

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

**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION**

**REPORT**

<b>Setting Name</b>	Ballycar Pre-School and After School
<b>Setting Address</b>	Ballycar National School Ballycar Newmarket-On-Fergus Co. Clare V95VR74
<b>DCYA number</b>	12CE0170

**Date of Inspection: 14-02-2020**



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## **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

<b>Date of inspection</b>	09-12-2019
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of interactions during session</li><li>• Interaction with children</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Feedback to owner/practitioner</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with setting owner/ practitioner</li></ul>	

### CONTEXT OF SETTING

Ballycar Pre-School and After School is a privately owned setting, located in Ballycar National School. The setting occupies a room in the school's main corridor. The owner/manager is the sole practitioner. She has provided a sessional pre-school service for children through the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme, since 2012. Five children are currently enrolled. On the day of the inspection, all of the children were in attendance; some are in their first year in the setting and some are in their second year. 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.
- There is a very family-type atmosphere in the setting. The practitioner interacts with the children in a kind and positive manner and her daily interactions with parents are warm and friendly. She frequently praises the children and highlights their achievements.
- An interactive daily plan is on display at child height. It includes pictorial representations of the various activities and it is referred to and altered as the session progresses to reflect the sequence of activities. Transitions within the daily routine are very seamless.
- There are two snack times; the practitioner sits with the children at both times. Both occasions are very social with lots of chat, and the snack table is beautifully arranged with fresh flowers and a table mat, serviette and plate for each child. Healthy eating is discussed and promoted. The children confidently attend to their self-care needs with minimal assistance from the practitioner.
- The children's sense of identity and belonging is well supported. Their photographs and names are visible in the room. During conversations they discuss their family, home life, and interests; and their strengths are acknowledged.
- The children's awareness of the local community is nurtured. Some photographs of the village are on display. In previous years, the children visited a nursing home to interact with residents over a six-week period, and they went on tour to Bunratty castle and a farm. Occasionally there are visitors to the setting; this year, a dental hygienist has spoken to the children about caring for their teeth.

#### *Action advised*

- To further nurture the children's awareness of the local community, the practitioner is encouraged to display additional photographs and representations of the area either throughout the setting or in a dedicated folder which the children can access. In addition, the practitioner is advised to generate more opportunities for the children to interact with community members.

## 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 setting implements a play-based curriculum which is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*
- The practitioner sets out termly plans, thematic ideas boards and weekly plans. It is strongly evident that the children's emergent interests inform the learning activities.
- The children's progress is monitored. There are formal termly observations, ongoing incidental observations and *Aistear* learner record templates are maintained for each child. Each child has an individual cubby and journal which contain samples of their work. In addition, a group learning journal is compiled; it provides ample evidence that the children engage in a very good variety of activities.
- The indoor learning environment includes plentiful materials to support learning and inspire play. There is a comfortable reading area; puzzles, toys and games; and a very attractive, large wooden house facade which incorporates a home corner.
- The setting uses the school's sensory room and the school hall; here the children's locomotor skills are well supported.
- The children and the practitioner have outdoor clothing; accordingly they use the outdoor area frequently. This area includes a purposefully developed enclosed area with a well-resourced mud kitchen, a sand and planting area, and wooden features which the children use as an improvised boat and car.
- The practitioner engages with the children as a play partner in a fulsome manner. Through the daily interactions, there is potential to further extend the children's thinking and reasoning skills.
- The children's early language and numeracy skills are well supported; they explore mathematical concepts as they play, they engage in mark making, and the practitioner reads to them expressively at story time. Some words and phrases in the Irish language are used informally.
- Practice in the setting is inclusive and where necessary, the practitioner accesses support through the access and inclusion model (AIM).

#### *Action advised*

- The practitioner is encouraged to focus to a greater degree on developing the children's thinking and reasoning skills. This could be achieved by posing more 'I wonder why?' questions, and by challenging them to solve problems and justify their choices and answers. The Interactions pillar of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* provides useful advice 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 engage in all activities eagerly; throughout the session observed it was evident that they have fun and benefit greatly from the various activities.
- The children have a positive sense of wellbeing; they manage their feelings very well, and they engage with each other and with the practitioner in an exemplary manner. They listen and take turns in conversations. For the most part, they play together as a full group. It is evident that they have formed good bonds and friendships.
- In the outdoor environment in particular, the children demonstrate persistence and explore with great enthusiasm. They use the mud kitchen in a resourceful manner.
- The children confidently recite songs and rhymes and they participate wholeheartedly at story time. They competently count, name shapes and explore capacity as they play.
- The children's physical skills are developing well. Indoors they slide, slither, walk, run and hop in response to music. Outdoors they are supported to climb and dig, and they use ride along toys. At snack time, they demonstrate a very good understanding of the importance of healthy eating.

- The children's drawings and paintings are unique and imaginative. They work individually and collaboratively with a broad range of artistic materials. Their creations in the style of Pablo Picasso are proudly framed and displayed.

#### **AREA 4**

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

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- As the sole practitioner, the owner/manager demonstrates commitment to providing high-quality experiences for the children. The *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* is used to some extent to support improvement and reflection.
- The practitioner participates in continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities to support her understanding of *Aistear*. She has participated in first aid training; child protection training and the Healthy Ireland Smart Start training.
- Good systems are in place to support communication with parents, including a social media page which informs parents about the children's collective learning experiences. In addition, information is provided for parents at the setting's entrance. While the individual learning journals are always available to parents, there is great potential to extend their use by sending them home more frequently.
- An open-door policy is in operation. Parents and children can attend a settle-in day, and at the start of the year parents are welcome to linger, as their child settles in. The practitioner provides parents with ongoing feedback about their child, and where concerns arise, one-to-one meetings are convened and external support is accessed.
- To support the children's transition to primary school, the practitioner provides props such as a school bag and a lunch box, and she encourages the children to explore school life through role play. The children visit the classrooms, they meet the school children in the yard and they interact informally with the teachers. At the end of the year, the practitioner provides parents with a transition flower with information about the child's strengths and progress; parents can choose to share this with the primary school.

#### *Actions advised*

- To support a more sustained and continuous approach to setting review and improvement, the practitioner is encouraged to engage systematically with the pillars of the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*.
- To optimise the value of the high-quality individual learning journals, the practitioner is advised to send the journals home more frequently. Parents could be invited to provide comments and observations, and in turn, these could form the basis of discussions between the child and the practitioner. This will boost home-setting links, provide additional affirmation for the child, and empower them to further reflect on their development and progress.

### 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>Excellent</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.