

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**  
**Department of Education and Skills**

**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<b>Setting Name</b>	Tír na nÓg
<b>Setting Address</b>	Tullaghnameeragh Moate N37 E6E8 County Westmeath
<b>DCYA number</b>	10WH0101

**Date of Inspection: 24-01-2020**



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agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills

## **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.

## Early-Years Education Inspection

<b>Date of inspection</b>	24-01-2020
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with setting manager</li><li>• Observation of interactions during session</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interaction with children</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Feedback to setting manager and practitioners</li></ul>

### CONTEXT OF SETTING

Tír na nÓg is a privately-owned and operated setting. It was established in 2003 and is located outside the town of Moate. One morning session is provided for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. On the morning of the inspection, eight children, the setting manager and two practitioners, one of whom was an extra staff member, were present. The setting manager and the two practitioners attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the 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.
- The practitioners have created a very warm and welcoming atmosphere. Children, parents and siblings receive a friendly welcome on arrival and present as comfortable and at ease in the setting.
- Lunch time is a comfortable, home-like experience and children's well-being is effectively promoted. Practitioners and children sit together and engage in natural conversations.
- Relationships between practitioners and children are extremely respectful. Practitioners consistently show warmth and sensitivity towards the children and their families.
- The practitioners very effectively promote children's sense of identity and belonging. Displays of photographs of the children and many examples of their creative achievements are some of the ways in which the children are made visible in the physical environment.
- Members of the local community regularly visit the setting to share their knowledge, interests and expertise with the children. Visual representation of the local community and its members is limited.
- The children display familiarity with the daily routine. Practitioners often provide children with guidance during tidy-up times which supports them to have autonomy and responsibility over their learning experiences.

#### *Action advised*

- The practitioners are advised to prepare visual representation of the local community and its members, in collaboration with the children. This will facilitate opportunities for children to revisit and recall their experiences in the locality while also building on their awareness of the people and places within the community.

## 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 play-based approach, linked to *Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*, is used to support children's learning and development.
- Practitioners have been involved in developing short-term curriculum plans. Learning activities and experiences are based around one main interest of the children. On the morning of the inspection, the practitioners successfully used a thematic approach to the learning activities to support children's interest in jungle animals.
- Individual learning journals are used to gather information about children's learning, their experiences and achievements. These comprise practitioners' termly narrative observations, children's drawings and developmental checklists. The information from these assessment approaches is not consistently used to inform the learning programme.
- Practitioners facilitate many effective interaction strategies with children. They are attentive and responsive to the children and provide appropriate levels of support and guidance. Practitioners are very mindful of their presence in the environment; they move between the various interest areas and ensure that each child is engaged and motivated in his/her learning.
- The indoor environment is bright and spacious. It has been carefully organised into clearly-defined interest areas, each of which is well-resourced. The provision of a wide selection of accessible resources supports the promotion of children's early literacy and numeracy skills.
- Practitioners recognise and value the importance of play as the central medium through which children learn and develop. They ensure that a generous amount of time is allocated to uninterrupted, child-initiated play opportunities. They also very effectively support and extend children's play and, at times, they act as play partners and may lead play.
- Practitioners' regular promotion of children's emergent language skills is highly commendable. Through songs, stories and drama experiences, the children are provided with many opportunities to express themselves.

#### *Action advised*

- Practitioners are advised to regularly document children's skills, interests and learning dispositions in their narrative observation records. As part of this process, the use of this information to inform their short-term plans will help to promote continuity and progression in children's learning.

### **AREA 3**

#### **QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- Many children display self-assurance and a positive sense of well-being. For example, children volunteered to be involved in acting out the "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" story and showed confidence in the various roles they adopted.
- Children present as very content and happy. They demonstrate enjoyment in their learning and remain engaged and interested in their chosen play experiences. During story time, a small number of children became disengaged after sitting for a lengthy period of time.
- Many children demonstrated a strong sense of achievement during the session. For example, a child proudly discussed with a practitioner which puzzles she could complete independently. Other children called on their peers and practitioners to share their creative achievements.
- Children display the ability to play co-operatively, in pairs and small groups. They demonstrate developing personal and social skills which are enabling them to respond appropriately to different situations.
- Children present as very effective communicators. They regularly make eye contact and listen to one another, they make requests and express their thoughts and ideas during their learning experiences. For example, a child expressed his interest in making a "birdie". With the support of a practitioner, the child created and represented his bird using various open-ended and creative materials.

#### *Action advised*

- Practitioners are advised to review the daily routine to ensure that the sequence of experiences and activities offer a more appropriate balance between sedentary and active learning experiences. In doing so, practitioners are advised to offer brief, interactive large group experiences. This will support greater engagement levels from all children.

### **AREA 4**

#### **QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- A sense of teamwork and ethos of professionalism is clearly evident among the practitioners. They work well together and regularly communicate with each other throughout the session.
- The manager and practitioners informally reflect on and review their practice and procedures on a daily basis. They record notes from these discussions in order to improve learning experiences for children. Formal self-evaluation processes, where practitioners intentionally reflect on provision to inform their planning, review and improvement practices, have yet to be established.
- The practitioners demonstrate commitment to the setting's vision. They consistently adhere and implement the setting's aim to provide high quality learning experiences for children.
- The manager acts as a very effective role model. She is actively involved in the setting and models best practice, particularly in her engagement and interactions with children and families.
- Practitioners have clear roles and responsibilities with regard to the facilitation of learning experiences. Each practitioner adopts a leadership role and has equal opportunities to plan for, prepare and promote quality learning experiences.
- Practitioners exchange information with parents through genuine and open daily informal conversations, a texting system and the sharing of letters and children's individual learning journals.
- A flexible, settling-in phase is offered to all new children and their parents. Children and parents are encouraged to spend time in the setting prior to enrolment where they have an opportunity to meet the team and to familiarise themselves with the environment.

- There are various effective procedures in place to support children as they prepare to move to primary school. This includes the introduction of relevant reading books and the facilitation of informal conversations about what children expect to experience when they move to school. The manager reports a good working relationship with the local primary school and informs parents about the school's enrolment days.

*Action advised*

- The manager and practitioners are advised to build on their informal reflective practices and to engage in more purposeful evaluation of their practice, policies and procedures. Practitioners' regular use of the online *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will assist in enhancing their professional review of provision.

### Summary of Overall Inspection

<b>Area</b>	<b>Quality Level</b>
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	<b>Very good</b>
Quality of management and leadership for learning	<b>Very good</b>

### Language used in Early-Years Education Inspection reports

<b>Excellent</b>	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.
<b>Very good</b>	Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.
<b>Good</b>	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.
<b>Fair</b>	Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.
<b>Poor</b>	Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.