An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>Muckalee Community Childcare Project</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>Clorinka</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ballyfoyle</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Kilkenny</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>10KK0111</td>
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Date of Inspection: 28-02-2019
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 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: 28-02-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-inspection meeting with the setting manager</td>
<td>Interaction with children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introductory meeting and conversations with practitioners in ECCE room 1 and 2</td>
<td>Review of educational resources and facilities in both pre-school rooms and outdoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of interactions between practitioners and children</td>
<td>Review of relevant setting documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review of available records of children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Post-inspection feedback meeting with the setting manager and four practitioners</td>
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CONTEXT OF SETTING

Muckalee Community Childcare Project is a community setting providing full-day, part-time and sessional pre-school care and education. In addition, an after-school service is provided for school-aged children. It provides two concurrent morning sessions for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme; both were inspected. Following the completion of an extension, a second ECCE room opened in September 2018. The outdoor learning environment is being developed. The setting manager, four practitioners and thirty-five children were present on the day of the inspection. 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 very good.
- The atmosphere is warm and friendly. The practitioners interact with children and their families in a caring manner; demonstrating positive regard.
- At times, practitioners offer affirmative feedback recognising and encouraging children’s efforts and achievements in their learning.
- The key worker approach established supports secure relationships. Practitioners are responsible for observing and planning to meet the needs of a dedicated group of children.
- Displaying photographs of the children’s families and their past experiences effectively nurtures identity and belonging. Children can access a limited number of resources which represent cultural diversity.
- Strong connections with the community support the ongoing development of the setting. Very good opportunities support children to get to know people and build a sense of place.

Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to consistently respond to children's actions to further support their independence and self-confidence in learning. They need to be encouraged to describe their efforts and achievements. Practitioners should meaningfully acknowledge children’s work and ideas to a greater extent using specific comments.
- It is advised that children be offered a greater range of materials and resources promoting understanding and acceptance of diversity.
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 effectively supports a learning through play approach. It is broadly informed by the themes of *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- Overall, planning consists of practitioner selected themes and topics with some emphasis on children’s emergent interests. Practitioners take good account of progression in children’s learning as they move rooms from the younger-aged ECCE room to the older pre-school aged ECCE group.
- Practitioners’ observations are used to inform next steps in children’s learning. Each child has a book containing samples of art work and photographs with some descriptions of their dispositions, skills and understanding. These books are stored out of reach from the children. Assessment methods are not fully effective in building a rich picture of children’s learning.
- The practitioners display respect, interest and enthusiasm in their facilitation of children’s learning. Using their knowledge of children they respond to their needs appropriately.
- The bright indoor learning environments stimulate children’s exploration and manipulation of a suitable range of materials. On the day of the inspection, materials reflected children’s rural backgrounds and interest in farming life. Some materials stored in large boxes are not easily accessible to children.
- The outdoor learning environment is accessed daily. At the time of the inspection children had limited access to resources as the space was under development. A large green area with hill offers potential for exploring natural materials.
- A wide variety of songs and rhymes is integrated into the daily activities. This supports emergent language and literacy skills.

*Actions advised*
- Practitioners are advised to develop an emergent enquiry-based curriculum. The development of a curriculum statement guided by *Aistear* will underpin long-term planning implementation. The children’s emergent interests, strengths, needs and previous learning experiences should be the central focus when completing medium-term and short-term plans.
- Building on good approaches to observation, practitioners are advised to consistently gather information that builds a rich picture of children’s holistic learning journeys.
- In order to progress the development of the outdoor learning environment, it is advised that suitable natural, sensory open-ended and challenging experiences be included, such as water play. The resources in the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* will support these developments.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children enjoy learning in this environment with peers and practitioners. They demonstrate good involvement in their active learning.
- On the day of the inspection during adult-initiated whole-group activities some children lost interest and became distracted when waiting for their turn.
- Children experience success during learning activities. They demonstrate awareness in their developing abilities. At the time of the inspection, children did not have regular access to their records of learning.
- The children use their physical skills; developing control and co-ordination over their gross and fine motor skills.
- Through a variety of play types children express their interests, feelings and creativity. The children show a strong interest in mark-making and pretend play.
- The children actively engage in exploring sound, pattern, rhythm and repetition in language. During the inspection, children capably used props to tell the story of Goldilocks.
- While exploring eggs and sharks there were some missed opportunities to enquire into children’s understanding.
The children demonstrate an evolving capacity to use their social skills to play cooperatively with peers. In the outdoors, children play together at games taking turns.

**Actions advised**
- In order to further support children to view themselves as successful learners, it is advised that they be given regular access to view, contribute and discuss their learning books.
- It is advised that children be provided with additional opportunities to engage in planned small group activities.
- Practitioners are advised to support the development of children's thinking skills to a greater extent. They need to use a range of prompts to stimulate children's capacity to share thoughts, predictions and investigations.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**
- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- A positive sense of teamwork and collaboration is evident. The sharing of ideas is actively promoted across the team. Practitioners have access to ICT for research purposes.
- Very good practices are in place for the smooth organisation of educational experiences and activities in the setting.
- Management offer professional development opportunities that contribute to positive outcomes for children. The manager and one practitioner are completing five workshops on *Síolta; the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*. It is planned to share the information gathered with the whole team to develop self-review systems.
- The manager is focused on developing structured supervision to support staff in their roles. She is readily available to mentor and support.
- At the time of the inspection, practitioners were exploring the provision of individual meetings with parents. It is insufficient for parents to only receive documented information about their children's learning at the end of the pre-school year.
- Transitions within the setting are managed effectively. In partnership with parents, information is shared between key workers.
- Policies, procedures and practice are well developed to promote the smooth transition of children into the setting and progression to primary school. Children bring a postcard with their own marks and voice captured when visiting the local primary school.

**Actions advised**
- Management and practitioners are advised to use the materials from the *Aistear Síolta Practice Guide* to support the development of a systematic approach to self-review. This should lead to the implementation of quality improvement initiatives. Outcomes of self-review should be documented, shared and acted upon to improve outcomes for children.
- Practitioners are advised to provide parents with formal opportunities to meet with their child’s key worker to exchange information. In addition, observations and learning books should be shared regularly.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**
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>
<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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### Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report.

The service was delighted with the overall report of the Early Years Inspection. We strive to provide a warm, caring, loving and stimulating service for the children in our care, which I believe is highlighted in this report. We acknowledge that there are areas where we need to focus on and develop and we aim to work toward them over the coming weeks, months and years.

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

The service aims to work on all areas of development highlighted in the report by

- Introducing more multi-denominational props and equipment into the service.
- We are introducing Childpath to the service in order to promote more in-depth interaction between parents and staff.
- Curricula are becoming more child-led with emphasis being placed on child-led activities.
- The outdoor area is currently being developed. We now have a large grass area, a vegetable patch and a large swing and climbing set in the garden. Over the coming months we plan to build a mud kitchen, sensory wall and climbing area in the garden.
- The Aistear Siolta Guide is being used on a more regular basis in the service.