QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**
- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is excellent.
- The children clearly have ownership in their pre-school. They are interested, motivated, confident and competent and demonstrate enjoyment in their activities. The children and the adults have fun together. The children show positive learning dispositions, such as resilience, resourcefulness, persistence, initiative and self-reliance.
• Through the deep, in-depth engagement in child-initiated/led, interactive play, the children utilise a myriad of opportunities to develop and refine their personal and social skills, such as problem-solving, self-regulation, co-operation, negotiation and building relationships.
• The children are very skilled language users. They use both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies effectively to give and receive information, negotiate roles and play situations and share their interests, feelings and ideas.
• The ‘hundred voices’ of the children are made visible in the displays of their unique, individual art work, where the children’s comments are recorded. In a group activity, the children cut out a Christmas tree and over a period of time they decorated it with hand-made baubles, tinsel and other art work.
• In particular, the rich mark-making and arts and craft materials and resources, stimulate the children to express their uniqueness, individuality and creativity in a range of ways. On the day of the inspection, several children were deeply engaged in mark-making on the blackboard. This led to animated discussions and rich learning through copying and scaffolding amongst themselves.
• The children are developing their physical skills and fitness through their active engagement in acting out songs, dancing, construction play and manipulating objects and materials.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

• The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
• Management and staff regularly reflect, review and plan practice and procedures together. Whole-staff meetings are carried out twice a year. On a more informal basis, daily, room internal meetings are held to review the day and plan ahead. The outcomes of the meetings are not documented.
• Regular supervision meetings and staff appraisal meetings are implemented.
• The stated philosophy and vision of the setting is evident in practice. The leader provides a good role model for staff, promotes high standards and has fostered this clear vision and direction for the work of the setting.
• There is clarity about the roles and responsibilities of practitioners with regard to educational activities and every practitioner in the setting avails of opportunities to take a leadership role in promoting quality learning.
• Management and staff regularly avail of opportunities for professional development. Recently staff members have completed the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) in the Early Years Programme, a course on messy play and some in-house training with a play therapist.
• Effective and clear two-way channels of communication between the setting and the families are established. These include a very informative notice board, regular information letters, daily informal chats, an informative parental handbook and some sharing of information via electronic media.
• Transitions into and from the setting are managed sensitively and effectively to ensure continuity of experiences and progression in learning for the children. Family-friendly settling-in procedures are in place. The setting has developed a range of strategies to support the children in their transition to primary school. There are uniforms from the different schools in the dress-up box during the summer months and the children create collages of the different schools and their environments.

Action advised
• Practitioners are advised to document the outcomes of reflection and planning meetings, so that they can be shared, acted upon and reviewed again at a later stage. Management is encouraged to provide some regular non-contact time for every practitioner to engage in professional reflection and planning.
**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>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Excellent</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 Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
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<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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