**EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION REPORT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Name</th>
<th>New Beginnings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting Address</td>
<td>St Mary’s National School</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dunmanway</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County Cork</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCYA number</td>
<td>15CC0507</td>
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**Date of Inspection: 06-12-2018**
**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  06-12-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection activities undertaken</th>
<th>Observation of interactions during one morning session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with setting manager</td>
<td>Interaction with children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting with practitioners</td>
<td>Review of relevant documents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feedback to setting manager and practitioners</td>
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CONTEXT OF SETTING

New Beginnings has been in operation in Dunmanway, Co. Cork since September 2015. Located in the local primary school, the owner/manager provides care and education for local children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, there were twenty-one children present along with three practitioners, one of whom is supporting children through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). In addition, the owner/manager was present intermittently throughout the session observed. 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 consistent daily routine in place which allocates times for child-initiated play and learning indoors and outdoors, practitioner-guided activities, circle time, story time and lunch.
- The setting operates an effective open-door policy and parents appear to be very comfortable and relaxed in the setting. They spend time sharing information and conversing at arrival time.
- Times of transition are very effectively managed. The consistent use of a shaker and a timer accompanied with clear explanations from the practitioners, supports positive learning experiences for the children.
- Relationships between the practitioners and the children are warm and reciprocal. The practitioners interact with each child gently, positively and with a sense of enjoyment throughout the session. A key practitioner approach is in place. This approach is at an early stage of development in the setting and could be further developed; currently, it identifies which practitioner will record the observations of the children.
- Snack time is celebrated as time where children can engage in social discussion with their peers, supported by the practitioners. The setting has a healthy eating policy which the parents support.
- The practitioners offer commendable support for the children’s developing sense of identity and belonging. There are many photographs displayed throughout the room of the children, their families, familiar people and places in the community.

Action advised
- The practitioners are advised to further develop the key practitioner approach and to take the necessary steps to ensure that the children can identify with their key practitioner. This will provide emotional security for the children and bring clarity to the delineation of responsibilities such as recording of emergent interests, planning and observations. Further insight into the key person approach can be found in the ‘Curriculum Foundations’ section of the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide.
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 play-based curriculum is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. This is organised on long-term, medium-term and short-term bases. Short-term plans outline the implementation of the themes, activities relating to festivals, and take account of children’s emergent interests.
- The practitioners observe, record and assess the children’s development and achievements using a wide variety of methods. Currently the information gathered has little impact on the planning for children’s future learning and development experiences.
- There is provision for a variety of play such as socio-dramatic, construction, puzzles, small world, books, art and different daily interest tables. The indoor environment is organised in distinct well-presented interest areas that support and inspire the children to investigate and discover.
- The outdoor learning environment has recently been developed and provides for many types of play and learning activities in a very attractive space.
- The practitioners view the children as being capable and competent learners. They have high, yet realistic expectations of the children who are actively involved in how the learning programme is facilitated.
- Practitioners use highly effective interaction strategies to support and extend the children’s engagement and learning. These include the frequent use of open-ended questions, following the child’s lead and engaging as a play-partner alongside the children.
- Songs and storytelling are used throughout the day to support group discovery and learning through play. On the day of the inspection children were enabled to dance to a familiar song.
- The children are learning in a commendably inclusive environment. The setting is linked with the Health Service Executive Early Intervention Team and the Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) to access assessment and support for children who may present with additional needs.

Action advised
- It is advised that the information gathered through the assessment approaches be used to inform the short-term curriculum plan. This will ensure greater continuity in the 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.
- During the session observed, the children were active agents in their pursuit of learning and play activities. Children made many choices and decisions about what and who they would play with demonstrating positive learning dispositions such as persistence, motivation and confidence.
- Many of the children displayed advanced capacity for imaginative play, such as when three children engaged in elaborate play with a practitioner in the home area for a lengthy period of time.
- Many of the children demonstrated a heightened interest in exploration, experimentation and enquiry as they worked with the open-ended sensory materials available to them. Ample supplies of sand and water are available for play. Using these materials, the children demonstrated how they test out hypotheses such as ‘why is it easier to squeeze when your hands are up high’.
- The children enjoy playing alone, in pairs and in groups. These experiences support the children to scaffold each other’s learning, resolve conflict and support the development of strong friendships.
- The children all engaged competently in self-care tasks and they display enjoyment in taking responsibility for completing real jobs to support the smooth running of the pre-school session. Ample supplies of dust pan and brushes, cloths and spray are available, enabling many of the children to engage in the clean-up routine.
- The children understand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. With gentle reminders from some practitioners, the children demonstrated a developing capacity for conflict resolution. There is potential to formalise and generate more consistency in the practitioners’ approaches to supporting children in times of conflict.
Action advised

- Practitioners are advised to reflect on their problem solving techniques when supporting children. They need to support the children to self-regulate, so that the children develop skills in this area. Consistency from all practitioners is advised. Engaging with the self-reflection tools in the Aistear, *Síolta Practice Guide*, may help in this regard.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is excellent.
- There is a highly commendable ethos of professionalism, teamwork and collaboration amongst the early year’s practitioners and the management of the setting.
- The owner/manager and practitioners articulate a very clearly developed and passionate commitment to providing a quality learning experience for children. The team engages in informal planning for quality improvement at regular team meetings.
- The owner/manager has engaged with the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* and uses this tool to inform the self-evaluative concentrations of the setting and to promote reflective discussions with practitioners.
- The practitioners are actively engaged in continuing professional development and maintaining their current understanding of effective practice. They recently completed training relating to supporting children with additional needs.
- Commendable efforts are made to engage and communicate with parents in the setting. Parents are continually informed, through informal and formal methods, with regard to their child’s evolving learning experiences. Children’s learning journals are shared with parents and their art work is sent home regularly.
- The setting has engaged with the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) and practitioners have also worked with many external agencies to support their work with children with additional needs.
- There are excellent strategies in place which support the children in their transition to the local primary schools. These include regular visits from the primary school teacher to the setting and past pupils.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

Based on their commitment to quality improvement, the capacity of the manager and the practitioners to implement the actions advised above is excellent.
### 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>
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<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>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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</tbody>
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### Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

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