An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION - FOCUSED INSPECTION

REPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Name</th>
<th>Killeigh Community Pre-school</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Address</td>
<td>Killeigh</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Offaly</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>12OY0087</td>
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Date of Inspection: 10-04-2018
WHAT IS AN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION-FOCUSED INSPECTION?

The Early Years Education-focused Inspection (EYEI) model is used to provide evaluative information, advice and support in relation to education provision in a pre-school service 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 service.

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 service’s provision in each area.
Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of inspection</th>
<th>10-04-2018</th>
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</table>
| Inspection activities undertaken | • Interaction with children  
• Review of relevant documents  
• Feedback to service manager and practitioner  
• Meeting with service manager  
• Meeting with practitioner  
• Observation of interactions during a number of sessions  
• Interaction with children  
• Review of relevant documents  
• Feedback to service manager and practitioner |

CONTEXT OF SERVICE

Killeigh Community Pre-school was established twenty years ago. The pre-school is situated in a converted private dwelling and is located in a small village in County Offaly. It provides a sessional pre-school service to children, using a play-based approach. The service has recently undergone a change in management and staffing. The manager and the practitioner were appointed last September. On the day of the inspection, fourteen pre-school children, the manager/lead practitioner and the practitioner were in attendance. The manager and the 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, 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 warm, welcoming atmosphere. Practitioners know the children and their families very well and as parents bring their children into the room they take time to chat to them about their families.
• The daily routine is on display at the entrance to the service but it is not visible to the children. Transitions are signalled by the practitioners using verbal reminders and singing the tidy-up song.
• Different play materials are on the tables when children arrive. Children reconnect with their friends, and select the table and activity they wish to undertake.
• Snack time is valued as a social occasion, during which the practitioners take time to sit and chat to the children about their lives outside the pre-school.
• The children have developed close secure relationships with the practitioners. Encouragement and praise are offered consistently to them throughout the session. This motivates and supports them in their learning. The key worker approach is not used. This approach is one in which the practitioner develops a close, secure relationship with the child and acts as a link between the pre-school and the parents.
• The practitioners actively model and provide effective and consistent guidance to support positive behaviour among children. This was evident when they encouraged children to play cooperatively together and to be kind to their friends.
• The uniqueness of each child is reflected in the birthday display with their self-decorated balloons and also in the photographs on their coat hooks.
• Many occasions are arranged for parents and extended family members to visit the service, including the Christmas party and the end-of-year graduation. They take an active part in fundraising activities such as the recent cake sale to support the redevelopment of the outdoor area. Parents have come to share their life outside the pre-school, including the mum who came to show a new lamb. Plans are in place for parents to visit the service during the month of April to share their work experience.
• Children are learning about their local community through their walks around the area, and their visits to the GAA grounds and to the local shop. The local Garda and the local GAA team have visited the service. Children take part in carol singing each Christmas in the local supermarket and afterwards parents and children return to the service for a Christmas party.
**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to extend the daily routine display by adding photographs of the children engaged in different activities and displaying it at child height. This will support the children to understand the daily sequence of events.

- To build on the current good practices which support strong relationships between the practitioners and the children, the introduction of a key person approach is advised. This would boost the practitioners’ efforts to develop a close, secure relationship with the child and to act as a link between the pre-school and the parents.

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**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 manager has recently taken over the running of the service and has begun the process of adapting the learning programme to reflect a play-based curriculum that is linked to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.

- The themes of *Aistear* are on display within the room and are referred to in the long-term planning undertaken by the practitioners. The broad monthly and weekly topics are based on adult-selected themes. At this time the planning does not include the children’s individual emergent interests.

- A large ‘floor book’ is compiled by the practitioners and includes samples of the children’s drawings, samples of their art and crafts and photographs of their engagement in activities linked to *Aistear*.

- A number of approaches are used by the practitioners to record the children’s learning. A developmental checklist is used at the beginning and end of the year to record their physical, intellectual, emotional, social and language development. Anecdotal notes are used on a daily basis and a monthly learner template is shared with parents at the end of the year. These approaches do not include the next steps planned for the children’s learning.

- The practitioner’s interactions with the children are consistently positive and responsive. Approaches such as open-ended questions and prompts support the children’s thinking and problem-solving skills. The practitioners play alongside and with the children. Many playful interactions were observed such as during the shop game and the Garda checkpoint game outdoors.

- Play is valued and supported by the practitioners and children are provided with opportunities for different types of play. The indoor environment has some interest areas, for example a large home corner and an area for socio-dramatic play. The current layout of the rooms and the limited access to play materials restricts the children’s play experiences.

- The practitioners in this service place a strong focus on the outdoors as a learning environment. Children access the large, well organised soft surface area on a daily basis. The practitioners have recently acquired the adjacent plot of land which will be used as a grassy area for planting and sensory play. Wind chimes, tree trunks and planting areas, together with sand and water play provide children with sensory experiences. A variety of ride along toys, a climbing frame, a slide, large blocks and a selection of cars enable the children to practise their physical skills. Children use two large easels for mark-making or painting.

- The practitioners recognise the children as competent, confident learners and emphasise the value of everyday activities, songs, and rhymes to support their emergent literacy and numeracy skills. The practitioners model mathematical language throughout the session in meaningful contexts for children. During the inspection the children were asked to think about how many children were absent during roll call, to count the number of floors in the multi-storey car park during block play and to count the seeds during the planting activity.

- Children with additional needs are well integrated in this service. The practitioners have made links with the relevant professional agencies and they share information regularly with parents.

**Actions advised**

- Practitioners are advised to ensure that the long-term, medium-term and short-term planning developed incorporates *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and to include the
children’s individual emergent interests in these documents. The templates in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will support them in this regard.

- It is advised that the practitioners extend their current approaches to observations of children’s learning by including the children’s learning dispositions and strengths and by ensuring the addition of the next steps for the children’s progression. The role of the key person would be useful in this regard and would also support the service in sharing the children’s learning with parents on a regular basis.
- The practitioners are advised to use the Indoor Environmental Audit in the *Aistear* toolkit to assist them in the development of specific interest areas, with suitable, accessible resources. This will ensure that children experience purposeful learning within their play experiences.

**AREA 3**

**QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- The children demonstrate enjoyment and engagement in their self-selected activities and in the adult-planned activities, such as the planting activity outdoors. Laughter is heard frequently as children engage in playful interactions with the practitioners and their peers.
- Many children achieve success and demonstrate good concentration levels. For example, children were observed covering seeds with moss peat and some children gathered water into a funnel to water the new plants. A small number of children were observed to be distracted and disengaged during the large group activities such as circle time and the storytelling activity.
- The children show increasing confidence, physical co-ordination and great enjoyment when taking part in the musical movement exercise and the balancing game.
- Children know the social rules of the service and they play well together with examples of good friendships being developed. They were observed sharing the new fairy equipment for the outdoors and negotiating the use of the watering cans with their friends.
- Opportunities are provided for the children to practise their self-help skills and independence. They take part in the tidy-up routine, and independently put on their coats when going outside. The practitioners select children to help with the roll call and for passing items to their friends. There is scope within the daily activities to offer children further opportunities to practise their social skills and independence.
- Children demonstrate their ability to recall and imagine how different objects work when taking part in the guessing game with a soft toy.
- The children are confident and eager to talk to the practitioners and their friends about their life outside the pre-school and to discuss recent events on their farms.
- At the time of the inspection, the service had recently been repainted and displays of the children’s art work had yet to be replaced.
- The voice of the child is reflected in the comments added to the children’s drawings in their folders. These are sent home at the end of the year. On the day of the inspection, at arrival time, paper and shapes were placed on tables, to be used by the children for drawing.
- A number of children show awareness of letters, shapes and numbers. They discuss names starting with the same letter, compare shapes and chat about the different sizes and heights of the flowers they had previously planted.
- Children are aware of the natural environment and they regularly plant flowers and herbs both indoors and outdoors.

*Actions advised*  
- The addition of further opportunities within the daily routine to promote the children’s independence and social skills is advised. This could be achieved by the use of a visual child-helper routine with a list of jobs.
- Practitioners are advised to offer additional small-group activities led by the key person, using differentiated learning materials to suit children’s interests and learning needs. This will ensure children are interested and engaged in the activities provided.
- To further support the children’s creative, imaginative and artistic development, it is advised that practitioners provide increased opportunities for them to independently access mark-making and art materials.
AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- At the time of the inspection, the service was in a state of transition; the manager had recently taken over the running of the pre-school. Practitioners chat informally at the start and end of each day to share ideas and plans. At the end of each week, they discuss the topics to be covered in the week ahead. Formal staff meetings to undertake and record planning for children’s learning do not take place.
- The practitioners have been working together for a short period of time and there is good evidence of teamwork, collaboration and partnership. On the day of the inspection, there was equal sharing of the leadership role. The manager led the roll call and circle time and the practitioner took responsibility for the guessing game.
- The practitioners are committed to their ongoing professional development. They recently completed their level six in Early Childhood Education. They are currently working towards achieving the level seven qualification in Early Childhood Education.
- The manager accesses support and advice from the local childcare committee and Early Childhood Ireland.
- Information on the children’s learning is shared with parents informally at arrival and collection times and a formal meeting is held at the end of the year. An information booklet on the service’s policies and procedures is given to parents at the start of the year. Information about Aistear and how it informs the curriculum is not currently included in the information booklet. Social media is used for sharing information about upcoming events and group activities. A parent’s notice board at the entrance to the room is used to share information on Aistear and the curriculum plan.
- An open evening is held with parents and children before they start to attend the service. At the start of the year, parents are invited to stay with their child until he/she is settled in their new environment.
- Practitioners chat to the children about their move to primary school. They bring the children on walks to see the location of the school and they know the principal and teachers well. The principal drops in regularly to visit the children. A policy regarding transitions is not in place. Some additional steps could be taken to support the children’s transition to primary school.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to use their discussions at the end of the week to formally undertake and record planning for children’s learning.
- Practitioners are advised to extend their parents’ booklet by including information about Aistear and how it informs the curriculum in this service.
- It is advised that the practitioners develop a policy for transitions into and out of the service. The addition of a transition box that includes photographs of the inside of the school and samples of the school’s uniforms would be useful in discussions with children and would help to promote their understanding of their move to primary school.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the service to continue to implement the actions advised above is 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>Good</td>
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### Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</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>Fair</td>
<td>Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.</td>
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